

**The Future Begins at
Friendship Elementary
2025-2026**

Parent Handbook



**Home of the Bobcats
A PAWsitive Attitude Leads to Success
#FESForward**

**Welcome to Friendship Elementary
A school committed to excellence!!!**

Mission Statement:

Friendship Elementary will empower *ALL* students to succeed by providing high quality, equitable, and positive educational experiences that build academic success and a foundation for life-long learning.

Vision Statement:

Through inclusive collaborative practices, Friendship Elementary will create a safe, positive, supportive learning environment where each student is valued and empowered to reach their fullest potential.

Bobcat Pledge:

**I promise to do what's right
I will follow the rules and be positive
I will learn all I can and promise to do my best every day.
I will push through.
I won't give up when things get hard
I can do anything I set my mind to do
My success is up to me!!!**



Friendship is where children learn and grow

Welcome to Friendship Elementary School: Home of the Bobcats! The teachers and staff of Friendship Elementary are committed towards providing ALL students with a safe, fun, and productive learning environment. We strive towards assisting each individual student reach academic success. **Our school hours are as follows:**

- School gates open for students to enter at 7:25 a.m.
- Breakfast will begin at 7:25 a.m. and last until 7:45 a.m.
- Our instructional hours for this school year are: 7:50 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- On Early Release Wednesday our hours for students are 7:50 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Attendance/Tardies: Attendance is a critical key component in the educational success of all students.

The expectation: Students should be in attendance every day; on time and ready to learn.

- Attendance counts when students **are present all day with no early checkouts or late arrivals.** Our first bell rings at **7:45 a.m.** with the tardy bell ringing at **7:50 a.m.** Students may still walk to class until 8:00 a.m.
- **After 8:00 a.m. parents are to walk the students to the office to sign them in and have student receive a tardy pass.**
- **Attendance will be monitored daily. When there are excessive absences or tardies, follow-up calls/conferences will be placed to the parents.**
- Students may be excused from school for personal illness, doctor's appointment, a death in the family, quarantine in the home, or observance of a religious holiday. **When a child is out due to an illness and visits the doctor's office, please make sure to provide documentation to the front office. This will excuse the absence in our system.**
- **Absences because of family vacations will not be excused.**
- **5 tardies are equal to one full day absence.**

Dismissal Procedures:

Our dismissal begins at 2:25 p.m. for VPK and Kindergarten. Students in 1st thru 5th Grade will be dismissed beginning at 2:30 p.m.

- At dismissal time please have your **yellow pick-up sign displayed in the front passenger-side window or dashboard. Have your child's first, last and teacher's name written out. This helps us quickly locate your child and load them into your car.**
- **Your child(ren) will not be released to you unless this card is displayed in your window due to Safety & Security procedures. If you lose your yellow card it is your responsibility to go to the office to get a new one.**
- **We ask that you do not get out of your car while in the parent loop at dismissal time.** Our procedure ensures that all students are dismissed in a timely efficient manner.
- **We need your assistance, please note that we only load students into the car from the passenger side for the safety of all parties.**
- When dropping off and picking up students pull all the way forward in the loop. This allows for better flow of traffic.
- **Parents are to utilize the parent car-loop for student pick-up. If walking, please wait at the gate by the bike rack to drop-off or to meet your child at dismissal. *Parents will be prohibited from walking on campus or parking and crossing over during drop-off and dismissal.*** We ask that you do not walk-up to the benches, crowd the benches or walkways, as this impedes us from dismissing the children in a safe and timely manner. *Please do not take a child from the line or the benches without checking out with a teacher/adult... We want to ensure the safety of all children.*
- **Please do not call your children during dismissal as cell phones are not to be answered while the students are on campus.**
- **If your child is to go home another way than what has been established, we ask that you (the parent/guardian ONLY) send a note to the teacher and place a call to the office (NO LATER THAN 1:45pm) so we are aware of the new process.**

Campus Access:

- ***For the safety and security of all students and staff, campus access is limited to only essential staff and approved volunteers.***

Campus Events:

Throughout the school year there will be several school events focused on engaging both student and parents in the learning process while having fun together. You will gain valuable information related to state, district and school initiatives and learning expectations. We encourage your participation at these events. All adults visiting campus must be signed in through our Raptor system.

