

# **PINEY RIDGE ELEMENTARY**

# **HANDBOOK**

## **2024 - 2025**

### **ADA ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT**

Carroll County Public Schools (CCPS) does not discriminate on the basis of disability in employment or the provision of services, programs or activities. Persons needing auxiliary aids and services for communication should contact the Office of Community and Media Relations at 410-751-3020 or [publicinfo@carrollk12.org](mailto:publicinfo@carrollk12.org), or write to Carroll County Public Schools, 125 North Court Street, Westminster, Maryland 21157. Persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, may use Relay or 7-1-1. Please contact the school system at least one (1) week in advance of the date the special accommodation is needed.

Information concerning the Americans with Disabilities Act is available from the Director of Facilities or the Supervisor of Community and Media Relations.

Director of Facilities

125 North Court Street

Westminster, Maryland 21157

(410) 751-3177

Supervisor of Community & Media Relations

125 North Court Street

Westminster, Maryland 21157

(410) 751-3020

### **NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Carroll County Public Schools (CCPS) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ancestry or national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, or age. CCPS provides nondiscriminatory access to school facilities in accordance with its policies and regulations regarding the community use of schools (including, but not limited to, the Boy Scouts). The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Director of Human Resources

125 North Court Street

Westminster, Maryland 21157

(410) 751-3070

## Mission

Through collaboration and communication, our school community will foster empathetic students who are creative problem solvers to prepare them for a positive future.

## Vision

Piney Ridge Elementary's vision is to inspire a community of caring, independent learners who positively impact our changing world.

**Mascot:** Dalmatian

**School Colors:** black, white & red



## Purpose

This handbook is designed to familiarize you with Piney Ridge policies and procedures. Please take time to read the information and refer to it often throughout the school year. School Board policies and procedures can be found in the CCPS Student Handbook and Calendar.

## Instructional Organization

The primary goals of Piney Ridge Elementary are focused on student achievement in all curricular areas; development of critical thinking skills, integration of technology across all content areas, and maintenance of a positive, safe, and caring learning environment. Classrooms are organized heterogeneously to allow for peer modeling and cooperative learning. Use of flexible grouping throughout the year allows for individualized instruction and grouping that best meets the needs of the students. Our intermediate classrooms are organized with a STEM and Humanities block of instruction. Ongoing assessment, both formal and informal, helps to ensure that all children will progress through the continuum of skills and thinking processes.

## Attendance and Absences

Regular school attendance is important to student success. Please encourage good attendance by avoiding scheduling of family vacations and appointments during school days. See CCPS Student Handbook for additional information. A written excuse is required when a child is absent. The excuse must be received within 5 school days of the child's return and contain the date of absence, the reason, and the signature of the parent/guardian. You may also email the excuse by sending it to [preattendance@carrollk12.org](mailto:preattendance@carrollk12.org). Without this information, the absence is coded "unlawful". A written note from the parent or guardian is required when a child is unable to participate in recess and physical education for medical reasons for a few days. A written excuse from the physician is required when a child is not able to participate in physical education for an extended amount of time.

- Parents may request homework for their child who has been absent for (2) days or more by calling the school office (410-751-3535) before 10:00 a.m. Since instruction and assignments are not always able to be replicated when a student is absent, there may or may not be homework available during an absence.
- If available, homework will be ready for pick up in the office between 3:45 – 4:15 p.m. or you can request to have it sent home with another student.
- If your child is absent for one (1) day, they can get make-up work from their teacher(s) when they return the next school day.

**Family Travel/Activities** – Family vacations during school days are strongly discouraged due to the impact they may have on school performance. However, a small number of absences for family travel/activities may be marked as “excused” if requested in advance and approved by the principal or assistant principal. Factors such as a student’s overall attendance record and academic standing will be considered when approving such requests.

### **Bullying**

Carroll County Public Schools will not tolerate any acts of *bullying, harassment, intimidation, discrimination, or hazing* on the part of students or employees. According to the Annotated Code of Maryland Education Article 7 – 424 *bullying, harassment, or intimidation* means intentional conduct including verbal, physical, or written conduct or an intentional electronic communication. <https://ext.carrollk12.org/brsxt/>

Bullying, harassment, or intimidation means intentional conduct, including verbal, physical, or written conduct or an intentional electronic communication, that creates a hostile education environment by substantially interfering with a student’s educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student’s physical or psychological wellbeing.

