

Ghent School



PARENT GUIDE TO SCHOOL PROCEDURES AND EXPECTATIONS 2026-2027



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Ghent School is committed to providing families with regular school news and information pertinent to Norfolk Public Schools (NPS) and your child's academic success. Please take a few minutes to read this information. This information is a quick glimpse into Ghent School's expectations for a successful school year.

ATTENDANCE AND ENROLLMENT EXPECTATIONS

Ghent School is a specialty program within Norfolk Public Schools that provides unique academic opportunities for students and families who choose to participate in the program.

Consistent attendance and positive participation are essential to student success and to maintaining the learning environment expected within the school community. Students who demonstrate chronic absenteeism, excessive tardiness, untimely pick-up, and/or a pattern of behavior that significantly and persistently disrupts the learning environment may be subject to review. When interventions, supports, and collaborative efforts with families do not result in improvement, the continued concerns may result in a review of the student's specialty-program placement in accordance with Norfolk Public Schools procedures, applicable law, documented interventions, and the student's individual circumstances. All decisions will be made on an individual basis and in accordance with Norfolk Public Schools policies and procedures, with the goal of ensuring a safe, productive, and positive learning environment for all students.

COMMUNICATION

NPS Website: www.npsk12.com provides comprehensive and up-to-date information. Our specific school website is: www.npsk12.com/gs.

It is a parental responsibility to keep contact information up to date. NPS has an electronic mass notification system handling attendance, emergency, and outreach via phone calls. In addition, if your student becomes injured or ill, we may need to contact you immediately. For this reason, it is important to keep parent/guardian emergency contact information up-to-date with the school. Please make sure we have your most up-to-date phone number and email address on file, and that your email provider doesn't send our emails to a spam folder.

Administration communicates with all families via email, not messaging through Dojo or social media apps. **Emails sent to administration through Dojo or social media will not be viewed.** Dojo and social media are used to inform or remind parents of important events. Please help us all stay connected and inform the main office if you have a phone number or address change, so you are ensured to receive emails and/or call outs.



Follow us on Instagram: @GhentSchoolVA



All teachers use **Class Dojo** to communicate with families on a daily/weekly basis. Please use Dojo or email to communicate your questions/needs/concerns. Staff members will make every effort to respond to parent communication within 24-48 business hours. Responses may take longer during weekends, holidays, and school breaks. Resource teachers, Library Media, and Special Education will also

use Dojo to communicate the current events within their programs. **Parents should not use Class Dojo to reach out to administration, email only.**

PARENT AND VISITOR CONDUCT

Ghent School is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and welcoming environment for students, staff, families, and visitors. All parents, guardians, volunteers, and visitors are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that supports a positive school climate and models appropriate behavior for students.

Disruptive, threatening, harassing, intimidating, abusive, or otherwise inappropriate behavior toward students, staff, families, or visitors will not be tolerated. Parents, guardians, volunteers, and visitors are expected to wear attire that is appropriate for a school setting and free from language, images, or content that is profane, discriminatory, sexually explicit, promotes violence, illegal activity, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or other content inconsistent with the educational environment.

Additionally, no individual may enter or remain on school property while under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs, or any substance that impairs judgment, behavior, or the ability to safely interact with students. Visitors whose appearance, behavior, or strong odor of alcohol, marijuana, or other substances creates a disruption to the educational environment and/or raises concerns regarding student safety may be denied access to the school and asked to leave school property.

Violations of these expectations may result in restrictions on access to school property, termination of volunteer privileges, involvement of law enforcement, and/or other actions deemed appropriate by school administration and Norfolk Public Schools.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

School Hours - 8:15 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. Our doors open for breakfast @ 7:55 a.m. We will start dismissal at 2:45 p.m. and it ends at 3:00 p.m.

Early Pick-Up

If you need to pick up your student prior to dismissal, please report to the main office with your ID, no later than 2:00 p.m.

Change in Dismissal

Any same-day change to a student's regular dismissal plan **must be reported directly to the main office no later than 1:00 p.m.** Please do not rely on a message sent only to your child's teacher, as the teacher may not see it in time to ensure the change is communicated and implemented safely.

Student Arrival Supervision

For the safety and security of all students, children should not arrive on school grounds before **7:55 a.m.**, as staff members are not available to provide supervision prior to that time. Students who arrive before 7:55 a.m. may be left unsupervised, creating a potential safety concern.

Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that students arrive no earlier than 7:55 a.m. unless they are participating in an approved before-school program. Repeated early drop-offs may result in a conference with school administration to develop a plan that ensures student safety.

Tardy- Students are considered tardy if they arrive to class after 8:15 a.m. An adult **MUST** sign in tardy students. All adults signing in a student who is tardy or picking up a child early **must present a picture ID to gain entry to the building.** **Habitually late arrivals may result in a review of the student's specialty-program placement in accordance with Norfolk Public Schools procedures, applicable law, documented interventions, and the student's individual circumstances.**

Before- and After-School Care

The YMCA runs a before- and after-school program in the school cafeteria. This program is not run by the school. Contact (757) 622-9622 to register.

