



**Carter Elementary School
Student and Family
Handbook
2025-2026**

This handbook outlines the instructional and behavioral expectations for Carter Elementary School students and families for the 2025-2026 school year. Please read the following pages to familiarize yourself with our school policies and procedures, all of which align to the KCS Board of Education Policies ([found here](#)), and complete the form *on the last page indicating that you have read and reviewed the handbook with your student and agree to abide by the guidelines and expectations as stated.*

ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

Mission Statement

Each day, all Hornets learn, improve, and strive to be their best. Carter Elementary School will be a CHAMPION for all students - academically, socially, and emotionally. We will provide high-quality, research-based instruction and instructional methods that allow students the opportunity to master academic knowledge and social skills necessary to be independent, responsible, and productive members of society.

Vision

The vision for Carter Elementary School is to support students in becoming successful members of their community. We will teach students how to...

- Follow directions
- Be self-confident
- Be problem solvers
- Be active learners
- Make good choices
- Adapt to change
- Celebrate their own and others' successes
- Be responsible, cooperative, and trustworthy
- Be positive and polite
- Be respectful of himself/herself, others, and others' property

Schoolwide Expectations

Everyday, we will display Hornet PRIDE in all school areas by being:

Positive

Respectful

Involved

Dependable

Excellent

GENERAL INFORMATION

OFFICE HOURS

- 7:10am to 3:15pm

REGULAR SCHOOL HOURS

- 7:45 AM – 1:30 PM for Pre-K
- 7:45 AM - 2:45 PM for students in grades K-5

HALF-DAY HOURS

- 7:30 AM – 10:15 AM for Pre-K
- 7:45 AM - 11:15 AM for students in grades K-5

EARLY RELEASE DAYS

The Early Release Day is aimed at improving student learning outcomes by providing regular, designated times for teachers to prepare lessons, evaluate student progress, work together, and receive professional development.

There will be four early release days this school year:

- September 17th
- November 19th
- January 28th
- March 28th

On these days, dismissal will follow the same schedule as a normal half day, and students will be dismissed at 11:15. Bus routes will still run.

INCLIMATE WEATHER POLICY

The decision to close or delay the opening of school due to inclement weather or a disaster is made by personnel at the Central Office of the Knox County School System. Local television and radio stations will broadcast school closings or early dismissals just as soon as the decisions are made.

If it has been determined that schools will need to open on a delayed schedule, the opening time of the school will be determined by how many hours KCS Central Office has delayed the start time. The delayed operation schedule will be as follows:

- 1-hour delay - School will open at 8:00. Students will be considered tardy at 8:45
- 2-hour delay - School will open at 9:00. Students will be considered tardy at 9:45.

SECURITY

- Security procedures at CES are a top priority, and we will not make exceptions to any safety/security procedure or policy.
- All exterior doors and windows are locked at all times.
- Admission to the building requires that a person buzz the office at the front door and wait to be admitted.
- Please do not hold the door open for anyone else or enter the building when a door is opened.
- All visitors will be asked to show ID at the front desk and sign in. IDs must be checked every time.

- Classroom doors are required to be locked during the day as well.
- Parents are not allowed in the building during regular hours without a staff escort unless they are scheduled volunteers and have checked into the office and been verified.

AFTER-SCHOOL CARE

- Kids Place Inc. provides on-site after-school care for students in Kindergarten through 5th grade. Call 660-7293 for more information or to register.

STUDENT DELIVERIES TO SCHOOL

- While it is thoughtful to give balloons, flowers, or stuffed animals to a child for their birthday or holiday, **no items delivered to students will be accepted in the school office.** Please make plans for these items to be delivered at home. Due to the serious nature of food allergies, **no** outside food is permitted without prior approval. Students may **not** have food/restaurant deliveries made to school (i.e.: GrubHub, UberEats, DoorDash, etc.)

BIRTHDAYS & CLASS PARTIES

- Treats to celebrate birthdays may be sent to school at the discretion of the classroom teacher.
- Per Knox County procedures, no outside, home-made items may be given to children; all treats must be store-bought and in the original, sealed container. Parents may also send a check or cash in to purchase ice cream from the cafeteria for the entire class.
- You will need to contact your child's teacher PRIOR to bringing treats for the class to obtain approval.
- Classrooms may celebrate with parties periodically throughout the year.
- Details will be communicated by classroom teachers.
- Thematic activities for seasons or holidays will be limited, linked to standards, and not promote any religious beliefs.

