

AMHERST STUDENT/ PARENT HANDBOOK



2025-2026

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Dr. Trina Spista
Principal

Dr. Sara Williams
Assistant Principal

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year at Amherst Elementary! We look forward to working with you all this school year. We are honored each day that you entrust your children to us, and we also understand that you are your child's first and most important teacher.

The beginning of the year necessitates **a mountain of paperwork** for you and our teachers. **Please read the notices that come home carefully.** Several items including student profile update, technology agreements and insurance, and electronic media release forms **must be signed and/or completed and returned to school.** Please give these items your prompt attention.

Please join our PTO. Amherst is a community school and we must have active parent involvement to make our school strong. The projects the PTO has planned for this year will benefit all our students and promise to be fun for everyone in the family! If you have questions about PTO, please contact the PTO at president@amherstpto.org.

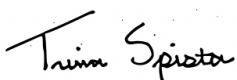
While the school administration's relationship with families is extremely important, the most important relationship you will have in the school is with your child's teacher. Please work with teachers to cultivate that relationship and reach out to them with your concerns or even to tell them how awesome they are doing! Your administrators are pleased to help you when you need further assistance. This year, grade levels are split up as follows:

- Dr. Williams: Pre-K, Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade
- Dr. Spista: 3rd, 4th and 5th grade

Please reach out to us by email or by phone 560-7001 should you need us.

I look forward to a wonderful year at Amherst!

Go forth and be awesome,



Dr. Trina Spista, Principal

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DRESS CODE

The standards for elementary school dress reflect “common sense” and a concern for each child’s comfort, safety, cleanliness, and sense of modesty. There is a strong relationship between neat, appropriate attire and a positive learning environment. Apparel or appearance, which tends to draw attention to an individual rather than to a learning situation, must be avoided.

To help create the best learning environment for elementary students, the following standards for student dress must be observed in all Knox County Elementary Schools:

1. Pants must not sag below the waist and must be at a safe length.
2. Head apparel, except for religious or medical reasons, must not be worn inside the school building.
3. Footwear is required and must be safe and appropriate for indoor or outdoor physical activity.
4. Clothing or accessories may not display offensive, vulgar language or images and must not advertise products, which students may not legally purchase.
5. For students in Grades 3-5, “short shorts”, mini-skirts, and skin-tight outer materials such as spandex are inappropriate attire.
6. For students in Grades 3-5, shirts, blouses, and dresses must completely cover the abdomen, back, and shoulders, and shirts or tops must cover the waistband of pants, shorts, or skirts with no midriff visible.

The school administration reserves the right to determine whether the student’s attire and appearance are within acceptable limits. In matters of opinion, the judgment of the principal/designee shall prevail. The principal may allow exceptions for school-wide programs or special classroom activities. The teachers and the principal will administer appropriate consequences for policy infractions.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

A Student Information Verification Sheet is sent home the first day of school. **It is extremely important the form be corrected and returned to school the second day of school.** We must have an emergency contact number in case we cannot reach the parent. It is also extremely important that we have a working email address. **Adults who are not listed on the Student Profile Form may not check out students or attend events during the school day, such as class parties and performances.**

DISCIPLINE POLICY

We are so excited to be a PBIS school! Our goal is to make the environment so positive that students WANT to choose the right thing, while also having consequences for those times when they choose not to do the right thing. Childhood is a great time to learn from mistakes, so we strive to make every infraction a learning opportunity.

All students will be taught and expected to follow the following school-wide expectations at the beginning and throughout the school year. Please reinforce these expectations at home. You will receive more specific information in terms of individual classroom expectations.

