

# 2025-2026 Cornelius Elementary Student & Family Handbook



**Our Mission:** *To inspire students to reach their potential as lifelong learners through a variety of learning experiences, where responsibility for teaching and learning is respectfully shared among students, parents, staff, and community.*

**Our Vision:** *Cornelius Elementary will be a collaborative community of excellence that fosters creative, self-directed, critical thinkers who are lifelong learners and community contributors.*

Dear Students and Parents:

On behalf of the faculty and staff at Cornelius Elementary School, I would like to welcome you to the 2025-2026 school year! Whether you and your child are joining Cornelius for the first time or you are a veteran parent with a child at CES, the beginning of the school year is a time filled with the excitement and anticipation of new teachers, new friends, and new opportunities for learning.

As a Cornelius Elementary parent, you are a partner in your child's education. I encourage you to participate in your child's learning experience through school sponsored activities, classroom projects, and PTO events. Our goal is to provide you with ongoing information concerning your child's education. This handbook is designed to provide basic information that will be useful throughout the school year.

I want you to feel connected to our school and know that you are vital to the success of our students. I encourage your participation and look forward to building a relationship with you and your children. Go Cougars!

Respectfully,

*Jessica Holbrook*  
Principal

Cornelius Elementary  
21126 Catawba Avenue  
Cornelius, North Carolina 28031

Phone: 980-343-3905

Fax: 980-343-3907

Webpage: [Cornelius Elementary School](#)

<b>Principal</b>	Jessica Holbrook
<b>Assistant Principal</b>	Ashley Moore
<b>Counselor</b>	Aara Bunyan- 1st, 2nd, 3rd
<b>Counselor</b>	Andrea Anzalone- Kinder, 4th, 5th
<b>Nurse</b>	Cristina Barfield
<b>Treasurer/Senior Administrative Secretary</b>	Wendy Flors
<b>Data Manager/ Front Office Secretary</b>	Claudia Trafford

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**The final pages include forms/documents which you must review, sign, and return to your child's teacher.**

- **Emergency Dismissal Form - Page 19**
- **Student and Parent Handbook Contract - Page 21**

## ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

We want to teach all of our students to become independent and responsible which allows teachers to begin classes promptly without interruption. **For those reasons, parents/guardians will not escort their child(ren) to class after the first week of school.** Students are expected to be in the classroom, seated, and ready for instruction when the tardy bell rings at 8:45 a.m. Parents may drop off students in the morning beginning at 8:15 a.m. Dropping off students before 8:15 a.m. is a safety concern and will not be allowed. Students who eat breakfast at school will go directly to the cafeteria at 8:15 a.m. Adults are on duty in the cafeteria and assigned areas to supervise students. Students entering the building after the bell rings must be accompanied by an adult and must be signed in at the front office.

## ASSESSMENTS

We use data from universal screeners to assess our core instruction and identify students potentially needing differentiated instruction and/or interventions. These assessments include Math and Reading i-READY assessments and DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills). Students' data will be shared with parents after each assessment. Grades 3rd, 4th, and 5th will complete Benchmark Assessments in the Fall, Winter, and Spring and this data will also be shared with parents. State required standardized testing varies by grade level: 3rd grade students - Reading BOG3 (Beginning of Grade 3 Testing), Reading and Math EOGs (End of Grade Testing), 4th grade students - Reading and Math EOGs, 5th grade students - Reading, Math, and Science EOGs.

## ATTENDANCE

Regular school attendance is a vital aspect of developing and maintaining a successful educational experience. There is strong evidence to support a direct correlation between good attendance and school achievement. Parents or guardians are responsible for seeing that their child(ren) attend school each day it is in session, according to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education policy and the North Carolina Compulsory Attendance Law (GS-115C-378). **The parent is required to notify the school within three days of an absence from school. Failure to notify the school will result in the absence being coded as unexcused.**

**To report an absence, please use the Report an Absence link on the school's website (preferred method). You may also report an absence by calling the front office at 980-343-3905.**

We encourage you to take your child from school as little as possible. Students need the benefit of a full instructional day. Absences from school should be for illnesses and emergencies only. Students who are frequently absent, or tardy, or dismissed early miss the sequence of learning and can fall behind their peers.

