

John Hay Elementary School
Student Handbook
2026-2027



Temporary Address: 215 Lincoln Avenue

Different Location, Same Pioneer Spirit

Vision Statement

Inspiring Excellence through High Expectations
so Every Child Can Thrive

Mission Statement

At John Hay Elementary School, we are committed to fostering a learning community where positive relationships, high expectations, unique learning needs, and a responsive, stimulating environment converge to ensure the success of every student.

Core Values:

High Expectations:

We believe in setting and achieving the highest standards of academic excellence, personal growth, and character development. Our unwavering belief in the potential of every student drives us to continually raise the bar and support them in reaching their fullest potential.

Responsive, Stimulating Environment:

We cultivate an inclusive and dynamic learning environment that adapts to the diverse needs of our students. Our classrooms are spaces where curiosity is encouraged, creativity flourishes, and every voice is heard. We respond to the evolving world to ensure our students are prepared for success in the 21st century.

Unique Learning Needs:

Recognizing that each student is an individual with distinct strengths, challenges, and interests, we tailor our educational approach to meet these unique learning needs. Our commitment to differentiation ensures that every student's path to success is personalized and meaningful.

Success for Every Student:

Success at John Hay is not defined by a single standard. It is the realization of each student's potential, whether it be in academics, arts, sports, leadership, or personal development. We celebrate and support the diverse pathways to success that our students pursue.

Thriving for All:

Beyond success, we aspire for all our students to thrive - academically, socially, emotionally, and personally. We provide a holistic education that empowers students with the skills, resilience, and mindset needed to navigate life's challenges and to make a positive impact on the world.

Our Commitment:

At John Hay Elementary School, we pledge to uphold these values and principles every day. We will collaborate with students, parents, and the community to create a vibrant, innovative, and nurturing educational experience where high expectations, responsive teaching, unique learning needs, and the aspiration for thriving intertwine to shape confident, capable, and compassionate individuals who will lead tomorrow's world.

Together, we will inspire excellence in every student, ensuring they not only achieve their potential but also exceed it, contributing to a brighter future for themselves and society as a whole.

INFORMATION ABOUT OUR SCHOOL PROCEDURES

For the school year at 215 Lincoln Avenue, Morristown, TN 37813

School Day

The school doors open at 7:00 AM when teachers begin bus duty. Students will report to either the gym or the assembly room for breakfast. All students are dismissed from the gym at 7:35 AM in order to be in their classrooms ready to begin their day at 7:45 AM.

Students who are car riders are dismissed at 2:45 PM. All car riders must be picked up by 3:15 PM.

Parking

Parents or visitors who need to come into the school to conduct business should park in the parking lot in front of the school, come into the office, sign-in, and obtain a visitor's badge.

At the rear of the school, please observe all signs as this blocks access to our dumpster, prevents buses from unloading safely, and blocks emergency access to our school.

Traffic for Drop-Off and Pick-Up

We have a 15 mph speed zone on school property.

In the morning, we only utilize one lane for drop off as this keeps our students safe. In the afternoons, we will use 2 lanes entering the property, the right lane will turn right on Lincoln Ave to depart, the left lane is for people turning left onto Lincoln Ave as they depart. Please stay in your car and make sure that your current hang tag is displayed to help speed the process while keeping our students safe.

If a current year's hang tag is not displayed, the driver will be asked to park in the parking lot and come inside to check identification and school pick-up lists.

By Tennessee state law, the use of handheld cellular phones in our school zone (and on Tennessee roads) is prohibited, so please avoid using your phone while dropping off or picking up your child.

It is important that we observe all speed limits, traffic signs, and that we are not passing other cars in the school zone unless directed to do so by a staff member directing traffic. Our top priority is staff and student safety. Please help us with this matter.

Changes to Your Child's Pick-Up Method

If you have a change to your child's pick-up method, please send a note signed by the legal parent/guardian the morning of the change. This is for the safety of your child. We cannot easily verify people calling in. If there is an emergency, you may call the office, but we will seek various ways to verify your identity.

Extended School Program (ESP)

After school care is available if you cannot pick up your child by 3:15 PM. This program is well staffed and available until 6:00 PM. If you need information about this option, please contact (423) 586-7700 and ask to speak with the director of ESP or use the link under the Parent tab at hcboe.net.