### **Buying/Selling**

Children should bring only enough money to school for lunch, milk, field trips, etc. Students are not permitted to trade or borrow money from each other. Piney Ridge Elementary prefers you pay by My School Bucks or check, with checks made payable to Piney Ridge Elementary School. If paying with cash, we ask for exact change only. The school does not have the ability to provide change back. Any payment over the amount needed will be considered a donation to the school. Solicitations or fund-raisers of non-school groups will not be permitted (i.e. Girl Scout cookies, raffles, sports teams, etc.).

### **Cafeteria Services**

Children may purchase a balanced lunch including milk daily in the school cafeteria or children may pack a lunch and purchase 1/2 pint milk. Ice cream and other snacks are also available for purchase for Grades 1-5. Breakfast will be served daily from 8:50 – 9:05 a.m. Lunch and breakfast are available to all students. Adult visitors are welcome to purchase lunch. The costs are posted on our monthly menus. Sodas, iced tea or glass bottles are not permitted at any time because of their explosive nature. Please provide your child a healthy alternative such as water, juice or milk. Please be sure your child has a drink in his/her lunch or will purchase milk. Water will not be provided to students during the lunch shifts.

Parents can choose to load money on a student’s account to prepay for lunches, milk, snacks, and ice cream. We would prefer that you use My School Bucks or send a check. This prevents the possibility of children losing their money, which leads to lunch charges. You may also want to load money on their account for use as a precaution when a child loses or forgets his/her money.

Lunch charges must be repaid the next school day. If a child comes to school without a lunch and has an outstanding charge, he/she will receive a sandwich and water for a nominal cost. After June 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, lunch charges will no longer be accepted. A child needing to charge during this time will receive a sandwich and a glass of water or will be asked to call home.

### **Conferences**

Designated conference nights are scheduled during the school year for grades K – 5. We encourage parents to take advantage of these conference opportunities. Appointments are necessary and information will be sent home before conferences occur. With a scheduled appointment, the teacher can give you the time and attention needed to discuss your child’s progress. If a teacher sees a need for a conference at another time, he/she will contact the parents. Teachers are

unable to meet with parents for impromptu conferences before, during, or after school. Any parent who wishes to discuss their child's progress at other times of the school year may do so by contacting the teacher and setting up a time for a phone or in-person conference.

### **Discipline**

Good student behavior is essential to the smooth operation of any school. It is the intent of the Piney Ridge staff to help instill respectful and responsible behavior in all students. Piney Ridge Elementary utilizes Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) strategies to teach students our three school-wide expectations: Perform Respectfully – Act Responsibly – Work Resiliently. In response to undesired behaviors, Piney Ridge Elementary and CCPS follow a system of progressive discipline.

### **Dress Code**

See CCPS Student Handbook.

### **Emergency Card Procedures**

One (1) emergency card will be sent home the first day of school. It is important to complete and return immediately. Please do not separate the copies. The information on the cards is essential in helping our school personnel provide prompt emergency care for your child in case of illness or accident. If the information on this card changes during the year, please notify the school in writing immediately. It is imperative that there is always someone to call in case of emergency.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips may be planned by the teachers to enhance the educational programs. There is usually a cost for field trips, including bus transportation and venue or tour fees. This amount is divided by number of students to determine the cost for each student. Refunds are not available in the event that a student is unexpectedly absent. As appropriate, volunteer chaperones may be requested for a field trip in order to assist with student supervision. All chaperones must complete the CCPS Volunteer Training at least 7 prior to the date teachers select chaperones. Students must travel to and from the trip on the provided bus. Chaperones will serve under the direction of school staff and are expected to supervise students appropriately during the trip. Chaperones may not bring siblings, other family members, or pets on the trip. Individuals who are not identified as chaperones may not "shadow" the trip or participate in the scheduled field trip activities, tours, and presentations.