Celebrations:

During the school year classrooms may have celebrations. These celebrations should have an academic focus and be tied to the benchmarks. Celebrations in addition to the Winter Holiday and End of Year celebration will be discussed with Administration.

- We do not celebrate birthdays in the classroom; **store bought (not homemade)** cupcakes may be bought & shared during café times after students have eaten their lunch. Please make sure that the store label with the ingredients listed is kept on the container of store-bought cupcakes.
- Cupcakes will be held in the office for teachers to pick up.
- We ask that you do not bring balloons or floral bouquets to school as these become a distraction during instructional time. Please hold these items for after school to celebrate your child's special day.

VPK and Kindergarten step-up ceremonies as well as our 5th Grade end of the Year award ceremony is open to all parents and guardians. **ONLY for these ceremonies are school-aged siblings able to attend.**

Cell Phone Usage:

Students are permitted to have cell phones on campus; however, they are to remain off and in their backpacks; while on our school campus. This includes dismissal time. Failure to follow this policy will result in disciplinary consequences. Continual violations may result in phone being confiscated for a parent to pick-up.

Communications:

Parents may communicate with their child's teacher via written communication, e-mails, via the phone, or scheduled teacher/parent conferences or via technology.

- Calls to specific teachers will not be placed through to the classrooms as to respect the instructional block for all students.
- You are encouraged to leave a message for your child's teacher. Once received they will contact you within 24-48 hours.
- **All changes to the way students go home must be done by the parent or guardian on record and the request must be made via phone calls to the office no later than 1:45 p.m. or in written form to your child's teacher.**

Conferences:

- Parents and teachers are encouraged to have conferences concerning a child's academic and behavioral progress each semester. Parents wishing to speak with the teacher should arrange for a conference ahead of time via phone call or written notification directly with the teacher first.

- If an administrator is needed to attend the conference the teacher or parent can make that request when planning the conference. Conferences are not permitted while class is in session unless scheduled during a teacher's planning period.
- Conferences should never be held during dismissal as we want *to preserve each child's privacy. An atmosphere of mutual respect will be maintained in accordance with School Board Policy 418.*
- ❖ ***Parents wishing to meet with the Administrative Dean or Principal should contact the Principal's Secretary by calling the office at 386-575-4130.***
- ❖ ***The administrators are not available during school hours as they are observing classrooms and meeting with students. They will return your call within 24 to 48 hours.***
- ❖ ***Drop-in visits to speak with the administrators without appointments will result in a scheduled meeting by the Principal's Secretary. The meeting will be scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time within 24-48 hours provided the administrators are on campus.***

Curriculum:

All grade levels follow the Curriculum Guidelines and proficiency scales set forth by Volusia County Schools toward mastery of the Florida Benchmarks. The curriculum is rigorous and meant to challenge your child's thinking and problem-solving skills. We ask that you review your child's homework/classwork each day to assist with understanding of the content.

Discipline Expectations:

All students must follow the rules and regulations as outlined in the Volusia County Code of Student Conduct and Discipline. This document is to be reviewed by the parent and child and the acknowledgment form signed by both. The acknowledgement form is in the first day folder. The code of conduct can be reviewed via the Volusia County Website under the parent tab. The classroom teacher also reviews the Code of Conduct. When students are sent to the office on a discipline referral parents are contacted regarding the nature of the referral. The situation is investigated thoroughly; then the resulting consequence and details of the referral are discussed with the parent and student.

Our EDEP program is an extension of the school day and students are still subject to our Student Code of Conduct.