- **Excused absences** are for illness, death in the family, doctor's appointment, court or administrative proceedings, religious holiday, or a family emergency. According to the current CMS policy, family vacations are unexcused absences. Families do have the opportunity to complete an Educational Experience form and submit to Ms. Holbrook to have absences excused. When a child accumulates **three** unexcused absences, the parent will receive a letter of notification. Then, if a student reaches **six** and **ten** cumulative days of unexcused absences, the parent will be notified of the next steps according to the state attendance policy. Please do not be offended by the tone of the letter, as it was designed to make sure that students are not being marked for unexcused absences if they should not be. On days that children are absent, the family will receive an automated phone call at approximately 7:00 p.m. **A student must be in attendance for at least half of the school day to be counted present; a half-day at Cornelius Elementary is 12:15 p.m.**
- **Tardies:** Students are encouraged to arrive at school on time as instruction begins as soon as the bell rings. Students arriving after the bell rings (8:45 a.m.) must be signed in by an adult. Late buses do not result in students being marked tardy. The office will notify the classroom teacher of tardy students and they will be escorted to class by an adult or student buddy.

### **BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM (ASEP)**

The ASEP provides a warm, caring environment beyond school hours where your children have the opportunity to play with school friends and get homework out of the way before the family sits down to dinner. ASEP offers exciting activities which stimulate children to be healthier and happier, including sports, art activities and computer exploration. The ASEP will operate daily from 6:30 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. and from 3:45 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Applications are available by calling the ASEP director at 980-343-3905. ASEP is also available online at [asep@cms.k12.nc.us](mailto:asep@cms.k12.nc.us) or by calling the ASEP central office at 980-343-5567.

More information can be found at the ASEP website on the CMS homepage.

## BEHAVIOR

To promote a positive school climate for students, parents, and staff at Cornelius Elementary, we have a uniform, school-wide expectation plan. The purpose of the plan is to teach students to make appropriate choices, accept responsibility for their behavior, and understand that all behaviors have consequences.

- **White/Blue Cougar Paws:** Cougar Paws are used as both a reward and consequence. Students may be awarded **blue cougar paws** for demonstrating excellence in the following- *respect, responsibility, cooperation, citizenship, trustworthiness, and work ethic*. Students may be issued **white cougar paws** for demonstrating poor character or character that needs improvement. White cougar paws will need to be signed by a parent or guardian and returned to the teacher.
- **BIG 3:** *The Big Three* consists of the school-wide rules and expectations: *Be respectful. Be responsible. Be an active learner*. Violations of the **BIG 3** can result in an office referral.
- **Office Referral:** The following violations result in an automatic office referral:
  - **Weapon possession (actual or suspected)- School administrator is called immediately**
  - **Banned Substance**
  - **Physical Altercations**
  - **Slurs/Highly Offensive Language/ “Rated R” language**
  - **Vandalism**
  - **Threat to teacher or other student**
  - **Sexual assault or harassment**
- **Consequences:** Threats, slurs of any kind, and violent behaviors will not be tolerated. Any violations will result in the student being removed from the classroom for the remainder of the day. Parents will be called for a conference and/or take the student home.
- **The Code of Conduct** is published as a separate document by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Parents and students must review the CMS Code of Conduct online and return the acknowledgement and pledge form.
- **Parents Requesting Meetings:** Teachers will gladly meet with parents on an individual basis. Teachers will not arrange meetings among parents to discuss discipline concerns.



## BIRTHDAYS

Parents may provide **store-bought** cake, cupcakes, or treats for the classroom to celebrate a student's birthday. Please make sure treats are ready and easy to distribute. Teachers should not have to cut cake, serve ice cream, or provide plates/cups etc. **Please make sure the teacher is aware of your plans in advance.** We also expect that all students in the class are included in the celebration. Do not bring or send balloons or other gifts to school. If you choose to do so, they will remain in the office until the end of the day. Balloons or other large items cannot be taken onto a bus. Birthday party invitations (hard copies) may not be distributed at school unless there is one for each student in the class. Teachers will not share evites with families.

## CAFETERIA

Breakfast is free for all students and is served each morning from 8:15- 8:40 a.m.. Students' lunch times vary by grade level and class. The cost for lunch is \$2.75 per day. Parents are encouraged to pay for lunch by the week or month. All checks should be made payable to Cornelius Elementary Cafeteria. If you are interested in paying online, go to <http://www.paypams.com>.