### **Illness/Injury/Medication/Hygiene**

**Illness/Injury** - If a child becomes ill or injured while in school, the parent/guardian will be contacted as soon as possible to take the child home or to the doctor for follow-up as indicated by the condition. It is recommended that working parents should have prior arrangements with caretakers, spouses, friends, etc. about who will be able to take care of sick children. The health room is not equipped to care for these children on an extended basis. Children should be picked up within one hour of being contacted. Please provide contact information for parents/guardians and emergency contacts, as well as medical concerns on the student Emergency Card. We ask that parents contact the office if this information changes during the school year. Children who are ill during the night or before school should be kept at home if there is any doubt about their condition. Examples include: temperature of 100 degrees and above, pink crusty eyes, vomiting, possible strep throat that the culture results have not been determined, etc. Any child with a contagious disease like strep or pink eye should be on medication at least 24 hours before returning to school. A doctor's note should be sent with the child when returning to school.

**Medication during school** – The Carroll County Board of Education encourages the taking or administering of medication at home. Parents are encouraged to consult their Health Care Provider (HCP) to discuss the possibility of administering medication either before or after school. In most cases these arrangements can and should be made. If alternative plans cannot be made, a written authorized prescriber’s order, parental consent, and instructions must be obtained before ANY medication can be given.

2. All medications, prescriptions, \*homeopathic preparations, herbals, and over the counter shall have a signed authorized prescriber’s order and parent signature for the medication to be administered at school.
3. Any medication brought to school without proper documentation will not be administered.
4. Medication will not be dispensed when the order for administration has expired. Parents/responsible adults must pick up all medications. All medicine not claimed at the end of the school year will be destroyed.
5. **Students cannot** transport any medication to or from school. **If a child transports medication in any way, he/she may be suspended.** (Article 26, Sec. 103 of the Public School Laws of MD - COMAR 13A.08.01.08A) (Section 2a of Discipline Regulations of Carroll County Public Schools Alcohol/Drug Policies).
6. Please use the Medication Consent form for Carroll County Public Schools which you can pick from the school nurse.

**Hygiene** - It is important for children to know basics about health habits. Please be sure your child is able to take care of his/her bathroom needs, knows how to blow his/her nose and dispose of the tissue properly, and knows when and how to wash his/her hands. If your child has frequent bathroom accidents, you should keep extra clothes in his/her back pack or locker. There are very limited amounts of clothes at school. If your child borrows clothes, please be sure to launder and return them to the health room.

**Food and Food Allergies** - Piney Ridge does not allow candy/food items to be brought into school, (e.g., holidays, birthdays, etc.). Non-edible items are allowed at the discretion of the teacher.

Piney Ridge Elementary School has many children with severe, possibly life-threatening food allergies, including peanut, tree nut, milk, soy, shellfish, egg, wheat and many other food allergies. We also have children with chronic medical conditions that prohibit them from eating anything not provided by their parent.

The following are NOT permitted:

***\* Sharing or trading of food items, including purchasing snack items for other students***

***\*Food rewards in classrooms***

***\*Food for birthday celebrations including not allowing to purchase ice cream or treats at lunch for your child’s entire class or bringing goody bags/food into school to be shared.***

### **Inclement Weather**

Decisions regarding school closings and inclement weather are made systemwide by CCPS. More information can be found at <https://www.carrollk12.org/operation/transportation-services/inclement-weather> .

### **Items Not Permitted in Schools**

The following items are not permitted in school: valuable personal possessions (e.g. music devices, electronic games, toys, laser pens, character or trading cards, etc.), tobacco products, lighters, matches, weapons or look-alikes (including pocket knives, plastic guns, toy guns), drugs, drug paraphernalia, or lookalikes, alcoholic beverages, clothing containing inappropriate slogans, language, pictures or advertisements, chewing gum, athletic equipment such as bats, hard balls, etc., inappropriate print material (including adult magazines or books). Students who bring dangerous or disruptive items are subject to disciplinary action. Personal belongings may be confiscated by a staff member and made available for parents to pick up in the office.

### **Invitations**

Invitations for birthday parties or other events will not be given out in the classroom. Teachers are not able to share class lists or contact information for other families. Please utilize the PTA directory for contact information of other students and families.