Student Drop Off (Walkers and Carpool)

Morning drop-off is a very busy time for our teachers and staff. During this time, safety and security are especially important.

- Parents are not permitted to walk students to their classrooms. Students should be dropped off via the carpool lane, bus stop, or front doors (walker zone only).
- If you need to talk to or get a message to your child's teacher, please send the teacher a Class Dojo message or email.
- **Parents should not be parking on the streets surrounding the school or in the parking lot to let out a student.** If you come by car, you are a carpool parent and you are not to park and walk your student to the school's entrance. Shirley Avenue, Granby Street, and Llewellyn Avenue are very busy in the AM and PM, and oftentimes the road isn't wide enough for cars parking on both sides and buses to travel through, so please stay to the right and never double park on the streets or in the school parking lot. We cannot impact the flow of traffic on the city streets. For safety reasons, parents are asked not to discharge students anywhere else on school property.
- **Morning car arrival:** ALL car riders will be dropped off in the carpool lanes in the staff parking lot on Shirley Avenue. Please have your student ready to unbuckle and hop out. Parents should stay in the car. Students should be in the building by 8:15 a.m., otherwise an adult will need to come and sign the student in at the office.



Designated Carpool Lanes for Pick-up

Carpool lane pickups require registration. You and your family will be issued a dismissal car tag number. This number must be displayed on your dashboard when you are picking up your student. Your student will have the matching number on their bookbag. Dismissal ends at 3:00 p.m. Students not picked up by 3:00 p.m. may be retrieved from the main entrance. **Habitually late pick-ups may result in a review of the student's specialty-program placement in accordance with Norfolk Public Schools procedures, applicable law, documented interventions, and the student's individual circumstances.**



- **DISMISSAL: K-4th grade** car rider parents will pull into the staff parking lot on Shirley Avenue to enter the carpool lanes in front of the school, just like morning drop off. If a K-4th grade student has older siblings, they will be picked up from these lanes too. As you exit the parking lot, please turn to the right so we can ensure everyone's safety through our neighborhood streets. **Please do not get out of your car or double park.**
- **DISMISSAL: 5th- 8th grade** parents should enter the carpool lane located on the side of the school on Llewellyn Avenue, which also functions as our bus lane. **Please do not block the corner of Shirley & Llewellyn or get out of your car.** Stay to the right so that passing traffic and buses can pass. Please be patient with our team and other cars.

Bus Riders

Visit the bus locator on the NPS website for the bus stop designated for your address. This is usually updated the week prior to the start of school.

Ghent School requests that all kindergarten students riding afternoon school buses be met by a parent, guardian, or student in middle school or higher.

All Kindergarten bus riders are returned to the school if an adult is not present at the bus stop.

All bus riders MUST follow these EXPECTATIONS FOR SAFETY:

- Refrain from crossing streets or playing on private property while waiting for your bus.
- Obey the bus drivers.
- Arrive at the bus stop five or ten minutes before the scheduled pickup time.
- Remain seated and talk quietly after boarding the bus.
- Keep hands, feet, and other items to themselves, and inside the bus.
- Talking back and/or refusing to comply with the bus driver jeopardizes the overall safety of the bus. This behavior will not be tolerated.
- All bus drivers reserve the right to assign seating on their bus as they see fit.

Transportation may be denied if a student fails to comply with the driver's request for safe and respectful behavior.

All students entering the building will be expected to walk through our Weapons Detection System.

Inclement Weather/School Closures

Inclement weather days may result in school closures or Virtual Learning Days. Closures and operating status changes are determined by the District Superintendent with safety as our number one priority. Based upon instructional needs and requirements at the time of the weather event, if school is canceled a Make-Up Day may be determined. Make-Up Days may include professional development days, teacher record days, holidays and "banked" instructional hours already built into the school schedule. We will use our Blackboard Call Out System, Class Dojo, and/or Ghent social media accounts to communicate weather related closures and make up days, in addition to the district post on the NPS website.

More Information about Closures

Inclement weather or other school emergencies (such as power failures or extreme temperatures) may result in closings and/or delayed openings.

- When schools are closed, extracurricular activities, interscholastic contests, team practices, field trips, after-schools programs, professional learning, training, recreation programs, and community use in schools and on school grounds are canceled.
- When schools open two hours late, before care and breakfast are canceled.
- When schools are closed two hours early due to worsening weather conditions during the school day, all evening activities are canceled.

Early Release Days

Students will be released two hours earlier than their normal dismissal times. Lunch will be served. Early release dismissal time for Ghent School is 12:45 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Academic success goes hand in hand with good attendance. It is difficult to catch up with missed lessons and activities. Academically successful students attend school regularly. All absences must be documented with a note (excused or unexcused) within 3 days of the child's return to school. Ghent School has an attendance reporting email that you may send your note to ghentattendance@nps.k12.va.us. You may also use the following QR code to report an absence.

