

**Fairfield Elementary School Student Handbook
2025-2026**

Welcome to Fairfield Elementary School! Our theme is "Anchored in Excellence, Powered by Growth. We are excited to have you as part of our learning community. Our school is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment where every student has the opportunity to grow academically, socially, and emotionally. We believe in the power of collaboration among students, staff, and families to ensure each child's success.

Fairfield Elementary has a uniform dress code in place to promote a positive learning environment. Students are expected to wear clothing that is appropriate. Closed-toe shoes are required for physical education and recess. Please label all personal items, including jackets and lunchboxes, with the student's name.

We encourage students to follow the Leader in Me. These principles guide behavior in the classroom, on the playground, and throughout the school. Students who consistently follow these expectations may be recognized through our Positive Behavior Rewards Program.

Fairfield Elementary values open communication between home and school. Families will receive regular updates through newsletters, ParentSquare, and the school website. Parent-teacher conferences are encouraged. We invite parents to get involved by joining our Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), School Improvement Council (SIC), and attending school events.

We are committed to maintaining a safe school environment. All visitors must check in at the front office and wear a visitor badge while on campus. We utilize the Raptor system for visitor management.

Emergency drills are conducted throughout the year to ensure students know what to do in the event of a fire, earthquake, or other emergency.

We look forward to a wonderful school year and are here to support every student's journey. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact our office. Thank you for being a part of the Fairfield Elementary family!

We are so glad to have you as part of our Fairfield Stingray family. This handbook will help you and your family understand our school expectations and how we work together to make Fairfield Elementary School a safe, fun, and successful place to learn.

Phone Numbers:

Fairfield Elementary School (803)635-5594

Fax Number (803)635-1721

Transportation (803)635-6818

District Office (803)635-4607

School Hours

- **School Day:** 7:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
- **Drop-Off Begins:** 7:00 a.m. *(no supervision before this time)*
- **Breakfast:** 7:00–7:55 a.m. *(no breakfast after 8:00 a.m. unless late bus)*
- **Drop-Off Location:** Front entrance only

Arrival Procedures

Students may begin arriving at school at **7:00 a.m.** Please do not drop off students before this time, as there is no supervision available. All students should be dropped off at the **front entrance**. Breakfast is served from **7:00 a.m. to 7:45 a.m.** To ensure your child receives breakfast, please plan to arrive by 7:45 a.m. Breakfast is not available after 8:00 a.m., except for students arriving on a late bus.

Tardiness

School starts at **8:00 a.m.** sharp. Students who arrive after this time must be **signed in at the front office** by a parent or guardian and will receive a **tardy pass**. Morning supervision ends at **7:50 a.m.** The front entrance sign will indicate when an escort and sign-in are required. Please help your child begin the day on time.

Dismissal

Afternoon dismissal begins at 2:30. Students should remain in class until 2:30 p.m.. Early sign-outs interrupt valuable instruction. If your child must leave early, sign them out in the main office **before 2:00 p.m.** using a **valid driver's license**. Parents may not go to the classroom to pick up students, and we kindly ask that you wait until arrival to request your child be called to the office.

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is vital for learning. Students should attend school daily unless they are sick or have a lawful reason to be absent. A **written excuse** must be sent to school **within two days** of returning. Students are allowed **up to seven lawful absences** each year with a parent's or medical note. Additional absences require medical documentation.

Lawful vs. Unlawful Absences

Lawful absences include illness, a death in the family, religious holidays, medical or court appointments, and suspensions. Absences without a valid excuse or without a parent's knowledge are considered **unlawful**. Every absence must be documented in writing, including the student's name, teacher's name, dates, reason, and parent's signature.

Medical Notes

Medical excuses must be on official letterhead and signed or stamped by a medical professional. Notes must include the student's full name, the date(s) of absence, and the doctor's address. Please keep your child home if they have had a fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or a contagious illness within the past 24 hours.

Make-Up Work Opportunities

Students who are absent will be allowed to make up missed work. As a rule, the work must be completed within 10 days of returning to school. The student is responsible for securing the makeup assignments and completing the task.

Health and Safety

In the event of illness or injury, students should report to the school nurse or office promptly. Routine health screenings are conducted per district and state requirements. A parent-signed medication form is needed to administer any prescription or over-the-counter medication during school hours. A trained assistant and or a full-time certified nurse run our Health Room. If your child is sick, please pick them up quickly when called. Medications require both a healthcare provider's signature and parental permission. All medications must be returned in their original packaging. The nurse is available to help with student health needs.

Visiting the Health Room

If a student becomes ill or injured during the school day, they may visit the health room. The school nurse or designated health staff will assess their needs and provide appropriate care. Parents or guardians will be notified if a student needs to leave school or requires further medical attention. In emergencies, the school will call 911 and contact the family immediately.

