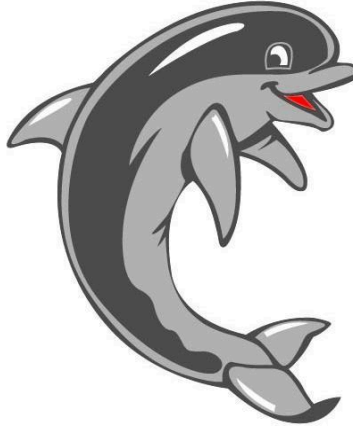


Hillsborough Elementary School

2026-2027 PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK



**402 North Nash Street
Hillsborough, NC 27278
919.732.6137**

Mission

Ensuring Student Success by Inspiring Hearts and Minds

Vision

We will foster a culture of mutual respect and understanding, hold high expectations for all of our students, recognize and teach the whole child, inspire joy for learning through authentic and engaging instruction, and prepare students to be productive and resourceful leaders in a diverse world.

Values

We believe in: honesty with kindness and compassion; being responsible for our own actions; respecting ourselves, others and property; working together as one team; and always striving to do our best!

This handbook provides information about Hillsborough Elementary School and serves as a reference source for our students and families.

All students are responsible for complying with and are expected to be familiar with the Orange County Schools Code of Student Conduct, Character, and Support; and School Board policies governing student behavior and conduct. School-based administrators are authorized to handle any incident that is not covered or mentioned in this handbook in a timely and appropriate manner.

This document can also be found on the OCS website and here:

[OCS Code of Conduct, Character, and Support](#)

Hillsborough Elementary Parent-Student Handbook

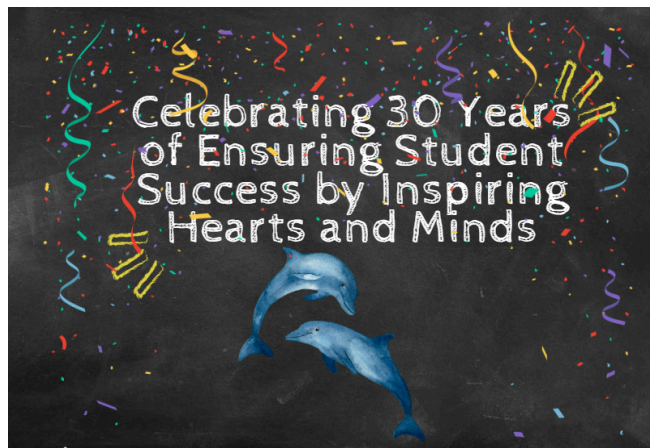
Dear Dolphin Families:

Welcome to Hillsborough Elementary School; we are thrilled to have you as part of our pod! Our school community works hard to provide an inclusive, inviting, productive, and safe learning environment for your child(ren).

The HES Parent/Student Handbook is designed as a reference guide for families concerning school and district policies and procedures. We ask that you take some time to read this handbook, familiarizing yourself with our school's procedures. As always, we are here to answer any questions and discuss concerns you may have about the contents of the handbook. Please contact the administration or office staff at any time if you need clarification on any of the enclosed information. The students of HES are our first priority!

Hillsborough Elementary School: Where Dolphin pride shines bright for all to see!

Jessica Nagy, Principal
Alexis Magill, Assistant Principal



Our school-wide theme is
“Celebrating 30 Years of Ensuring Success by Inspiring Hearts and Minds”

At HES we are committed to diving deep into quality education practices to ensure every student thrives. Through engaging and meaningful instruction rooted in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, we are unlocking depth of knowledge and fostering curiosity in our dolphins!

Administrative Office Contact Information:

Principal: Jessica Nagy jessica.nagy@orange.k12.nc.us

Assistant Principal: Alexis Magill alexis.magill@orange.k12.nc.us

Office Manager/Student Data Manager: Erika Foster erika.foster@orange.k12.nc.us

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Bookkeeper/Payroll: Zevalda McPherson zevalda.mcpherson@orange.k12.nc.us

The following contract of expectations was created with input from staff, parents, and students. The statements reinforce individual responsibilities that support the collective goal of ensuring our mission and vision.

Staff Expectations:

- I will give my best effort every day.
- I will foster an inclusive and encouraging classroom/school community that is physically and emotionally safe and reflective of high expectations.
- I will respect and celebrate diversity.
- I will provide timely, honest, clear, and individualized communication in a manner agreed upon by the parent/legal guardian and teacher (newsletter, email, meeting, phone call, etc.).
- I will engage students in relevant, challenging, hands-on instruction that is aligned with the state curriculum, involves 21st Century Skills (research, collaboration, leadership, self-assessment, technology, communication, and innovation) and promotes a joy for learning.
- I will clearly communicate and model my expectations for student learning and behavior.