The cafeteria does sell extra food items such as chips, ice cream, etc. We encourage parents to only allow one extra purchase a day and not allow students to buy multiple ice creams or snacks. We do not allow students to purchase treats for other students in the cafeteria. Please review these expectations with your child. **Cafeteria staff cannot tell a student, he/she cannot buy multiple items. If there is money in the account, students can spend up to the amount of money in the account. As a parent, you can put restrictions on your child's lunch account.** Please contact our cafeteria manager, Kevin Savino, at [kevinf.savino@cms.k12.nc.us](mailto:kevinf.savino@cms.k12.nc.us) to discuss dietary and spending restrictions.

If your child forgets his/her lunch, you may bring it to the front office (make sure it is clearly labeled with your child's name and teacher). Classes may not be interrupted to deliver lunch, but the office staff will make sure it is delivered.

To apply for free or reduced lunch, School Nutrition Services encourages parents/guardians to apply online via the following link: <https://www.cmsk12.org/Domain/96>. Applications will also be sent home with students at the beginning of the year or upon enrollment.

## CHILD CUSTODY

If there are special custody agreements for a student, the parent(s) must provide the school office a copy of the official court documentation. Otherwise, the school considers both parents (who are listed on the birth certificate) to have equal access to the child(ren).

## COMMUNICATION

Regular communication and quality customer service is very important to us. The **school website** can be accessed at: <https://www.cmsk12.org/corneliusES>

Our goal is to respond to all parent calls and communication in a timely manner, and we will make every effort to get in touch with you within 24 hours. Please stay in contact with us and make sure that all changes in phone numbers are given to teachers and office staff. We will send home **communication folders on Thursday of each week**. You can expect class work samples, important information, and/or class and school news within the folder.

- **ParentSquare** is a two-way private communication platform. **This is our primary communication method**. It provides a safe way for administrators, teachers, staff, groups, and parents to connect and communicate effectively. All school information will now be sent from one centralized place to your computer or mobile phone via email and/or text, or you can download the FREE App! Search CMS ParentSquare in your App Store. You can join by visiting <https://parentsquare.com/signin>
- **Our PTO website** is another excellent resource for updates and information; this can be accessed at <https://corneliuspto.org/> .

## CURRICULUM

Cornelius Elementary has implemented the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, a state-led initiative to establish a set of educational standards for kindergarten through 12th grade in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Essential State Standards are implemented for Science, Social Studies, Health, Physical Education, Music, Art, and Media.

These learning goals outline what a student should know and be able to do at the end of each grade. The standards are designed to ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to enter college programs or enter the workforce. The standards are written to ensure that parents, teachers, and students have a clear understanding of the expectations in reading, writing, speaking, and listening language and mathematics.

## DEVICES/TECHNOLOGY

**Students' personal devices, cell phones, smart watches, tablets, etc., will need to be off and away when entering the school property.** This includes while waiting at bus stops and while on the bus. Students in grades K-5 will need to have all personal devices secured in their book bags each day. Parents should not text or call their child or allow their child to text or call them during school hours. If there is an emergency or need to contact the parent, someone from our staff will call you. The school is not responsible for any lost, damaged, or stolen personal devices when brought on campus.

## DRESS CODE

Student clothing should be comfortable and appropriate for the variety of activities that occur regularly during a school day. Any clothing, accessories, or outerwear that advertises alcohol or drugs will not be permitted. Likewise, any profanity, derogatory, or sexually suggestive clothing will not be allowed. If you are unsure if clothing is inappropriate, be cautious and choose something else. Below are some guidelines for school dress:

### Shirts and Tops

- All tops should completely cover the abdomen and midriff.
- Undergarments must be covered at all times and shall not be seen through other garments.

### Shorts, Skirts, Pants and Dresses

- All shorts, skirts, pants and dresses must be worn at the waist.
- No saggy garments.
- Underwear must not be visible.

### Footwear

- Students are required to participate in physical activity on a daily basis. We ask that you consider secure shoes for outdoor activities and PE.
- No shoes with wheels or cleats will be permitted.

### General Expectations

- No costumes allowed at all unless prior approval from the teacher.
- Pajamas or other nightwear must not be worn at school.
- Attire that is considered disruptive or attire that is a health/safety concern will not be allowed.

***Sending extra clothes with your student, especially younger students, is always a good idea in case of an accident. Parents will be contacted to bring appropriate clothing to school for students who are not dressed according to the dress code expectations.***

## **EARLY DISMISSAL**

Early dismissal for students is discouraged between 3:00-3:45 p.m. Students will remain in their classrooms until parents sign them out in the front office. If your child needs to leave early, please plan ahead to have your child signed out prior to 3:00 p.m.

