

# **R. L. NORTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK 2025-2026**



**R. L. Norton Elementary**

**3050 Xavier Ray Court**

**Snellville, GA 30039**

**770-985-1933**

**<https://schools.gcpsk12.org/NortonES>**

**School Hours: 8:15 a.m. – 2:45 p.m., Monday – Friday**

**Front Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

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

## Welcome

Welcome to R.L. Norton Elementary School, where we all strive for excellence in all that we do! On the pages that follow, you will find important information about our school. This is a live document, therefore changes may be made throughout the school year. Please read it carefully and refer to it often. Let's make it a wonderful year!

### Norton Elementary School General Information

**School Mascot:** Comets

**School Colors:** Navy Blue, Silver

**Principal:**

**Dr. Katoria Gaston**

**Assistant Principal:**

PK, K, 2nd, MTSS Coordinator, Bus Discipline (PK-2),  
EIP, Mentor/Mentee, Play 2 Learn, Testing Coordinator (KREP, GKIDS)

**Lenise Cole**

**Assistant Principal:**

3rd, 5th, Special Education (IRR), School Safety, SEL  
Bus Discipline (3rd-5th), Testing Coordinator (iReady, District Assessments)

**LaSayra Ferguson**

**Assistant Principal:**

Special Education (Self-Contained), PBIS, Special Education Transportation,  
504 Coordinator, Testing Coordinator (GAA), Title IX Investigator

**Tonya Merl**

**Assistant Principal:**

1st, 4th, Special Areas, Gifted, ESOL Car Rider, Student Teacher,  
Title I, Testing Coordinator (GMAS, ACCESS), Title IX Coordinator

**Delisa Tate**

**Counselor (3rd - 5th)**

**Dr. Kentosha Cody**

**Counselor (Pre-K - 2nd)**

**Lisa Sanchez**

### Important Phone Numbers

Main Office	(770) 985-1933
Fax	(770) 736-2005
Counselor	(770) 736-2010
Cafeteria	(770) 736-2009
Clinic	(770) 736-2006
Parent Center	(770) 736-2015
Registration/Records	(678) 639-3798

# **Gwinnett County School Board**

Gwinnett County's School Board is a policy making body composed of five members who are elected to serve four-year terms. Citizens are always welcome to attend Board meetings. These meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Instructional Support Center in Suwanee, GA. Citizens wishing to address the Board must inform the superintendent's office in writing by noon the Monday prior to the Board meeting.

## **Gwinnett County Public Schools Board Member for South Gwinnett Cluster**

Rachel Ruffin Stone, District I

### **Superintendent**

Interim: Dr. Al Taylor

### **South Gwinnett Cluster Superintendent**

Dr. Keith Thompson

## **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 the 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.

## **Board of Education Core Beliefs and Commitments**

Gwinnett County Public Schools is committed to fostering a learning environment where each and every student thrives. Guided by our core beliefs, we shape our practices to ensure that all learners feel valued, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential in a global society. Sustained through our commitments, our district community – students, teachers, educational support professionals, and community members – will be integral contributors to a network of world-class schools that develops and nurtures rigorous, relevant, and engaging learning opportunities. In all of our endeavors, we will prioritize opportunity, access, and ongoing quality improvement.

### **Our Core Beliefs**

- Students are the Center of Every Decision – Every policy, practice, and initiative is designed with students' best interests in mind, ensuring they are supported academically, socially, and emotionally.
- Equity Benefits All – Ensuring resources and access for all acknowledges the strength in our diversity and drives positive outcomes for our students, families, and, ultimately, our community.
- Lifelong Learning Is Essential – Learning never stops. We encourage curiosity, adaptability, and continuous growth within our district community.
- Learning Should Reflect and Respect Every Student – We embrace uniqueness in all its forms, ensuring that teaching and learning honor each student's background, voice, and strengths.
- Excellence Is for Everyone – We hold high expectations for all, recognizing that excellence is not exclusive, but an achievable goal for every learner.
- Belonging Builds Strong Schools and Strong Communities – We foster an environment where every member of our district community feels a deep sense of connection and purpose through authentic engagement.
- Collaboration Drives Our Success - We empower our district community to contribute to decision-making and school improvement through transparent processes.

## Our Commitments

- Provide World-Class Learning for Global Readiness – Through culturally-relevant instruction, we will create an educational environment that nurtures creativity, critical thinking, and individualized learning experiences to help students navigate and lead in an interconnected world.
- Make Data-Driven Decisions – We will use evidence-based practices and disaggregated student data to inform instruction, enhance student outcomes, close gaps, and remove barriers to continually improve our learning community.
- Promote Opportunity and Agency – We will strive to provide each and every student with the resources, support, and opportunities they need to succeed.
- Foster a Safe, Supportive, and Inclusive Environment – We will prioritize the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of our students and staff, ensuring a space of belonging where everyone feels safe, respected, and valued.
- Cultivate a Culture of Excellence – We will celebrate high achievement and continuous improvement, supporting our district community in reaching their highest potential while addressing factors that limit access to excellence.

Through these beliefs and commitments, GCPS builds a dynamic, inclusive, and high-achieving learning community. We stand firm in our unwavering dedication to ensuring that each and every student has the opportunity to belong, succeed, and thrive.

### Notice of Nondiscrimination

Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) is committed to equal opportunity, a culture of inclusion, and an environment free from discrimination and harassment in its educational programs, activities, and employment practices. GCPS prohibits discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), age, disability, genetics, or veteran status in its activities, programs, and employment. The prohibition against discrimination applies to all employees, students, Board members, and all other members of the GCPS community, including affiliates, invitees, and guests. In addition, GCPS provides equal access to designated youth groups. GCPS expressly prohibits subjecting any person to discrimination or harassment on the basis of his/her membership in a protected class by the following laws: Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Age Discrimination Act of 1975; Title I and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; and Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008. For more information regarding our GCPS Nondiscrimination policies, call 678-301-6000 or visit the website at <https://www.gcpsk12.org/Page/24942>.

### School Safety Tip Line (770) 822-6513

Students and parents play a critical role in keeping their schools safe. To aid in that effort, the school system operates a confidential hotline. If a parent or child thinks that someone is carrying a weapon, drugs, or alcohol on school property, they can call (770) 822-6513. Callers do not have to give their names. For more information regarding the School Safety Tip line visit <https://www.gcpsk12.org/students/handbook-information-for-students-and-families/2025-26-handbook/handbook/~board/handbook/post/school-safety-tip-line>

# Facts About R.L. Norton Elementary School

## School Name

R. L. Norton Elementary School was created to alleviate overcrowding at Annistown and Centerville Elementary Schools in the South Gwinnett County. The school was named after Robert Lee Norton, a member of the Gwinnett County Board of Education from 1948-1958. Mr. Norton also served as a trustee of the Centerville School for close to 20 years before his service as a dedicated school board member. Mr. Norton resided in the Centerville area for his entire life and was dedicated to serving the community, his church, and the school system. R. L. Norton Elementary School officially opened its doors to students on August 25, 1986.

## School Statistics

EXPECTED ENROLLMENT:	1110
CLASSES:	12 Special Education Self-Contained
	2 Pre-Kindergarten
	7 Kindergarten
	7 First Grade
	8 Second Grade
	8 Third Grade
	7 Fourth Grade
	7 Fifth Grade

## Vision

R.L. Norton Elementary will become a learning community where students, parents, faculty, and staff will acquire knowledge and skills needed to become life-long learners. We will work together as a team within a professional learning environment striving for excellence every day.

## Mission

R.L. Norton Elementary will educate and encourage every student to his/her highest potential through the acquisition of knowledge, skills and appropriate behavior. This will lead to the development of the whole child and optimal student achievement with our local, national, and world-class counterparts.