MEDICATION POLICY ([Board Policy J-352](#))

- No medication of any kind shall be self-administered or administered by school personnel to students except when medication must be given on a long-term basis and is necessary to be given during school hours for the child to remain in school. A doctor's form must be on file.
- Medications such as Tylenol, aspirin, and other over the counter (O.T.C.) medications are included in these regulations. The School Nurse or his/her representative will monitor the administration, documentation, and storage of all medications on a regular basis.
- All medication should be brought in by the guardian of the child to the school nurse.

Parents/guardians are responsible for picking up any unused medication at the end of the treatment or at the end of the school year. Any medications not picked up shall be destroyed as per Knox County policy.

LUNCH WITH YOUR STUDENT

- Only those listed on the child's contacts list will be able to have lunch with the student.
- If you choose to come eat lunch with your child, you must check-in at the front office, and you will then be escorted to the cafeteria. Once your child enters the lunch room to get in line, you may join them.
- You may only sit with your child(ren) at the designated lunch table.
- You should not be taking pictures of other students while in the cafeteria. We ask that you keep your phone up in general, and just enjoy the time with your kiddo(s). If you are caught taking pictures or videos of other students you will be asked to leave and if another warning has to be given at a later date, you may

not be allowed to come in and eat with your child for the remainder of the school year.

ARRIVAL, DISMISSAL, AND STUDENT ATTENDANCE

STUDENT ARRIVAL

- *We begin welcoming our students at 7:10 AM.* Students may not be dropped off at school prior to that time.
- Students will report to the cafeteria to eat breakfast and will remain in the cafeteria until 7:15. After 7:15 they will walk to the gym.
- If students choose not to eat breakfast, they will report directly to the gym. Students will not be permitted to leave the gym to return to the cafeteria.
- Breakfast will be served until 7:35. After that, the cafeteria will be closed for breakfast to ensure students get to class on time. Please be sure to have your child here prior to 7:35 if you would like for them to have breakfast at school.
- Students are to be in classrooms and ready to learn by 7:45 AM. A child who is not in class by 7:45 will be given a tardy slip.
- If your child is not in the building by 7:45 A.M., you will need to come to the front door and sign in your child. Please park in a designated parking spot, as parking in the fire lanes is prohibited at all times.
- Excessive tardiness may result in parental contact by our social worker.

STUDENT DISMISSAL

- All requests for dismissal changes, either method of transportation or person responsible for pick-up, must be made in writing. To ensure student safety, no changes to pick-up will be accepted over the phone.
- **Early Dismissal**
 - There will be no early dismissals after 2:15.
 - Early checkouts are occasionally necessary; however, frequent early dismissals disrupt the learning of the entire classroom.
 - If you have an appointment that requires the early dismissal of your child, please send a note to the classroom teacher that morning.
 - Knox County policy regarding early dismissal states that students who are dismissed early before 11:15 will be counted as absent.
 - Any person checking out a child must enter the office and show ID before the office will call the child up for dismissal.
- **Car Riders:**
 - The GREEN & WHITE car tag must be hung from your rear-view mirror or on the passenger side of your dashboard with the student name visible.
 - Any car not displaying a car tag will be required to park and walk to the front door to show ID. You will then have to wait to get your child until all car riders are dismissed.
 - Please be patient and respectful of staff and other drivers during car dismissal. We have a large number of car riders. The line will go slow at first; however, after we get in a routine, it should begin to go a little faster. The safety of our kids is our top priority, so please follow traffic rules and do not have cell phones out while in the car rider line.
- **Bus Riders:**

- School bus routes and stops are arranged by the Transportation Department and may not be modified by parents, drivers, or school personnel. Requests for changes may be made by completing a form available in the school office. Pre-K students are not eligible to ride buses.
 - To find your bus route or stop, contact the transportation department or check your route online under the For Families tab on Knox County Schools website at <http://www.knoxschools.org>.
 - Students are expected to follow each of the Knox County policies and procedures. Riding a bus is a privilege (not a right), and the privilege may be revoked if a student fails to follow bus expectations.
 - **Bus Expectations:**
 - Obey the bus driver and bus aide.
 - Follow the bus driver's/bus aide's first request.
 - Enter and exit the bus quietly and safely.
 - Stay seated at all times when the bus is in motion and adhere to seating charts.
 - Use respectful language and tone of voice and speak quietly.
 - Refrain from eating or drinking on the bus.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