NPS will **excuse** a student's tardiness or absence when a note is submitted within 3 days due to:

- Illness of a student
- Death in the family
- Medical appointment (ask your provider for a note)
- Observance of a religious holiday



Absence or tardiness for the following reasons will be unexcused, but still require a note:

- Family trips
- Childcare problems
- Oversleeping
- Non-school related activity
- Traffic
- Missed bus
- Train
- Other

NPS encourages family trips during scheduled school vacations and strongly discourages such trips during the school year. Extended absences interrupt the continuity of learning. NPS must withdraw any student who is absent from school for 15 consecutive days or more. Upon the student's return, a parent must officially re-enroll their child.

If your child is going to be either absent or late, please notify the teacher via Dojo and send in a note upon your child's return.

NPS' automated attendance calling system is in place to contact parents of absences. Please keep in mind, a note is still required when your child returns to school.

Section 22.1-254 of the Code of Virginia (also referred to as the "compulsory attendance law").

Your child(ren), our student(s), are expected to attend school in-person, every day, arriving at school on time, and remaining in school until dismissal. Missing just two days each month adds up! Choosing to complete assignments online **instead of attending school in-person** is ***NOT*** an option and results in additional absences. Even when you send notes and your children's absences are excused, when they have more than 17 absences, your children are identified as chronically absent. As we continue the drive toward equity and excellence for all, we expect our students to be physically in school. You can help your children develop and maintain good attendance habits by:

- making sure your children attend school every day unless there is what is classified by NPS as a legitimate reason for the absence;
- talking to your children about the importance of reporting to class on time, prepared, and ready to learn;
- encouraging your children to follow all school rules and the Standards of Student Conduct so they can remain in school; and
- scheduling family trips and vacations during scheduled school breaks.

As a parent or guardian, you are responsible for:

- keeping the lines of communication open between you and your children's school team;
- making sure your contact information (phone number, address, emergency contact list, etc.) is up to date; and
- providing a written explanation for your children's absences before they occur or on the first day they return to school.

Please note: **Schools will no longer accept personal excuse notes for absences after a 3-day grace period.** For medical appointments, make sure you provide the official note from the doctor's office, clinic, hospital or have them fax a copy to the school. When unexpected things happen that result in your children missing school, you are expected to contact their teachers, school counselors, or the office as soon as possible. Any special arrangements for extenuating circumstances will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Patterns of nonattendance may result in one or more of the following:

1. Development of an Attendance Plan
2. Parent Conferences
3. **Returning to zoned school**
4. After school make-up assignment date(s)
5. Meetings with the Truancy Multi-Disciplinary Team
6. Petitions filed with the Juvenile Court for truancy

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Department of Student Support Services at 757-628-3931 or studentsupportservices@nps.k12.va.us





After your student's 3rd absence, excused & unexcused, you may be asked to attend a conference with our attendance team to establish an Attendance Improvement Plan to assist with compliance of NPS Attendance Policy and the Virginia Compulsory School Attendance Laws. Upon 7 absences, excused & unexcused, the Attendance Improvement Plan will be continued as an Attendance Conference to again assist with compliance and avoid truancy proceedings.

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES

Breakfast and lunch are provided at school, free of charge for all students. Parents may pack a lunch for their child as often as they want, but please keep the following health/safety guidelines in mind:

1. Please do not send in candy.
2. Please do not send in any glass containers or knives.
3. Please teach your child how to open their own lunch boxes and serving bowls/thermoses.
4. Please do not send in soda or energy drinks.
5. Please do not send in full sized bags of chips. This usually leads to sharing at the table and having multiple hands in one bag of chips creates a health concern.
6. Dropping off outside food by a parent/guardian or delivery service for your student is prohibited. This often creates a significant disruption to the learning environment, and may present a health concern for those with various types of allergies.



Birthday Celebrations

We love to celebrate your child; however we ask that you adhere to the following guidelines when planning to send in birthday treats for the entire class. YOU MUST inform your child's teacher in advance if you plan on sending in a special treat.



1. All treats must be store bought (no homemade goods) and will be given out during lunchtime.
2. Birthday treats must be pre-arranged with the classroom teacher. Please don't send in "Goodie Bags" to the class. Small treats, candy, and toys can create a distraction in the classroom.
3. **No large, full-sized** cupcakes. Remember, less sugar is always better.
4. Birthday celebrations are one small treat. **Please don't schedule the delivery of pizza, ice cream, or other treats as these types of treats and celebrations will exceed the allocated time for student lunch and they create a lot of extra work for our cafeteria monitor.**
5. Please inquire about food allergies before sending in a treat for the class.

HEALTH SERVICES

Annual Health Screening (Vision and Hearing)

Vision and hearing screenings of all kindergarteners, third graders, and newly enrolled NPS students are conducted each fall by the school nurse. This is a brief screening which does not serve to take the place of parental vigilance in identifying vision and hearing problems that indicate the need for an examination by a specialist.