## Norton is a Title I School

Title I is a federally funded program. It is designed to help all students get a good education and meet academic standards. Norton's schoolwide Title I program offers services and programs that help improve the education of all students. Norton receives thousands of Title I dollars which is used to pay for the following:

- Teacher salaries (which lowers the student/teacher ratio)
- Staff development and release time for teachers to plan instruction
- Extended learning time programs
- Purchasing technology for classrooms
- Purchasing consumable and non-consumable teaching materials
- Paying presenters and childcare providers at parent workshops
- Purchasing materials and resources for the Family Engagement Center
- Learning experiences

All decisions regarding the Title I Program are made at Title I Planning Meetings. These meetings are open to all parents who wish to attend. Planning Meetings help decide which topics are offered at our Parent Workshops, how the Title I funds should be spent, what materials should be purchased for the Family Engagement Center, writing, revising, and approving Title I Documents, and help analyze data

based on our end-of-the-year parent surveys. If you are interested in participating in our Title I Planning Meetings, please contact Beverly McKellar at 770-736-2015 or attend the next Title I meeting. Hard copies of Norton's Title I School-Wide Plan can be found in the Norton Family Engagement Center.

For more information about Title I and Gwinnett County Public Schools, please visit the Gwinnett County Public Schools Federal Programs website.

## General Information from A to Z

### Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS)

Gwinnett's curriculum for grades K–12 is called the Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) and is aligned to the state-adopted Georgia Standards of Excellence in Language Arts (K-12), Mathematics (K-12), and literacy standards for Science, Social Studies, and Technical Education for middle and high school students. The Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) are in place for other content areas. Gwinnett's AKS is a rigorous curriculum that prepares students for college and 21st century careers in a globally competitive future.

The AKS represents the Board of Education's accepted content standards for excellence in academic knowledge and skills for all students. Each course has specific AKS and includes state-adopted standards. State and local assessments measure student learning of the AKS. [The AKS for each grade level and subject area are available on the district website.](#)

### Academic Integrity

Gwinnett County Public Schools is committed to becoming a system of world-class schools where students acquire the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and careers. Guided by our mission to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior for each student, we hold high expectations for all, recognizing that excellence is not exclusive, but an achievable goal for every learner. Central to achieving that goal are the principles of integrity, respect, and accountability in all learning environments. By embracing these principles, our students contribute to a culture of trust and high standards that prepares them to thrive in a diverse and ever-changing world.

#### I. Core Values

All students are expected to uphold the following pillars of academic integrity:

- Honesty: Be truthful in all academic endeavors.
- Responsibility: Be accountable for your own work and actions.
- Respect: Treat others' work and ideas with fairness and acknowledgment.
- Integrity: Maintain ethical behavior even when unsupervised.

#### II. Definitions of Academic Dishonesty

Cheating, including but not limited to, the following:

- Copying or allowing others to copy assignments or assessments
- Using unauthorized materials (e.g., cheat sheets, electronic devices)
- Sharing or receiving test questions or answers
- Submitting work completed by others, including AI-generated content (unless its use is explicitly allowed)
- Paying or asking someone else to complete your work
- Selling or giving your work to others for submission

Plagiarism, including but not limited to, the following:

- Using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation
- Paraphrasing without acknowledgment
- Submitting downloaded or purchased work as your own

Prohibited Artificial Intelligence (AI) Usage, including but not limited to, the following:

- Using AI tools to impersonate others for bullying, harassment, or any form of intimidation
- Overreliance/dependence on AI tools. Students must instead **practice critical thinking by reviewing and evaluating outputs generated by AI before using them**
- Copying from generative AI sources without prior approval and adequate documentation
- Presenting work that has portions created or sourced from AI as a student's original work without citation and/or teacher approved use of AI is considered plagiarism
- Using AI to misuse intellectual property or misrepresent the likeness of others

### III. Expectations for Students

1. Complete all assignments independently (unless collaboration is explicitly allowed).
2. Avoid any form of cheating and/or plagiarism on all assignments and assessments.
3. Engage in appropriate, ethical use of AI.
4. Avoid using unauthorized help or materials.
5. Report observations of academic dishonesty.

### Address and Telephone Changes

**Parents** are responsible for updating contact information for each student through the Parent Portal as well as notifying the school office **in person** of any changes of address, phone number, or any other contact information. The school cannot be held responsible for failure to communicate if it is not informed of such changes. **It is very important that the school has current phone numbers in the event of an emergency.** These changes will be noted in our internal program for the district (Synergy). Please make any changes as soon as they occur by providing proof of new residency. If you have questions please contact the school registrar, Mrs. Alma Garcia at 678-639-3798.

**Address changes require new proof of residency for each student enrolled.** School officials must require the parent or guardian to provide proof of residency in the district and attendance zone (a lease/purchase agreement as well as a notarized residency affidavit and a current gas, water, or electric bill showing name and current address who they are living with or reside).

### Annual Supply Contribution

An annual elementary school supply contribution of \$10.00 per student is requested from parents to supplement supplies of paper, art materials, and enrichment supplies. This contribution does not pay for necessary personal school items such as pencils, notebooks, and notebook paper. Contributions may be paid through MyPaymentsPlus (<https://www.mypaymentsplus.com/welcome>).

These funds are over and above any funds provided under the Quality Basic Education Act of 1985. No student will be denied access to or participation in any course funded by the Gwinnett County Board of Education or by the state of Georgia.

## Attendance

The Norton Elementary school day begins at 8:15 a.m. and students are expected to be in their classrooms by this time. The tardy bell rings at 8:15 a.m. Students arriving after this time are tardy and are to be accompanied to the desk in the main lobby by the parent or guardian for check in procedures and a tardy slip. Tardies due to medical or dental appointments, personal illness, death in the immediate family, or religious holidays are entered as excused tardies. **They will count against Perfect Attendance for award purposes.** Parents are not to escort students to class when they are tardy.

Students should not be dropped off at school or enter in the building before 7:45 a.m. unless they are enrolled in a before-school learning opportunity or accompanying the parent/guardian in a staff-parent meeting/conference. **No staff members are available to supervise your child until 7:45 a.m.**

R.L. Norton Elementary dismisses at 2:45 p.m. On Early Release days in fall and spring, the dismissal time is 12:15 p.m.

### GCPS 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. A minimum level of attendance is required for attainment of the Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) curriculum. The responsibility of school attendance is that of both parents and students. The Superintendent has designated the minimum levels of attendance in procedure consistent with state standards.

The importance of punctual and regular attendance for every student cannot be overemphasized. A good attendance record has a direct effect on academic performance. County Policies state that a social worker will investigate repeated absences. In compliance with the State Law, all absences will be classified as unexcused except those for the reasons of

- personal illness
- death in the immediate family
- religious holidays
- instances where attendance could be hazardous to student health or safety
- 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)
- 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
- 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

**Absence information can be provided through ParentVUE with instructions available on the GCPS website. If the information is not submitted electronically, parents or guardians must send a signed and dated written note (not email or fax) when the student returns to school explaining the reason for the absence, the date(s) of the absence, and a daytime phone number.** Parents are urged to make dental, medical and other appointments for their children after hours, on Saturdays, teacher workdays, or holidays if possible.

**If a child has excused absences of two days or less, work will be "made up" at school, not at home, when the child returns to school.** If students are absent for more than two days, parents may contact the teacher to pick up work. Teachers require a 24-hour period to gather make-up work. Students are expected to complete all work that is missed.

If a written note explaining the reason for absence is not provided upon the students return to school, the absence will be regarded as unexcused. Students must be in school 3 hours and 15 minutes per day on regular school days in order to be counted present for the day. Students are marked absent from school if they check in after 11:30 a.m. or if they leave before 11:30 a.m. on regular school days. Students without tardies and checkouts will earn Norton's Perfect Attendance Award. Habitual checkouts and or tardies will be referred to the combined Student Support Team (SST)/Student Attendance Review Committee (SARC) meeting.

### Backpacks

Students need to use over-the-shoulder backpacks at school. Due to the danger of tripping others and the danger involved in rolling book bags up and down hallways, rolling book bags are NOT allowed.

### Birthday Celebrations

**Birthday treats can only be served by the parent in the school cafeteria during the child's regular lunchtime.** Please collaborate birthday treats during lunch with your child's teacher in order to adhere to all students' medical needs as it relates to food allergies, birthday treats must be store bought. Balloons, flowers, outside food (including pizza or other fast-food items), homemade items, whole cakes, knives or utensils for cutting, etc. **cannot** be brought to students at school. Birthday candles **cannot** be lit, and birthday songs may not be sung during lunch for the safety of all students and staff. **No birthday parties are allowed at school.** Birthday party invitations, unless inviting the entire class, cannot be given out at school.

### Bring it Back/Friday Folders

Students will receive a Bring It Back/Friday folder on a weekly basis. Parents need to check the Bring It Back/Friday folder every week for communication from the school, student work, progress reports, report cards, etc..