## **EARLY RELEASE DAYS**

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools has designated four Early Release Days in the 25-26 school year. On the following dates, students will be **dismissed at 12:45 p.m.**

***October 1, 2025***

***November 19, 2025***

***February 11, 2026***

***April 29, 2026***

## **EMERGENCY DISMISSAL**

In the event of inclement weather or an emergency, students may be dismissed early. It is very important that you complete an emergency dismissal form for your child at the beginning of the school year. This form is at the end of this packet. Please notify the office if this vital information changes. Information regarding cancellation of school is broadcasted on television and radio shortly after 5:00 a.m. This information will also be listed on the CMS website [www.cmsk12.org](http://www.cmsk12.org), and parents will receive a message through ParentSquare. **The school does not have this information in advance of this broadcast unless the announcement is made the previous evening.**

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are extensions of the educational program that expand and reinforce concepts learned in class. Field trips vary by grade level. All field trips must be associated with an educational objective. Prior to students' taking the field trip, parents must complete a permission form. Chaperone opportunities will be included on the form as appropriate. Chaperones will be notified in writing prior to each event. Due to space, chaperone numbers may be limited. Chaperones should register as a CMS volunteer. [You can register here](https://www.cmsvolunteers.com/) or by visiting: <https://www.cmsvolunteers.com/>

Chaperones are expected to provide their own transportation unless otherwise notified and travel behind the buses to and from the field trips. Only students in the participating class/group may attend. Students attending field trips are expected to travel to and from the event with the school group. Parents who are not selected as chaperones to field trips at public venues, and choose to attend anyway, may only have access to their own children.

**FOOD ALLERGIES**

Although the school nutrition program no longer serves peanut products, there is not a CMS policy banning peanut products from the cafeteria or classrooms. If your child has a food allergy, we will make every effort to accommodate the student’s needs. Please inform the teacher and the school nurse as soon as possible.

**GRADING**

● **Kindergarten-2<sup>nd</sup> Grade: Standard Based Grading System**

**What is the goal of a Standard Based Report Card:** The goal of the standard based report card is to provide clear communication to all stakeholders, the current progress of a student as related to a set of grade level standards. Grades are an informative reporting tool in order to determine specific student strengths and areas of growth, give opportunities for feedback, as well as determine next steps in learning.

**How does the grading scale work?** The grading scale is a descriptive letter-based scale that allows students to show growth in their learning over time. The standards are in ‘I can’ statements to help parents better understand what their student can or cannot yet do.

**How is mastery measured?** Mastery is measured in various ways in the classroom, including formal or informal assessments, performance tasks, or verbal responses.

**Mastery is reported as the most recent representation of multiple points of data based on end-of-year grade level learning outcomes.**

Mastery is measured on a growth scale ranging from **Developing, Progressing, Mastering, to Exemplary Mastery** (as noted on the below continuum).

No Indicator\* (N/I) shows that evidence of mastery is still being collected, or the content has not been instructionally reached in the curriculum at this point.

<b>D- Developing</b>	<b>P-Progressing</b>	<b>M-Mastering</b>	<b>E-Exemplary Mastery</b>
Student demonstrates basic level of understanding of standard with support. Intervention is in place to support the development in mastery of standard.	Student demonstrates progress toward developing mastery of standard. Student applies limited understanding in familiar situations.	Student achieved mastery of the end of year grade-level standard. Student applies understanding in familiar situations.	Student exceeded mastery of the end of year grade-level of standard. Student applies understanding in familiar situations.
<p><b>NI- No Indicator</b> No indicator (N/I) indicates that evidence of mastery is still being collected, or content has not been instructionally reached in the curriculum at this point.</p>			

- **3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Assignments will be aligned with content standards, including homework, classwork, projects, and tests. Grades from other activities, to be determined by the teacher, may also be used.