ATTENDANCE

Absences

Absences will be classified as either excused or unexcused as determined by the principal or designee in charge of attendance. When a student is absent, the parent/guardian shall contact the school. Upon returning to school, the student must present a note to the school for the dates absent. Absences may be excused, but the student is responsible for any make-up work in subject matters covered during an absence. Make-up work is due in the amount of time a child has missed (if a child misses 3 days, he/she will have 3 days to make up the work once returning to school).

Absences may be excused for a limited number of times for:

1. Personal illness. A parent/guardian note shall be accepted for three days each semester. After three days, a physician's statement shall be required.
2. Death in the immediate family; not to exceed three days.
3. Illness of parent/guardian requiring temporary help; a physician's statement is required.
4. Recognized religious holidays.
5. Court summons; only time actually in court shall be excused.
6. Doctor or dentist appointment; medical statement required.
7. Military
8. Injury
9. Hospitalization
10. Homebound
11. Subpoena
12. Court Order
13. School sponsored activities
14. School endorsed activities
15. Extenuating circumstances determined on a case-by-case basis by the school principal.

Absences for any reason other than those listed shall be unexcused. An accumulation of unexcused absences will result in a letter or call from the attendance coach and could result in an attendance contract or parental Sessions Court appearance.

Tardies/Early Dismissals

School begins promptly at 7:45 AM each day, but students go to class at 7:35 AM to prepare for the day. More than 3 tardies or early dismissals will accumulate into days absent and can also be referred for Attendance Review.

Tardies/Early Dismissals may be excused for:

1. Late Bus

2. Illness with Doctor's Note
3. Death in Family
4. Religious Holiday
5. Medical/Dental Appointment.

Tardies or early dismissals for any other reason will be unexcused.

More than 10 tardies may result in students being asked to ride the bus to ensure on-time arrival.

Sign In/Sign Out

An adult must come inside and sign in all students arriving at school after 7:45 AM at the office. If a parent must get their child before 2:45 PM, they must come to the office, have proof of identification, and be designated on the Emergency Contact list as someone who can pick up the child from school. It is very important that anyone who will be allowed to pick any child up from school be included on the Emergency Contact list.

SICKNESS OF A CHILD

Children who exhibit signs of illness such as vomiting, diarrhea, or fever should not attend school. Please do not give them fever-reducing medication and send them to school, as they would still be contagious.

Sickness of a Child at School

If your child becomes ill at school or has an accident or injury, the school nurse will contact parents to pick up the child. **Please be sure we have a working phone number we can use to contact one member on the Emergency Card for picking up a child at school.** Every attempt will be made to reach the parent, guardian, or emergency contact if a child becomes ill at school. We ask that you keep phone numbers current on Power School and with the office so we can reach someone in case of emergency.

Prescription/Non-prescription Drugs (Board Policy 6.405)

A Permission to Give Medication Form must be on file at the school before medication can be dispensed. Prescription medications must be brought to school by the parent/guardian in the original, pharmacy-labeled container

Visitors/Volunteers/Contacting Teachers

For the safety of our staff and students, all visitors must enter through the front doors and check in at the office. Parents may not go directly to their child's classroom as this can interrupt instruction. Parents are not allowed on the school playground, unless there is a specified event, during the school day. If you need to speak with your child's teacher, you may make an appointment during the teacher's planning time. We will not interrupt instruction for a phone call. Teachers are not allowed to have cell phones out during class, so if you send a DoJo message, they may not read it until their next break.

Planning times are:

Kindergarten: 11:50-12:45
1st Grade: 1:55- 2:50
2nd Grade: 12:55-1:50

3rd Grade: 10:05-11:00
4th Grade: 9:05-10:00
5th Grade: 8:05-9:00

Out of Zone Students

Students are expected to attend the school to which they are assigned by virtue of their residence. No student whose custodial parent or legal guardian resides outside of Hamblen County will be permitted to enroll in Hamblen County Schools. Parents/guardians residing in Hamblen County may elect to enroll their children in any school provided the parent/guardian provides transportation to and from that school and provided that such choice of school does not cause overcrowding. It is the principal's discretion to accept out-of-zone students on a space available basis. In all cases, residential students have preference over students who reside out-of-zone. Students attending John Hay as Out of Zone must maintain attendance and limit unexcused absences, tardies, and early dismissals to less than 10 occurrences. More than 10 of any of these will result in the child being asked to return to their zoned school.