### **Progress Reports**

Report cards will be sent home for children in grades Pre-K through Grade 5 at four times during the year. Interim reports will be sent midway through each marking period for Kindergarten through Grade 2. Parents of students in Grades 3 through 5 are encouraged to monitor their child's grades in Home Access Center throughout the marking period.

### **Release of Students**

Students leaving school by any way other than their regularly assigned bus or way of leaving (ABC Care, parent pick-up, etc.) must bring written permission from parent/guardian indicating the change. The notes should be given to the child's teacher before 9:15 a.m. that morning. The regular school day is from 9:15 - 3:45. Parents who wish to pick up their child(ren) from school must abide by the following guidelines:

- A written note must be sent to school in the morning. This note must include the name of the person who is picking up the student and signed by a parent/guardian.
- Parents (or other authorized individuals) should be prepared to show ID.

For safety reasons, students leaving before the 3:45 pm dismissal will be dismissed from the front office only. Please do not go to your child's classroom to get your child. On special event days (Field Day, assemblies, etc.), we recommend that your child maintain his/her normal dismissal routine. We ask that parents refrain from making dismissal changes late in the school day, unless an emergency exists.

### **Recess**

Students will participate daily in outdoor recess as long as the feels like temperature is 32 degrees or higher. All children will be taken outside in the attire in which they wear to school. Students are allowed to bring equipment (balls, gloves, jump ropes etc...) in for recess as long as the equipment is small enough to stay inside of a backpack during travel to and from school. However, the students will have to accept accountability if such items are misplaced, lost, or damaged.

### **School Hours**

The regular school day is 9:15 AM - 3:45 PM. Students may arrive at school no earlier than 8:45 AM. This ensures proper supervision at all times. Parent pickup and walkers will be dismissed at 3:45 PM. Unless it is an emergency, please do not ask to get your child from class before 3:45 PM. Instructional time and announcements may be missed. No students will be allowed to re-enter the building after 4:10 PM to look for or retrieve any forgotten items.

### **School Pictures**

Professional photographers will take individual pictures in the fall. Class pictures and individual pictures will be taken in the spring. Yearbooks will also be available in the spring. The Fifth Grade class will have a panoramic picture taken in the spring. Information about purchasing photos will be shared with families prior to each date.

### **Visitors**

For the safety of our students and staff, ALL visitors/volunteers must report to the office upon entering the building. All visitors/volunteers must wear an identification label, even if you plan to be in the building for only a few minutes. Parents may not walk students to lockers/classrooms without signing in as a visitor. We encourage and recommend that all students take responsibility for independently walking to their classroom. All visitors must enter through the main entrance and obtain a visitor's sticker.

If you would like to observe your child in the classroom, please send a note to make arrangements with your child's teacher. We expect our students to maintain maximum time on instructional tasks. Visitors may not bring other children to the school. We ask that visitors refrain from visiting for lunch during the first 10 school days of the year so that cafeteria routines and procedures can be established.

### **Volunteers**

Carroll County Public Schools seeks and encourages the use of volunteers in all schools throughout Carroll County. The Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland requires that all volunteers complete an annual volunteer training that is outlined in the Carroll County Public Schools Volunteer Program Guidelines. All volunteers must complete the volunteer training process at least **7 school days prior** to the first activity for which they wish to volunteer. These activities include field trips, field days, or any school based activity. For questions or support, please go to <https://carrollk12org.finalsite.com/operation/human-resources/volunteer-program>. or contact the school office.

Volunteers may not bring other children to the school during school hours.

### **Walkers/Car Riders**

All elementary students in CCPS are assigned a bus stop. We encourage families to utilize bus transportation. Students are permitted to enter the school building at 8:45 a.m. Car riders and walkers enter and exit from the side door at the North entrance. Cars may not enter the parking lot until 8:45 a.m. and are expected to follow the established traffic pattern. Cars must avoid entering the bus loop during arrival and dismissal times. Parents should always be prepared to have ID ready to show staff when picking up a child. Students who are walkers must be accompanied by a parent when walking to/from school. We are not able to release students to walk home on their own, or release them to the care of other children. Pedestrians should be alert to the high level of vehicle traffic during arrival and dismissal times.