### Bus Discipline

Expectations for good behavior also extend beyond the classroom to the school bus. Proper bus behavior is a safety issue. Students receive instruction every year in school bus safety. In addition, riding procedures are reviewed to remind students of the safety rules.

1. Students will follow directions of the bus manager/driver.
2. Students must be at their assigned bus stop 5 minutes before the bus arrives, waiting in a safe place, clear of traffic and 12 feet from where the bus stops.
3. Students will wait in an orderly line and avoid playing.
4. Students will cross the roadway in front of the bus after the bus has stopped, they have looked at the bus manager/driver for a hand signal, and they have looked in both directions for traffic; left, right, left.
5. Students will signal the bus manager/driver with a waving motion if something is dropped and wait for the bus manager/driver to give a signal before picking up the object.
6. Students will go directly to the assigned seat when entering the bus. Keep the aisles and exits clear.
7. Students will remain properly seated, back against the back of the seat, bottom against the bottom of the seat, and keep hands to themselves.
8. Students will not eat, drink, chew gum, or bring tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or any controlled substances on the bus.
9. Students will not carry animals, glass objects, nuisance items, hazardous materials, or weapons onto the bus. Students may carry only objects that can be held in their laps.
10. Students will refrain from using loud voices, profanity, and/or obscene gestures, and respect the rights and safety of others.

11. Students will not extend their heads, arms, or objects out of the bus windows.
12. Students will be totally silent at railroad crossings.
13. Students will stay seated until time to get off the bus.
14. Students are expected to ride the bus to which they have been assigned and to get off at their assigned bus stop. Only in the event of an emergency, as determined by the principal or their representative, will a student be allowed to ride a different bus. Notification of this emergency must be sent to the school in a written note signed by the parent/guardian. The school administrator may provide a bus pass granting permission.
15. Students will keep their bus clean and in good, safe condition.
16. Students are allowed to "Bring Your Own Device" (BYOD), but shall be prohibited from using such device during the operation of the school bus in a manner that interferes with the communication equipment or the bus manager's/driver's operation of the school bus. The bus manager/ driver may allow wearing of headphones with an audio system on a case-by-case basis as long as it is in accord with the local school rules.
17. Students shall be prohibited from using mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus manager's/driver's operation of the school bus.

### **Riding the school bus is a privilege.**

### **Students who do not follow bus rules may lose that privilege.**

#### **Cell Phones**

Subject to the terms of Rule 11 of the Student Conduct Behavior Code of the Gwinnett County BOE, students are permitted to possess electronic cell phones or communication devices on a limited basis. Local school principals have the authority to set forth rules pertaining to student possession and use of such devices at their individual schools. **Students may have cell phones (turned off) in their book bags at school but may not use them without permission from school personnel or on the school bus. School or employees of the school are not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged electronic devices or cell phones. Cell phones are only used at school for instructional purposes and with the permission of school staff.**

#### **Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness**

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ensures certain educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. This law identifies any student who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence as homeless. It provides legal protections for children and youth in homeless situations to immediately enroll in, attend, and succeed in school and qualifying public preschool programs. The law further provides support for student records maintenance and transfer, school of origin transportation, and appropriate dispute resolution for children and youth experiencing homelessness. In accordance with this law, Gwinnett County Public Schools affords children and youth experiencing homelessness equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other non-homeless students. Children and youth experiencing homelessness will have access to needed services to support their academic achievement as they work to meet the same challenging standards to which all students are held. For more information, contact the district Homeless Liaison in the Office of Health and Social Services at 678-301-6882.

#### **Clinic**

A clinic worker staffs the school clinic. First aid is provided to children who suffer injuries or become ill at school. The clinic keeps no medication, including aspirin, on hand to give to students. We will clean cuts and scrapes and apply bandages as needed. Anything requiring further care will be referred to the

parent. By law, the clinic cannot operate as a doctor's office. We will not dispense any medication without prior written approval by parents. Medication must be personally delivered by a parent in the original childproof, labeled container, and the parent must complete necessary consent forms. **Children cannot bring medication to school.** The parent must then pick up any remaining medicine, once treatment is finished. Otherwise, it will be discarded.

**Fever:** If the temperature is 100 degrees or higher, with or without symptoms, a parent will be notified and the student needs to go home. Your child should be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

**Diarrhea and vomiting:** If your child has one episode of loose stool and/or vomiting and appears to feel well, it may not be necessary for your child to be sent home. However, if your child has recurring loose stools and/or vomiting, the child should remain at home until their symptoms clear up.

**Pinkeye:** If your child's eye is red and there is yellow drainage, he should stay home until symptoms are gone.

**Lice:** Children with lice must be picked up. Treatment with a special shampoo and removal of all live lice is required before the child returns to school.

#### **Medication:**

Medication can only be given if complete instructions and a signed note from parents accompany the medication, whether it is aspirin or a doctor's prescription. No medicine will be administered without a signed note from parents. The medicine must be in the original container. Instructions for the medication must include:

1. The child's name
2. The name of the medication
3. The time medication is to be given
4. The amount of medication to be given
5. A written request signed by the parent to administer medicine

**Medicine is not to be kept in a student's desk.** All medicine must be taken to the clinic. Medicine will be administered in the clinic. The teacher will not be held responsible for medication. Should it be necessary for a student to have medication for any duration of time, it will be necessary for the parent to complete a standardized form giving the school permission to administer the medication.

#### **Signs of illness and reasons to exclude from school:**

Fever 100.0 degrees or higher with or without symptoms  
More than one episode of vomiting, diarrhea or severe abdominal pain  
Whites of eyes are pink or red with yellow drainage  
Any open sore oozing fluid  
Any rash with fever or signs of illness  
Suspected impetigo, lice or scabies that has NOT been treated

Each child will be given a **CLINIC INFORMATION CARD** to be completed by the parent or guardian and then returned to the school. This will be kept on file in the clinic. **It is very important that you have at least one name and number of someone who can be contacted in case of an emergency.** It is the parent's responsibility to notify the clinic if any of the telephone numbers change during the course of the school year. The school will not be responsible in cases where a parent cannot be reached because of incorrect or invalid telephone numbers provided by parents. Should an emergency situation arise in which your child needs immediate medical attention, and we are unable to contact anyone, we will call 911, and your child will be taken to the emergency room at parental expense.

## Counseling Program

The School Counseling Department is an indispensable part of each school team. Every school in Gwinnett County has at least one counselor. All GCPS counselors are state-certified, highly-skilled professionals who possess the minimum of a Master's degree or higher in school counseling. Our purpose is to serve 100% of Gwinnett students in removing barriers to academic success. Our goal is to assist students in developing skills and competencies necessary to complement the academic curriculum and impact a positive school climate. Counselors work in cooperation with parents and teachers to provide programs and services that enhance student academic performance, instill respect for lifelong learning, and heighten career awareness and exploration. Counselors provide crisis intervention and serve as a community liaison.

## Deliveries to Students

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, the items are to be left at the front desk. We appreciate parents minimizing the number of deliveries to students because it interrupts instructional time. Balloons, flowers, etc. cannot be delivered or brought to students at school.

## Digital Learning Days

GCPS periodically conducts Digital Learning Days (DLDs) when the school building must be closed on a scheduled school day. On a Digital Learning Day, teachers continue instruction via their online course pages and other digital resources, and students are expected to participate and complete instructional activities with these resources. Schools and teachers will communicate the specific expectations for completing and submitting activities and work.

## Disabilities Service

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.

Norton Elementary wishes to meet the needs of all our students and families. If any member of your family needs assistance or has any questions regarding mobility impaired issues or handicapped access, please contact Dr. Katoria Gaston, Principal or a member of the administrative team.

## GCPS Discipline Policy Statement

Gwinnett County Public Schools ("GCPS" or "District") is committed to creating a safe, positive learning environment for all of our students, staff, parents, stakeholders, and community partners. GCPS will work to assure that all students and staff are well-motivated, fully aware of their potential, and dedicated to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior. GCPS believes that all children can thrive in a safe learning environment. The District utilizes a range of activities to recognize, celebrate, and reward positive behavior at the classroom, school, and district levels. In addition to this Student Conduct Behavior Cod ("Code"), GCPS has various policies that govern conduct in the District. A copy of those policies can be obtained at [www.gcpsk12.org](http://www.gcpsk12.org).