Type of Assignment:	Prepare/Rehearse-40%	Perform-60%
<b>Definition:</b>	Includes both: -Assignments that allow students to practice new learning with no risk for mistakes ( <i>i.e. GLOs/Learning profiles/Executive Functions, homework, pre-assessments, checklists for learner behaviors</i> ) -Assignments that provide feedback of students' progress leading up to demonstrating/assessing mastery of a standard(s) <i>(i.e. Components for EL Performance Tasks, exit tickets, entrance tickets, tasks with rubrics and performance tasks, checklists, quizzes)</i>	Culminating/formative assessments that measure mastery of one or more standards ( <i>i.e. Formal/unit assessments, cycle assessments, common assessments, projects with rubrics</i> ) <i>*Note: EL performance task are not given a formal grade</i>

**3rd-5th Grade Grading Scale:**

A	90-100	Excellent Performance
B	80-89	Very Good Performance
C	70-79	Satisfactory Performance
D	60-69	Low Performance
F	Below 60	Unsatisfactory Performance

**HOMEWORK**

Homework expectations will be shared with you by the teacher. Homework may be assigned to enhance classroom instruction and varies by teacher and grade level. Homework, which includes nightly reading, should not exceed the times:

- Kindergarten – 10 minutes, Monday – Thursday
- 1<sup>st</sup> Grade – 15 minutes, Monday – Thursday
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade – 20 minutes, Monday – Thursday
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade – 30 minutes, Monday – Thursday
- 4<sup>th</sup> Grade – 40 minutes, Monday – Thursday
- 5<sup>th</sup> Grade – 50 minutes, Monday – Thursday

**LOST AND FOUND**

Lost and found items are placed in the main hallway to the right of the main office. It is clearly labeled "Lost and Found." Please make every effort to check lost and found regularly. **It is recommended to write your child's name on all personal belongings. If your child's name is on the item, we will make sure the item is returned to your child.** Unclaimed items are removed and donated to local charities on a quarterly basis.

## HEALTH ROOM

- **MEDICATIONS** - All medications (both prescription and over the counter) must be presented to the school nurse by the parent/guardian in the original container with the student's name, date, and name of medication. **A medical authorization form completed by a doctor must be on file for any school personnel to administer medicine.** The prescribing doctor and parent must sign this form and return it to the school before medication can be given. This includes medicine for colds, allergies, upset stomach, headaches, etc. **Do not send medication to school with your child. An adult must bring in the medication with the required paperwork.**
- More information and forms may be found at the [Coordinated School Health website here.](https://www.cmsk12.org/Page/713) <https://www.cmsk12.org/Page/713>
- **POLICY ON CONTAGIOUS ILLNESSES OR CONDITIONS** - CMS policy requires that students with infections or contagious illnesses must stay home until they have been **fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication and no vomiting for 24 hours.** Please inform the school if your child has any contagious illness.

## LUNCH

Parents will have the opportunity to have lunch with their children. We will notify families when we are allowing lunch visitors. **There will be a designated area for you to eat with your child only. Parents/visitors will not be allowed to invite friends/classmates to eat during the visit. Inviting other students to join the visitors' table became an issue last year. Visiting privileges will be revoked if our visitor policies are not followed.** We will not be able to alter lunch times to accommodate siblings to eat together.

Please be mindful of lunches delivered to the school during business hours. **Students should have a lunch packed at the start of each day or choose to get a lunch provided by our school cafeteria.** Please refrain from dropping off lunches yourself for your child and/or having lunches delivered to your child by a food delivery service. These deliveries are disruptive to the office staff and to your child's schedule.

## PARENT CONFERENCES

Parents are encouraged to schedule parent conferences to discuss a student's academic performance, social behavior, and special needs. Parent/teacher conferences must be scheduled so that the instructional part of the day is not interrupted and should be arranged by appointment during the times set aside each day (which may include before or after school or during a teacher's planning period). **Teachers will not arrange meetings between/among parents or participate in meetings between/among parents.**

## PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION

It is through working together that we can best meet the needs of our students; therefore, all parents are encouraged to join the parent/teacher organization. Please visit our PTO webpage: <http://corneliuspto.org/>

## PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Parents are welcome and encouraged to participate in school activities. In addition to visiting, there are many opportunities to be involved as a volunteer. Opportunities include: classroom helpers, media assistants, special event volunteers, etc. There are several “at-home” jobs that parents can assist with as well. **You do not have to be at our school to volunteer!** Please consider volunteering by contacting your child's teacher, the school office, or the PTO volunteer coordinator. **ALL volunteers must register prior to volunteering.** [You can register to volunteer here.](https://www.cmsvolunteers.com/) <https://www.cmsvolunteers.com/>

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Students will receive 30 minutes daily of physical activity in addition to weekly PE class. Parents should ensure that their child is dressed appropriately.