- Parents/Guardians have a legal responsibility to ensure that their student(s) are fully participating in school.
- Tennessee law requires children to be in class for no less than three hours and fifteen minutes per day in order to be counted present for the day.
- Knox County Board of Education policy allows students' absences from school be excused only for the following reasons:
 - personal illness
 - illness in the family temporarily requiring help from the child
 - death in the family with documentation
 - recognized religious holidays regularly observed by persons of the student's faith
 - verifiable family emergency.
- When a student is absent, parent notes/doctor notes **must be submitted to the school office**. Families have up to ten (10) parent notes that can be submitted. There is no limit on medical notes.
- Excuses for absences must be made in writing and must be submitted within five (5) days of the student's return to school.
- **Family trips/vacations are not excusable absences.** Please see Knox County Board of Education Attendance Policy ([J-120](#)) regarding absence documentation and other details.

MAKE-UP WORK

- If a student must be absent from school for any reason, excused or unexcused, up to ten (10) days upon returning to school, he/she shall be given the opportunity to make up any and all assignments that were missed.
- Teachers shall set a reasonable time for the completion of the work.
- Failure of a student or parent to initiate a request for make-up work within three (3) days may result in a lost opportunity for credit for that assignment.

Communication and Family Engagement

Knox County School Civility Code (KCS Board Policy B-230)

It is the intent of Carter Elementary and Knox County Schools to promote mutual respect, civility, and orderly conduct among employees, parents, and the public. The intent of this policy is to maintain, to the greatest extent reasonably possible, a safe, harassment-free workplace for teachers, other staff, students, parents, and other members of the community.

Any individual...

- disrupting, threatening, attempting to do or doing physical harm to personnel, students, or others lawfully on school premises,
- intentionally causing damage to school property,
- using loud, vulgar, obscene, or offensive language,
- entering a part of the school closed to the public may be directed to leave the school property by the school administrator or designee.

Should the person refuse to leave the premises as directed, the administrator or designee shall seek the assistance of law enforcement and request that law enforcement take action as necessary. Should the offender threaten personal harm, the administrator or designee shall contact law enforcement officers.

Should a school employee receive written communication, email, or voice message that is abusive, threatening, or obscene; the employee is not obligated to respond.

SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

- The primary method for parent communication for Carter Elementary School is Parent Square.
- ParentSquare works on any device, and you may download the free mobile app or use the desktop version.
- Please allow up to 24 hours for a returned call or email. Staff members are not required to respond to emails or phone calls outside of quiet hours (5:00 p.m. - 7:00 a.m.).
- Prompt communication is important to us, and we will do our best to be transparent and responsive at all times.
- Additional methods of communication include:
 -  Carter Elementary School

STUDENT EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

- **Please return the student information sheet with any changes to your child's information by Friday, August 29th.** If you need to make changes after this date, you will need to do so in person in the front office.
- Please be sure to include the names and phone numbers of all relatives/friends assigned to pick up your children. For security purposes, we will not allow your child to leave school or eat lunch with anyone who is not on the emergency card.
- We encourage you to think of **EVERYBODY** you wish to include to pick up your child.
- No student will be released to anyone not listed as an emergency contact.
- You must show your photo IDs when checking out your student(s). Students will not be released without proper identification. No exceptions.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

- Parent-teacher conferences are an important part of student achievement. In addition to the Interim Report and the 9-week report card, parent-teacher conferences provide an opportunity for

communication about your child's progress.

- Each grade level will continue a scheduled window for Parent-Teacher Conferences in the fall and the spring.
- To arrange a conference at any other time, you should call the school office, email the teacher, or write a note to the teacher.
- Conferences will not be held without an appointment, and teachers will not be called out of class to talk with parents during the instructional day to protect the learning of all students.

Parents are encouraged to be familiar with teacher grading and homework procedures and to check the Aspen Family Portal daily to monitor student progress. Setting up grade notifications in the Parent Portal is an excellent tool because parents will receive an email every time a grade is recorded that falls below the threshold set in the system. For help with Family Portal, check out the video tutorials on the Pages tab of your account or access the Help documents linked below:

- [Aspen Family Portal Help Mobile](#)
- [How to Update Your Email Address](#)
- [How to Set Parent Notifications in the Family Portal](#)

Visitors/Volunteers (Board Policy C-210 and I-260)