Medications

Students are not permitted to carry or self-administer medications at school unless authorized through a doctor-approved care plan. Any medication that needs to be taken during the school day must be delivered to the health room by a parent or guardian and accompanied by a signed permission form. All medication must be in its original packaging with clearly labeled instructions. School health staff will administer medications according to the provided doctor's orders.

Immunizations

All students attending public school in South Carolina must be current on required immunizations. Parents must provide an official immunization certificate or approved exemption before a student begins school. Students who are not in compliance may not attend until they submit the necessary documentation. The health room staff can help families with questions about immunization requirements.

Medical Homebound Services

If a student is unable to attend school for a medical reason for a period of time, they may be eligible for **medical homebound instruction**. This service is provided for students with temporary or long-term physical or mental health conditions that prevent them from attending school in person. A licensed physician must complete a medical homebound form, which is submitted to the school/district for approval. Once approved, a certified teacher will provide instruction at home or through virtual means to ensure academic progress continues.

Instructional Program

The instructional program at Fairfield Elementary School follows the **South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards**. These standards guide our curriculum in core subject areas such as English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. In addition to academic subjects, students receive instruction in Art, Music, Spanish, Physical Education, and other enrichment areas throughout the week. Lessons are designed to be developmentally appropriate, hands-on, and engaging. Our goal is to provide a well-rounded education that prepares students for future success both academically and socially.

Grading Scales

For **Grades 1–6**, South Carolina uses the following 10-point grading scale:

- A = 90–100
- B = 80–89
- C = 70–79
- D = 60–69
- F = 59 and below

For **Kindergarten**, students receive standards-based report cards using the following performance indicators:

- **4 – Exceeds Expectations**
- **3 – Meets Expectations**
- **2 – Making Progress**
- **1 – Needs Improvement**

Teachers assess student learning using a variety of methods, including classwork, observations, quizzes, tests, and projects. Report cards are issued quarterly, and progress reports are sent mid-quarter. Parents are encouraged to communicate regularly with their child's teachers and attend parent-teacher conferences to stay informed about their child's academic progress.

Instructional Day

The instructional day at Fairfield Elementary School begins at **8:00 a.m.** Students arriving between **7:30 and 8:00 a.m. will be provided an intervention period targeting specific skills in which they need additional support.**

Parents who wish to conference with a teacher should schedule a meeting during the teacher's **planning time** or **after-school hours** in order to maximize instructional time. Please note that teachers are **not available on _____** for conferences during the school day.

Activities such as **field trips, assemblies, and other tasks** that directly relate to the **concepts and objectives** of the school curriculum may be scheduled as part of the instructional day.

To minimize disruptions, **classroom interruptions are limited to emergencies ONLY.** No phone calls will be sent to classrooms during instructional time.

Parents are **not permitted to host birthday parties** in the classroom in order to preserve instructional time. However, parents may send a **small, healthy snack** for every student in the class. These snacks may be shared during the **last few minutes of the school day** and **must be delivered to the front office.**

Academic Expectations

Fairfield Elementary maintains high academic standards. Lessons and assignments are structured to foster critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. Students receive weekly assignments and periodic progress reports. Teachers are available before and after school for additional help.

Behavior and Discipline

We uphold a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework. Behavior expectations are clearly communicated through school-wide rules: Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe, and Be Kind. Minor infractions—such as talking out of turn or failing to follow directions—are managed in the classroom. Repeated or serious violations—including bullying, fighting, or vandalism—are handled by the administration and may result in detention, parent-teacher conferences, or in-school suspension. Restorative practices are used whenever appropriate to repair harm and support positive growth.

Dress Code

Students should dress neatly and appropriately for school. When students are allowed to dress down, clothing should be free from profanity, gang-related symbols, or offensive slogans. Shoes must allow safe participation in all school activities. Parents will be contacted to bring appropriate attire if necessary.

TEXTBOOKS

Most textbooks—including consumables—are provided to students free of charge. Once a textbook is issued, it becomes the sole responsibility of the student. If a textbook is lost or damaged, it must be repaired or replaced. In such cases, parents or guardians will receive a letter stating the amount owed for the repair or replacement. The replacement cost for a lost textbook is the state price, typically ranging from \$25 to \$55.

Guidance Program

Our school is staffed with a full-time school counselor who provides a **comprehensive guidance program**. This includes:

- Classroom guidance lessons
- Small group sessions
- Individual counseling
- Collaboration with outside agencies

If you have any concerns about your child's social or emotional well-being, please don't hesitate to contact the school counselor.

Special Services and Support

Fairfield Elementary provides support services for students with diverse learning needs, including special education, English language learning support, counseling, and reading/math interventions. Parents may contact the school's counselor or learning support team to request evaluations or access support services.

Gifted and Talented (G/T) Program

Fairfield County School District offers a program for **academically gifted students in grades 3 through 6**. Students may be recommended for testing by: Parents, Teachers, Other students or Themselves. **Placement** in the program is based on individual test results.

Gifted and Talented students *attend* **Fairfield Magnet School for Math and Science one day per week**. However, there may be times when students remain at their home schools. Parents will be notified in advance of any schedule changes.