## PICTURES

**\*The following dates are tentative for school pictures:**

**October 9, 2025:** Fall Pictures for Yearbook (all student pictures are taken)

**February 5, 2026:** Clubs & Yearbook Make-Up photos

**March 12, 2026:** Spring Pictures (pictures taken of students who have placed prepaid orders)

**April 23, 2026:** 5th Grade Panoramic Photo

## PLATFORMS

- **Parent Square:** All district and school, grade level and classroom information will be sent to your computer or phone via email and/or text. For even more convenience, download the ParentSquare app (available for free for iOS and Android devices). [Parent Square Parent & Guardians Getting Started Guide](#)
- **Infinite Campus** - Infinite Campus (formerly PowerSchool) is our student information systems platform. This platform is used for student schedules, digital student forms, attendance, and grades for our 3rd-5th graders. Parents can download the Infinite Campus App on their phones to access all grades. Please visit the Infinite Campus page on our school website to get instructions on how to access this app. [Infinite Campus Parent Getting Started Guide](#)
- **CMS Launchpad** - This platform is used by students within the classroom to access academic learning programs such as i-Ready, BookCreator, etc. Teachers may refer parents to these programs for extra practice at home to support their child's learning. Students can access the Launchpad from home using the website below. Please reach out to your child's teacher if your child needs assistance logging in at home. <https://launchpad.classlink.com/cmsk12>

## PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports will be sent home approximately four weeks after the start of the 9-weeks grading period. These reports are to be signed and returned to the school.

## REPORT CARDS

Report cards will be sent home at the end of each 9-week grading period.



## TRANSPORTATION

### Afternoon Dismissal

- **Walkers:** *Only students who live in the CMS designated No Transportation Zone for Cornelius Elementary School may be walkers.* Students are dismissed from their classrooms and go directly to the Media Center. Once all walkers have arrived there, staff members will walk these students to the Crossing Guard/Crosswalk at Catawba Avenue.
- **Parent Pick-Up:** Students are dismissed from their classrooms and go directly to the Media Center. Parent Pick-Up numbers will be called by a staff member, and students will be released from the PTO Office Atrium Door.  
***\*All parents must have a school-issued parent pick-up number visible. If the parent does not have the tag, he/she must come to the front office to sign out his/her child.***
- **Bus Riders:** Students are dismissed from their classrooms at designated times and will be placed on the bus.
- **Car Riders:** Students are dismissed at the bell and go directly to the designated locations. A staff member will call car rider numbers, and students will walk to their cars. Parents should remain in the cars throughout this process. Parents must not walk up to students in the car rider line for dismissal. All car rider traffic will enter the school using Smith Circle. Cars will not be allowed to turn off or onto Catawba Avenue. When exiting the school, police will direct drivers to turn right. Do not text or use your cell phone while driving through the car rider line. Safety is our number one priority.  
***\*All cars must have a school-issued car rider number visible. If the parent does not have the tag, he/she must park and come to the front office to sign out his/her child.***
- **After School:** Students registered in the After School Enrichment Program are dismissed at the bell and go directly to the ASEP location. Parents must not enter the back of the school for ASEP during afternoon dismissal.

### Change in Transportation

Occasionally (not daily) you may need to change the way your child goes home. If a change is necessary:

- Send in written notification to your child's classroom teacher regarding changes on how your child will be leaving school. This includes a request for bus, day care van, or car pool changes.

- **If it is an emergency and a transportation change must be made, call the school prior to 3:00 PM (980-343-3905).** It can be very hectic in the office after this time and will be difficult to get the information to your child.
- **Do not email/message/text your child's teacher during the day with a transportation change for that day.**
- Early pick-up of students will not be allowed between 3:00-3:45 p.m.

### **Bus Transportation & Conduct**

Students riding the bus must adhere to safety and behavior guidelines. Students are expected to be at the stop 10 minutes prior to the assigned pick up time. Buses will not wait for students to walk to the stop as this impedes traffic flow and schedules. Students are expected to sit in assigned seats, talk quietly, and follow the driver's directions. Standing, yelling, making inappropriate comments, and any physical contact with others are violations of bus guidelines.