Amherst Elementary School Matrix of Behavior Expectations

Expectation	Classroom	Hallway	Bathroom	Cafeteria	Special Areas	Playground
Be Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself Move around the room carefully Use and clean up all materials as taught 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eyes are forward Hands by your side Walk on the right side of the hall on the 3rd square 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk at all times One person per stall Report problems to an adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk at all times Keep feet under table and bottom in chair, facing forward Raise your hand for help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear appropriate shoes Stay in your personal space Use and clean up all materials as taught 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be alert, don't get hurt Use equipment the correct way Keep your hands and feet to yourself
Be Respectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give your best effort on all your work Active listening when others are talking Follow directions the first time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Body control Voices off 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voices off Use bathroom area correctly Keep area and floor clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use good manners and a quiet voice Keep your hands, feet, and food to yourself Use lunch items appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter and exit quietly Active listening when others are talking Follow directions the first time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay in your play area Wait your turn patiently Follow game rules
Be Responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete work, stay on task, and ask for help when you need it Clean your work area Have what you need Monitor your own behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close line gaps Keep items safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always flush Wash your hands and turn off the water Toilet paper in toilet and paper towel in trash can 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring lunch items only Get everything you need before you sit down Pick up all items and trash from your area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in activities Give best effort, stay on task, and ask for help when you need it Come prepared Monitor your own behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen for your teacher Manage your own behavior Keep playground clean
Be Kind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use kind words Care for classroom materials Treat others how you want to be treated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiet waves Smile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wait your turn patiently Keep your eyes in your own stall Be quick 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk kindly with neighbors at your table Say "please" and "thank you" Leave no trash at your table 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use kind words Care for materials and equipment Treat others how you want to be treated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take turns and share equipment Include others Show good sportsmanship

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

School Hours: 7:45am – 2:45pm

STUDENTS MAY NOT BE DROPPED OFF BEFORE 7:05.

Arrival: Students that arrive by bus will be dropped off in the front of the building. Car riders will drive around to the back of the school and be dropped off in the car line. There is rarely a wait in the car line from 7:10–7:25. PreK/PreSchool will be dropped off in the front of the building. Students who arrive before 7:35 should report to the appropriate grade level waiting area. If a student is eating breakfast, he/she should report to the cafeteria.

Students must be in the cafeteria by 7:35 to receive breakfast.

Tardies: Instruction begins at 7:45, so students should be in their seats at this time. If you arrive to school at/after 7:45, you must come to the front of the building for your child to get a tardy slip. When dropping your child off, please remember that your child needs time to walk to their classroom. For example, if you arrive at school at 7:44, your child will likely be tardy because they will not have enough time to walk and arrive at their classroom by 7:45.

Afternoon dismissal: Please be patient. Dismissal will be slower for quite a bit at the beginning of the year. Bus riders will load buses beginning at 2:40. We will begin calling cars between 2:45–2:50. All car riders will load in the back of the building. Car drivers must have a school-provided, car tag name plate, given to you by the school, to load your student.

Students will be loaded into cars from the passenger side only.

If the car driver does not have the provided car tag name plate from this current year, the driver must park and enter through the front office to make sure the person is on the student's pick up list. If the driver is on the pick-up list, the driver will wait in the office until dismissal is over when the students will come down and come to cars. (This does not apply to the first week of school.) If you are late for pick up, you will need to pick up your child from the front office. Please bring your car tag in with you to the front office when you pick up your child.

For the safety of your child, parents may not call the school to change the way a student is to go home. The school/teacher must have a note from the parent indicating change in transportation for the child in order for the child to go home in a different manner. If an emergency arises during the school day, you may come to the school to change the

dismissal plan in person, or a note with a copy of the parent/guardian's driver's license may be emailed to school before 2:00 pm to all of the following email addresses:

shelly.lucas@knoxschools.org, cindy.harpending@knoxschools.org, and lisa.clevenger@knoxschools.org.

Early dismissal: Students being checked out before the end of the school day should be checked out before 2:30. Please do not ask that your child be signed out after 2:30. Adults who check students out early must have and show a picture ID and must be listed on the Emergency Card.

Beginning of the year – Walking your child into the building:

Walking Students into School 1st–5th grades: You may walk with your child into the building if you choose on August 7. Beginning August 8, everyone will be required to stay in the car line, and the students will all exit from the vehicle and walk into the building. We promise to take care of them, even if there are nerves.