- To ensure the safety of our students and staff, all visitors will be required to have an appointment prior to arrival. Once at school, visitors will check-in with the main office and receive a visitor badge upon entering the building. Visitors **must** have a state issued photo id.
- If you are dropping off forgotten items, you may leave them in the office, and a staff member will make sure it is delivered to the student.
- All volunteers must have the appropriate level of clearance required for whatever volunteer service they are providing.
- All parents volunteering in or visiting classes will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement in accordance with the Federal Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA). Parents wishing to visit a classroom for any reason must obtain permission from the classroom teacher at least 24 hours in advance, and visits should be limited to no more than half an hour to respect instructional time.
- Children who do not attend CES may **not** accompany volunteers during their visits. We do allow siblings to attend Field Day as long as they are not school-age (not enrolled in a K-12 school program). Children who are enrolled in a school other than CES will not be allowed to attend Carter Elementary events (field day, awards ceremonies, special programs, etc.) during the school day, as this is a violation of our district attendance policy. This includes students enrolled in homeschool programs.

INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDELINES

CURRICULUM

- Carter Elementary School will utilize KCS approved curriculum to address the demands and expectations of TN Academic Standards.
- A list of KCS Textbooks and Adopted Curriculum can be found [here](#).
- TN Academic Standards can be found [here](#).

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

- Teachers will provide a variety of assessments to determine student mastery of the course content. Assessments may include discussion-based assessments, essays, project-base assessments, formative

assessments, and district and state standardized assessments. Students will be expected to adhere to all assessment policies for diagnostic, benchmark, and Standards-Based Assessments.

● Interim report cards are posted every four and a half weeks, and quarterly report cards are posted every nine weeks. Reports are published electronically to the Aspen Family Portal unless a hard copy is requested. Kindergarten reports are sent home in hard copy. Below is the KCS grading scale:

Grades 3-5	Grades 1-2
A - Excellent (93-100) B - Above Average (85-92) C - Average (75-84) D - Below Average (70-74) U - Unsatisfactory (0-69)	E (Excellent) = 93-100 S (Satisfactory) = 92-75 N (Needs Improvement) = 74 and below

LATE WORK

- Late work, even with parent communication, may not be accepted more than two (2) weeks after the due date. It is important to note that this policy is intended for work that is infrequently late. Consistently turning in late work is not acceptable.
- Students must not assume teachers will repeatedly accept late work without prior approval. At times, circumstances out of our control (i.e.: illness, weather-related events, family issues, or other major events) would require an exception to this policy. If this is the case, talk to your student’s teacher. Continued failure to turn in work on time will result in a lowered grade.

FIELD TRIPS

- Field trips are an extension of the educational program, and students from Carter Elementary will have opportunities to participate in field trips during the school year.
- No student will be excluded from attending a field trip based on participation in interventions or programs such as Gifted & Talented, English as a Second Language, Speech, etc.
- Students must demonstrate appropriate behavior and demonstrate self-discipline, good character, and qualities consistent with our school-wide expectations while away from the school.
- While it is our desire that all students take part in these learning opportunities. Safety always comes first.
- In order to ensure student safety, Carter Elementary uses the following field trip guideline:
If a student fails to demonstrate mastery of school-wide behavior expectations during the grading period in which the field trip occurs, the student may not be allowed to take part in the field trip opportunity. Mastery of the behavior expectations is defined as earning a C or better for Classroom Behavior (including Encore classes) and receiving no major office referrals.

The principal reserves the right to approve exceptions to field trip behavior guidelines in consultation with the classroom teacher and appropriate school staff.