INFORMATION ABOUT OUR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT RULES

We hold high expectations for student behavior at school, on school sponsored transportation, or while at any school sponsored event.

All board policies can be found at:

<https://tsba.net/hamblen-county-board-of-education-policy-manual/#students>

CODE OF CONDUCT (Board Policy 6.300)

John Hay School Rules

1. Follow directions the first time given.
2. Keep hands, feet, objects, gestures, and inappropriate comments to yourself.
3. Raise your hands to be recognized and wait quietly for the teacher to call on you.
4. Follow all Hamblen County board policies regarding student conduct.

Consequences

Students who choose not to follow expectations during the school day will be addressed using the Assertive Discipline Plan for their grade level.

Level One - Classroom Level

Teachers will use the following **Level One** consequences which are teacher administered and non-cumulative outside of one school day.

1st Consequence - Verbal Warning

2nd Consequence - Time Out/Alternative Setting/Loss of Privilege

3rd Consequence - Extended Time Out/Alternative Setting/Loss of activity or privilege

4th Consequence - Parent Contact (Note, phone call, Class Do Jo message)

5th Consequence - Referral to Principal

6th Severe Clause - Some behaviors such as fighting, use of profanity, inappropriate comments or gestures (profane), threats, etc. will result in an immediate referral to the Principal.

Level Two - Office Level

Referrals to the Principal (Office Referrals) are **Level Two** and any consequences are cumulative. Any visit to the office that results in an official written referral will be assigned one of the following steps and consequences. Any student receiving two or more official office referrals may not be allowed to attend the next grade-level field trip or other reward day at school.

Step 1 - Warning - Conference with Principal and SRO or Counselor

Step 2 - 1 Day Alternative Learning Placement (In School Suspension)

Step 3 - Up to 3 Days Alternative Learning Placement, Guidance Referral

Step 4 - 1 Day Out of School Suspension, Guidance Referral

Step 5 -Up to 2 Days Out of School Suspension or comparable placement, Guidance Referral

Step 6 - 3 Days Out of School Suspension or comparable placement, Orientation at Transition Academy or Alternative School Referral

Step 7 - Transition Academy/ Alternative School Meeting to determine amount of time of placement.

Severe Behavior Clause: Levels may be assigned at the principal's discretion based on the severity of the student offense using HCBOE policy

Bullying/Intimidation/CyberBullying/Harassment (Board Policy 6.304)

At John Hay Elementary School, students shall be provided a safe learning environment. It shall be a violation of this policy for any student to bully, intimidate, or create a hostile educational environment for another student. Harassment, bullying, and intimidation occurs if the act takes place on school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided equipment for transportation, or at any official school bus stop and if the act either physically harms a student, damages his/her property, or knowingly places the student in reasonable fear of harm to self or property, causes emotional distress to a student or students, or creates a hostile educational environment.

Threat Assessment (Board Policy 6.304)

We are dedicated to providing a safe learning environment for all students and staff members. Threats, in any format, will be taken seriously. Students who make threatening comments, gestures, or written forms will be subject to a threat assessment and investigation and could result in an Alternative Learning Program and/or expulsion from school.

If a credible threat is deemed, the school must notify parents through district level communications about the threat within 48 hours.

Transportation Policy (Board Policy 6.308)

Bus service is considered an extension of the classroom and the Hamblen County School Board expects students to conduct themselves on the bus in a manner consistent with the established standards for classroom behavior. Students are expected to remain quiet and seated, facing the front of the bus, keeping hands and feet to self, and refrain from eating or drinking, throwing objects, and/or participating in any activity that distracts the driver while operating the bus.

Students are under the supervision and control of the bus driver while on his bus and all reasonable directions given by him/her are to be followed. Bus Referrals for inappropriate behavior will result in the following consequences:

First Offense - Warning

Second Offense - Suspension from the bus for five (5) days.