Walking Students into School Kindergarten: You will walk and check your child into the gym during the staggered days of August 8th – 20th. On August 21st, kindergarten students begin full time. Parents of kindergarten students will be able to walk your child into the back lobby on that day. Beginning August 22nd everyone will be required to stay in the car line, and the students will all exit from the vehicle and walk into the building. Please make sure your child can remove their seat belt and get out on their own on the passenger side. It would be helpful if you begin to practice now so they will know how it feels.

PreK and PreSchool: Your teacher will give you more information soon.

Emergency Closings/Delayed Openings

Please remember to listen to your television or radio for information. Parent Square will notify your contact numbers, and you may view information on the Knox County Schools website at www.knoxschools.org. Remember, Parent Square will not contact you if you have opted out. Do not call the school as we have a limited number of phone lines that need to remain open for information from the Central Office and bus drivers. If school is delayed one hour, we will not have a teacher on duty at the regular time for early arrivals. The school will open at 8:05 instead of 7:05. Two hour delays would result in the school opening at 9:05.

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

All students entering Knox County Schools must have the following documented information on record:

- Birth Certificate
- Current physical examination
- Permanent Tennessee Certification of Immunization
- Proof of address (most recent KUB bill)
- Immunizations may be obtained from your family doctor or the Knox County Health Department. Students cannot be enrolled until these requirements are met

PROOF OF RESIDENCE

Students enrolled in Amherst Elementary School will be required to provide proof of residence within our school zone, unless he/she has been approved through the transfer process. If the parent/guardian is not listed on the proof of residence (most recent KUB bill), the parent/guardian must provide a notarized statement stating that the family is living at the residence of the person listed on the proof of residence (most recent KUB bill).

SCHOOL FEES

School fees are \$25.00 per child. Make checks payable to Amherst School or use <https://amhees.givebacks.com>. This fee is used for expendable supplies such as manipulative material, teacher made and commercial material, and art material.

STUDENT SHOUT-OUTS

What better way to celebrate your child's birthday than giving them a special shout out on our school's electronic sign? For only \$5 we can make that happen for you! Just complete the form no later than the week prior to your child's birthday and we will get his/her name on the sign. These funds will be used at the principal's discretion which could be classroom needs, student incentives, staff luncheons, technology, staff incentives, etc: <https://amhees.givebacks.com>

STUDENT DELIVERIES

Due to the increased deliveries to students on their birthdays, holidays, or special days we will no longer be able to accept or sign for deliveries of any kind. We appreciate your understanding.

BACKPACKS and HEELYS

Rolling backpacks and shoes with wheels are not allowed at Amherst Elementary.

VISITORS

We welcome visitors at Amherst. **All visitors must enter the building through the main office. It will be necessary for visitors to press the intercom and announce their visit, and place their government ID up to the screen before being “buzzed” into the building by the office staff. To maintain the best learning environment, we ask you to make appointments in advance for classroom visits or conferences with teachers (this includes prior to the school day).** For the safety of all our children, visitors must sign-in in the office when they arrive and receive a visitor’s pass. **Passes must be worn in the building.** If you are coming to an event i.e. Field day, class parties etc. for your child please abide by our rule of not checking out their sibling(s) to go with you to watch/participate.

VOLUNTEERS

We welcome volunteers at Amherst. In order to volunteer at a Knox County school, volunteers must complete required paperwork in our office. Our staff members will have specific tasks for volunteers to complete and will schedule volunteers to help on days that most benefit our students. Chaperones on field trips will also be required to complete volunteer paperwork. All volunteers will be required to complete confidentiality paperwork each year. **If you are volunteering or chaperoning please do not bring siblings/younger children with you.**

BIRTHDAYS, CELEBRATIONS, AND PARTY INVITATIONS

Birthdays are a very special time in the lives of children. **Federal Nutrition Guidelines prohibit cupcakes, cookies and other items that do not meet nutritional standards from being distributed at school as a class treat.** Additionally, homemade items are not acceptable. At the end of this handbook, you will find the I-440 Wellness Policy. **Another option is to purchase ice cream from the cafeteria for the entire class.** Children or parents MAY NOT distribute invitations to birthday parties or special events at school unless they are inviting the entire class (or all the boys/all the girls in the classroom).

