

Mountain Park Elementary School

Student Handbook 2025-2026



**1500 Pounds Road SW 🐾 Lilburn, GA 30047
(770) 921-2224**

**Mountain Park Cougars are SAFE,
RESPECTFUL, & RESPONSIBLE!!**



Staff Roster 2025-2026

Principal

Brian Walker

Assistant Principals

Kelsey Case

Dr. Sharissa Seymour

Front Office

Mary Benist-Registrar

Jean Limmiatis-SDMC

Mary Pierson-AA/Bookkeeper

Chandler Masse-Clinic

Aida Hailu-Stellar Sub

Atul Patel-Stellar Sub

Counselor

Lauren Thomas

School Psychologist

Lisa Banfield

Family Engagement

Charlotte Thomas

K-5 Support Staff

Elizabeth Adams

Dr. Debbie Freeman

Dr. Kimberly Harris

Andrea Herman

Christa Kirksey

Traci Morgan

Katrina Tucker

Kindergarten

Lorri Beeney

Angela Foster

Tess Koretos*

Zoe Sirmans

Cali Strauss

Regina Mitchell-Para

First Grade

Katie Bevins

Delanie Fancher

Autumn Fortenberry*

Jordan Scott

Manyi Webb

Second Grade

Maddie Beckett

Tanya Blanchard*

Cheryl Miller

Sina Pemberton

Cheryl Smith

Tanina Walsh

Third Grade

April Duncan

Nadia Jones*

Enasia King

Tara Sanders

Abby Stenwall

Fourth Grade

Jodi Chamberlain

Tiffany McGee

Melissa Oliver

Emily Stenzel

Shirley Weingarten*

Fifth Grade

Jennifer Dahmer

Katrina Hoelzen

Taylor Katelan*

Kristin McCord

Karen Sessler

Specials

Amy Brodnax-Art

Sam Butler-Music

Madison Bonner-PE

Jillian Hudnall-CS

Gabrielle Orbe-Health

Special Education

Brooke Aquino – SLP

Celeste Benes-SLP (PT-.8)

Jennifer Balian-IRR

Pam Hart-IRR*

Angela Leckie-IRR

Nadia Savelyeva-IRR

Roseline Sumner-IRR

Kristen Metz-Pre-K

Lisa Paul – Para – Pre-K

Rylie Wilson – Pre-K

Fran Whately-Para Pre-K

Mary Dodd-Para Pre-K

Elaine Childs-Pre-K

Dazia Gatlin - Para-Pre-K

Katie Thomas-Para Pre-K

Media & Technology

Heather Wilson-Media

Casey Weltch-ITIC

Darrell Eldridge-TST

Custodial

Jean Lyron

Andriss St. Dic

Fatima Sehic

Food Services

Fifi Leow

Lucero Carbajal Adame

Jafrin Akthar

Nazma Chowdhury

Deanna Riggins

School Resource Officer

Shaun Gonzalez

MOUNTAIN PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1500 Pounds Road 🐾 Lilburn, Georgia 30047 🐾 770-921-2224

<http://mountainparkes.org/home/>

ADDITIONAL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Cafeteria:	(678) 245-3109	Clinic:	(678) 245-3112
Counselor:	(678) 245-3113	Media Center:	(678) 245-3110

MASCOT

Cougar

SCHOOL COLORS

Blue and Orange

OTHER CLUSTER SCHOOLS

Parkview High 🐾 Trickum Middle
Knight Elementary 🐾 Arcado Elementary 🐾 Camp Creek Elementary

GWINNETT COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Board meetings are held on the **third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m.** Meetings are held in the Board Room at the Instructional Support Center, located at 437 Old Peachtree Road in Suwanee. Citizens are encouraged to attend so that they can become better acquainted with the operation and programs of the school system.

INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS:

Dr. Al Taylor

437 Old Peachtree Road, NW
Suwanee, GA 30024-2978
(678) 301-6000

GWINNETT COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD – DISTRICT IV:

Dr. Adrienne Simmons

Phone : (470) 248-2513

Dr. Adrienne Simmons joined the School Board in January 2023. Her electoral district includes all or portions of the Berkmar, Brookwood, Discovery, Grayson, Meadowcreek, Parkview, Shiloh, and South Gwinnett clusters. Dr. Simmons has served in public education as a classroom teacher, instructional coach, literacy coordinator, and statewide administrator. She holds a master's degree in reading, language, and literacy from Georgia State University and a doctoral degree in educational leadership from Clark Atlanta University. Her current term will expire in December 2026.

Schools located in District IV

Anderson-Livsey ES	Craig ES	Partee ES
Annistown ES	Five Forks MS	Pharr ES
Arcado ES	Gwin Oaks ES	Shiloh ES
Berkmar HS	Head ES	Shiloh HS
Berkmar MS	Knight ES	Shiloh MS
Britt ES	Lilburn ES	Snellville MS
Brookwood ES	Lilburn MS	South Gwinnett HS
Brookwood HS	Mountain Park ES	Trickum MS
Camp Creek ES	Nesbit ES	
Centerville ES	Parkview HS	

MOUNTAIN PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Core Beliefs of Mountain Park ES

- All students learn best when they are actively involved in meaningful and developmentally appropriate opportunities for success.
- Educators, students, parents, and the community share in the responsibility of enabling students to become confident, self-directed, life-long learners who recognize the relevance of learning.
- Students learn in different ways and should be provided with a variety of instructional approaches and meaningful assessments to support their learning styles and promote success on the Academic Knowledge and Skills.
- Each student is a valued individual with unique physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and cultural needs.
- Challenging, appropriate expectations increase individual student performance.
- The belief that all students can learn is fundamental to all decisions impacting the work of the school.
- Students learn to make appropriate behavioral and academic decisions given a safe, supportive, and challenging environment.
- Students will become effective problem solvers and communicators.
- Students will become proficient users of technology.
- The commitment to continuous improvement and life-long learning is imperative for all members of the organization.
- The faculty and staff are committed to shared decision-making and collaborative leadership and will base all decisions on the collection and analysis of relevant data.

Mountain Park Cougars are SAFE, RESPECTFUL, & RESPONSIBLE!!

As a student, parent, or teacher in the Mountain Park Community,
we commit to being safe, respectful, and responsible,
so teachers can teach, and students can learn.

Mountain Park ES Policies and Procedures

Arrival Time

For safety and supervision reasons, students may not be dropped off at the school before 7:45 a.m. Students are allowed to enter the building at 7:45 a.m. Prior to that time, teachers are preparing for the school day and are not available to supervise students. Our official school day begins promptly at 8:15 a.m. Your child should arrive at school no later than 8:15 a.m. to be ready for instruction at the beginning of the official school day.

Dismissal Time

Students are dismissed at 2:45 p.m. It is very confusing to young children to alternate between daycare, parent pick-up, and buses. Should you need to change directions for student pick-up, please do so in writing. In the absence of a note from you, your child will be placed on his/her usual transportation. Please do not check children out or make transportation changes by phone after 2:15 p.m. Do not email to make transportation changes, as we cannot guarantee receipt of email during the instructional day.

Attendance: Absences, Tardy, and Participation in After-school Activities

If a child misses more than half of the school day, they will be marked absent for that day. Any student absent from school will not be allowed to participate in any after-school activities for that day including but not limited to, chorus performances, before/after-school clubs, and PTA events. Example: A student goes home at noon on Tuesday with a high fever and must be fever-free for 24 hours. The student has a chorus performance Wednesday evening and checks in at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday after a doctor appointment. Because the student did not attend classes the majority of Wednesday, the student will not be able to participate in the chorus performance. Our focus must be on the safety and well-being of all students. Unfortunately, this sometimes excludes students from participation. Any exceptions must be approved by the school principal.

Absence: Georgia School Board Policy 160-5-1-.10 defines a child as being truant from school when he/she misses more than five days of unexcused absences. Excused absences are those in which the child was sick, and the parent has provided written documentation indicating the absence was for an illness. In addition, a death in the child's immediate family warrants an excused absence. Observation of religious holidays, conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous, and parents on leave from military service also count as excused absences – with proper documentation.