Health Services

Health services, such as administration of medication and basic care for sick and injured students, are performed by the school nurse and office staff members, if the school nurse is not present. According to state regulations, NPS staff may provide care only for minor injuries or illnesses. Parents will be contacted if the student's condition requires more attention.

Medication at School

Forms authorizing the school to administer medication (including over-the-counter medications) are available in the school office. Forms must be completed prior to medication being administered. Forms require a medical provider's signature, parent signature, duration dates and times and the specific dosage of medication to be administered. All medications are stored by the school and dispensed by nurse/office staff. Parents must transport medicine to and from school and sign medicine in with school personnel. The medication label must match the authorization form. A parent or guardian must collect any unused portion of the medicine. Medicines not claimed will be destroyed when the order expires or at the end of the school year.



Medication drop off/refills should NEVER be sent to school with the child. They must be dropped off by a parent/guardian. Students are not allowed to bring over the counter medication of any type (allergy, pain relief, eye drops, etc.) to school.

Allergies at School

To provide a safe, educational environment for a student with allergies, schools, parents and guardians, physicians and the student must work together. Parents or guardians enrolling a student with allergies should contact the school nurse as early as possible so that a safe plan can be instituted. For students who have been ordered epinephrine, albuterol, or Benadryl by a medical provider, the parent or guardian must provide the student specific medication to school accompanied with required forms and a doctor's order. Our school maintains an emergency stock of Benadryl, albuterol, and epinephrine at all times.

Health Care Plans

Parents or guardians of a student with a chronic or temporary health condition, health-related need (to include crutches), or specific health care procedure that affects the school day should contact the principal and/or school nurse so that a health care plan can be discussed.

If your child is unable to participate in PE, please send in a note. If the child needs to be excused for more than 3 class periods, please send in a note from your medical provider.

When to Stay Home

Students with symptoms such as rashes, watery and inflamed eyes, a fever, sore throat, vomiting or diarrhea should remain home until a medical provider evaluates their symptoms and determines whether they are contagious. Any child with vomiting, fever, or diarrhea **MUST** remain at home until they are without symptoms or fever for 24 hours. To limit the spread of illnesses, notify the school nurse (757-628-2565 ext. 3005) if your child gets head lice, strep throat, chicken pox, or other contagious illnesses.

Taking Your Child Home

Our school clinic works to control and manage student exposure to contagious diseases/illnesses and will call you if your child exhibits concerning symptoms. We ask that you plan to pick up your child as soon as possible after receiving such a call. It is important to have all emergency numbers up to date with our office in case we need to contact you. Anyone picking up your child must show identification.

Returning to School

Some rashes, pink eye, impetigo, ringworm, and scabies can be passed from one student to another. To protect all NPS students, the school system requires a note from a medical provider for any child with symptoms of these illnesses. The note must state that the child is not contagious before he or she can return to school.

Head Lice (CDC Recommendations)

Head lice can be a nuisance, but they have not been shown to spread disease. Personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice. Treatment for head lice is recommended for persons diagnosed with an active infestation. All household members and other close contacts should be checked; those persons with evidence of an active infestation should be treated. Some experts believe prophylactic treatment is prudent for persons who share the same bed with actively infested individuals. All infested persons (household members and close contacts) and their bedmates should be treated at the same time.

When treating head lice, supplemental measures can be combined with recommended medicine (pharmacologic treatment); however, such additional (non-pharmacologic) measures generally are not required to eliminate a head lice infestation. For example, hats, scarves, pillowcases, bedding, clothing, and towels worn or used by the infested person in the 2-day period just before treatment is started can be machine washed and dried using the hot water and hot air cycles because lice and eggs are killed by exposure for 5 minutes to temperatures greater than 53.5°C (128.3°F). Items that cannot be laundered may be dry-cleaned or sealed in a plastic bag for two weeks. Items such as hats, grooming aids, and towels that come in contact with the hair of an infested person should not be shared. Vacuuming furniture and floors can remove an infested person's hairs that might have viable nits attached.

SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY

Safeguards are in place for the welfare of all. When an emergency occurs during the day, you will receive a “robo-call” from Ghent School/NPS. **Please answer these emergency call outs if they are received during the middle of the school day. If you miss the call, listen to the voicemail.** We will not be able to answer incoming calls during an emergency.

- Entrances and the cafeteria are monitored by video cameras.

- **Entering and Exiting the Building**

The front doors on Shirley Avenue are the only doors used for entering and exiting the building. All students must enter through the main entrance. No students may enter through the side of the school between the main building and learning cottages (from Llewellyn Ave. or Granby St.). Visitors must report directly to the office for sign-in procedures upon entering the building. **ALL VISITORS MUST HAVE A PICTURE ID TO GAIN ENTRY INTO GHENT SCHOOL.**

- All students and visitors entering the building must pass through a weapons detection system.