ILLNESS AND ACCIDENTS

You will be informed if your child becomes seriously ill or is injured in a school activity. We must have a telephone number on file where parents, a relative or neighbor can be reached in an emergency. It is your responsibility to notify the school if your number

changes. Students who become ill with fever/vomiting/diarrhea have to be symptom/fever free for 24 hours before returning to school without the use of medication.

CAFETERIA

Breakfast is served from 7:05 –7:35

MEAL PRICES

STUDENTS		FACULTY	
Breakfast	FREE	Breakfast	\$3.00
Lunch	FREE	Lunch	\$5.00
		VISITOR	
Ice cream	\$1.00	Breakfast	\$3.00
		Lunch	\$5.00

To apply for free or reduced lunch go to: lingconnect.com. Paper applications are also available by calling the KCS Food and Nutrition Services Department at (865) 594-9563. Families may add money to their cafeteria account by writing a check to the cafeteria or using lingconnect.com. This is a new system, this is a link to help answer your questions. [LINQ Connect FAQ page](#) Students, in elementary school, do not have the option of saying they do not want to eat lunch. It is expected that every child will eat at lunchtime.

CAFETERIA PROCEDURES

Once seated, students should remain seated. Students should raise a hand if they need help and a cafeteria assistant will help them. PLEASE work with your child to help them be able to open packages, condiment packets, milks, etc... Students may not take toys, games, purses (other than change purses), textbooks, pencils, etc. in the cafeteria during lunch. Students should NOT drink soft drinks at school. Glass containers are not allowed in the cafeteria. Sharing food is prohibited. The faculty has developed guidelines for behavior in the cafeteria that seek to allow students a chance to socialize while maintaining a pleasant, safe atmosphere for everyone.

EATING LUNCH WITH YOUR CHILD

Lunch is an important time for students to learn to socialize appropriately with same-aged peers. With this in mind, we encourage parents to limit the number of times you eat with your child. We will not allow anyone to visit a child who is not on the emergency card of a student or has written permission from the parent on the emergency card. Due to this policy, visitors that come to eat lunch with students will only

be allowed to eat with those named on the emergency card. Due to our large class sizes, we have limited lunch space for adults. Adults visiting for lunch must take their child to the tables directly outside of the lunchroom to have lunch with their child. Students will not be able to choose a friend to sit with them.

MEDICATION

No medication of any kind (prescription, over the counter drugs including but not limited to ointments, eye drops, Tums, Tylenol, aspirin, etc.) shall be self-administered by students, even with assistance from school nurses or other school personnel, except when medication must be given on a long-term basis and is necessary to be given during school hours in order for the student to remain in school.

Medications such as Tylenol, aspirin, and any other over the counter medications are included in these regulations. Elementary students should not carry these medications to school to be taken after school hours.

If medication is to be administered according to the above guidelines, the appropriate paperwork required by Knox County Schools must be completed and returned to the school office. **Parents must deliver the medication to school.**

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Excused absences:

1. Student illness
2. Illness in the family temporarily requiring help from the student and **supported by medical documentation**
3. Death in the family (provide obituary)
4. **Recognized religious holiday** regularly observed by members of the student's faith
5. Verifiable family emergency

It is the parent's responsibility to provide appropriate documentation regarding absences to the school within five (5) days of your child's return to school. If appropriate documentation is not provided within five (5) days, the absences will be recorded as unexcused. Ten days (10) per school year may be excused with a note from the parent if the **child is sick**, but does not see a doctor. **Always send in a doctor's note if your child makes a visit to the doctor.**

Absences resulting from vacations, car trouble, family business trips, oversleeping, missing the bus, etc. will be unexcused absences.

