# Student & Family Handbook 2024-2025

## Love ♦ LEAD ♦ Learn

**Motto:** Love, Lead, Learn: *Growing Leaders One Habit at a Time!*

**Mission:** To develop compassionate lifelong learners in a leadership-focused school community.

**Vision:** As a National Blue Ribbon School, Linden Hill will be recognized as a leader in maximizing each student's educational experience by creating an environment that is inclusive, equitable and supports the social-emotional needs of our learners.

# ***Student and Parent Procedures***

**Student Attendance:** Teachers are responsible for completing student attendance in the E-School system by 10:00 am. Contact the office or send down a paper copy of attendance ONLY if your E-School system is not working.

**Student Absences:** It is our goal to have every student in school every day unless the student is ill. Students who have been absent will receive an automated call home and are required, upon returning to school, to provide an excuse note signed by the parent/guardian. This note needs to be sent to the office. If a parent e-mails you an excuse note, please forward this to the office. Please inform administration about excessive absences and tardies in order to communicate attendance expectations with families. The student code of conduct lists the district's policy for student attendance.

**Student Records:** All student records and all information relating to students are confidential and may only be shared with parents, guardians and others for whom parents/guardians have signed release documents. A breach of such privacy is in direct violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Any item with identifiable student information must be protected. Such items must be shredded by the staff member responsible for them. Simply placing them in the recycling bin is not acceptable and is a violation of FERPA subject to the consequences that have been established by the district and government. Cumulative student folders must be signed for when a staff member wishes to review them and such folders may not be removed from the office without special permission from the main office staff. Parents may review their child's records in the presence of the building administrator.

**Student Notes:** Family submitted student notes are a crucial part of informing the main office staff of any changes in student transportation and reason for student absence. Teachers are to submit all notes to the office via student courier by 9:30 AM each morning. If you are a teacher of the younger grades, it is an expectation that you verify that students don't have notes or other items which should be shared with the office. Failure to do this often creates issues for the school either in terms of transportation changes or other parental concerns.

**Classroom Volunteers/Visitors:** Using parent volunteers in the classroom is at the discretion of the individual teacher. Any parent working as a volunteer with children must complete the parent volunteer paperwork before they are allowed in the classroom, attend field trips, etc. Confidentiality is an issue that needs to be addressed with all parent volunteers as they work in classrooms.

**Visitor Information:** Per the Red Clay School District Visitor Policy all visitors and volunteers need to sign in at the office before entering the building. Visitor badges will be exchanged for photo ID's and must be worn at all times. Any person not wearing a badge should be directed to the office to sign in and receive a badge. Confidentiality agreements may be required.

## Breakfast/Lunch Procedures

**Breakfast Period:** We know that good nutrition supports success in school. Providing time for students to participate in the breakfast program supports our efforts focusing on the development of the whole child. Breakfast begins on the first day of school. Any child is able to purchase breakfast during the breakfast time beginning at 8:50am.

**Lunch Period:** Students have an opportunity to select from several menu items from the cafeteria or to bring their own lunch. Children will need to know their cafeteria "pin number – student ID" when purchasing from the cafeteria.

## Recess Expectations

**Purpose:** The time designated for recess is meant to allow students the opportunity to both "use their excess energy" and develop appropriate social skills in working and relating to others. Many students do not understand what is "acceptable" school behavior as what they may do at home is not what is allowed

in school. It is the responsibility of the staff on Recess Duty to monitor all students to ensure they are following proper behavioral and social expectations.

**Duty:** The term duty implies that the staff who are outside are working, which they are. Each area of the playground should be "sectioned" off to reflect the number of staff available. Those staff should be distributed evenly so that they are able to monitor the students in their section without distractions. Distractions would include conversations with other staff, the use of cellphones, and a general lack of active engagement with the students.

**Administration:** The Principal or his designee will randomly "spot check" recess duty of teachers and will meet with teams that are not adequately monitoring students. Continued inability to ensure the proper monitoring of students will result in the team developing an action plan for recess management. This plan will include what every member's role is during recess and how they will fulfill that task. Failure to implement the action plan will result in the use of progressive discipline.

Student Expectations:

- Good sportsmanship must be displayed in all activities
- Throwing objects other than game balls is prohibited
- Body contact games (tag, wrestling, karate, football, etc.) are prohibited
- Hardballs are forbidden
- Climbing on fences, trees, and equipment supports is not permitted
- Students are permitted to leave the playground only with prior permission from a supervising adult

**Recess Procedures:** Recess time is viewed as a critical component of the instructional program at Linden Hill. The physical development of children is as critical as their cognitive development. Therefore, children go out to recess every day except for inclement weather days. Children are assigned a 30-minute recess time. Limited additional recess time can be arranged and supervised by classroom teachers as they deem appropriate, with permission from administration. Please be sure to notify the office if you will be out of your classroom, and take a recess bag and walkie-talkie with you any time you take your class outside the building. Teachers must "check-in" with the main office at the beginning of recess to make sure the walkie-talkie is working properly. Teachers are assigned the supervision of recess periods. It is important for teachers to spread themselves over the playground area placing themselves near high activity areas.