Parent/Legal Guardian Expectations:

- I will encourage my child to put forth their best effort each day.
- I will maintain open, timely, and honest communication with my child's teacher.
- I will support my child in completing homework and regularly review assignments and school experiences together.
- I will ensure my child arrives at school on time and attends school consistently.
- I will inform the teacher of any changes that may impact my child's learning.
- I will use the Infinite Campus Parent Portal to monitor my child's academic progress and attendance.

Student Expectations:

- I will do my best each day to actively participate in class and complete all assignments to the best of my ability.
- I will help create a positive and focused classroom environment.
- I will speak with kindness and encourage myself and others.
- I will follow our Dolphin Tenets: Be respectful, responsible, engaged, safe, and a leader.
- I will ask a trusted adult for help when I need support with schoolwork, emotions, or friendships.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

Hillsborough Elementary Parent-Student Handbook

In order to foster independence in our young learners, **we ask parents not to walk students to class, except kindergartners on the first day of school.** HES staff will be stationed around campus to ensure your child transitions to and from their classroom safely.

School Hours & Timeliness

- **Drop-Off:** 7:25 – 7:45 AM (No supervision before 7:25)
- **Instruction Begins:** 7:45 AM sharp
- **Pick-Up:** 2:30 PM
- **Tardy:** Students arriving **after 7:45 AM** are tardy. Please **park and walk your child to the front office** to sign the student in if arriving at 7:46am or later.

Important: We understand students rely on parents to get to school. Please establish morning routines to support consistent, on-time arrivals. If this becomes a challenge, contact our school social worker, **Zach Krenzler**, zach.krenzler@orange.k12.nc.us, or at 919-732-6137, for support.

BELL SCHEDULE

7:25 A.M.	Initial Arrival Bell	Students may enter the building
7:45 A.M.	Start of School Bell	Students should be in their classrooms & ready to learn
2:25 P.M.	1st Dismissal Bell	School and camp bus riders & walkers are dismissed
2:30 P.M.	2nd Dismissal Bell	Car riders are dismissed

Important: Student pick-up after 2pm should be for emergencies only, otherwise, all students should be dismissed at 2:30 pm

Car Riders

K-1 & Siblings

- Drop-off/pick-up in front of the cafeteria
- Enter and exit via **Union Street (right turns only)**. Cars should enter from Union Street, making a right turn into the drop-off area and then a right turn to exit.
- Staff will assist with unloading.

Grades 2-5

- Drop-off/ pick-up in the **staff parking lot near the playground.**

Safety Reminders for All Car Riders:

- Remain in vehicles until a staff member is present.
- Have your child seated on the right side of the vehicle for easy exit during arrival and for loading at dismissal.
- Teach young children how to unbuckle independently to keep the line moving.
- Do not drop students off on side streets, such as Occoneechee Street.
- Peak time is 7:40 AM—plan accordingly to ensure on-time arrival.

Hillsborough Elementary Parent-Student Handbook

- The car rider line moves swiftly at dismissal when drivers display the name tags on rear view mirrors or the dashboard and wait patiently for children to be called to the colored dolphins (K-1/sibling line) or numbered cones (2-5 line).

Walkers (Families Living Within Walking Distance of HES)

Walker Arrival:

- **The bus/walker entrance at the front of the 100 Building on Union Street.**

Walker Dismissal:

- **Students can be picked up at our 100-building location located on Union Street. See map below. Please wait in the grass area and keep sidewalks clear so bus riders can safely board and HES staff can safely dismiss students.**
- **Walkers will only be dismissed with an adult (parent/guardian or someone on the emergency pick-up list).**



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Bus Expectations and Safety

Please review bus rules with your child—even if they don't ride the bus daily. Field trips or special events may require bus transportation, and the same rules apply.

Riding the bus is a privilege that can be revoked for unsafe behavior, disruptions, or failure to follow school rules. Parents/guardians will be notified if a discipline referral is made for bus misconduct.