- **Fire drills** are practiced at least twice during the first 20 days of school and at least an additional two fire drills are held during the remainder of the school year. When hearing the fire alarm, students walk outside in an orderly manner to their assigned area.
- **Lockdown drills** are practiced twice the first month of school and two additional drills the remainder of the year. The building is secured, and no one leaves or enters the building until the lock down is over.
- **Tornado drills** occur once a year during the month of March. Staff supervises students as they assume a safe position away from windows on the first floor of the school.
- **State-Wide Earthquake drill** occurs in October. Our staff supervises students during this drill as they take shelter under desks/tables and away from windows. Following the shaking, students are evacuated to an outside area so that the building can be assessed for damage.

FIELD TRIPS

All grade levels can take field trips that relate directly to the regular instructional program. The school calendar posted monthly will include scheduled field trips. Teachers also inform parents of upcoming trips and a permission slip for each field trip will be sent home. Students must have a signed permission slip to participate in a field trip. For safety and insurance reasons, siblings may not accompany chaperoning parents on field trips.

- All chaperones must complete a free background check by going to the link provided and completing the application.
- Students with repeated behavior/conduct concerns may be restricted from participating in field trip events. Decisions will be made individually, with



consideration of documented supports, accommodations, student safety, and applicable IEP or Section 504 requirements.

- **Link: NPS VOLUNTEER APPLICATION & INFORMATION PAGE**
<https://www.npsk12.com/site/Default.aspx?PageID=10386>

STUDENT CONDUCT AND PBIS

Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports (PBIS)

Ghent School uses PBIS, which is an evidence-based framework to improve student outcomes behaviorally and academically. The PBIS practices and systems are established school-wide and create a foundation of regular, proactive support while preventing unwanted behaviors for all students ([PBIS.org](https://www.pbis.org)). Please review the PBIS matrix below with your student.

PBIS Behavior Matrix for Ghent School



Suns R.I.S.E.	All Settings	Classroom	Hallways	Cafeteria	Bathroom	Testing	Buses	Arrival & Dismissal
Respect (Treating others well)	Be kind. Follow staff directions first time given. Wait your turn. Include everyone.	Raise your hand for permission to speak. Use appropriate language/Communicate positively. Keep cell phones hidden and off.	Remain quiet. Respect other classes. Respect different ways of walking	Sit at your assigned table. Wait your turn in line.	Allow for the privacy of others Be mindful of other people's space	Remain in your assigned area. Remain completely quiet. Raise your hand if you need help.	Use kind words Use quiet voice Listen to the bus staff and follow directions.	Enter/Exit in quietly Walk directly to your class or dismissal area ONLY
Integrity (Doing right when no one is looking)	Be ready to work & listen. Report problems to staff. Respect others' opinions & ideas.	Do your own work Remain on task Be on time.	Walk on the right side in a straight line. Go directly to your destination	Raise your hand for permission to get up. Use a quiet voice.	Report problems to staff Wash hands for 20 seconds.	Do your own work. Do not talk about the test with anyone. Follow testing procedures.	Keep all food and drinks packed up.	Walk on the right side. Go directly to your destination
Safety (Making sure people are protected)	Keep hands, feet, and belongings to yourself. Be safe & only in appropriate areas. Treat people & property with care. Food or drink in the cafeteria only.	Keep hands, feet, and belongings to yourself. Remain in your assigned area. Follow class expectations. Food or drink in the cafeteria only.	Keep hands, feet, & belongings to yourself. Listen & respond to teacher directions.	Remain seated until your teacher lines you up. Keep hands, feet, and other items to yourself. Eat only your food.	Keep property clean & clear Keep hands, feet, and belongings to yourself. Keep water off the floor	Keep hands, feet, and property to yourself.	Keep hands, feet, and property to yourself Sit facing forward Stay seated when bus is moving	Keep hands, feet, and belongings to yourself. Remain in your assigned area. Follow class expectations.
Excellence (Doing your best in all areas)	Complete tasks on time. Ask for help when needed. Keep cell phones hidden and off.	Engage in learning. Ask questions when you don't understand. Complete & turn in work in a timely fashion.	Stay with your class. Be on time. Keep cell phones hidden and off.	Keep all areas clean. Ask for help when needed.	Put trash in the trash bin. Wait your turn.	Remain on task. Give others the ability to do well. Give your best effort.	Keep cell phones hidden and off.	Keep all areas clean. Bring concerns to staff.

Our goal is to proactively avoid disciplinary actions that require administrative intervention using PBIS. Our teachers will reach out to you should your student display repetitive behaviors that impede their own or the learning of others or are unsafe. When teachers and parents/guardians work together, the partnership promotes success for all students. The goal is to keep students from escalating their behaviors to a level that requires administrative intervention.