Weekly Schedule for G/T Students:

- **3rd Grade** – Monday
- **4th Grade** – Tuesday
- **5th Grade** – Wednesday
- **6th Grade** – Thursday

Transportation for GT:

Gifted and Talented (G/T) students are provided transportation to and from Fairfield Magnet School. They must be at the **Fairfield Elementary bus loop by 7:10 a.m.** to ride the bus to Fairfield Magnet School.

Special Services and Support

Fairfield Elementary provides support services for students with diverse learning needs, including special education, English language learning support, counseling, and reading/math interventions. Parents may contact the school's counselor or learning support team to request evaluations or access support services.

Homework

Homework helps students practice what they've learned and builds responsibility. Students may not have homework every night, but parents are encouraged to support their children by discussing home learning activities with their teachers.

Report Cards

Report cards go home every nine weeks. Interim reports and graded work are sent home to keep you informed. You can also check your child's grades and attendance through the Parent Portal at www.richland2.org.

District Grading Scale: A = 90–100

B = 80–89

C = 70–79

D = 60–69

F = Below 60

Students in grades K–5 have special classes in art, music, PE, technology, and library. These classes are graded on effort.

Field Studies (Field Trips)

Students participate in field studies that align with their classroom learning. Chaperones must ride the bus. Younger siblings may not attend. Parents must notify the school at least 24 hours in advance if a student will be riding home with them.

Lunch and Recess

Students may pack lunch or participate in the school meal program. Lunch must be eaten in designated areas under adult supervision. Recess time promotes physical activity, with equipment provided and monitored by staff. Students are expected to play safely and follow staff directions.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

We encourage open communication between home and school. Teachers meet with every family at least once each year. You may schedule a conference before or after school or during planning time. Contact your child's teacher to set up an appointment.

PTO / School Improvement Council

Our PTO and School Improvement Council work closely with teachers and staff to enhance our school's performance and ensure it is the best it can be. Elections for the Council happen in September. All families are welcome to join and share ideas throughout the school year.

Technology Use

Students are granted access to school computers, tablets, and the internet. Acceptable Internet Use guidelines prohibit the misuse of the internet, such as accessing inappropriate content or disrupting school networks. Unauthorized sharing of personal information is not allowed. Violations result in the loss of privileges and may lead to disciplinary action.

Updating Contact Information

It is essential to keep all **phone numbers and emergency contacts** current. This ensures we can reach you quickly in case of an emergency. Please also keep your child's emergency pickup list current, so we know who is authorized to take them home.

Communication with Families

We strongly believe in partnering with families. We will keep you informed through weekly newsletters, phone messages from the principal, and social media. Please ensure that your contact information is always up to date. Important information about your child's progress, upcoming events, and school updates will be shared this way.

Telephone Messages

To avoid disruptions, teachers are not permitted to take phone calls during the school day. Only **urgent messages** will be delivered to students. Please ensure your child is familiar with their daily routine and any after-school plans before arriving at school.

Emergency School Closings

If school must close early due to weather or other emergencies, announcements will be shared via **local TV, radio**, and the **ParentSquare app**. Bus riders will be sent home on the bus unless we are notified otherwise. Please have an emergency plan in place and share it with your child in case of unexpected closings.

Student Belongings and Money

Label your child's items, like jackets and backpacks, with their name to help return lost items. When sending money to school, place it in a **sealed envelope** with your child's name, teacher's name, amount, and purpose clearly written. Please avoid sending extra money. The school is not responsible for **lost or stolen items**.

LOST AND FOUND

To help minimize lost articles, please put your child's name on all clothing that may be removed, such as jackets, sweaters, hats, and gloves. Additionally, be sure to label your book bags, lunch boxes, and other personal belongings with your name.

Bus Transportation

Bus Stop Safety Rules

Parents are responsible for student safety at the bus stop before the bus arrives and after it departs. Students should stay at least 5 feet away from the road and avoid playing or standing in the street. Always wait for the driver to open the door before approaching the bus. If you need to cross the street, wait for the driver's signal and look both ways. Respect others' property and report any suspicious activity to the driver.

Bus Behavior Consequences

If students break safety or behavior rules on the bus, they may receive consequences from school administrators. These can include verbal warnings, bus suspensions, or even school suspensions. Serious offenses may lead to expulsion or arrest. Bus drivers will stop in a safe place to restore order if needed. Students should always ask the driver or a staff member for help with problems.

Transportation Changes

If your child's transportation is changing for the day, please send a **written note** to the teacher. In the event of an emergency, please call the front office before **1:45 p.m.** As teachers may not have time to check emails, written communication is recommended for effective communication. For weekly changes, a new note is required each week.

Our behavioral, attendance, and academic policies are designed to foster student success and safety. We count on families and students alike to uphold the values of respect, responsibility, and collaboration. Together, we can make Fairfield Elementary a place where every child feels supported and prepared to flourish, both in school and beyond.