- All students go outside unless a doctor's note is provided. If a doctor's note was provided and approved by the nurse/administration, the student should sit in the office with an activity. If a parent sends a note requesting that their child does not go out for recess, please send the note to the front office and an administrator will contact the parent.
- Teachers cannot take recess away from students. **All students should fully participate each day in recess.** Administration may take away recess under extreme cases (such as fighting at recess); however, this shall be avoided whenever possible.
- Teachers are responsible for viewing and following the expectations set forth in the Red Clay Plays it Safe PowerPoint which can be accessed using the following link: http://bit.ly/2v8LNUY
- A DSC Course will be created that verifies that staff members have completed the Red Clay Plays It Safe training and staff will need to sign off to verify they have taken the training.

## Nurse & Healthy School Procedures

Children's health plays a critical role in their success in school. All health concerns should be reported to the school nurse. Over the past years specific procedures have been developed to

ensure effective communication between teacher, child, nurse, and parent. Below are some of the procedures followed on a regular basis. This does not represent an inclusive list.

**Office Hours:** The nurse's office will be closed during her lunch and planning periods. These specific times will be communicated to the staff at the beginning of the school year. If you have a student who needs medical assistance during these times, please send them directly to the main office. The nurse will be called to assist in situations that require immediate assistance.

**Nurse Passes:** Children sent to the nurse's office should be accompanied with a nurse's pass. Passes can be obtained from the nurse or main office. (In emergency situations or recess this may not be possible.)

**Medications:** Students needing medication during school hours should take the medication to the nurse upon arriving to school. Students may not have medication on themselves, in their book bags, or in their lockers.

**Allergies:** Students may have any variety of allergies (to bees, insects, food, etc.) and exposure to such items can be life threatening. Common allergies within the school are those to nuts, peanuts, seafood, or eggs. Life threatening food allergies require a district form be completed by the family and doctor. This information is communicated to the cafeteria. This information comes up on the register when the student goes through the cafeteria line. Students with nut allergies will sit at a peanut free table in the cafeteria. Parents are asked to provide a letter in writing if they prefer otherwise as to protect the district from negligence.

**Field Trips:** Team leaders need to notify the nurse prior to a field trip in order to allow her time to put medications together. The nurse will give teachers a health care bag. Each team needs to have designated team members trained in administering epipens if needed on a trip.

**Return to School:** Any student who is hospitalized for any reason (asthma, surgery, etc.) or has had a serious accident, is in school with a large bandage, splint, brace, crutches or a cast must have a note from a physician allowing the student to return to school. Please call the nurse to confirm that she is aware of the situation and if it is needed an escort will come to get the student and bring him/her to the nurse's office. Students are not allowed to use the elevator without an adult.

**Classroom Celebrations:** We will follow the recommended policy for healthy snacks given by the district. This list is posted on our Linden Hill Website (www.LHEPride.com). All classroom celebrations and snacks should abide by this list. Each grade level will have the choice to have two "freebie" celebrations, where they can stray from the healthy food list. Please have the team leader get your celebration freebie ideas approved by administration before informing families. Remember that allergies must still be taken into account, as safety is our first priority for the students.

Students are not allowed to bring in food items for birthdays or celebrations to share with the class. Students may bring in small bags of non-food items (pencils, erasers, bookmarks, etc.) to share as long as there are enough for each classmate. These items will be placed in student bookbags and may not be opened until the students get home. Please check the items first to make sure no food items are sent in. Students' birthdays will be acknowledged on the morning announcements.

## ***Instruction and Assessment***

**Core Curriculum:** All teachers are expected to teach the curriculum approved by the Red Clay Consolidated School District Board of Education for the subjects and/or courses they teach. There is no "free lancing" or choosing to teach certain things and supplementing with non-approved materials. This is a contractual violation and teachers have been terminated for such actions (and had the terminations upheld by the Courts).

**Teachers will use the district provided curriculum:**

Reading: Scott Foresman/Ready Gen Writing: District Writing Units Math: Math Expressions Science: Science Kits Social Studies: District Units
Related Arts: District Materials

It is crucial that your team communicates the pacing of lessons and assessments so that you can collaborate together to be successful. If you are having difficulty, please reach out to your team leader, BLT, or curriculum representatives for your school. If you are still having difficulty after reaching out to those outlets, please seek advice from an administrator.