## Scope of the Code

### (MODIFIED VERSION)

Everyone is entitled to a safe, secure, and orderly environment in which to learn and work. The rules and regulations in this Code are designed toward that end and are effective during the following times and places:

- a. On school grounds at any time;
- b. Off school grounds at a school bus stop or on a school bus, or other GCPS provided transportation vehicle
- c. Off school grounds when the behavior of a student (1) could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony; or which could result in a felony criminal charge if committed by an adult; and which (2) makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to person or property at school or which disrupts the educational process. (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.5(c)).
- d. Off school grounds at a school related function. School related functions include any activity sponsored by or associated with an individual GCPS school or the GCPS system. School related functions include, but are not limited to, virtual meetings, virtual classes, athletic and extracurricular events, athletic and extracurricular practices, athletic and extracurricular meetings, athletic and extracurricular conferences, field trips, camps, foreign language trips, booster club meetings and events, parent teacher organization meetings and events, and any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum.
- e. Off school grounds when the misconduct constitutes bullying by use of data or software that is accessed through Gwinnett County Public Schools computer(s), computer system(s), computer network(s), or electronic technology. (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4)
- f. Off school grounds when the misconduct constitutes cyberbullying (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.6).
- g. Off school grounds when the misconduct constitutes an act of physical violence against a teacher, school bus driver, or other school official or employee. (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.6)
- h. Off school grounds during school hours and when a student leaves without permission (AWOL) of a school official or any time Rule 10 would apply.

The rules of this Code do not apply to:

- i. Student speech that occurs off campus if the speech is at a non-school sponsored event and does not cause or is not likely to cause a material and substantial disruption to the school environment or a school activity.

To ensure a proper teaching and learning environment, students will be held accountable to abide by GCPS rules as listed below:

RULE 1 - Disruption and Interference with School

RULE 2 – Damage, Destruction, or Misuse of School Property or Equipment

RULE 3 – Damage, Destruction, or Misuse of Private Property

RULE 4 - Abuse, Threats, Intimidation, Assault, or Battery on a School Employee

RULE 5 - Abuse, Threats, Intimidation, Assault, or Battery by a Student on another Student or to Any Other Person Not Employed by the School

RULE 6 – Weapons, Dangerous Instruments, and Explosive or Implosive Devices

RULE 7 - Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco, and Vaping

RULE 8 - Disregard of Directions or Commands

RULE 9 - Sexual Misconduct/Indecency

RULE 10 - Unexcused Absences

RULE 11 - Other Conduct which is Subversive to Good Order

RULE 12 - Repeated Violations/Misbehavior/Chronic Disciplinary Problem Students

RULE 13 - School Bus Infractions

The decision to charge a student for violation of this Student Conduct Behavior Code shall be made by

the administration of the local school. The range of consequences for misconduct that can be assigned by a local school administrator and staff may include administrative conference, in-school suspension (Opportunity Room), out-of-school suspension, and/or appearing before a discipline hearing for long-term suspension, placement in an alternative program, or permanent expulsion.

### Drug-Free School

The Gwinnett County Board of Education is committed to having schools that are drug-free. It prohibits any unlawful possession, use, manufacture, distribution or dispensation of illicit drugs, tobacco, and alcohol on school premises, in school vehicles or at any school sponsored activities. Counselors reinforce positive choices with students during Red Ribbon week, which is held every year in October. Counselors are also available and can provide families with resources in the area of need.

### Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”)

Parents have certain rights with respect to student educational records pursuant to the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act. These rights transfer to the student when the student reaches the age of eighteen (18) or attends a school beyond the high school level. These rights are summarized as follows:

- The right to inspect and review student educational records maintained by the school;
- An opportunity to challenge the content of the student educational records;
- The right to notice of what information the school has designated as directory information and a reasonable time after such notice to inform the school that the designated information should not be released without prior consent;
- The right for student educational records (or other directory information) to only be released upon written consent to any individual, agency, or organization other than (A) other school officials within the local educational agency with legitimate educational interests; (B) following notification, other school systems in which the student seeks to enroll; (C) specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes; (D) in connection with the student’s application for financial aid; (E) state and local officials pursuant to State law; (F) organizations conducting studies on behalf of the school; (G) accrediting organizations; (H) parents of a dependent student as defined in section 152 or Title 26; (I) in connection with an emergency if necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons; and (J) in compliance with judicial order or pursuant to any lawfully issued subpoena when the educational agency provides proper notification in advance of the compliance.

### Family Changes

If the status of a student’s custody changes after the student is enrolled, the enrolling parent/guardian or agency shall notify the local school of new address and contact phone numbers. Parents/Guardians may be required to facilitate and obtain appropriate guardianship or custody of their child to avoid referral to an outside agency or withdrawal. State law generally prohibits attempts to make a change of the school without permission of the person who enrolled the student. This prohibition applies even if there is a court order granting custody of the child to the person seeking to make the change.

### Field Trips

All school field trips require a parent permission slip. In order for students to participate in field trip activities, parents must submit the required parent permission slip at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled time of the field trip. There are no exceptions to this procedure. Bus transportation expenses and admission fees, if applicable, are requested to cover one field trip per class. No child is denied the opportunity to participate for failure to contribute toward the field trip cost. However, if sufficient funds are not collected, it will be necessary to cancel the field trip.

## Foster Care

Gwinnett County Public Schools' foster care program supports all students placed in out-of-home care who are enrolled in GCPS. When a foster child enters GCPS, the case manager or the foster parent completes the Foster Care Questionnaire (FCQ) form at the local school. The local school submits the form to the GCPS foster care liaison within the Office of Health and Social Services. The local school will notate the student is in foster care via the student management system. This process is repeated at the beginning of every school year and whenever a foster child's placement changes. Within five days of enrollment, a Case Management Consultation (CMC) is held to serve the student. During this meeting, the foster parent, foster care liaison, school counselor, assistant principal, and DFACS worker are invited to discuss the student's strengths and areas of concern, current and previous supports, and, in accordance with House Bill 855, how trauma has affected the child's academic performance and behaviors.

## Grading – Reporting to Parents

The Norton staff continually checks each student's progress so that activities can be planned that lead to improvement. Student progress is reported to parents every semester via a report card. A parent-teacher conference is scheduled twice each year during early release days. The teacher will contact you to schedule these conferences. In addition, you can monitor your child's progress by visiting the Parent Portal to get the **current grades for all the classes** in your child's schedule. Check the school calendar for the dates of the early release days. Because we regard parents as partners, this reporting system emphasizes the need for a close working relationship between home and school. If there are any questions or concerns about your child's progress, please request an additional conference at once.

Students in grades K-2nd are promoted to a higher grade based on proficiency of the current grade-level Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS), reflected in their grades and/or performance data. Specific promotion requirements in grades 3-5 can be found on the GCPS website.

## Homework

Outside assignments may be given to an entire class, to small groups, or to individual students. The amount and type of assignments given may vary with the student's placement and the teacher. These assignments are made to help the child understand, provide additional opportunities to practice, and master concepts and skills and be better prepared for the next day's learning. It is the responsibility of the child to see that these assignments are completed. Please follow up to see that your child does complete his/her work. Please **encourage** your child to read at home daily. Students have an opportunity to check out books as often as needed from the school library. In order to give your child maximum assistance in his/her school work you may wish to use the following guidelines:

1. Praise and/or reward the child for his/her efforts.
2. When asked by your student, provide academic assistance.
3. Encourage him/her to have confidence in his/her own abilities.
4. Work on projects together.
5. When a student is in doubt about assignments, contact a classmate and teacher to obtain the information regarding the assignments.

Demonstrate to your child your interest in his/her school work and learning by asking about the day and discussing work with the family.

## Instructional Support Programs

### English Language Learners (ELLs)

Upon enrollment in GCPS, all parents answer Language Background questions. When newly enrolled students have a primary home language other than English (PHLOTE), they are screened for proficiency in English, even if English is one of the languages they speak. The WIDA Screener for Kindergarten is the assessment used for students through the first semester of first grade. The WIDA Online Screener is used for students in the second semester of first grade through twelfth grade.