Third Offense - Suspension from the bus for fifteen (15) days.

Fourth Offense - Suspension from the bus for thirty (30) days.

Fifth Offense - Suspension from the bus for one year. (180 school days.)

Fighting on the bus shall result in the following penalties:

First Offense—Suspension from the bus for thirty (30) days.

Second Offense—Suspension from the bus for one year. (180 School Days).

Use of Tobacco in any form, including electronic cigarettes, on school buses shall result in the following penalties:

First Offense—Suspension from the bus for five (5) days.

Second Offense—Suspension from the bus for thirty (30) days.

Third Offense—Suspension from the bus for one year. (180 School Days.)

Personal Communication Devices (Board Policy 6.312)

Personal communication devices include, but are not limited to, wearable technology such as eyeglasses, rings, or watches that have the capability to record, live stream, or interact with wireless technology; cell phones; laptops; tablets; earbuds; and MP3 players.

Students in Grades K-5 may not possess personal communication devices. A student in violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action as outlined below.

Whether on school buses or on school property, students are not permitted to use recording devices (photograph, audio, or video) without administrative approval. A student in violation of this policy is subject to the grade-level discipline outlined below.

K-5 students may not possess personal communication devices during school bus transportation to and from school.

First Offense: Warning. Students may pick up the device at the end of the day.

Second Offense: One (1) day of ALP (commonly termed in-school suspension).

Students may pick up the device at the end of the day.

Third Offense: A level on the assertive discipline plan, orientation to alternative school, and three (3) day ALP placement. Device shall be released to a parent.

Fourth Offense: Placement in alternative school for forty-five (45) days. Parents may pick up the device at the homebase school.

DRESS CODE (Board Policy 6.310)

Board Policy 6.310 (may change for 2026-2027 school year. The current policy can be found at hcboe.net)

For All Apparel

- Clothing that exposes underwear or body parts in an indecent manner that disrupts the learning environment shall not be permitted.
- Clothing must be neat.
- No holes, rips, or tears shall be allowed.
- Clothing shall fit properly and shall not be unreasonably tight or unreasonably baggy.
- Students shall wear appropriate undergarments, and undergarments shall not be visible.

Pants (including slacks, jeans, leggings, etc.)

- Pants shall be hemmed and worn at the waist.
- Leggings will be worn with a top that is the length of mid-thigh.

Skirts and Dresses

- Skirts and dresses shall be a minimum length of mid-thigh.

Shorts

- Shorts shall be a minimum length of mid-thigh and shall be worn at the waist.

Shirts and Blouses

- Tank tops, spaghetti strap, and halter tops shall not be permitted.

Shoes

- Students will wear appropriately fitting shoes.
- Flip-flops shall not be permitted.
- Tennis shoes are recommended on days when attending physical education.

Hair and Hats

- Hair shall be worn in a manner that does not disrupt the educational process and does not call attention to the individual.
- Hair should be of a natural hair color.
- No headwear of any type shall be worn inside the buildings with the exception of headwear for religious or medical reasons as approved by the school administration.
- Hair bows, headbands, and barrettes shall be permitted, provided they do not cause a substantial disruption to the learning environment.

Jewelry

- Facial jewelry shall be limited to the ear with the exception of religious exemptions approved by the school administration.

Symbolism

- The Board prohibits the display of any symbol on school property or any object (such as a backpack, locker, clothing, etc.) which directly or by innuendo disrespects or is perceived to disrespect a student's race, color, gender, national origin, or disability.

The principal has the right to take appropriate actions to correct any student whose clothing appearance, while not specifically covered by this policy, is considered by said principal to be out of compliance with the Board's stated goal or causes a substantial disruption to the learning environment.

GRADING

Report cards are sent home every nine weeks with a mid-term progress report being sent home every four and half weeks. As always, you can check on student progress using ParentPortal.

The basic grading system for Kindergarten is a **skills checklist**.

The basic grading system for
First Grade is:

E = Excellent

S = Satisfactory

N = Needs Improvement

U = Unsatisfactory

In Grades 2—5 the countywide
grading scale is used:

A = 90-100

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 60-69

F = Below 60

At all grade levels, S (Satisfactory) and U (Unsatisfactory) are used for Physical Education, Art, Music, and Conduct grades.