*Riding the school bus is a privilege.* We know you share our concern for the safety of every student who rides a school bus. The staff at Cornelius Elementary School strongly urges parents to review these rules with their children to ensure the safety of all passengers. Students who fail to observe these rules are subject to immediate disciplinary action since their failure to do so may affect the safety of themselves and others. The bus driver will report a student who misbehaves to a school administrator. Disciplinary actions may include suspensions from the bus. If a student is suspended from the bus, the parent is responsible for providing transportation to and from school during the duration of the suspension. The parent should observe established arrival and dismissal schedules. Students who do not attend school during a bus suspension will be marked with an **unexcused** absence. Students suspended from the bus are not permitted to be at any Charlotte Mecklenburg School District bus stop or ride any school bus during their suspension. **All buses and bus stops are considered CMS property.**

Parents can help to support their child's appropriate behavior on the school bus by reviewing the following bus expectations with their child on a regular basis.

- **Students are only to get on and off the bus at their assigned bus stops. Parents cannot send in a note to request a different stop for their child. This includes a sleep over, play date, or childcare.**
- Students and parents are advised that video cameras may be used to monitor behavior on the bus.
- Students are to sit in their assigned seats and are to remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop at their bus stop or at the school.
- Students are permitted to talk quietly.
- Students are to obey the instructions of the bus driver promptly and consistently.
- Students are to refrain from eating, drinking, or chewing gum on the bus.

- Students are not permitted to use profane or inappropriate language while riding the bus.
- Students are not permitted to tamper with the emergency door, emergency windows, fire extinguishers, or first-aid supplies.
- Students are not to deface the bus in any way.
- Students are not permitted to take pets or other animals on the bus.
- **Students are not permitted to use personal technology devices such as cell phones, laptops, video games, tablets, etc. on the bus. All electronic devices must remain off and put away (stored in a backpack) while on the bus.**

Parents/guardians are not permitted to board CMS buses. Students who do not adhere to bus guidelines will be disciplined as follows:

**1<sup>st</sup> offense- conference with student and verbal warning**

**2<sup>nd</sup> offense-written warning sent home or phone call made to parent**

**3<sup>rd</sup> offense-possible bus suspension for 1-3 days**

**(For more serious offenses, such as fighting, a student may be suspended from the bus immediately.) Notices regarding bus behavior are required to be signed by the parent and returned to school the following day.**

Please speak to your child about bus safety and the importance of practicing good bus behavior both to and from school.

### **Frequently Asked Transportation Questions**

**Q: What if I need to have my stop changed?**

**A:** In order to change a bus stop or request a new one, you must go to the CMS website and complete the Alternate Stop, Unsafe Stop, or Change in Request form. The site is <https://www.cmsk12.org/buses>. Look for the transportation link at the bottom of the site. Depending on the time of year, this could take several days to two weeks to be approved before he/she can actually be assigned to the bus and begin riding. Once you have submitted the change of information, please contact the school after 3 days to verify if it has been approved by CMS Transportation.

**Q: What if I need my child to ride to a daycare center that is served via a CMS bus?**

**A:** If you have registered your child at a daycare service that CMS provides transportation to, you will need to go online at the CMS website and request that stop in the section titled **Alternate Stop**. Your child's daycare service cannot do this for you. This only applies to daycare services that CMS provides bus transportation for, not daycare vans. Failure to request the daycare stop will mandate that the driver take your child to the assigned home stop. The sooner this is completed, the sooner your child will be able to ride the bus to that daycare.

**Cornelius Elementary School 2025-2026  
Emergency Dismissal Form**

In the event of an emergency, act of God, or any other condition requiring the termination or early dismissal of classes, the Superintendent of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools may suspend the operation of the school day. In the event that school is dismissed early FOR ANY REASON, my child is to:

\_\_\_\_\_ **Ride the bus, as usual**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Ride in car, as usual**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Parent Pick Up, as usual**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Walker, as usual**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Alternative Plan (Please indicate)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Student's Name** \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Emergency Contact Information:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

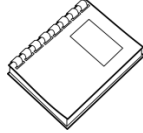
Note: If school dismisses early because of adverse weather conditions, all After School Enrichment Programs will be canceled, as well.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**



# Cornelius Elementary School 2025-2026 Student and Parent Handbook Contract



This handbook is designed to provide students and parents with important school information, which will be useful throughout the school year. **All information should be reviewed carefully.** We look forward to making our school a positive community, sharing our creativity, and making long lasting relationships in the 2025-2026 school year.

**Please sign this contract and return it to your child’s classroom teacher.**

**I read and understand the expectations outlined in the Student & Parent Handbook.**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_