Students who are not yet proficient in English are considered to be English Learners (ELs) and are eligible for language support services until they meet the exit criteria set by the Georgia Department of Education.

Elementary school students with a PHLOTE are screened at their local schools. Middle and high school students with a PHLOTE who are new to U.S. schools are screened at the International Newcomer Center (INC) in Lawrenceville. Parents are asked to call the INC at 678-985-5200 to make an appointment and to bring any school records with them. At the INC, International Student Advisors (ISAs) will interview the student and family about previous schooling, screen the student for English language proficiency and math skills, and make recommendations for course placement to help students learn English and grade level content as quickly as possible.

### Gifted

Gifted education programs provide academic challenges by extending GCPS' AKS. The gifted program is called FOCUS at the elementary school level, PROBE at the middle school level, and is referred to as gifted education and QUEST in high school. Students participating in the program in grades K-5 may receive instruction in resource, cluster and/or advanced content classes. Middle and high school students receive instruction in advance content classes. Students are identified and placed in gifted education based on criteria established by the Georgia General Assembly and the Georgia Board of Education. Students who transfer from gifted education programs within the state will be placed into the Gwinnett program, providing the original placement was completed correctly. Students who transfer from out of state must meet Georgia requirements. Parents should notify the school of their interest in the gifted education program at the time of registration. The gifted program teacher at the local school will review the student's educational records and discuss the records with the parents. For more information, contact the local school or call the Gifted Program office at (678) 301-7020.

The gifted education program stresses five areas:

1. AKS extensions
2. advanced content
3. research and reference skills
4. communication skills
5. metacognition/cognitive strategy development

Fundamental to GCPS' curriculum for gifted students are learning experiences that develop the use of thinking strategies and processes. Instruction that develops thinking strategies enables students to make informed decisions, to understand and apply concepts, to make reasonable judgments and to define, create and implement problem solving skills.

Rules and regulations dealing with assessment are approved by the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education. These rules and regulations, called "due process," have been established for the protection and privacy of individuals.

There are three steps in the process of identifying and placing gifted students: referral, evaluation and eligibility.

## **Referral**

The referral process is the first step for entrance into the gifted program. A referral may come from teachers, parents, peers, or as the result of system-wide testing scores. Referrals are reviewed by each school's local gifted referral team. This team determines which students will be evaluated for gifted education placement.

## **Evaluation**

Following parental consent, the local school evaluates the student's mental ability, achievement, creativity and motivation through the use of nationally normed group tests, performance assessments, and survey checklists.

## **Eligibility**

An eligibility team composed of at least three people (a local school administrator, a teacher, a counselor and/or the gifted program teacher) reviews the evaluation information about the referred student. The team follows guidelines set by the State Department of Education when making a decision about the student's placement in the gifted program. The local school notifies parents as to the team's decision.

A student must qualify in the following areas to be placed in the gifted program:

- Mental Ability 96th %ile
- Achievement 90th %ile
- Creativity 90th %ile or 90%
- Motivation 90% (K-5) / 92% (6-12)

Gifted education students are responsible for mastery of GCPS' Academic Knowledge and Skills. However, due to the unique nature of the elementary gifted resource program and the additional workload the students are expected to carry, they will, in most cases, be excused from daily and related homework assignments given while attending classes.

## ***Elementary School (FOCUS)***

At the elementary school level, the gifted program offers extensions of the AKS through academic expansion in a variety of settings. The leadership team at the local school determines which setting is appropriate for the school's student population. Elementary gifted education program settings include resource, magnetism, advanced content, and/or cluster classes. A complete listing of curriculum topics is available through local school gifted education programs.

## **Early Intervention Program (EIP)**

The Early Intervention (EIP) program provides remediation for students in grades K-5 having difficulty with reading and/or math concepts and skills.

## **Insurance**

Student Accident Insurance will be available for students. Forms will be given to parents at Open House, and sent home during the first two months of school in the Friday Folders. Parents will mail the premium directly to the insurance company. Checks should not be made to Norton Elementary School, but to the insurance company. **If you choose not to take out school insurance, please be advised that Norton Elementary will not be responsible for medical expenses if accidents occur.**

## Interrogation and Searches

School administrators and/or their designated representatives possess the authority to conduct a reasonable search and interrogation of students and/or their possessions, if it is established there is reasonable suspicion that the student is in violation of the Student Conduct Behavior Code.

## Lost and Found

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 ask their teacher for permission to visit the Lost & Found. **Please write your child's name inside clothing items. Several times a year all unclaimed clothing items will be donated to local charities.**

## Media Release

Gwinnett County Public Schools uses and releases photographs, audio recordings, and/or video recordings taken or recorded at its facilities and events for educational, instructional, or promotional purposes as determined by Gwinnett County Public Schools for use in broadcast and media formats now existing or created in the future, including social media. These photographs and recordings often include depictions of students and/or parents engaged in instruction, school functions, and school activities. Any such photographs, audio recordings, and/or video recordings shall become the property of Gwinnett County Public Schools and may be used or disclosed by Gwinnett County Public Schools or others with the consent of Gwinnett County Public Schools and/or its representatives to students, parents, community members, or media outlets. By signing the Response Form acknowledging receipt of the Student/Parent Handbook, you consent to the foregoing.

## Nutrition Department

The goal of the school nutrition program is to provide high quality, nutritious meals to all students in Gwinnett County. Eligible students receive meals free or at a reduced price. Applications will be available online on our district website as well as Norton's school website. **Parents must complete a new application each school year.** It is our goal to keep school lunches affordably priced for all students. We will use the computer cash register debit system. Money goes into the student's account to be used for breakfast, lunch, and a la carte items. Pre-pays are accepted daily, and they may be pre-paid online at [www.mypaymentsplus.com](http://www.mypaymentsplus.com). The student's account number will be needed if you choose to pay online. (You may call the above number to receive the student number.) The cafeteria will be open for breakfast items and water until 8:15 a.m. each morning and open again during the lunch period from 10:45am until 1:00pm. No food items or water will be sold to students or staff outside of these hours. Negative balance letters are sent by email every Wednesday and a paper copy goes home every Friday. Parents are invited to have lunch with their child. **Please sit at the visitor's table in the Norton Cafe.** Your child's friends must eat with their regular classes and **cannot** join you for lunch with your child as there is limited seating for visitors.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: FAST FOOD LUNCHES MAY NOT BE CONSUMED IN THE CAFETERIA AND CARBONATED DRINKS AND GLASS CONTAINERS ARE NOT ALLOWED.**

Should you have any questions about the nutrition program, please call the cafeteria manager. Meal prices for the 2025-2026 school year are listed below.

### **Breakfast Menu:**

Full Price - \$ 1.50  
Reduced Price - \$.30  
Parent Price - \$2.50

### **Lunch Menu:**

Full Price - \$ 2.25  
Reduced Price - \$.40  
Parent Price - \$4.00

## Parent Conduct

Parents are welcome to visit the school and support in classrooms at any time. We just ask that you follow the guidelines in the handbook when visiting the school. Please make sure you have proper ID at all times and that your visitor's badge is visible. Please also remember that this is a professional setting with children present. Remember to follow the procedures, be dressed appropriately, and use appropriate language and tone.

## Parking

**Park in visitor parking spaces when visiting the school.** Please note the following reserved areas:

- No parking is permitted in the No Parking Areas, Handicapped Areas, Reserved Parking Area and Fire Lanes at Norton Elementary. Police may issue tickets to violators.
- Speech-only parents are asked to park in parking spaces rather than the bus lane when bringing or picking up students.
- **No parking is allowed in the bus lanes between 7:30 a.m. to 8:25 a.m. and 2:15 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. when buses are arriving and loading/unloading students.**

**Please note that cars are not allowed to enter the front entrance to the school from 7:30 a.m. to 8:25 a.m. and 2:15 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. Student drop off is in the side parking lot through our car rider lane only.**

## Parties

Norton Elementary classes may have two parties per year. One can be a winter holiday party and the other can be an end of year party. The room parent and the teacher may collaborate to plan for these celebrations. So that this can be a special time for our students, siblings are not allowed to attend these parties. Students who bring valentines must have a card for every student in the class. Students may not deliver cards to other classes or to other teachers during class/instructional time. **No other parties, including birthday parties, will be allowed.** Teachers may on occasion serve food items as part of an instructional unit or as a reward for their class. If you wish to help on these occasions, please contact your child's teacher. Out of school party invitations may only be distributed during non-instructional time and must be given to ALL class members.