- All students should bring a note from their parent following an absence to be recorded as an excused absence. Absences without notes will be recorded as unexcused absences. Parents will be called any time a student is absent for three consecutive days. Students must be present for the majority of the day to be counted present.
- The consequences for poor attendance in school have become much more severe and require consistent and persistent follow through by school personnel. Your assistance in making certain your child is here, and on time, daily is critical. In addition, children need to remain the full day. Please avoid checking children out the last 30 minutes of the day when we are preparing for the safe dismissal of our children. Your cooperation and support are greatly appreciated.

State Attendance Rule 160-5-1-.10 states that students will be excused from school under the following circumstances.

- Personal illness or attendance in school endangering a student's health or the health of others.
- A serious illness or death in a student's immediate family necessitating absence from school.
- A court order or an order by a governmental agency, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school.
- Observing religious holidays, necessitating absence from school.
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.
- A period not to exceed one day is allowed, at the discretion of the local unit of administration, for registering to vote or voting in a public election.
- Visiting with a parent or legal guardian prior to or during leave from deployment to a 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)

Tardy: Tardiness is very disruptive to the learning of the entire class. Please be on time. When circumstances delay a student from arriving at school by the 8:15 a.m. starting time, parents must accompany their children into the office to sign in. Do not drop students off if it is after 8:15 a.m., as staff members are reporting to classrooms for instruction at that time and are no longer available for supervision of the car rider line.

Cell Phone Use

Student cell phones must be turned off during the school day. Failure to do so will result in consequences. Cell phones must be kept in the student's book bags. We cannot be responsible for lost or stolen items. Also, cell phones are not to be used on the bus ride to or from school.

Makeup Work

Upon return to school, makeup work will be provided/completed. All graded assignments must be completed at school.

School and Classroom Visitations

We encourage you to visit the school and participate in our many activities. As part of our security plan, you must check in at the office and get a visitor's badge. Teachers have been instructed not to release students to any adult without notification from the office. As a courtesy to teachers, please arrange conferences and conversations about your child's academics and behavior ahead of time. Classroom visitations must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance with your child's teacher.

Lunch Visitation

Parents are welcome to join us for lunch at MPES; however, we ask that you refrain from joining us during the first full week of the school year. Lunch visitation is an activity for you to spend with your child. Friends will not be allowed at the visitors table. Use this time for meaningful conversation on your student's day. Food is not to be shared with anyone other than your own child. Parents and other persons authorized by the parent may come for lunch during their student's lunch time. However, plan to meet and leave your student at the cafeteria because visiting the classroom before or after lunch is a disruption to instruction. For the safety of all students, visitors are not allowed on the playground.

Student Release

For your child's safety, children will not be released from school at any time to anyone other than parent or guardian, unless that person is on the student's approved emergency information list.

A parent wishing to check out his or her child from school during the school day may do so by signing their child out in the office. The office staff will ask for identification for the safety of the student. Students are released only from the office. Do not go to your child's classroom to check him/her out.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Our school system reports student progress to parents in the form of conferences twice a year. In addition to these two planned conference times, parents, teachers, students, or administrators may initiate additional conferences. For planning purposes, all conferences must be scheduled in advance. Parents can write or call the school to schedule appointments.

Change of Address or Phone Number

For emergency purposes, we must have updated information on each student. Update any changes in phone numbers or addresses in ParentVue.

Student Insurance

Student health and accident insurance is offered as an option and service to interested families at the beginning of the year. Purchases and claims are made directly to the vendor. Parents are responsible for providing insurance coverage or paying medical expenses in the case of an accident.

Lost and Found

Items found in hallways, playground, bus, or cafeteria (other than eyeglasses, jewelry, money, or keys) are placed on a rack in the hallway. Students should check this area to retrieve lost items. Unclaimed items are donated to charity organizations at the end of each semester. Please write your child's name in their clothing, lunchboxes and water bottles so items can be returned, if lost.