Should your student demonstrate a behavior that requires administrative disciplinary action, you will be contacted regarding the incident and consequences of their action, and a

disciplinary action form will be sent home that is to be signed and returned to school the following day. Should the consequence of the behavior(s) be suspension, a parent/guardian will be required to attend a reinstatement conference the day the student is scheduled to return to school after the suspension is served. The student will not be allowed to go to class until this meeting is completed with a parent or guardian, at the pre-scheduled time identified by administration. During the time of a suspension and until this reinstatement takes place, students are not allowed on Norfolk Public Schools property for any reason.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

A NPS issued Student Handbook/Code of Conduct is published and distributed at the beginning of each year. This guide clearly articulates expectations for a safe and successful school year in addition to potential consequences for conduct violations. This guide can also be downloaded from the NPS Homepage: <https://www.npsk12.com/Page/1349>

Parent Inquiries and Concerns

Parents with inquiries and concerns are encouraged to resolve the issue informally at the school starting with the teacher. Staff members will make every effort to respond to parent communication within 24-48 business hours. Responses may take longer during weekends, holidays, and school breaks. If a parent is not satisfied that a concern has been resolved, the parent may complete a Parent Concern Form requesting a conference with administration.

Noncustodial Parents

A noncustodial parent has the same rights as a custodial parent to review student records and other school information. After submitting a written request, the parent may review or receive copies of information from the student's record. A fee may be imposed for copying and postage.

Personal Property

NPS does not assume responsibility for personal property. Parents and students are urged to carefully consider the type and value of property taken to school, especially items with monetary or sentimental value. Unclaimed clothing articles found in the school are placed in a designated location. Hats, gloves, coats, sweaters, sweatshirts with/or without hoods, lunch boxes, water bottles, books, notebooks, purses, and wallets should be marked/labeled with the student's name to make return easy and swift. Although not easily labeled, eyeglasses and jewelry are items that show up in our lost and found. Students often leave outerwear on the school yard after recess. PLEASE LABEL ALL COATS, WATER BOTTLES, and LUNCH BOXES with your child's name.

School Dress Code

NPS expects students to come to school dressed in proper attire for school activities. Tennis shoes or shoes designed to provide support, fit securely, and prevent injury are necessary for physical education classes and active recess play. Clothing should fit, be neat and clean, and conform to district standards. The NPS dress code can be found online and in Norfolk Public Schools Standards of Student Conduct booklet. Flip Flops/Slides are not permitted in school.

TECHNOLOGY AND CELL PHONES

Personal Electronic Devices

Norfolk Public Schools acknowledges parental concern for the safety and well-being of their children while they are attending school or school-sponsored activities. Norfolk Public Schools also understands the parental belief that students' possession of cell phones enhances their safety and security. The school division realizes, however, that student misuse of cell phones and PCDs may:

- (1) undermine the learning environment;
 - (2) disrupt academic instruction and distract students;
 - (3) compromise the integrity of student testing;
 - (4) increase disciplinary problems;
 - (5) violate privacy rights of students and school staff; and
 - (6) increase the school division's exposure to opportunistic litigation and potential legal liability.
- To support a focused and healthy learning environment, students are not permitted to use cell phones or personal electronic communication devices during the school day. The school day includes all instructional time, lunch, and time between classes—from the beginning to the end of the school day.

A cell phone is defined as any personal device capable of making calls, taking or transmitting pictures or videos, or sending and receiving messages. Personal electronic communication devices include any item that can connect to the internet, a cellular or Wi-Fi network, or directly to another device. **This includes smartwatches, tablets, laptops, headphones, and similar devices.**

If students bring any of these devices to school, the devices **must be turned off and stored in a backpack or book bag before entering the school building.** Devices may not be visible, worn, or carried on the student during the school day.

All communication during school hours must be conducted using school-approved methods, such as telephones located in the main office, counseling office, or nurse's office. In the event of a family emergency, parents or guardians should contact the school's main office directly.

Consequences of Policy Violations

- **1st Offense:** Verbal warning and parent/guardian communication
- **2nd Offense:** Written warning and parent/guardian communication
- **3rd Offense:** Device confiscated; returned to the student at the end of the school day with parent/guardian communication
- **4th and Subsequent Offenses:** Device confiscated; returned only to a parent or guardian, with additional disciplinary actions as necessary.

Repeated violations may lead to further disciplinary measures in accordance with the Standards of Student Conduct and the NPS Level System. If a student commits an infraction while school staff are attempting to enforce this policy, the student will receive additional disciplinary consequences as outlined in those systems.



Social Media, Group Chats, and Digital Citizenship

Student use of social media is quickly becoming one of the leading causes of student conflict in schools. Many conflicts begin through social media platforms, group chats, text messages, gaming platforms, and other online communication tools. Students may also use cell phones on the bus or outside of school hours to create videos, send messages, or post content that later impacts the school environment.

Parents and guardians are asked to partner with us by monitoring their child's online activity and ensuring access to social media, group chats, and personal devices is limited and appropriate for the child's age and maturity level. Students should understand that messages, images, videos, and posts shared online are rarely truly private. Even "disappearing" messages or temporary posts can be saved through screenshots, screen recordings, or photographs and shared with others.