**Please note: Volunteers may NOT park in the bus and/or fire lanes.**

**Please see related information under "Birthday Celebrations."**

## Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

The faculty and staff at Norton Elementary are committed to providing our students with a safe, secure, and enjoyable school. We believe that a safe and effective learning environment is critical for student achievement. This learning environment can be attained through effective implementation of a positive behavior reinforcement system. We must intentionally teach behavioral expectations, routines and procedures to support student success in our school. As you walk through our school, you will see our behavior expectations posted. All teachers and staff are expected to implement expectations with fidelity. Expectations are listed below:

- **We are Ready!**
- **We are Respectful!**
- **We are Responsible!**
- **We are Comets!**
- **We are the BEST!**

We use the following matrix to reinforce school-wide expectation

		Norton Elementary School				
		Cafeteria	Hallway	Restroom	Playground	Bus
School-wide Expectations	Be RESPECTFUL	<b>QUIET ZONES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the food line</li> <li>When lined up at the exit door</li> </ul> <b>SPEAK QUIETLY WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS AT YOUR TABLE</b>	<b>QUIET</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk only if there is an emergency</li> <li>Pick up your feet when walking</li> </ul>	<b>QUIET</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enter</li> <li>Use the restroom</li> <li>Wash your hands</li> <li>Leave</li> </ul>	<b>BE KIND</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be courteous and polite in actions and speech to everyone</li> </ul> <b>BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS</b> <b>BE MINDFUL OF PERSONAL SPACE</b>	<b>KEEP HANDS AND FEET TO YOURSELF</b> <b>LISTEN AND FOLLOW DIRECTIONS</b> <b>KEEP BUS CLEAN</b>
	Be RESPONSIBLE	<b>PICK UP EVERYTHING YOU NEED WHEN YOU GO THROUGH THE LINE THE FIRST TIME</b> <b>USE GOOD MANNERS WHILE EATING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chew with your mouth closed</li> </ul> <b>CLEAN UP YOUR AREA BEFORE YOU LEAVE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pick up all trash whether it is yours or not</li> <li>Wipe up spills</li> </ul>	<b>STRAIGHT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remain in a straight line under the ceiling strip</li> <li>Hands should be at your side or at your lips</li> <li>Face forward</li> </ul>	<b>BE NEAT AND CLEAN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flush</li> <li>Use soap and water to wash your hands</li> <li>Turn off water</li> <li>Dry your hands</li> </ul> <b>REPORT ANYTHING UNUSUAL TO YOUR TEACHER</b>	<b>USE EQUIPMENT PROPERLY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Return all items to their correct place</li> </ul> <b>MAKE WISE AND SAFE CHOICES</b>	<b>STAY IN ASSIGNED SEATS</b> <b>GET ON AND OFF AT YOUR ASSIGNED STOP</b> <b>FOLLOW BUS PROCEDURES</b>
	Be READY	<b>WALK IN A QUIET, SINGLE FILE LINE WHEN ENTERING OR LEAVING</b> <b>SIT WITH YOUR LEGS UNDER THE TABLE</b> <b>RAISE YOUR HAND IF YOU NEED ANYTHING</b> <b>FOLLOW CONE SYSTEM:</b> Red: Silent Yellow: Warning Green: Talk Softly	<b>SINGLE FILE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You should be behind the person in front of you</li> <li>Keep the line moving</li> <li>Remain an arm's length apart</li> </ul>	<b>BE NEAT AND CLEAN</b>	<b>COME WHEN YOUR TEACHER CALLS YOU</b> <b>KEEP WOOD CHIPS, ROCKS, STICKS, ACORNS, AND DIRT ON THE GROUND</b>	<b>PLEASE SHARE SEATS WITH OTHERS ON THE BUS</b>

Norton's Code of Conduct, as well as any of the rules published in the Gwinnett County Schools Parent/Student Handbook should serve as a guide for your child's daily behavior at school, at the bus stop, and on the school bus.

Teachers may elaborate on these expectations by teaching the students to be leaders and help their classroom run smoothly. Minor offenses of these expectations will be handled by the classroom teacher or any staff member present. If a student becomes continuously disruptive or commits a major offense, he or she will be referred to an administrator. All minor infractions must be entered in Synergy. All of the teachers at Norton will be consistent, fair and firm in their expectations.

Teachers may handle misbehavior by providing the following consequences:

- \* Calming corner/cool down place in classroom
- \* Time out in another classroom
- \* Contacting a parent/guardian
- \* Requesting a conference
- \* Behavior Action Plan
- \* Loss of privileges
- \* Referral to an administrator
- \* Student contract
- \* Student conference

When your child meets with an administrator, he/she will always be asked to explain their side of the story verbally and in writing. Local school administrators shall address major violations, such as disrupting teaching and learning, fighting, vandalism, physical and/or verbal abuse to staff members or peers, refusal to follow the directions of the adult in charge, bullying and any other serious violations in one of the following ways:

- \* Parent contact/conference
- \* Administrative Time Out for the student
- \* Detention (before school, after school)
- \* Out-of-School Suspension
- \* Discipline Hearing

A determination of the consequence will be made by the administrator for all office referrals.

## Personal Property

Cameras, expensive watches, jewelry, and large sums of money are not to be brought to school. Students should also refrain from bringing toys to school. If such items are brought, they are **not the responsibility of the school**. The school will also not assume responsibility for cell phones or tablets. Electronic games and devices and any other fad merchandise are **NOT** permitted at school and will be confiscated. The Gwinnett County Board of Education permits students to have in his/her possession a communication device on a limited use basis. However, the Board prohibits the use by a student of any personal electronic communication device during school hours without the permission of school staff for educational purposes or on a school bus. The local school principal may set forth rules pertaining to student possession and use.

## Pets

The local school principal may set forth rules pertaining to class pets. Please check with the school office.

## Pictures

Student pictures will be taken twice (fall and spring) during the school year. A class picture is also taken at the spring sitting. These are optional and are offered as a service to the students and parents. Fall pictures will be used in the school yearbook. There will also be club pictures in the Spring.

## Privacy

Parents and students are notified that they have a right to expect privacy in educational records. Accordingly, only school system staff, their agents, representatives, and/or consultants have access to student records on a discernable need to know basis. If educational records are requested or subpoenaed by others, parents or adult students will be notified.

## PTA

The Parent-Teacher Association of Norton Elementary is an active part of the school. For more information about PTA visit <https://www.pta.org/>.

## Registration and Records

Please contact Mrs. Alma Garcia at 678-639-3798 for registration information. Children must be 5 years old before September 1 to enroll in kindergarten. Parents of elementary age students residing in the Norton attendance area and new to GCPS are required to register their students on-line.

### Online Registration for NEW STUDENTS

We are excited that your student will be attending a GCPS school. Our school system has an easy-to-use, secure online registration system that will allow you to complete many of the forms required for registering your child. For more information about student enrollment visit <https://www.gcpsk12.org/site/default.aspx?PageID=35561>.

## Responsible Use of Electronic Media for Students

Gwinnett County Public Schools recognizes that the use of technology is prevalent in society. Students and staff have access to the Internet, cell phones, games, and a variety of personal technology devices. Students and staff utilize social media websites and applications as well as a variety of other digital resources that allow them to interact, share, create and innovate. Staff members utilize these same resources as a means to effectively engage and motivate student learning and collaborate with colleagues. These technologies must meet GCPS standards and expectations for communication with students, staff and community members. The same laws, professional standards, expectations, and guidelines for interacting with students, parents, community members, and colleagues apply online as

they do in the real world. The Board has adopted and will enforce the code of ethics adopted by the Professional Standards Commission. Students are expected to comply with the Student Conduct Behavior Code.