STUDENT SUPPORTS

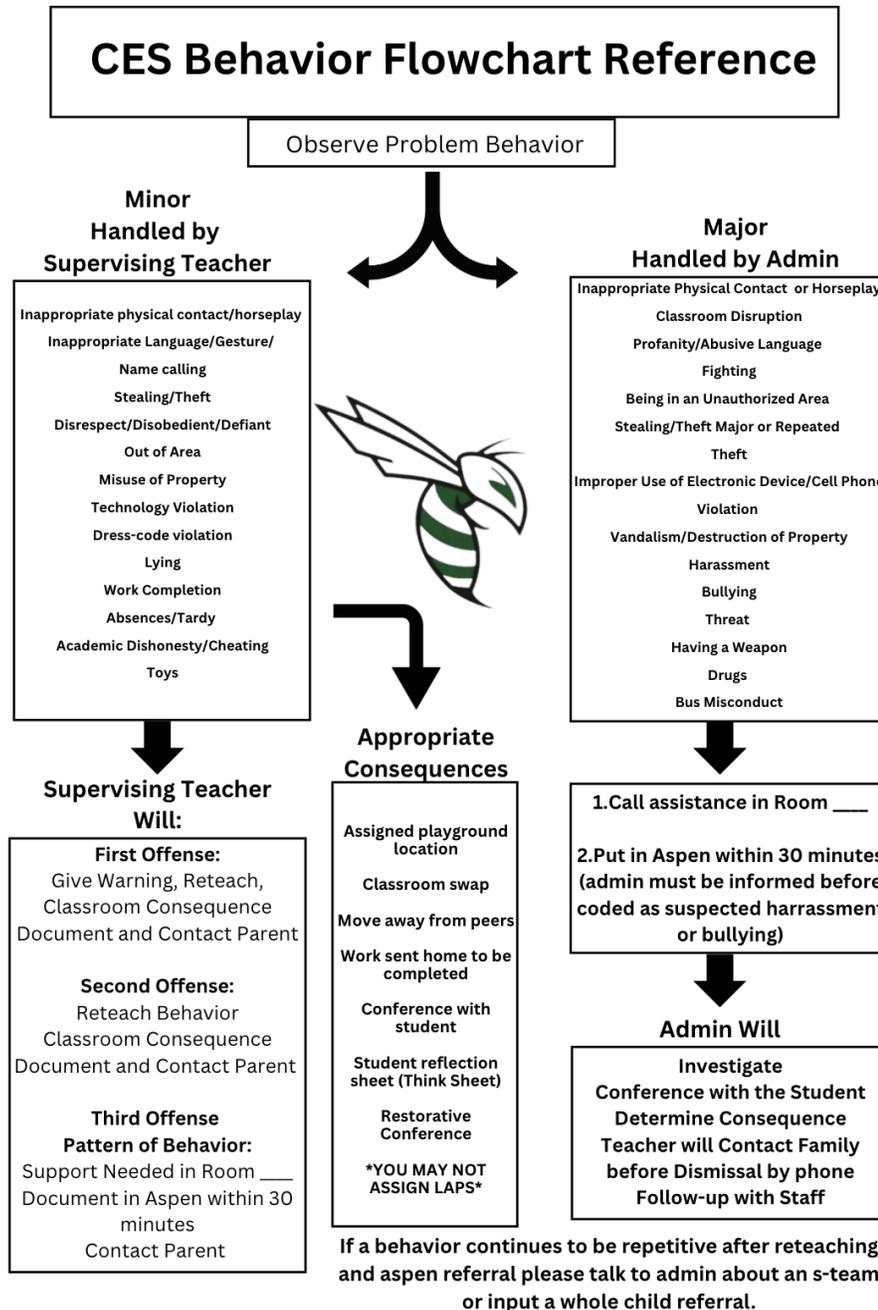
If your child needs support with academics, behavior, or attendance, please contact Ms. Young or Mrs. Parrott to request an S-Team meeting.

CONSEQUENCES FOR MISBEHAVIORS

For a detailed description of all behaviors and disciplinary options, see [KCS Board Policy J-191](#). Repeated offenses may impact the student's opportunity to continue participating in the traditional classroom learning environment or extra-curricular activities.

This list indicates *some* behavior interventions that may be utilized for students at Carter Elementary School. Students will always have an opportunity to tell his/her side of the story and/or submit a written statement.

Please reference the flowchart below as to how behaviors will be handled at CES.



STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Carter Elementary students are expected to:

- Follow the KCS bullying, dress code, and personal device policies
- Be respectful and safe at all times
- Complete and turn in all assignments on time
- Use technology responsibly and follow the KCS Tech Agreement
- Practice good digital citizenship
- Participate actively, listen, and do their own work

PARENT/GUARDIAN EXPECTATIONS

Parents/guardians are expected to:

- Keep contact info updated in Aspen
- Check Canvas/Aspen regularly for assignments and grades
- Ensure students follow dress code and behavior expectations
- Support attendance, academic honesty, and timely work completion
- Communicate with teachers through Parent Square, phone, or email
- Encourage respectful communication and good digital habits

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Carter Elementary School (865) 933-4172

KCS Transportation (865) 594-1550

KCS Transfer Department (865) 594-1502

Taiesha Young, Executive Principal taiesha.young@knoxschools.org

Bekah Parrott, Assistant Principal bekah.parrott@knoxschools.org

Tech HelpDesk <https://knoxschools.happyfox.com/new/>

Aspen Family Portal <https://aspen.knoxschools.org/>

Canvas <https://www.knoxschools.instructure.com>