Children must be in school for 3 hours and 30 minutes to be counted present for the day. **According to State of Tennessee policy, THESE RULES INCLUDE DAYS THAT ARE DESIGNATED HALF-DAYS OF SCHOOL.**

MAKE UP WORK WHEN A CHILD IS ABSENT

If your child is out of school for an extended time due to illness and you wish to pick up the child's school assignments, you may call the office on the **SECOND** day of the absence and place your request. **You must call the office no later than 10:00 A.M.** in order for the assignments to be available after 2:45 P.M. on the same day. **There will be no exceptions to this policy.**

TOYS AND GAMES

Children may not bring any toys or electronic games to school. If any toy, game, or valuable item is brought to school and is then stolen or lost, neither your child's teacher nor the school is responsible for replacement or investigation.

INAPPROPRIATE ITEMS

Students must not bring to school any items that violate laws, safety rules, or disrupt the learning process. Parents and students are especially reminded that no weapons of any kind may be in any student's possession. This includes guns (including "toy" or water guns), knives (including "toy"), or any items used to hurt or threaten others. Knox County Schools practice strict "no tolerance" procedures with regard to students' possession of weapons of any type, and students, including elementary students, who violate these rules, will be subject to severe disciplinary action, including the possibility of long-term suspension from school. **No live animals may be brought to school without prior consent of the teacher and the principal.**

TELEPHONE CALLS

Staff members will not be called to the telephone to speak with parents while classes are in session. The office will forward your call to the staff member's voice mail and the staff member will return your call when they are able. Please do not ask office personnel to relay messages to children except in cases of **EXTREME EMERGENCY**. Children will not be

called to the telephone to speak with parents. Please respect your child's instructional time when expecting responses back on messaging apps set up by teachers. These are set up for your ease and convenience, however instructional time takes precedence.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are welcomed at Amherst Elementary and special conference days are scheduled in the calendar. Any time during the year, parents are welcomed to arrange a conference with the teacher. We also have two parent conference nights throughout the year. Our Fall Parent Conference Night is Thursday, September 18th 3:00-6:00 P.M. Our Spring Parent Conference Night is Thursday, February 12th 3:00-6:00 P.M.

Teachers cannot conference or answer questions during the school day between the hours of 7:30-2:45, so **please do not go to the classroom during those time periods** for conferences or messages. **Conferences must be by appointment only.**

Quiet Hours

We want to take care of the big people who take care of the little people. To give our staff time to disconnect, we ask that we have quiet hours between 5:00 pm and 6:00 am during the week, and from 5:00pm Friday until 6:00am on Monday. Staff will not be returning emails or messages during this time. Staff should get back to you within 24 hours. Thank you for helping our staff have time with their families and disconnect from work.

Parent Square

We will be notifying every family in the building of special events or any emergency situations by phone through our automated phone and email system. Again, we must have the current contact information for every child at all times. Please keep the office updated with any changes.

SCHOOL BUS

Students may only ride the school bus **to which they are assigned**. Students may not ride home from school on the school bus with a friend. Our buses are full and do not have room for extra students.

CELL PHONES/WIRELESS COMMUNICATION DEVICES

STUDENT DEVICES: CELL PHONE AND WATCHES

Use & Limitations (Per State Law & KCS Policy)

As you may have seen in the recent message from Knox County Schools, a new state law—reflected in KCS Policy J-240—restricts the use of personal wireless communication devices (such as phones, smartwatches, and tablets) during the school day.

Starting this school year, students will be expected to keep personal devices powered off and out of sight during school hours, unless specifically allowed for an educational purpose, emergency, or approved use through a health plan, IEP, or 504.

Students will store their devices powered off in their backpack.

Students will continue to use their district-issued Chromebooks for instructional needs, and we will contact families through ParentSquare in the event of an emergency.

This includes:

- Cell phones

- Smartwatches

- Tablets

- Earbuds

- Smart glasses

- Any device capable of texting, recording, or accessing the internet

Devices may not be used as a reward, privilege, or incentive.

This includes free time, early finisher activities, Fun Friday, or behavior-based incentives.

Technology use must be purposeful, directly tied to instruction, and aligned with district guidelines.