Avoiding Classroom Interruptions

It is important to keep interruptions to instruction to a minimum. If it is necessary to bring books, lunches, or other supplies to your child during the day, you must leave the items in the school office. There is a procedure in place for getting items to classrooms. Children will not be called from the classroom to accept phone calls, pick up items, or to visit with parents or others. Teachers are not available to confer with parents during the school day.

School Parties

School system policy allows students to enjoy two parties per year. Our teachers have chosen these two times for student parties: Winter Celebration and End of Year Celebration.

Celebrations/Birthdays at School

Parents are allowed to provide the class with individual snacks for children's birthdays. These snacks will be provided to the students at an appropriate time as designated by the teacher. Do not send drinks, treat bags, or balloons for birthdays. Parents should not make arrangements for private parties through the school staff, which includes passing out invitations.

Messages for Teachers

The front office will take phone calls between 7:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. The office will take messages for teachers, so instructional time is not interrupted. The best way to get in touch with your child's teacher is email. In most cases, teachers will return phone calls and emails within 24 hours.

School Council

It has been a long-standing tradition of the Gwinnett County Public Schools to encourage parent participation in an advisory capacity through membership on the Local School Advisory Council. As part of the A+ Education Reform Act (HB 1187), all schools in the State of Georgia are required to implement School Councils. The intent of School Councils is to bring communities and schools closer together in a spirit of cooperation. The focus of the work will be on the school's Local School Plan for Improvement (LSPI) and striving to improve student achievement for all students. Members to the School Council have been elected through a nomination process in May.

Representatives serving in this capacity for the 2025-2026 school year are:

Parent: Diana Valez

Teacher: Jillian Hudnall

Parent: Erica Reid

Teacher: Tara Sanders

Parent: Anna Dang

Assistant Principal: Sharissa Seymour

Parent: Kitty Scott-Rapin

Assistant Principal: Kelsey Case

Principal: Brian Walker

Dates for the meetings: September 23, 2025, November 18, 2025, January 27, 2026 and March 24, 2026. All meetings will be held at Mountain Park ES at 8:00 a.m.

Security Plan

Our school has a security plan in an effort to provide a safe environment for our students. Portions of the plan remain confidential, and portions are communicated to our public. Each year our school safety plan is reviewed by our faculty, staff, and School Council members. Appropriate adjustments are made based on feedback received. Our plan requires that all visitors enter through the front doors and check in at the office. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Fire, Tornado, and Lock-down Drills

Fire, tornado, and lock-down drills are held throughout the school year. Remember these basic rules:

- Check the posted instructions in each classroom that indicate how to leave the building in case of fire or to take cover in case of a tornado warning or lock-down.
- Walk. No talking. Move quickly and quietly to the designated area. Follow the directions of all faculty and/or staff members.

Individuals with Disabilities Service

It is the practice of the 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 Pictures

Individual school pictures will be taken on September 12, 2025. Class and individual pictures will be taken on February 10, 2026. Pictures are offered for purchase as an option to our students; however, this is a great fundraiser for our school.

School Lunch Program

Breakfast Prices		Lunch Prices		Extras	
Student	FREE	Student	\$2.50	Entrée	\$2.25
Adult	\$2.50	Reduced	\$0.40	Side Item	\$0.75
		Adult	\$4.75	Extra Milk	\$0.40
				8oz Water	\$0.40

You can establish a Meal Pay lunch account for your student(s) at: <https://www.mypaymentsplus.com/default.aspx>.

We would prefer keeping all money for meal accounts online; however children can also give money to the cafeteria cashier. Money for lunch accounts should be sent in a sealed envelope with your child's name and student number on the check and the teacher's name indicated. Free and reduced lunch options are available. You can fill out the [Free & Reduced Form](#) online.

An important part of our nutritional program is the modeling of healthy nutrition habits. Our cafeteria serves a nutritious lunch with various choices of entrees and vegetables daily. Fast Food is not allowed in the cafeteria. Students are not allowed to bring soda cans, glass containers, or anything containing red liquid. Students and parents are not allowed to share food with other students. Sometimes we are unaware of allergies and parental opinions regarding outside food.