Elementary grades for the year are determined by averaging the four Nine-Week grades.

Students who do not complete assignments regularly, as determined by the teacher, may be given an office referral.

VISITOR CODE OF CONDUCT

Parents, Guardians, Community Members, and any other visitors to school property, while on school property and/or during school programs/activities **must not**:

1. Act in a threatening manner toward another or others.
2. Injure or threaten another or others.
3. Damage school property or the personal property of another or others.
4. Disrupt classes, school programs or other school activities in any way.
5. Communicate with another or others in an abusive, harassing, or threatening manner.
6. Audio or video record where there is an expectation of privacy (i.e., classroom instruction, locker rooms, restrooms, etc.).
7. Disrupt school transportation or confront transportation staff on a bus/vehicle, a road, a neighborhood, etc.
8. Distribute or wear materials which are vulgar, obscene, advocate illegal action, promote drugs, or are disruptive.
9. Harass or discriminate against another or others based on protected class status (e.g., race, color, religion, etc.).
10. Enter school property or certain areas of school property when otherwise restricted from entering the same.
11. Fail to promptly leave school property upon being directed to do so by school administration or law enforcement.
12. Possess, consume, sell, distribute or exchange alcoholic beverages, tobacco, vaping products, or illegal drugs, or be under the influence.
13. Possess or use firearms or dangerous weapons, except in the case of law enforcement officers.
14. Gamble or encourage another or others to gamble.
15. Violate any applicable federal or state statute, local ordinance, or board policy.

Principals or their designees and school security have the authority to enforce the Code of Conduct and are authorized to determine the appropriate actions if a violation occurs. These actions can include removal from school grounds, banishment from school grounds or school-sponsored activities, and issuance of a No Trespass Letter.

If you have questions about this Code of Conduct, please refer to the District's Policy located at hcboe.net and/or contact Dr. Hance at 423-586-1080.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

IMMUNIZATIONS (Board Policy 6.402)

No student entering school, including those entering Kindergarten or First Grade, those from out of state, and those from non-public schools shall be permitted to enroll or attend without proof of immunization, as determined by the Commissioner of Public Health. This documentation must be listed on the Tennessee Certificate of Immunization and must be signed by the medical provider. It is the responsibility of the parents or guardians to have their children immunized and to provide such proof to the principal of the school that the student is to attend.

Exceptions, in the absence of an epidemic or immediate threat, shall be granted to any child whose parent or guardian who provides a completed Tennessee Certificate of Immunization that lists the refusal to give immunizations based on religious tenets or practices; or due to medical conditions that the provider has excused the child from those immunizations.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

The decision to close schools due to weather conditions or illness is made by the Director of Schools, not by the principal. Messages are sent from our Central Office by email, text, and a recorded phone call in the case of any school closings due to weather, illness, or other reasons. You can modify your information through your child's parent portal account. You can also tune in to our local radio station, WCRK (105.7 FM), WJDT (106.5), or WMTN (93.3 FM) in case of bad weather. The Citizen Tribune also offers a text notification. Please inform your child what to do in the case of an early dismissal. We will send home a form for you to fill out in case of an unannounced early dismissal. We will follow this information. The buses will run if we are dismissed early. Also, please maintain a current working telephone number on file with the office in case we need to contact you concerning an early dismissal.

One and Two Hour School Delay Schedules

Buses will run as able at a one or two hour delay (ie If the bus regularly stops at your house at 6:20, on a 1 hour delay it will be 7:20, and at a 2 hour delay, it will be 8:20, or as close to the time as possible.)

	Regular Schedule	One Hour Delay	Two Hour Delay
Doors Open	7:00 a.m.	8:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.
School Starts	7:45 a.m.	8:45 a.m.	9:45 a.m.

COMMUNICATION

The school as well as each class, club, and sport will communicate through Class DoJo. Please contact your child's teacher/sponsor for the correct link.

We have a school website: <https://jh.hcboe.net/>

We have a school Facebook page: John Hay Pioneers

Conferences: Fall, Spring, and by request

PTO AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We have a group of parents in our PTO and are always looking for more participants. Our PTO plays a vital role in the overall success of our students and our school. The possibilities for and level of participation are varied. Your child will benefit from your enthusiasm and involvement with the school. If you have not joined our PTO in the past, we invite you to do so. Your assistance is vital to our school's success.

