

DACULA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
DES = “Dedicated to Every Student”

Parent-Student Handbook 2024-2025

Dacula Elementary
2500 Fence Road
Dacula, GA 30019
770-963-7174

Gwinnett County Public Schools
437 Old Peachtree Road
Suwanee, GA 30024
678-301-6000

www.daculaes.org

Dr. Calvin J Watts, CEO/Superintendent

Holly Warren, Principal

Assistant Principals

Dr. Ashley Holmes Lyons
Jennifer James
Camala Mitchell
Jayson Washington

The officers, employees and officials identified in this handbook are charged with using their personal judgment and deliberation in executing the functions and tasks set forth herein and nothing in the handbook be construed or interpreted to create any ministerial duties on behalf of any officer, employee or official.

ParentVue

The Gwinnett ParentVue allows parents access to pertinent information. To access the Portal, parents are strongly encouraged to set up their secure account that will provide access to test history, attendance, conduct, and weekly grade updates for all their children. If you have any questions please call Jimena Hernandez at 678-225-7634.

GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Vision Statement

Gwinnett County Public Schools will become a system of world-class schools where students acquire the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and careers.

Mission Statement

The mission of Gwinnett County Public Schools is to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior for each student, resulting in measured improvement against local, national, and world-class standards.

Gwinnett County Board of Education Core Beliefs and Commitments

Believing, as we do, that public education is an integral part of the seamless fabric of the American experience, we, the Gwinnett County Board of Education, derive our core beliefs and commitments for public education in Gwinnett County from the foundational principles of the United States of America, specifically those espoused in the Declaration of Independence. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness,” and “That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed...”.

America’s public schools exist to undergird and advance these principles. They are the one place where all children and youth in our great, diverse country are provided a common, free education. They must educate every child for success in life and for the responsibilities of American citizenship.

Thus, we commit ourselves to a world-class education that meets the needs of individual students, to a sharp focus on the traditions and values at the heart of our constitutional democracy and the rule of law, and to the civic virtues that bind together communities of many cultures, faiths, viewpoints, interests, and histories into a unified nation. E pluribus unum. Out of many, one.

Therefore, the Gwinnett County Board of Education will:

- Ensure our core business of teaching and learning is built on a rigorous curriculum, effective instruction, and high-value assessments
- Educate every student to world-class standards and individual potential
- Provide a safe and secure learning environment
- Optimize the school effect to have a positive impact on every child
- Govern the district fairly and openly, seeking the engagement of the many stakeholders we serve.

MISSION OF DACULA ELEMENTARY

Dacula Elementary School is dedicated to creating a collaborative partnership between students, home, school, and community to provide a safe, nurturing, and enriching learning environment.

VISION OF DACULA ELEMENTARY

Dacula Elementary's vision is to establish and foster lifelong learners who positively impact our global community.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Statement of Policy

School attendance is important because it underscores the significance of learning and the importance of obtaining an education in our society in addition to helping students develop good work habits that will carry over in life. Good attendance also correlates strongly with improved grades, and is required for attainment of the Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) curriculum.

The responsibility of school attendance is that of both parents and students. Students must be in their classroom by 8:50am. The Superintendent has designed the minimum levels of attendance in procedure consistent with state standards.

Excused Absences

State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.10 defines the following as excused absences:

1. Personal illness or attendance in school endangers a student's health or the health of others. (i) Local boards of education may require students to present appropriate medical documentation upon the return to school for the purpose of validating that the absence is an excused absence.
2. A serious illness or death in the student's *immediate* family necessitating absence from school. (i) In the event of a serious illness in a student's family, local boards of education may require students to present appropriate medical documentation regarding the family member upon return to school for the purpose of validating that the absence is an excused absence.
3. A court order or an order by a government agency, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces mandating absence from school.
4. Observing religious holidays, necessitating absence from school.
5. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to students' health or safety. (For Gwinnett County Public Schools the closure of schools for hazardous conditions may *only* be made by the School Superintendent for the purposes of excused absences.)
6. Local boards of education *may* allow a period not to exceed one day for registering to vote or voting in a public election.
7. Local boards of education shall count students present when they are serving as pages for the Georgia General Assembly.
8. Visiting with a parent or legal guardian prior to or during leave from deployment to combat zone or combat support posting as a member of the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard (maximum of five school days per year).