Breakfast Program

An optional breakfast program for students is available from 7:45-8:15 a.m. only. All students will receive breakfast free of charge. Our breakfast consists of simple quick items that will help start your children's day. Students in Grades K-3 who purchase the school breakfast may eat breakfast in the cafeteria. Students in Grades 4-5 who purchase the school breakfast are permitted to eat breakfast in their classroom.

Lunch Charges

GCPS has adopted a policy that governs student charges: only two charges are permitted. After two charges, students will not be permitted additional charges. Students receive a charge notice indicating the need for additional money the following day. Student charges will not be allowed after April 30, 2026. Starting May 1, you may not have a negative balance on your child's lunch account.

Special Diet/Food Allergies

In order to substitute milk with juice or soy milk as part of the regular daily diet, documentation from your physician indicating an allergy is required in writing to the cafeteria staff. Special diets should be provided from home.

Clinic

A clinic worker staffs our clinic each day. Basic first aid services are provided. The clinic number is (678) 245-3112.

- The clinic worker will administer over the counter and prescription drugs, as well as long-term medication when a parental request is furnished in writing for a specific reason and for a specific day. The medication should be brought into school by a parent and a GCPS form filled out with detailed instructions.
- The clinic worker will contact parents to pick up students who are ill. Ill students are children who have thrown up or have a fever of over 100.4. (according to GCPS policy) Ill children are considered contagious and cannot remain at school. When a student is sent home with fever or vomiting, the student must be out the next day. Students may return to school once they have been fever or vomit free for 24 hours without fever reducing medications.

- Should your child's health require a long-term medication (several weeks to indefinite in length), our clinic worker will dispense medication after your doctor has written specific instructions that include the exact dosage to be given. Long-term or emergency type medications will not be administered to students without these required documents. Our clinic worker will administer short-term prescription drugs to students. Medication must be in the original container with the information on the container.
- Children are not allowed to keep prescription medications in their backpack or transport it on the bus.

Academic Information

Report Cards/Progress Reports

Report cards will be issued twice: January 2026 and May 2026. Parents are encouraged to sign up for ParentVue, so they can check grades online anytime. Parents will be invited to participate in parent-teacher conferences twice a year: October 22 & 23, 2025 and March 4 & 5, 2026. Students will be dismissed at 12:15 p.m. on conference days. Progress reports will be emailed on the last school day of every month.

Grade Scale

Report cards and the grade scale will be reviewed during the MPES Curriculum Night on August 21, 2025.

The following scale is used to assess kindergarten and first grade students on progress toward the AKS in the following academic areas, effort, conduct, art, music, health, physical education and computer science:

E = Surpasses Standards

N = Needs to Improve

S = Satisfactory

U = Unsatisfactory

For students in Grades 2-5, student performance is graded using the following scale:

90% and above	A	excellent progress
80%-89%	B	above average progress
70%-79%	C	average progress
Below 70%	U	unsatisfactory progress

Students are promoted to the subsequent grade based on mastery of the Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) at the preceding grade level.

Media Services and Instructional Technology

The purpose of media services and instructional technology is to provide access to information and resources. Media services and instructional technology support and enhance teaching and student learning across all areas of the curriculum.

Mountain Park's media center is an open, inviting place filled with a wide variety of materials for students and teachers. The media specialist, paraprofessionals, and teachers work together to provide information to students and to teach them the skills necessary to find the resources they need. Students are encouraged to visit the media center on a regular basis. Books are checked out for a two-week period but may be returned early and another book selected. A student with an overdue, lost, or damaged book loses check out privileges until the book is returned or a \$15.00 replacement fee is paid.

Student Conduct

Each student is expected to always conduct himself/herself in an appropriate manner when attending school or a school related event. Staff members will use positive behavior points to encourage and maintain appropriate behavior for all students. Teachers will seek the assistance of parents, counselors, or administrators as needed in handling disciplinary infractions. It is our desire to work collaboratively with parents in assisting students in maintaining appropriate behavior. By carefully reviewing the following information regarding student discipline with your child(ren), you will be setting the stage for this collaboration.