**Performance Assessments:** Each teacher is expected to document that his/her instruction is in line with both the approved Red Clay Consolidated School District curriculum and the State Curriculum Standards and Performance Indicators for his/her subject area. An essential aspect of teaching to the standards is making sure that the assessments that a teacher uses in the classroom on a regular basis mirror the types of assessments which students will encounter on the state assessment. As part of our routine operations we should be teaching *about* the test as we teach the standards measured on the test

**Homework Philosophy:** Homework at Linden Hill Elementary School is meant to provide practice in the core content areas of reading and math. To this end, students should at most receive the math homework sheet that accompanies the math curriculum and be assigned the task of reading for pleasure or a spelling/phonics review sheet. Other homework should not be assigned without approval from administration.

- **Math**: Homeroom teachers will assign one Math Expressions worksheet each night which reinforces what was taught in class that day. Students should be able to complete all problems on their own and should be able to explain their thinking to their parents.
- **Reading**: All students will be encouraged to read for pleasure each night for as long as they choose. Reading topics will be chosen by each student. Teachers are encouraged to help students find appropriate books that spark their interests.
    - Spelling/Phonics - In the younger grades, review sheets may be provided for homework.
- **Extra Work Request:** If parents ask for additional work to be sent home for enrichment, teachers will provide parents with a team-created list of educational websites and activities. Teachers will not be expected to create additional assignments throughout the year under these circumstances.
- **Student Support Request:** If parents ask for help for struggling students who need extra support/practice at home, teachers will be expected to provide additional resources to support these students.

**Absenteeism:** Students must be given at least as many days to make up work as they were absent. Make-up time may be extended at the teacher's discretion, but except in cases of extreme illness or emergency the make-up time should not extend into the marking period following the student's absence. Planned absences (family vacations, medical appointments, etc.) are to be handled in exactly the same way as unplanned absences.

**Response to Intervention:** Students who need additional instructional support with be placed into Tier 2 or Tier 3 groups for RTI. All teachers working with RTI groups are expected to progress monitor and input data into Data Service Center (DSC) by the timelines given. This is crucial to tracking student progress and looking at student achievement.

## Grading

**Grading:** The district defines grading students as an indicator of the student's demonstrated knowledge or skill at a particular time. A student's grades should reflect the teacher's best assessment of the student's academic achievement. Information on grading policies for our district can be found at: http://redclay.schoolwires.net/Page/315

**Interims/Report Cards:** We work with four marking periods throughout the year. There will be an Interim Report sent out at the midway point of each marking period that must notify families of struggling students and can be used to share positive affirmations.

**Grading for Kn through 3rd:** The Elementary Kn-3 Standards-Based Report Card is issued four times each year. Student progress is assessed through demonstrated on-going documentation of understanding of state content standards and students are graded on a letter based scale system

**Grading for 4th & 5th:** 4th & 5th Grades should follow the administrative memo on grading linked below:

https://de01903704.schoolwires.net/cms/lib/DE01903704/Centricity/domain/187/admin%20memos/7000%20series/7011.3%20Online%20Grade%20Book%20for%20Grades%204%20-%205.pdf

**Comments:** Report Card and Interim Report Comments should be given to students to help clarify the grade and areas of concern. A sample for the 4th and 5th grades is linked below (All grade levels can be found on the mark entry pages):

http://redclay.schoolwires.net/cms/lib010/DE01903704/Centricity/Domain/87//Grades/OBGReportCardCommentsGr4122.pdf

**Narratives:** Along with the report card, narratives may be used to further describe a teacher's observations of student progress. Narratives are required for students working below grade level. It is also recommended that narratives be shared for students working significantly above grade level.

**Promotion/Retention:** The promotion or retention of a student is defined by the district in administrative memorandums available on both the school and district website (and linked below). The expectation is that all families will be notified early and regularly if a student is in danger of retention or being administratively assigned. Conferences are required with families to inform them of the situation and to work on finding solutions. Appropriate paperwork must be submitted including but not limited to the PID (promotion in danger) form. The final decision to retain or assign a student is solely that of the principal, with the understanding that the opinions of the teacher(s) and the family will be taken into account. Please be aware that a student who does not have failing grades may not be retained unless it is an IEP team decision.

**K-3 Procedures:**
http://redclay.schoolwires.net/cms/lib/DE01903704/Centricity/domain/187/admin%20memos/7000%20series/7011.5%20PROMOTION%20AND%20RETENTION%20GRADES%20K-3%20.docx

**4th & 5th Procedures:**
http://redclay.schoolwires.net/cms/lib/DE01903704/Centricity/domain/187/admin%20memos/7000%20series/7011.3%20Online%20Grade%20Book%20for%20Grades%204%20-%205.pdf