GCPS Procedures

Parents or guardians are encouraged to call the school on the day of the student absence to indicate the reason for the absence. Parents or guardians should also send a signed, written note when the student returns to school explaining the reason for the absence, the date(s) of the absence(s), and a daytime phone number. **If the student fails to bring a note, the absence will be regarded as unexcused until such time as the parent provides a written explanation for the absence.** If a student has five unexcused absences, a letter will automatically be generated from the District Office and sent by the principal. The school shall send a written notice via certified mail with return receipt requested. To facilitate prompt, appropriate communication between the home and school, parents, guardians, or persons having charge or control of a student should notify the school immediately when there is a change in the student's address and/or phone number as listed in school records.

Students must be picked up by **3:45pm** if they are a car rider. Three or more late pickups will result in notification to the GCPS School Resource Officer and/or the Department of Family and Children Services.

Discipline Policy and Procedures

Dacula Elementary promotes a positive learning environment. There are four major expectations for student behavior:

Respectful: We value ourselves and others.

Engaged: We stay focused.

Accountable: We are responsible for our actions.

Leaders: We serve others

Our school strives to provide a school program that promotes student learning. No student will be permitted to disrupt the learning environment. (Refer to the Student/Parent Discipline Handbook.) If necessary, a conference will be requested to discuss behavioral problems. A student who is not exhibiting appropriate self-discipline can expect the following consequences depending on the seriousness of the behavior:

1. Time out in another classroom in order to allow the student time to regain control.
 2. Conferencing with a member of the leadership team (principal, assistant principal, or counselor).
 3. A student may be assigned to the Opportunity Room. The student will complete his/her assignments in isolation from other students in this setting.
 4. Suspension from school will be considered based on the severity of the behavior.
- Parents will be contacted by an administrator when a child is suspended from school.

Gwinnett County Policies and/or School Laws

***Notice to Students and Employees**

If you believe you are being mistreated by school employees on the basis of your race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin or handicap, you have a complaint and a remedy.

Our Local Title IX Coordinators are **Ashley Lyons, Assistant Principal and Jayson Washington, Assistant Principal**. Please contact either administrator immediately (770-963-7174) if you have a complaint about the manner in which you are being treated and why.

You may also contact the school system's Equity Compliance Coordinator for assistance by writing or calling:

Title IX Coordinator
Equity Compliance Coordinator
437 Old Peachtree Road
Suwanee, GA 30024
678-301-6062

School Contributions

The school requests contributions as approved by the Gwinnett County Board of Education. No student will ever be denied access to or participation in any course funded by the Gwinnett County Board of Education or by the State of Georgia. All contributions for supplemental materials and activities are voluntary.

Changes of Address or Phone Number

For emergency purposes, we must have updated information on each student. Please notify the school if any change of address or phone number occurs. This includes changes in

emergency and work numbers. Documentation is required to change an address. Please contact the office at (770) 963-7174.

School Cancellations/Inclement Weather

In the event of severe weather, the school day opening may be delayed or schools may be closed. Announcements will be made over radio stations WSB–Atlanta, AM 750 on your radio dial, the Atlanta TV stations and on the Gwinnett County Public School website which is www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us. Reports in the morning will be between 6:00 a.m. and 6:30 a.m. **If no report is announced, school will be in session.** The same conditions may also necessitate early dismissal.

Insurance

Student accident insurance may be purchased each year. School insurance is voluntary and is not handled by the school.

School Nutrition Program

Phone: 770-277-4454

The goal of the school nutrition program is to provide high quality, nutritious meals to all students in Gwinnett County. Eligible students receive free or reduced-price meals. Applications will be available in August. Parents must complete a new application each school year. Money goes into the student's account to be used for lunch, breakfast, and a la carte items. Breakfast begins on **August 5**.

MEAL CHARGES:

Students

1. Elementary school students will be allowed to charge up to \$11.25
2. Charges are not allowed for supplemental or a la carte items.
3. Once the charge limit has been met the student may receive a designated alternate meal at no charge as defined by the School Nutrition Program.
4. A charge notice will be completed for each occurrence and notification will be sent home to the parent/guardian through the student.
5. Charging for meals will not be allowed after April 30th.

Parents are welcome to have lunch with their students. **Please do not bring take-out lunches to school. No take-out lunches will be permitted in the cafeteria.** We want to support our school nutrition program. Questions concerning the nutrition program should be directed to the cafeteria manager at 770-277-4454.