Expectations for Students:

- Devices must be turned off and stored in backpacks from arrival until dismissal.

- The first unauthorized use will result in your child being given a reminder of the expectations and reminded to put it away.

- The second unauthorized use will result in the device being confiscated and a parent being contacted.

- Repeated violations will result in disciplinary action.

Homework

It is encouraged that students read/are read to and practice math fluency each night. If homework is assigned, it should be purposeful practice for review purposes and not dependent on parental assistance. It should be based on a **maximum** of 10 minutes per

grade level (not to exceed 30 minutes). For instance, first graders should have no more than 10 minutes a night; second: 20 minutes; third: 30 minutes; fourth: 30 minutes; fifth: 30 minutes. Students that do not finish assignments in class may do them as homework if that is deemed most appropriate. However, if this becomes a consistent practice for particular students, we will consider other ways to address the issue such as modifications or work habits contracts.

Special Education/504/ESL

Knox County provides a continuum of services for students who qualify for special education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act. If you feel your child might require special services and want Knox County to provide them, contact your child's teacher, the principal, or Knox County Pupil Personnel Services. We also have students from many countries throughout the world that may be in need of English language instruction. ESL services are provided during the regular school day for students who qualify for these services.

Field Trips

Per Knox County School Board Policy (I-250) field trips must be "justified for the purpose of the established educational goals of the school system."

Students must have the opportunity to participate in field trips, with certain behaviors being maintained throughout the school year.

Students may be removed from the opportunity of participating in a field trip when their behavior becomes a safety concern for themselves or the school. These behaviors include, but are not limited to, a

- pattern of elopement
- pattern of self harm
- pattern of violence
- pattern of noncompliance with other established school rules

Teachers need to have frequent verbal communication with parents regarding their student's behavior and its impact on their field trip eligibility.

Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying

Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying or Cyberbullying of any kind is prohibited. Please see the attached policy for more information. The following chart is helpful when

identifying how to label a given situation.

CONFLICT	RUDE	MEAN	BULLYING
Occasional	Occasional	Once or Twice	Is REPEATED
Not planned; in the heat of the moment	Spontaneous; unintentional	Intentional	Is planned and done on purpose
All parties are upset	Can cause hurt feelings; upset	Can hurt others deeply	The target of the bullying is upset
All parties want to work things out	Based in thoughtlessness, poor manners or narcissism	Based in anger; impulsive cruelty	The bully is trying to gain control over the target
All parties will accept responsibility	Rude person accepts responsibility	Behavior often regretted;	The bully blames the target
An effort is made by all parties to solve the problem			The target wants to stop the bully's behavior, the bully does not
Can be resolved through mediation	Social skill building could be of benefit	Needs to be addressed/ should NOT be ignored	CANNOT be resolved through mediation

Source: Jennifer Astles, DASA Newsletter, January 2014, TST BOCES

Sharks will treat each other WITH RESPECT and REFUSE TO TOLERATE BULLYING OF ANY KIND.

Definition: According to stopbullying.gov, "Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time."

Bullying behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Hurting someone physically by hitting, kicking, tripping, or pushing;
- Stealing or damaging another person's things;
- Grouping up against someone;
- Teasing someone in a hurtful way;
- Using put-downs, such as insulting someone's race or making fun of someone for being a boy or a girl;
- Spreading rumors or untruths about someone;
- Leaving someone out on purpose, or trying to get other kids not to play with someone;
- Harassment.

Students at Amherst Elementary WILL DO the following things TO PREVENT BULLYING:

- Treat each other respectfully;
- Refuse to bully others;
- Refuse to watch, laugh, or join in when someone is being bullied;
- Try to include everyone in play, especially those who are often left out;
- Immediately report bullying to an adult and get help.

Teachers and staff at Amherst Elementary will do the following things to prevent bullying and help children feel safe at school:

- Closely supervise students in all areas of the school and playground;
- Communicate with bus drivers regarding all student behavior on buses after school and on field trips;
- Watch for signs of bullying and stop it when it happens;
- Look into all reported bullying incidents and specifically address each case as determined necessary by the offense.