Families should also discuss the serious consequences of sharing inappropriate, harmful, explicit, or unkind images, videos, or messages. Repeated unkindness, harassment, or bullying through social media is considered a serious offense and may result in school disciplinary consequences, law enforcement involvement, and long-term impacts for students.

Incidents that occur off campus through social media may still result in school disciplinary action when the behavior substantially disrupts the educational environment, impacts student safety, or violates school or district expectations. Schools cannot address this issue alone, and we need parents and guardians to help hold children accountable for appropriate online behavior.

CHROMEBOOKS

All students in grades Kindergarten through eighth grade will be issued a Chromebook or iPad to use in the classroom by their teacher. Norfolk Public Schools has set an expectation that the Chromebooks are to remain in the classroom with your child's teacher, and will not be allowed to go home with them at the end of the day. Middle School students will follow the processes set in place by their teachers and will have a Chromebook assigned to them for use in each teacher's classroom, during that assigned block. Students are responsible to sign in and out of the device at the start and end of each class, once directed by their teacher to follow their device retrieval protocol. It is important that our students take good care of their assigned devices.

- Teachers will keep devices at school.
- All parents are asked to sign a Usage Agreement for the device their child uses. This assures NPS that you have talked to your child about the appropriate use and care of school issued devices. Parents/Guardians will be billed if your child's device is intentionally damaged. This is usually the result of picking off the keys or punching the screen.
- Please understand that being issued a Chromebook is the same as being issued a textbook. Chromebooks are required tools for your child's engagement in instruction. A parent's refusal to accept or sign a Chromebook Usage Agreement doesn't cancel a child's responsibility for using one appropriately nor being held accountable for its loss or damage, just as if they were issued a textbook.

- **Replacement Costs for lost or damaged equipment are as follows:**



- New Chromebooks: \$229
- New Chromebook G4/G5 Adapter/Charger \$58
- New Chromebook G6-G8 Adapter/Charger \$64

ACADEMICS AND GRADING

Parent-VUE (Student Gradebooks G1-G8)

Parents are encouraged to visit the Norfolk Public Schools website so they may check the progress of their student(s) at any time. From our NPS Home page, click on the PARENTS menu and select Synergy Student VUE/Parent VUE. **NOTE: If you don't have a password, select "Forgot my Password" to reset your account. This is also the procedure for new families. Please make sure we have a valid email address for your child(ren).**

Conferences

Consistent communication is important to ensure your child's success. If you desire a conference with your child's teacher, please email or send a direct Dojo message to the teacher indicating the topic of concern and they will return your message.

Kindergarten

Students in kindergarten classes receive 4 report cards per year. Students are graded by designating certain skills as M=Mastered, P=Progressing, or N=Needs Improvement or U=Unsatisfactory.

Grades 1-8

Students in grades 1-8 receive 4 informal progress reports and 4 letter-grade report cards. Letter grades (A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, and E) will be used in evaluating academic areas, and the grading scale (O = Outstanding, V = Very Good, S = Satisfactory, N = Needs Improvement, U = Unsatisfactory) is used to report progress in Art, Music, Physical Education, and work-related skills. The progress reports reflect the current status of coursework as it is being completed. Teachers' comments provide suggestions for adjusting learning and providing additional support. The progress reports are designed to improve communications between school personnel and the student's parents/guardians.



Parents in grades 1-8 are strongly encouraged to log into Parent VUE regularly to monitor their child's grades. The sooner you talk to the teacher about your child's progress, the better the outcomes. If you don't have your login credentials for Parent VUE, please go to the NPS Home page, click on the PARENTS menu and select Synergy Student VUE/Parent VUE. **NOTE: If you don't have a password, select "Forgot my Password" to reset your account. This is also the procedure for new families. Please make sure we have a valid email address for your child(ren).**

NPS GRADING SCALE

A = 93-100	B+ = 87-89	C+ = 77-79	D = 64-66
A- = 90-92	B = 83-86	C = 73-76	E = 0-63
B- = 80-82	C- = 70-72	D+ = 67-69	

Homework

Homework is intended to reinforce classroom learning in grades K-8. Homework may be assigned a minimum of 4 nights a week which may include a weekend assignment per subject. Homework will not be assigned over holidays except to complete long-range assignments and projects. Most of the time homework will encourage studying for tests, skill practice, and home reading.

Academic Integrity/Artificial Intelligence

Students are expected to complete their own academic work. The use of artificial intelligence, online answer generators, or other resources to complete assignments without teacher permission may be considered academic dishonesty and addressed according to school and district policies.

Testing

Formative and state mandated test results are communicated with parents via a letter in your child's quarterly report card. Our teachers use a variety of assessments to monitor your child's academic performance throughout the school year. **Parents are encouraged to ask questions about their child's test results via a parent/teacher conference.** For confidentiality and accuracy reasons, please refrain from attempting to discuss assessment results at arrival and dismissal.