Discipline

At Mountain Park, we are:

1. Safe
2. Respectful
3. Responsible

As a positive behavior intervention school, we work to establish regular, proactive support while preventing unwanted behaviors. We have implemented the use of Behavior Intervention (BI) slips as a way to ensure students are given opportunities to be redirected before further consequences. Below is a list of steps that are taken for all minor incidents.

1. Official warning
2. Break in classroom
3. Break in another teacher's classroom
4. Administration

Please refer to the Gwinnett County Public Schools Student-Parent Disciplinary Handbook for a more detailed version of the Student Code of Behavior or visit the GCPS website for additional information.

<https://www.gcpsk12.org/Page/33010>

Please note – The administrative staff may assist when major offenses occur. Major offenses include those behaviors considered to be life threatening, severe or illegal, and are specifically defined as (1) physical assault resulting in bodily harm, (2) racial or sexual harassment, (3) major destruction of school property, (4) stealing, (5) using disrespectful or abusive language and/or gestures, and (6) documented continuous disruptive behavior. After problem solving with the student regarding the action involved, an appropriate consequence will be determined. With respect to helping students make more appropriate choices in the future, the following interventions may be suggested when a child commits a major offense: Student Support Team (SST), individual and/or group counseling, etc.

Student Dress Code

Students are expected to dress appropriately, suitable to weather conditions and in good taste.

Clothing should NOT be distracting to the learning environment.

- Clothes with logos identified with drugs or gangs, with logos from alcohol or tobacco industries, or with inappropriate language are not permitted.
- Short shorts or skirts, spaghetti-strap or halter tops, tops which expose the mid-drift, are not permitted.
- Pants/jeans must fit properly so students can move with ease and inappropriate exposure does not occur.
- Footwear should be appropriate for playground (closed-toe/fitted) and physical education classes (tennis shoes). Flip-flops are discouraged.

Student Code of Ethics – Guideline for Student Behavior

- I will be honest in my statements and actions.
- I will respect school staff, the fellow students, and myself.
- I will respect the belief of others.
- I will display good conduct and sportsmanship at school, on the bus, and at all school activities.
- I will respect the property of others.
- I will work to the best of my ability.
- I will use criticism in a helpful manner.
- I will promote school cleanliness and the upkeep of school property.
- I will make substitute teachers and visitors feel welcome.
- I will support school activities.

Students at Mountain Park Elementary School are committed to being SAFE, RESPECTFUL, & RESPONSIBLE!

Student Transportation

Bus Discipline

All GCPS rules still apply while on a school bus or at the bus stop. The bus ride to and from school is an extremely important part of our students' instructional day.

Safety is the first priority while transporting students to and from school. While on a school bus, the bus driver/manager is the school official who has supervisory responsibility of students. Drivers must be able to concentrate on their driving at all times. A momentary distraction from their concentration can lead to a serious accident resulting in injury or death.

If a student does not follow the bus rules, the driver will talk with him/her and explain what rule has been broken. If the driver observes further problems, he/she will write the information down and send a discipline notification to the parent(s) along with a follow up call to explain the bus problem. Once the bus driver has called the home and sent the written discipline referral home to the parent(s), any future problems will be sent to the school office to determine consequences. Consequences may result in 1-5 days of Bus Suspension.

In the event that transportation is suspended, it will be the parent's responsibility to transport the student to and from school during the suspension days.

Children Left or Brought Back to School

County policy states that school personnel shall take the following steps in the case of children not picked up at the end of the school day or returned to school by the bus because no one is home to meet them.

The first week of school parent(s), guardian or emergency contacts will be contacted for pick up.

Second week of school and beyond:

- 1) First incident: The school will contact parent(s), guardian or emergency contact and the contact will be given a form advising you of future consequences.
- 2) Second incident (within 90 days): The school will contact parent(s), guardian or emergency contact and transportation services will be suspended for three school days.
- 3) Third incident (within 90 days): The school will contact parent(s), guardian or emergency contact and transportation services will be suspended for five school days. Principal or designee will also call DFACS and make a referral for neglect.

Transportation Questions

For routine transportation questions or information, please contact the Transportation Supervisor for the school your child attends. Those phone numbers are available on the Gwinnett County website at <https://schools.gcpsk12.org/Page/35609> or 770-338-4800.