It shall be the policy of the Board that the school system shall have in continuous operation, with respect to any electronic devices belonging to the school and/or belonging to individuals accessing the GCPS network, the following:

1. A qualifying "technology protection measure," as that term is defined in Section 1703 (b)(1) of the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000; and
2. Responsible User Agreements signed by all users of the district-wide area network and/or other electronic information services; and
3. Procedures or guidelines developed by the Superintendent, administrators and/or other appropriate personnel which provide for monitoring the online activities of users and the use of the chosen technology protection measure to protect against access through such computers to visual depictions that are (i) obscene, (ii) child pornography, or (iii) harmful to minors, as those terms are defined in Section 1703(b)(1) and (2) of the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000. Such procedures or guidelines shall be designed to:
  - a. Provide for monitoring the online activities of users to prevent, to the extent practicable, access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and the World Wide Web;
  - b. Promote the safety and security of minors when using instruction-related electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications;
  - c. Prevent unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors; and Restrict minors' access to materials "harmful to minors," as that term is defined in Section 1703(b)(2) of the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000.
  - d. Establish consequences for students and employees who willfully violate the acceptable-use- procedures.
  - e. Provide for an expedited review and resolution of a claim that the policy is denying a student or school employee access to material that is appropriate for instructional, administrative, and/or business purposes.
4. Students will also be educated about appropriate online behavior, including safe interactions with other individuals on social networking websites, electronic chat room safety, and cyberbullying awareness and prevention.

### School Safety

The school district is committed to providing a safe environment for students, staff, and visitors. It works closely with national, state, and local safety personnel to ensure our schools are well prepared for an emergency. School Resource Officers, or SROs, are police officers employed by the school system and are located in Gwinnett schools. In addition to policing school campuses, these officers focus on educating students and staff on safety issues and working with school administrators on school safety plans. Each year, school administrators review and make any necessary modifications to their school's Emergency Management Plans. Every school conducts emergency drills throughout the school year so that students and staff are aware of the most effective and safe emergency responses.

### School Cancellations/Inclement Weather

During inclement weather, GCPS usually announces plans for a Digital Learning Day or full-day cancellations by 6 a.m. Once a decision is made, the district posts the announcement on the district

website; GCPS TV; via School Messenger; Facebook, and Instagram; and via metro-Atlanta radio and television stations. School closings are determined by the Superintendent, not by the local school.

In cases when bad weather moves in during the school day, district leaders determine the safest and most efficient way to get students home. Should GCPS schools release early or cancel afternoon or evening activities, notifications to families are made using the communication vehicles mentioned previously.

## **Student Recognition/ Awards**

At R. L. Norton Elementary School, we want to recognize all students in a positive way. In addition to the many things that are done by staff in their classrooms, there are semester school-wide programs to recognize students. An end of semester student award program will be held for students earning academic or attendance accomplishments. These ceremonies will be held during the months of January (first semester recognition) and May (second semester and/or all year recognition).

### **Attendance**

Students with perfect attendance during each semester and/or for 180 days will receive recognition during a special assembly each semester. Perfect Attendance at Norton Elementary means in school every day with no tardies or checkouts.

### **Principal's Honor Roll**

The Principal's Honor Roll will be awarded to all students in grades Pre-K through 5 who earn all A's or E's in the academic areas and E and/or S in special areas classes each semester grading period during a special assembly each semester.

### **Honor Roll**

Honor Roll will be awarded to all students in grades Pre-K through 5 who earn A's and B's or E's and S's in the academic areas and E and/or S in special areas classes each semester grading period during a special assembly each semester.

### **Outstanding Behavior Recognition**

Two to four students per class in grades Pre-K through 5 are selected by their classroom teacher based on exceptional behavior at school and during any school function each semester grading period during a special assembly each semester.

### **Best Effort Recognition**

Two to four students per class in grades Pre-K through 5 are selected by their classroom teacher based on overall progress – The classroom teacher sets the criteria for this award. Examples: effort towards improving grades, effort towards improving conduct, effort towards following school rules etc. Best effort recognition will be awarded to students each semester grading period during a special assembly each semester.

### **Math, Reading, Science, and Social Studies Whiz**

Each classroom teacher will select two students who demonstrate excellence in Math, two students who demonstrate excellence in Reading, two students who demonstrate excellence in Science, and two students who demonstrate excellence in Social Studies each semester during a special assembly.

### **Wonderful Writers Recognition**

Two students per class in grades Pre-K through 5 are recognized for demonstrating excellence in writing. Wonderful Writers recognition will be awarded to students each semester grading period during a special assembly each semester.

## Student School Dress Code

The dress of a student is primarily the responsibility of the student and the parents. **We expect students to dress in such a way that is safe for themselves and their peers, not distracting to teachers or other students, and does not disrupt the instructional program of the school.** Students are encouraged to dress appropriately for school in clothes that are suitable to weather conditions and for safety. When a student's dress is felt to be detrimental to the learning environment and is in violation of any of the guidelines, he/she will be asked to change into clothing kept in the clinic or call his/her parents to bring something more appropriate. Please use the following guidelines to help your child select school appropriate clothing:

1. Clothing should fit properly so that students can move with ease and be comfortable throughout the day.
2. Clothing should cover the body and should not show midriffs or underwear, be see-through, have thin straps, be torn or have revealing holes, or be excessively short or tight. Tank tops and dresses must have straps at least three finger-lengths wide on each side and shorts, dresses, or skirts should extend to the length that finger-tips can touch the bottom of the hem when standing.
3. Clothing should depict kind, positive images and encouraging words. Clothing should not depict or symbolize offensive words or designs, such as violence (blood, death, weapons), sex, hate groups, negative or disrespectful attitudes, and drugs (including alcohol and tobacco). This is in accordance with School Board policy JCD – Student Conduct Behavior Code.
4. Clothing should not present a safety hazard for your child. Examples include sagging pants that won't stay up without holding them, wheeled shoes which are unsafe on the recess field or at PE, or jewelry worn in pierced areas other than the ears.
5. Only athletic type shoes and appropriate clothing are to be worn to PE for safety reasons. Students who come unprepared cannot participate, and their grade will be affected.
6. Hair coloring and styles should not be a distraction or keep any child from being able to see.
7. Hats are to be worn in the building only on designated hat days. Hats may be worn outside as long as they do not cause disruption.

School reserves the right to determine if an article of clothing could be considered too dangerous or inappropriate. You will be contacted and asked to bring a change of clothes to school. If you have a question about the appropriateness of an article of clothing, send a change of clothing with your child just in case.

## Sign In/Sign Out of Students

**SCHOOL HOURS: 8:15 A.M. - 2:45 P.M.**

Students are expected to be at school on time and not leave unless signed out by an authorized person. Proper picture identification is required to check out a student from school. **Students must be checked-out BEFORE 2:15 p.m.** Students and parents are encouraged to become familiar with school hours and arrive at school between 7:45 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. **Students arriving at school after 8:15 a.m. must be signed in at the front office by the adult bringing the student to school, prior to the student going to the classroom. Parents may not escort tardy students to class.** Students with excessive tardies and/or early checkouts will be referred to the attendance committee.

Students may be dismissed early only when an authorized person comes in requesting the student's early dismissal and provides the proper identification. In order to prevent an unnecessary disturbance in the classroom, parents or visitors must wait in the lobby for the student(s) being checked out. **Office personnel will call for the student once he/she is officially signed out.** Relatives, neighbors, etc. will not be allowed to check out any student unless authorization is on file. School officials will require verification of identification or custody from anyone requesting to check a student out of school.

## Snacks

Parents are encouraged to send healthy snacks to school with their students. **No sodas, candy, colored juices, juice boxes, chewing gum, or thermos containers of juice are allowed.** A water bottle is encouraged.

## Student Planner/Agenda Book

Kindergarten through fifth grade students maintain a student planner/agenda book throughout the school year. The student planner/agenda book serves as a place to record class work and homework assignments each day. In addition, the student planner/agenda book provides a daily means of communication between home and school. It is the student's responsibility to have and maintain the planner/agenda book. Parents should review the student planner/agenda book daily as a means to keep informed about the student's progress and content of classes.

## Tardies

Tardiness is a part of attendance and will be recorded on the report card. **Students are considered tardy if they are not in their classrooms at 8:15 a.m. by the school clock.** For the safety of your student, **parents must accompany their child inside the building to sign them in if your child is tardy.** A pass to class will be completed before the student goes to the classroom. **Parents may not escort tardy students to class.** All tardy students must obtain a late pass before going to class. Tardies due to medical or dental appointments, personal illness, death in the immediate family, or religious holidays are entered as excused tardies. **This will count against perfect attendance awards.** Excessive tardies and/or early checkouts will be referred to the combined Student Support Team (SST)/Student Attendance Review Committee (SARC).