Parents are invited to join their child for lunch beginning September 1, however, due to the time constraints and number of students, we ask that parents do not join their child for breakfast. Lunch visitors are limited to 1 adult per child.

Clinic/Illness at School

When a student becomes ill at school, the classroom teacher will refer the student to the clinic. The student's temperature will be taken. If the student has a temperature of 100° or higher, a parent will be contacted to pick the child up from school. Parents or Guardians must provide the name and phone number of a friend or relative who can be reached if you are not available. Please be considerate by caring for your sick child at home. Students need to be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school. Students should not return to school if vomiting and/or diarrhea has occurred within the previous 12 hours. All medications will be administered through the school clinic. Teachers do not administer medications or allow students to self-administer. Prescription and over the counter medications should be brought to the school by the parent in the original, labeled container. Students may not bring any medication to school in bookbags or on the bus. Please provide the student's name, teacher, and instructions for the time and dosage. The providing of medical care to students is the responsibility of the parent and should not be assumed by the school. Whenever it is absolutely necessary that medication be given to a student during the school day, the following guidelines apply:

- 1. Medication needed for short periods of time:** Administration of the medicine for a short period of time is discouraged. Parents should check with their physicians regarding the need for any medication during school hours. Parents must complete the permission form provided by the school system. These forms are available in the clinic.
- 2. Medication needed for long periods of time:** Medication needed for long periods of time should have an updated request from the parent/physician yearly.
- 3. Head Lice:** Infested children will be sent home with a letter to parents regarding recommendation for treatment, disinfecting the home and procedures for readmission to school. Children can not return to school until treatment has been completed and proof of treatment is provided to the school. Students will be rechecked eight days following identified infestation. If the child is still infested the above procedure will be repeated.

Clubs

Students who attend after-school clubs will be dismissed through the car rider lane. Please be on time to pick up your student from their designated club. Students who are picked up more than 15 minutes late will be dismissed from the club after two late pick-ups.

Fire/Tornado/Lockdown Drills

Fire, tornado, and lockdown drills are held at intervals throughout the school year. Instructions are posted in the classroom indicating how to leave the building in case of a fire and where to go in case of a tornado. Children will practice walking quickly and quietly to the designated area during a drill.

Evacuation

In the event that the school must be evacuated, our primary evacuation location will be Hebron Baptist Church. The secondary location will be Dacula High School. Communication will be sent via ParentSquare to parents regarding the processes for picking up students.

Guidance and Counseling

The school counselors provide a preventative/developmental guidance program which focuses on the needs of all children. It is their goal to foster students' academic success through

consultations with parents and teachers, classroom guidance activities, small group counseling, and individual counseling for students in crisis or with special concerns. Our counselors are:

Ms. Brittany Davidson (Grades 2, 5)

Ms. Danielle Graff (Grades 1, 3)

Mr. Bobby Hokett (Grades K, 4)

Gifted Education Programs

Gwinnett County Public Schools gifted education program serves students in grades K-12 by providing academic challenges for those who qualify accordingly to district guidelines. The gifted program is called FOCUS at the elementary level. The classes offer accelerated learning and enriched academic curriculum experiences that focus on and extend Gwinnett County Public Schools' Academic Knowledge and Skills. Students are identified and placed in gifted education based on criteria established by the Georgia General Assembly and the Georgia State Board of Education. Students who transfer from gifted education programs within the state of Georgia have reciprocity into the Gwinnett program providing the original placement was correctly completed. Students who transfer from out-of-state must meet Georgia requirements. Parents should notify the school when registering their child that he/ she were identified as a gifted education student in their previous school.

Grading

Elementary report cards describing a student's progress are sent to parents/guardians in grades K-5 at the end of each semester. Grades are calculated on a semester basis. **However, parents are strongly encouraged to check their child's grades frequently using the ParentVue as grades are updated weekly.**

Parents and/or students may request a reassessment of a summative assessment only (not classwork) within 10 days of the grade being posted on the portal. Additional learning opportunities may be required (tutoring, additional practice, etc) for reassessment. Teachers may also recommend reassessment for any student.

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled during early release days for elementary students. Parents will be notified by the teacher regarding the time for these conferences.

Student Support Team Meetings (SSTs)

Student Support Team meetings may be held if a student is demonstrating a lack of mastery of AKS or demonstrating behavior that impedes the learning of themselves or others. SSTs participants may include the teacher(s) that work with the student, parents/guardians, school psychologist, counselor, GCPS nurse (if appropriate), and school administrator(s). No third party representatives (i.e. tutors, advocates, attorneys, health officials, etc) are permitted at SST meetings.