FOOD AT SCHOOL

Breakfast

Breakfast for **all** students continues to be served free of charge as long as students take the required items.

Lunch

- Lunch at this time is free for all students due a grant.
- Your child must know his/her ID number and enter this number into the computer each day as they
- receive their meal.
- Parents, or parent approved guests, may eat with their student one time per month.
- Hamblen County Board Policy prohibits food being brought into school cafeterias from any outside commercial food service establishments. No carbonated drinks will be allowed in the cafeteria at anytime.

Shareable Food for Classrooms and School

Due to Health and Safety regulations, we do ask that any refreshment items shared for special activities be commercially prepared and packaged. Our classes schedule one date each month for all of that month's birthdays to be recognized and celebrated. You can contact your child's teacher for more information concerning birthday or holiday celebrations.

SAFETY DRILLS

Monthly practice drills are conducted to make certain that all students and school personnel are aware of safety guidelines. Please discuss with your child that these drills are only practice to make sure we are prepared and ready to keep everyone safe. Throughout the course of the year we will practice:

Fire Drills with Evacuation

Fire Drills that move to Hard Lockdown

Lockdown - Hard, Soft, and Shelter in Place

Tornado

Medical Crisis

During some drills, parents/visitors may not be permitted to enter the building. Just know this is for the safety of all, and helps our staff practice in case of an emergency.

FIELD TRIPS

At various times during the school year, teachers will organize field trips that enhance the curriculum or reward students for grade level. A permission form will be sent home prior to the trip. There will be a deadline for turning in the money and form. Due to school regulations, parents/guardians are not allowed to ride the school bus. They may drive and meet the group at the trip destination.

Parents/guardians are responsible for paying their own admission for activities. **All students must ride the bus to the field trip destination in order to be counted present at school.**

Parents/guardians desiring to take their child home at the end of the trip must see the classroom teacher for proper sign out procedures.

SCHOOL CHOICE OPTION

Under the Tennessee State Board of Education's Unsafe School Choice Policy, as required by the No Child Left Behind Act, any public school student who is the victim of a violent crime as defined under the TCA 40-38-111(g), or the attempt to commit one of these offenses as defined under TCA 30-12-101, will be provided an opportunity to transfer to another grade-level appropriate school within the district. Additional information may be obtained by contacting the Director of Schools, 210 East Morris Blvd, Morristown, TN 37814, (423) 586-7700.

HISTORY OF OUR SCHOOL

John Hay Elementary School opened in 1968 as one of the early open-concept schools in Tennessee. The school was named for John Hay, the son of a local Presbyterian Minister who volunteered for service in World War II. John served in the Pacific Theater of the war where he was captured by the Japanese. He died in the Bataan Death March as a prisoner of war.

Mr. J.B. Shockley was the first principal followed by Mr. Eddie Amos. Mr. Amos served as principal until he passed away in 2004. After a couple of interim principals finished the year, Ms. Kim Dyke became principal before moving to Alpha Elementary School. Mr. Scott Bolton served one year as principal before moving to Central Office. Dr. Matthew Drinnon became principal in 2012 and served until the end of the 2021-2022 school year before moving to Central Office. Currently, Dr. Misty Hance serves as principal. She taught 21 years at John Hay before advancing to Assistant Principal at Alpha Elementary School in 2016. She returned to start the 2022 school year leading John Hay in a continued path toward academic excellence with the goal of supporting the whole child.

In 2012, John Hay Elementary was recognized with a National Blue Ribbon for Excellence in Academics. In 2018 John Hay Elementary was named a Reward School for Academics by the Tennessee Department of Education. This recognition was earned again for the 2024-2025 school year. This commitment to our tradition of academic excellence continues today.

In 2026-2027, the school will undergo extensive renovations to add walls, interior doors, new HVAC and lighting systems to ensure safety and a better learning environment. For the 2026-2027 school year, the Pioneer Family will reside at 215 Lincoln Avenue, but their Pioneer spirit and activities will continue as usual!