Conflict vs. Bullying - What's the difference?

Conflict	Bullying
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disagreement or argument in which both sides express their views • Equal power between those involved • Generally stop and change behavior when they realize it is hurting someone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal is to hurt, harm, or humiliate • Person bullying has more power* • Continue behavior when they realize it is hurting someone. <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 5px;">* "Power" can mean the person bullying is older, bigger, stronger, or more popular.</p>



PACER's
National Bullying Prevention Center
The End of Bullying Begins with You.

“I promise to do my best to keep our school a safe and caring place for everyone.”

Students at Amherst are expected to:

1. Treat everyone with kindness and respect.
2. Resolve disagreements with other students peacefully.
3. Never tease, hurt, name-call, or bully another student;
4. Refuse to join in if I see someone else being bullied.
5. Immediately ask for help from an adult if I am bullied, or if I see someone else bullied.

Amherst Student/Parent Handbook 2025–2026

It is an expectation that you have read and discussed the Amherst Handbook with your child. Additionally, we appreciate your support in following the outlined expectations. Thank you in advance for your cooperation!



2025-2026 Knox County Schools Calendar

Thursday, July 31	First Day for Teachers (School Based In-Service Day)
Friday, August 1	Systemwide In-Service Day (PreK-12)
Monday, August 4	Administrative Day (Teacher Work Day)
Tuesday, August 5	Systemwide In-Service Day (½ Day School-based); Administrative Day (½ Day Teacher Work Day); 6 th and 9 th Grade Orientation
Wednesday, August 6	Administrative Day (Teacher Work Day)
Thursday, August 7	First Day for Students (½ Day)
Monday, September 1	Labor Day Holiday (Knox County Schools Closed)
Friday, September 5	End 4½-weeks Grading Period
Wednesday, September 17	Constitution Day (Knox County Schools Open), Half-Day for Students
Monday, October 6 - Friday, October 10	Fall Break
Tuesday, October 14	End First 9-weeks Grading Period
Tuesday, November 4	Systemwide In-Service Day (PreK-12) (Student Holiday)
Thursday, November 13	End 4½-weeks Grading Period
Wednesday, November 19	Half-Day for Students
Wednesday, November 26 - Friday, November 28	Thanksgiving Holidays (Knox County Schools Closed)
Friday, December 19	Half-Day for Students; End Second 9-weeks Grading Period; End First Semester
Monday, December 22 – Friday, January 2	Winter Break
Friday, January 2	Systemwide In-service Day (½ Day School-based); Administrative Day (½ Day Teacher Work Day)
Monday, January 5	First Day for Students after Winter Break (Full Day)
Monday, January 19	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (Knox County Schools Closed)
Wednesday, January 28	Half-Day for Students
Thursday, February 5	End 4½-weeks Grading Period
Monday, February 16	Systemwide In-Service Day (PreK-12) (Student Holiday)
Monday, March 9 – Friday, March 13	Spring Break
Tuesday, March 17	End Third 9-weeks Grading Period
Wednesday, March 25	Half-Day for Students
Friday, April 3	Holiday (Knox County Schools Closed)
Monday, April 20	End 4½-weeks Grading Period
Tuesday, May 5	Systemwide In-Service Day (School-based)
Thursday, May 21	Last Day for Students (½ Day); End Fourth 9-weeks Grading Period; End Second Semester
Friday, May 22	Administrative Day (Teacher Work Day) – Last Day for Teachers
Friday June 19	Juneteenth Holiday (Knox County Schools Closed)

Calendar Summary

180	Instructional Days*
4	Administrative Days
2	Unscheduled In-Service Days
1	Unscheduled Parent-Teacher Contact Hours Day
6	Scheduled In-Service Days
10	Vacation Days

**In accordance with T.C.A. § 49-6-3004 – 177 student instructional days plus 3 days accumulated under daily 7-hour schedule.*

Note: This calendar allows cancellation of up to 8 instructional days due to inclement weather or serious outbreaks of illness before any make up days will be required.