Student Cell Phones

All students in Gwinnett County Public Schools have access to a Chromebook to keep and use for instructional purposes during the school day. Students will no longer have any instructional reason to rely on a cell phone as their "device" needed for school. Due to the increased negative behaviors coupled with GCPS's 1:1 Chromebook initiative, Dacula Elementary School has implemented an "Away for the Day" procedure regarding cell phones and personal devices.

It is preferred that students not bring cell phones to school for use. If they do, devices should not be seen or heard during the school day. They should be completely away for the day. Electronic devices should be turned off (not on silent or vibrate) and properly stored away in their bookbags before school begins each morning. It is important to know that if a student chooses to bring electronic devices, particularly cell phones, to school, he or she is doing so at his or her own risk. The school is not responsible or obligated to investigate for damage, loss, or theft.

Visitor personal cell phone calls are not permitted inside the school building.

Student Check-in/Check-out

School Hours: 8:50 a.m.-3:20 p.m.

Students are expected to be at school on time. Students and parents are encouraged to become familiar with school hours and arrive at school between 8:20 a.m. and 8:50 a.m. **Students should not be in the building earlier than 8:20 a.m. unless they have been scheduled for morning tutoring or a club meeting.** Please do not drop your child off before 8:20 a.m. Teacher supervision is not available. **Students arriving at school after 8:50 a.m. must be signed in at the office by the adult bringing the student prior to the student going to the classroom. Students entering after 8:50 a.m. will be marked tardy.** Students may be dismissed before the school day officially ends only when a parent or guardian appears in person requesting the student's early dismissal. If check-out is necessary, please check student out **before 2:15 p.m.**

Picture I.D. is required for all check outs and when entering the school building during school hours. Please do not go to your child's classroom. Office personnel will call for the student(s) while the parent signs them out for the day. Relatives, neighbors, etc. will not be allowed to check out any student unless authorization is on file. School officials may require verification of custody from anyone requesting to check a student out of school. **It is important that we keep instructional interruptions to a minimum.** If it is necessary to bring books, lunches, or other supplies to your child during the day, please leave the items at the front desk. There is a procedure in place for getting items to the classrooms.

Registration and Records

School officials require the parent or guardian to provide proof of residency in the district and attendance zone at the time a student is initially enrolled in a school. A certified copy of the birth certificate, Georgia Immunization form (GA 3231), and Vision, Hearing and Dental form (GA 3300) will be required for initial registration. A copy of the student's social security number (or waiver form) is required. "Under the Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, parents have several rights. These include: the right to inspect and review educational records of their child, the right to challenge the content of those records, the right to control the release of the educational records of their child, the right to complain to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Office about the school's failure to comply with the law, and the right to be informed of these rights as listed above. To obtain a copy of Gwinnett County's policies on their compliance with the law, or request the opportunity to inspect and review your child's records, contact your child's school." "Copies of a student's educational records may be transferred to officials of other schools or school systems in which the student seeks to enroll. Unless parents express, at the time of enrollment in the Gwinnett County Public Schools, a need for additional

notice of the transfer of student records, the records transfer to the enrolling school or school system will occur without further notice.”

Homeless Children and Youth

The Stewart B. McKinney/Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act ensures that educational rights are protected for children and youth experiencing homelessness. It provides legal protections for children and youth in homeless situations to enroll in, attend, and succeed in school and preschool programs. In accordance with this law, Gwinnett County Public Schools affords homeless children and youth equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education such as Head Start, Even Start, State Pre-K, and Title I Preschool Programs as provided to other students. Homeless children and youth will have access to education and other services that he/she needs to have an opportunity to meet the same challenging state student academic achievement standards to which all students are held. Please contact individual schools for further information.

Snacks

Students may purchase frozen snacks weekly in the cafeteria. The cost of frozen snacks will be \$1.00. Students may bring a healthy snack from home as well if the teacher has designated a time for snacks in the classroom. The teacher/school do not provide snacks for students, however, if there is a specific need, please contact our school counselors.

Pictures

Student pictures will be taken twice (fall and spring) during the school year. All students are photographed in the fall for the school's yearbook with parent permission. A class picture is also taken at the spring sitting. These are optional and are offered as a service to the students and parents.