- Students are administered the Virginia Language and Literacy Screening System (VALLSS) at designated windows during the year.
- Students in Kindergarten are administered the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP) in the Fall and Spring of each school year.
- Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) reading and mathematics tests are given to all students in grades 3 through 8 in the Spring. Our fourth grade students are also assessed in Virginia Studies in the Spring and our fifth-grade and eighth-grade students are assessed in the areas of Writing, and Science in the Spring

Library/Media Services

Students can visit the Media Center/Library as scheduled by the teacher. They may check out library books as long as overdue books have been returned. Please encourage your child to have responsible check in/out behavior.

- Make sure your K-2 child's backpack is large enough to take home a big picture book.
- Please keep all library books in a safe place. Watch out for those younger siblings who may not be as gentle with book pages as your Sun or Rocket may be.
- Books can be checked out for two weeks at a time. If more time is needed, the book check out can be extended.
- Our middle school library includes a Young Adult section containing titles written for older adolescents. Some books may address mature themes such as mental health,



relationships, identity, substance use, or other complex topics. Families are encouraged to discuss reading preferences with their child. Parents may contact the library to request limitations for their individual child.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Student Assistance Team (SAT)/Special Education

If a parent/teacher/staff member has a concern about academic/behavioral performance, a referral to the school's SAT team can be made. This team consists of the parent, teacher, NPS representative (usually our AP), School Social Worker, School Psychologist, School Counselor & Speech and Language Pathologist (if applicable). The goal of this team is to develop an intervention plan that can be put into place to monitor growth and improvement.

If necessary, a referral for evaluation due to a suspected disability may be initiated during or after the SAT team meeting.

Norfolk Public Schools provides a full range of services for students with disabilities ages 2-21. Students suspected of having a disability are referred, evaluated, and if determined eligible, provided a free, appropriate public education according to their Individualized Education Program (IEP). NPS provides a continuum of placement options to implement a student's IEP, beginning with inclusive support in the general education classroom. To initiate a referral, contact the assistant principal of the child's school. To refer a preschool age child (who does not currently attend a NPS school) please call (757) 852-4630 X2010.

Section 504 Plans

A student may be eligible for protections and accommodations under Section 504 when a physical or mental impairment substantially limits one or more major life activities. Eligibility is determined individually by a knowledgeable school-based team using information from multiple sources.

School Counseling Services

School counselors use the Virginia Department of Education for School Counseling guidelines to provide classroom lessons, small counseling groups, and individual planning, counseling, and responsive services for children. Parents may opt their child out of school counseling services. Contact the school counselor for more information about the opt-out process.

VOLUNTEERS

We are very grateful for our volunteers! Volunteering is both a pleasure and a privilege and we want to make sure the experience is an enjoyable experience for everyone. Ways you can volunteer include, but are not limited to; room parent, mentor, tutoring, after school clubs, PTA, etc. Volunteers will work under direction or in collaboration with school staff and adhere to the NPS Volunteer Code of Conduct with an emphasis on respect and confidentiality. Volunteers may not bring younger children or non-enrolled children with them while volunteering at school or participating in school-sponsored activities. Volunteers must be able to devote their full attention to the assigned task and the supervision of additional children may create safety,



security, and confidentiality concerns. Please make childcare arrangements prior to volunteering.

If you are interested in volunteering, you must complete an application located on the NPS website or (<https://www.npsk12.com/Page/18259>). **Once approved, volunteer status will be valid for two years.**

You will be guided through the easy application process and required to e-sign a release form. Once submitted, your profile information will go directly to the processor. Most background checks will be completed within 7-14 business days. Should further review be necessary before a determination can be made, you will be contacted by email with instructions.

All approved volunteers will receive an email notification letting them know that they are approved and then will receive an approval email from Raptor within 10-14 business days.

To volunteer with Norfolk Public Schools, you must meet the following criteria:

- You *cannot* have any felonies on your record.
- You *cannot* be a registered sex offender.
- You *must* be eight (8) years removed from a misdemeanor charge.

SCHOOL CONTACTS

Dr. Jennifer Banks, Principal jbanks181@nps.k12.va.us Mr. Brian Tooley, Assistant Principal btooley@nps.k12.va.us • 504 Coordinator • Attendance	Mrs. Adriane Williams, Office Manager awilliams1@nps.k12.va.us • Human Resources • School Calendar • Raptor, Volunteer/Visitor Management
Ms. Yukita Saddler, School Nurse 757-628-2565, Extension 3005 • Medication management • Emergency/First Aid Care	Mrs. Teresa Clay, Student Data Specialist tclay@nps.k12.va.us • Student Records • Community Outreach Coordinator • Attendance • Report Cards
Ms. Desiree Gandy-Turner, School Counselor dgandy@nps.k12.va.us	Ms. Sharon Holt, School Security sholt@nps.k12.va.us
Ms. Karen Inniss kinniss@nps.k12.va.us • Special Education Department Chair	