Per the OCS Student Code of Conduct, students must follow the instructions of the bus driver and/or safety monitor. The following behaviors are prohibited and may result in loss of bus privileges:

- Delaying the bus
- Fighting or aggressive behavior
- Smoking or use of tobacco products
- Using profanity
- Disobeying the driver
- Damaging or tampering with the bus
- Getting off at an unauthorized stop
- Distracting the driver with disruptive behavior
- Throwing objects from the bus
- Ignoring safety rules
- Trespassing on a school vehicle
- Violating any other Code of Conduct rules while on the bus

Safety and respect are essential for all students riding school transportation.

Transportation Communication

Please ensure your child knows their transportation or dismissal plan before coming to school each day.

- For any changes, send a **written note or email** to the teacher **as early as possible**.
- If someone else is picking up your child, **written permission** (note or email) is required.
- We **will not release** students without confirmation from a parent or guardian.
- For **same-day transportation changes after 12:00 PM**, call the **main office** directly; teachers may not see late emails or messages in time.
- If your child participates in an after school camp, please communicate directly with the Afterschool Camp AND the teacher with any changes.

Thank you for helping us keep all students safe, on time, and ready to learn each day!

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is essential for student success. According to [OCS Policy 4400](#), students must be on time and present at the scheduled start of each class.

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To be marked present, a student must be at school for at least half the instructional day. Students arriving after 11:30 AM or leaving before 11:30 AM will be counted absent for the day. While being present for the majority of the day meets basic requirements, we encourage students to stay the entire day to benefit fully from instruction.

Absence Notifications

- 3 unexcused absences – Parent/guardian will be notified.
- 6 and 10 absences – Further notification and support steps may follow.
- Excessive absences or tardies may lead to a referral to the school social worker and, if unresolved, to a juvenile court counselor.

Excused Absences (per NC State Board of Education):

- Illness or injury that prevents the student from being physically able to attend school
 - The local health officer or the State Board of Health orders isolation
 - Death in the immediate family
 - Medical, dental, or other appointment with a health care provider that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours (with doctor's note)
 - Court proceedings (with documentation)
 - Religious observance in accordance with school board policy
 - Participation in valid educational opportunities, such as travel with prior approval from the principal and require a student-generated work product of their learning experience
- [HES Request For Educational Leave Form](#)

Reporting an Absence

- All absences must be reported with a call, note, or email to the teacher or front office.
- Illness-related absences should also be shared with the school nurse (daniel.boling@orange.k12.nc.us)
- Excessive absences may require a doctor's note or other validation.

Recognition of student attendance is at the discretion of the school administration. Thank you for partnering with us to ensure consistent, on-time attendance!

CALENDAR

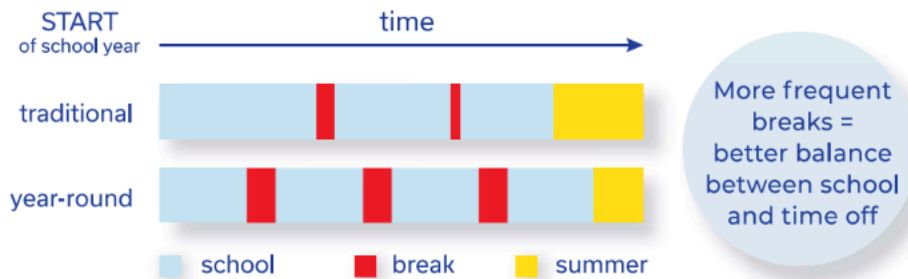
Hillsborough Elementary School operates on a single-track year-round or "Balanced" Schedule.

[2025-2026 OCS Year-Round School Calendar](#)

Hillsborough Elementary Parent-Student Handbook



school calendar	number of school days	number of breaks	summer break
traditional	180	3	11 weeks
year-round	180	4	5 weeks



****Note:** Number of school days varies based on instructional hours.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please notify the school office in writing of any changes to your address, email address, or phone number. Accurate, up-to-date contact information ensures you receive our weekly *Dolphin Dispatch* messages and other important updates. It is also essential for emergencies such as illness, injury, or inclement weather.

Ensure your child's Infinite Campus Account and teacher the name and phone number of a relative, neighbor, or friend who can be contacted in case of an emergency when you cannot be reached. If this situation changes during the year, please notify the office.

Please reach out to Erika Foster, erika.foster@orange.k12.nc.us, with any questions. Thank you for helping us stay connected and keep your child safe!

CLASSROOM PLACEMENTS

Class placement is a thoughtful process that considers each child's individual needs. Teachers, support staff, and administration work together to create balanced classrooms.