Personal Property

Students are asked to bring all found articles to the office. All textbooks should be turned in to the office; library books should be returned to the media center. Students should check the lost and found for lost articles when they are missed. **Unclaimed items will be donated to a local charity at the end of each month.** It is requested that large sums of money, expensive jewelry, toys, and articles of clothing not be brought to school. Non-academic electronic items such as radios, cameras, computer games, CD players, iPods, and other hand held devices should not be brought to school. Students may bring electronic devices for instructional purposes in accordance with our BYOD policy.

Volunteers/Visitors

Volunteers are invaluable in helping meet the needs of students and staff. They offer positive influences to promote character and well-being. They assist our school in many ways, such as reading to students, working with student classroom activities, coordinating school-wide student activities, and assisting with media center materials. You are encouraged to be an active participant at Dacula. For the protection of all children, **visitors must sign in and show a picture I.D. to school office personnel. Visitors are required to wear a visitor's badge throughout their visit.** During your visit to the school or your child's classroom, the regular school program must continue, so please do not expect the teacher to hold a conference with you at this time. As a courtesy to the teacher and/or administrator, please make a prior appointment for visitation.

Supplemental Services

It is the practice of Gwinnett County Public Schools to provide instructional and related services appropriate to provide a free appropriate public education for individuals with documented disabilities. Individuals may contact their local school for information regarding such services.

School Celebrations

There is a limit of two school-wide parties per year. These parties are coordinated by the classroom teacher and the PTA Room Parent Volunteer. Individual birthday parties are not allowed, however you may bring a prepackaged treat (cupcakes, cookies, doughnuts) or purchase ice cream for the class.

Dress and Personal Appearance

The wearing of, or absence of, any items of clothing that will distract from the learning process and clothing with offensive words to others and/or the advertising of weapons, drugs or alcoholic beverages will not be permitted. Neatness is important and helps set a positive tone. **Shorts and skirts should be hand length. Halter tops, spaghetti straps, cleats, spandex shorts, Heelys (shoes with wheels), and bare midriffs are not permitted.** Boys and girls must remove headgear when entering the building. Shorts must be visible under t-shirts. Discretion is left up to the teacher and administration. Be sure that your child is dressed for the weather. Check the weather reports and use good judgment. **Tennis shoes must be worn on days when a student has P.E.**

Transportation

Riding a bus to school is a privilege. Improper conduct on the bus will result in that privilege being denied by suspension from the bus. Students riding a bus will be expected to ride their designated bus. A request to ride another bus may be approved provided a written request is submitted to the front office. Bus changes are for a one-day period of time. Each bus driver has complete charge of students riding the bus. Students who refuse to obey the school bus safety guidelines shall forfeit their privilege to ride the bus. Bus changes are NOT allowed due to buses being filled to capacity. Students are allowed to ride a different bus ONLY in the case of an extreme emergency.

If your child will be a **car rider**, you will receive detailed guidelines, a map, and a car rider number at the beginning of the school year. This number must be displayed each time you pick up your child. If you do not have your car rider number to display, you will need to go to the front reception desk to show I.D. to check out your child. The morning car rider line will begin moving at 8:20, and will close at 8:45. Students will be marked tardy if they are not in their classrooms at 8:50 a.m. The afternoon car rider line will begin moving at 3:20 p.m. and it will close at 3:45 p.m.

Transportation Changes

Transportation changes should only be made in the event of an emergency and must be made in writing or through a credible verified email address sent prior to 2:00pm to our

receptionist, Suzy Whitt, at Suzy.Whitt@gcpsk12.org. Please do **not** email your child's teacher directly during the school day for transportation changes. Faxing a transportation change to the school is also an option by calling 770-277-4448. You should include a copy of your driver's license. Always check to be sure your communication has been received. Please allow time for the information to be received before calling.

Collection of Money from Students

Money is collected for field trips, breakage, damaged textbooks, and other items. Parents will be notified by the teacher regarding the reason for the charge and the amount involved. When money is sent to the school, it should be in an envelope with written instructions. Please send separate envelopes for school and cafeteria money. State on the envelope the purpose of the money, the teacher's name and your child's name.

Homework

The faculty and staff at Dacula Elementary believe that consistent homework promotes student academic achievement and work habits. The homework should be academically rigorous, giving students the opportunity to practice skills independently. Suggested times for assignments are based on 10 minutes per grade level. Some assignments may be long-range in nature and require planned time for their completion. If homework is taking a longer period of time for your child, please contact the teacher.