Dress Code:

All Volusia County Schools students are required to follow the Volusia County Schools Student Dress Code policy. The dress code policy with specifics can be found on the VCS & Friendship Elementary School websites.

- On Friday's students are encouraged to wear their school "Friendship" spirit shirts.
- Appropriate footwear is required for PE and Recess. To support this safety measure, Crocs and footwear similar to this brand will not be permitted this school year.
- No hats, caps, visors, hoods, bandanas, sunglasses or other head gear may be worn on a school campus except with administrative permission.
- When outer garments with hood are worn, the hoods must be removed from the head while in school buildings.
- Clothing exposing the torso or upper thighs, such as see-through garments, mini-skirts or mini-dresses, halters, backless shirts or dresses, tube tops or tank tops without over-blouses or shirts, spaghetti strap garments without over-blouses, bare midriff outfits, or shirts or blouses tied at the midriff are not acceptable school attire.

Field Studies:

During the school year each grade level may have the opportunity to participate in at least one field study. The field studies while fun, will promote a deeper understanding of what has been learned in the classroom. They are enriching experiences therefore we encourage participation by all students. ***These field studies will be announced ahead of time to allow families time to prepare for the field trip and pay for it in a timely manner. If as a parent, you would like to chaperone on the field trip you must have an approved volunteer application on file.*** You can fill out the volunteer application at the front office on our 'Raptor Kiosk' or by visiting the Volusia County Schools Website at <https://www.vcsedu.org/volunteer-partnership/volunteers-vips> and selecting "Application to Volunteer". You must have your driver's license in order to complete the process.

Grading Policy:

During the school year grades will be entered into the Focus gradebook. These grades will be updated by your child's teacher at least once a week. If you do not know your parent portal login credentials, please stop by the front office to ask for the information.

Progress Reports/Report Cards:

Report cards and Progress Reports are electronically available on Parent Portal four times a year. Reviewing these documents is very important as these are indicators of your child's progress. After each progress report/report card is an appropriate time to request a parent/teacher conference if you have any concerns related to academics or behavior.

GRADING SCALES

3rd through 5th Grade:

A = 90-100 Excellent
 B = 80-89 Above Average
 C = 70-79 Average
 D = 60-69 Passing
 F = Below 60

Kindergarten through 2nd Grade:

E = 90-100 Excellent
 S = 70-89 Satisfactory
 N = 60-69 Needs Improvement
 U = Below 60 Unsatisfactory

I= In progress Toward Grade Level Proficiency in Skills and Concepts. "I" may be issued for a student who has not yet met grade level criteria. The "I" will be replaced with the letter grade based on student progress.

Medication/Clinic:

- School personnel can't administer any medication without the Authorization to Administer Prescription Medication form completed by the parent and the physician.
- ***Under no circumstances can a child carry or receive medication without this signed form.***
- ***Medication must be brought to the school by an adult and signed in by the nurse or office personnel.***
- ***Medication must be in the original container with the pharmacy label intact.***
- ***Emergency care plans for life threatening illnesses must also be on file in the clinic.***

Monies Collections:

Please note money collections will not be taken by Front Office personnel. Students can turn in any money items directly to the teacher/sponsor of the activity. Any money for School Way Café the student can turn in directly to the School Way Café personnel. You also have the option to make School Way Café payments directly online by accessing their website at:

<https://www.myschoolbucks.com/ver2/getmain.action?clientKey=&requestAction=home>

Parents now have the option of utilizing Online School Payments (OSP) as an option for paying for school activities. OSP is a school activity funds payment solution that allows parents, students, and guardians to pay with a credit or debit card online using a web browser from any location, 24 hours a day. Parents can go online, view activities, add them to a shopping cart, check out and pay by using a credit card. A receipt is emailed to the purchaser and an email is sent to the teacher/sponsor of the activity notifying them that a payment has been received for the student. OSP can be accessed by visiting the following website: <http://osp.osmsinc.com/volusia>

Open House:

Open House is a great event that provides guardians and families the opportunity to meet school staff and teachers. It also provides an opportunity to learn about Title I and about all of the many wonderful programs available to the students of Friendship. Prior to each Open House, teachers will provide you with time to tour the classroom. During the classroom visits teachers will share information related to classroom, academic and behavioral expectations, grading policies, field trip information and much more. Open House will be September 18th 5:30 to 7:00 pm with a Title 1 Presentation starting at 5:00.