## Transportation

Gwinnett County Public Schools provides bus transportation for all students living within the Norton Elementary attendance district. **We strongly encourage all students to utilize bus transportation to and from school on the first day and every school day.**

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. On buses, the bus driver is responsible for maintaining discipline. Bus drivers will attempt to settle any behavior problems, but because of the nature of their job, they are restricted in their efforts to deal effectively with discipline. If a student is a persistent behavior problem; a bus referral will be filed by the driver and turned in to the school. The student is allowed to respond to the complaint. Copies are sent home for the parent to sign. Every effort will be made to correct misbehavior with mutual cooperation between the parents and the school. Students can be suspended from riding the bus depending on the severity of the problem and/or the number of discipline referrals. Students will not carry animals, glass objects, nuisance items, hazardous materials, or weapons onto the bus. Students may only carry objects that can be held on their laps.

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 from the student's parent is submitted to the front office. **FOR THE SAFETY OF STUDENTS, BUS CHANGES ARE FOR A ONE-DAY PERIOD OF TIME ONLY.**

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 as determined by an administrator.

A **TPA** (Transportation Parent Authorization) form designating plans for your child's transportation to and from school will be checked and completed during registration or Open House. **Any change in this plan must be emailed to [NortonESTransportation@gcpsk12.org](mailto:NortonESTransportation@gcpsk12.org) with a photo id from the parent or guardian on file. On a daily basis, children have one way to school and one-way home. *Transportation changes are for a one-day period of time.* If a parent or guardian wants to make a **permanent change** to your child's transportation, you will need to come to the school and complete a new TPA form.**

For students who are dismissed to a local daycare in the afternoon, the daycare must complete an Enrollment Verification Form. The parent must provide the Enrollment Verification Form along with the completed TPA (Transportation Parent Authorization) to the front office.

In a true emergency, a change of transportation by email to the principal will be accepted **one time only during the school year for a student.** This email must include a copy of the parent or guardian's driver's license and the office staff must be alerted by telephone to notify the principal of the email sent.

Should an alternative student mode of transportation at dismissal time become necessary, parents should check their child out in the front office with proper identification.

If transportation changes are made early in the day, the teacher will initial the parent's hand written note and send it to the front office for record keeping. A copy of the note will be given to the student to be presented to an adult monitor at the time of dismissal. This procedure should ensure that the adult monitors are aware of students who are not regularly car riders. Additionally, the initial on the note should ensure that the teachers and/or paraprofessionals are aware of the change in dismissal for the student. Please Be Advised: If a student is returned to school and a parent cannot be reached, Gwinnett County Police may be contacted.

Buses occasionally get behind schedule because of breakdowns or weather. Every effort to keep buses on schedule or to make other arrangements to get your child home as soon as possible will be made. Plan to have your child ready to catch the bus 5 minutes before the usual arrival time and 5 minutes after the usual arrival time. It is the child's responsibility to catch the bus daily. Children who miss the bus from school to home must make arrangements by telephone with parents for transportation home.

#### Bus Lanes

The front parking lot is designated for loading and unloading buses only. In compliance with the posted sign, **no cars should enter the front parking lot while buses are loading or unloading. Please note: Bus unloading times are 7:45 a.m. - 8:15 a.m. and loading times are 2:45 p.m.- 3:15 p.m. It is not safe for school buses and cars to share the same loading and unloading zones. To ensure the safety of all students, do not use the front parking lot as a car rider zone. Buses continually enter and exit the lot during our time frame both before and after school.**

#### Car Riders

If you choose to transport your child, please adhere to the following guidelines. All procedures are set to ensure the safety of your child and others.

#### **Morning Drop Offs: 7:45-8:15 AM**

- Car rider drop-off begins at **7:45 a.m.** No students may be dropped off prior to this time, as there is no adult supervision available until **7:45 a.m.**
- Students should remain in their cars until the cars reach the unloading area. School personnel will be there to supervise unloading students (unless weather conditions are unsafe for our staff). Parents are to remain in their cars and students are to exit their vehicle on the sidewalk side. Students will need to open and close their car doors.
- Students who exit their vehicles from the sidewalk where staff is present will enter the building through a side door entrance in the car rider lane.
- Morning drop-off closes at 8:15 a.m. Staff members are needed at this time to begin their regular morning classroom duties. **Please note: Instruction begins at 8:15 a.m.** If students are not in class by 8:15 a.m. by the school clock, they are considered tardy. The car rider line can be lengthy as the 8:15 start time nears; you may wish to plan your morning accordingly so your children are on time and ready to begin instruction at 8:15 a.m.

### **No Left Turns from Xavier Ray Court**

- **Time:** 7:30–8:25 AM
- Prevents traffic backups and keeps bus access clear.

### **No Left Turns Out of the School Parking Lot**

- **Time:** 7:30–8:25 AM
- Helps maintain a steady and safe traffic flow.

### **Walking Your Child In?**

- If you park, you must **walk your child to the front entrance**—do not let them walk alone.

### **No Student Drop-Offs in the Parking Lot**

- For safety, all drop-offs must occur in the car rider line where staff are stationed to assist.

### **Afternoon Pickups: 2:45-3:15 PM**

- Afternoon car rider pick-up begins at 2:45 p.m.
- Please always keep your car rider tag clearly visible during dismissal.
- Our staff uses the tag to call the correct car rider number.
- After your child's number has been called, keep the tag displayed on your dashboard until your child is safely in the vehicle.
- This process helps ensure students get into the correct car and supports their safety.
- We ask for your patience as arrival and dismissal routines settle during the first few weeks of school.
- **Students who are car riders will not be released to adults who "walk up."** This is done to ensure children are safely released to the proper adults via car rider numbers assigned. This procedure will be followed to ensure the safety and security of each and every child.
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### **Check-outs:**

- For the smooth operation of our end-of-day procedures, we kindly ask that all student check-outs be completed before 2:15 p.m.
- Anyone picking up a student in the car rider line must have a current and valid car rider number/tag. If not, students will be checked out of school from the front of the school by an adult with appropriate identification.

## **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 Norton Elementary School.

**Any visitor with legitimate business on school grounds must sign in at the front desk in the main lobby and wear a visitor's pass.** The visitor's pass must be clearly visible the entire time the visitor is on campus. To ensure the safety and confidentiality of students, Gwinnett Public Schools limits classroom visitors to:

- The parents/guardians (or court appointed guardians) of current students;
- Other family members of current students who are approved by the student's parent/guardian; and
- Those persons invited by the Gwinnett County Public Schools for official business.

The principal or designee may, at his/her discretion, grant or deny permission for classroom visits and determine the duration of time.

Students should not bring student visitors to school.

**Parents and visitors MUST make an appointment to see a teacher, the principal or assistant principals, the counselor, or to visit their children's classes. Administration retains the right to limit visitor's time in the building.**

No student or unauthorized visitors may remain on the school campus after regular school hours without supervision.

School personnel have the authority to warn persons trespassing to leave the facilities or properties. Persons who refuse are subject to prosecution under the laws of the State of Georgia.

**Please note: For safety/security, reasons outside doors, except the front doors, will remain locked during the school day.**

Teachers will schedule volunteers to work in the classroom for specific days and times.

**Volunteers are not to bring siblings into the classrooms while volunteering.**

During your visit to the school or your child's classroom, the instructional program must continue, so please do not expect the teacher to hold a conference with you at this time. Additionally, teachers are not able to hold conferences with parents during lunch as they are expected to monitor student safety. As a courtesy to the teacher, please make a prior appointment for visitation.

**NO VISITORS, PARENTS, OR STUDENTS ARE TO BE IN A CLASSROOM UNLESS THE TEACHER IS PRESENT.**

Neither parents nor students should be given a key to a classroom if a student is checked out while the teacher is away from the classroom. The parent and child will need to wait until the teacher returns from lunch or other appointment or duty. For this reason, we ask parents to write a note in the morning if they know they will be checking a student out during the school day so that the teacher can have the child's belongings ready at the designated time.

### Who Do I Contact? Resolution Flow Chart

The flow chart below will assist you should you have questions or concerns regarding your child. The Norton Administrative Team would like parents to follow this chart to resolve any questions and/or concerns you may have. Thank you.