Recess:

As per state mandate students in VPK-5th Grade receive 20 minutes of recess daily. The recess time is built into our master schedule. On these days, teachers may choose to host an indoor recess for no more than 20 minutes.

Safety & Security:

As a part of our Safety & Security procedures all classroom doors on campus are always locked.

There is only one point of entry to the campus; that is by way of the front office gate. All visitors on campus are required to stop by the front office and sign in through our 'Raptor Kiosk'. You will be asked for your driver's license at the time of signing in so that it may be scanned into the system.

- During afternoon dismissal, we will ask for a form of identification to establish pick-up authorization. This will apply to others who do not regularly pick-up the student. We ask that you work with us as we ensure your child's safety.
- During the school year we will conduct a Fire Drill the first two weeks of school, then once a month there after. During fire drills all students, parents and faculty must evacuate to their designated location.
- We do not do checkouts 30 minutes prior to dismissal as this creates challenges that can affect the dismissal process. If you need to check your student out early, please plan accordingly by arriving before the 30 minute timeframe.

State Assessments:

At this time the Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) will be given to students in Grades 3-5 in ELA and Math. Students in 4th & 5th Grades also take the Writing FAST which is accounted for in the overall ELA (Reading) score. Students in Grade 5 also take the FSSA 2.0 Science Test. Dates will be released as soon as they are available.

School Hours:

We will open our gates for students to enter beginning at 7:25 a.m.

- Breakfast will begin at 7:25 a.m. and last until 7:45 a.m.
- Instructional hours for this school year are: 7:50 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- On Early Release Wednesday our hours for students are 7:50 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
- We ask that you please have your children to school on time every day as instruction begins promptly at 7:50 am. Excessive late arrivals and absences affect a student's achievement (5 tardies=1 regular excused absence).

Toys & Gadgets:

Students are not permitted to bring toys & gadgets from home to school. This includes fidget spinners, Legos, footballs, toys look-alike weapons, trading cards, etc. This includes EDEP before & afterschool.

Volunteers:

We welcome our parents to sign up to volunteer. You can fill out the volunteer application at the front office on our 'Raptor Kiosk' or by visiting the Volusia County Schools Website at <https://www.vcsedu.org/volunteer-partnership/volunteers-vips> and selecting "Application to Volunteer". You must have your driver's license in order to complete the process. Once you are an approved volunteer, we ask that you contact our Volunteer Coordinator for volunteer opportunities at our school.

VPK:

Arrival after 7:45 AM: If a parent arrives after 7:45 AM for the full school day program, they must wait until the next drop off window from 8:15 AM to 8:25 AM, unless alternative arrangements have been made in advance with the school.

Three or more instances of late arrivals or late pick-ups will result in withdrawal from the VPK program. Administration will call you after 2 of these instances.

Parental Acknowledgement

Parents/Guardians:

We thank you for taking the time to read through the parent policies and procedures handbook. We do follow these guidelines to provide you and your children with the best quality education and service possible. Your support of our efforts is greatly appreciated.

Please sign and return the bottom portion of this page. This serves as your acknowledgement and receipt of the parent handbook of policies and procedures. We also have this posted on our school website.

Once again thank you for partnering with Friendship Elementary to support your child's education.

Parent's Name: _____

Student's Name: _____

Student's Teacher: _____

Student's Grade: _____

Date: _____