While we are unable to accommodate requests for specific teachers, classes, or friends, we do thoughtfully consider each child's individual needs and personality when making class placements. Families are encouraged to share information about their child's learning style, strengths, and the type of teacher they believe would be a good match. This input helps us create balanced classrooms that support all students' success.

Thank you for trusting us to make the best placement decisions for your child!

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HOME- SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

We encourage regular communication between families and teachers to support your child's success. You can reach your child's teacher through written notes, email, phone calls, or Class Dojo.

Please note that teachers begin supervising students at 7:25 AM and must stay focused on their classes throughout the day. For this reason, unscheduled conferences or drop-in conversations are not permitted. If you have concerns or questions that require more discussion, please schedule a conference.

For topics such as progress, behavior, grading, or peer issues, always contact your child's teacher first. Teachers do not answer phones during instructional time. If you need to reach them urgently, please call the main office.

Home-To-School Communication Options For Families

- **Phone** 919.732.6137 Each Teacher has their own individual extension
- **Email** Visit the school website for Staff Email Addresses and Contact Information.
- **School Website** <https://www.orangecountyfirst.com/he>
- **Scheduled Conferences** Face-to-face conversations are a great way to communicate.
- **Class Dojo** Each teacher has a link to join their individual class

Teacher Conferences

Teachers will schedule conferences with each student's parent or guardian during the school year. Ongoing communication is encouraged—please reach out to your child's teacher anytime you have questions or concerns; strong home-school partnerships support student success.

Tips for a Successful Conference:

1. Prepare questions ahead of time and write them down.
2. Ask the child if there is anything he/she would like you to discuss with the teacher.
3. Share helpful information about your child that may support their learning.
4. Discuss any concerns directly with the teacher to find solutions together.
5. Ask how you can support your child's learning at home.
6. Schedule conferences in advance—teachers cannot meet during class time.

If you need further support after speaking with the teacher, the principal, assistant principal, or school counselor is available to help. Please speak with the teacher first unless it's an emergency.

Weekly Folders & Teacher Newsletters

Each teacher will share student work and classroom/grade-level updates weekly. Teachers will email their newsletter to the email provided in Infinite Campus.

To help streamline important paper communications, weekly folders will be sent home every Friday and should be returned each Monday. These folders may include:

- Student work for review
- Forms requiring signatures

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- Important announcements from staff, PTA, or administration

Please check your child's folder each week and reach out to their teacher with any questions.

Student Progress & Standards-Based Grading

Hillsborough Elementary uses Standards-Based Grading to report student progress. View these [informative slides for more information on Standards-Based Grading](#).

Progress Reports and Quarterly Report Cards

Progress reports and report cards are sent home four times a year. OCS policy requires a parent-teacher conference at the end of the first nine-week period, at which point the parent/guardian is provided with the report card. Parents cannot receive the first report card until a conference has taken place, either in person or via Zoom.

Parents can access grades and attendance anytime through the [Infinite Campus Parent Portal](#). If you need additional assistance, contact the front office.

Retention warning letters will be generated in February and sent from the principal to the parents/guardians of students identified as at-risk of performing below grade-level.

You are welcome to request a conference with your child's teacher at any time to discuss your child's progress.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum focus at Hillsborough Elementary is aligned to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study in all classes. The teachers at HES emphasize the importance of educating the whole child. In addition to English, math, social studies, and science, all students in grades K-5 participate in the following classes:

- Physical Education
- Music
- Art
- Spanish

Students will also have regular exposure to the following resources:

- Media
- Digital Learning
- Classroom Guidance lessons
- ReThinkEd Social/Emotional lessons

HES staff and students focus on the whole child through academics, being engaged, being a leader, treating others with respect, being safe, and being responsible. We hope that you see your child grow in each of these areas. A whole-child approach emphasizes that each child is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged.

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Recognition of student achievement is at the discretion of school leadership.

FIELD TRIPS

Current educational philosophy recognizes the desirability of using the total community environment as a learning laboratory. Teachers plan these educational experiences to enhance their teaching of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. These trips are always arranged **for their educational value** and serve to broaden the students' total educational experience. A field trip is defined as any planned activity that necessitates the student leaving the school grounds during instructional hours. Some trips may use coach buses and extend outside the normal school hours. Every effort will be made to ensure both the suitability of any trip away from school and the reasonableness of any cost involved in the trip. For this reason, all field trips must have the approval of school administration.

Permission Slips

Before a student can go on a field trip, a signed permission form from the parent/legal guardian must be on file with the classroom teacher for each trip. **Verbal permission is not accepted.**

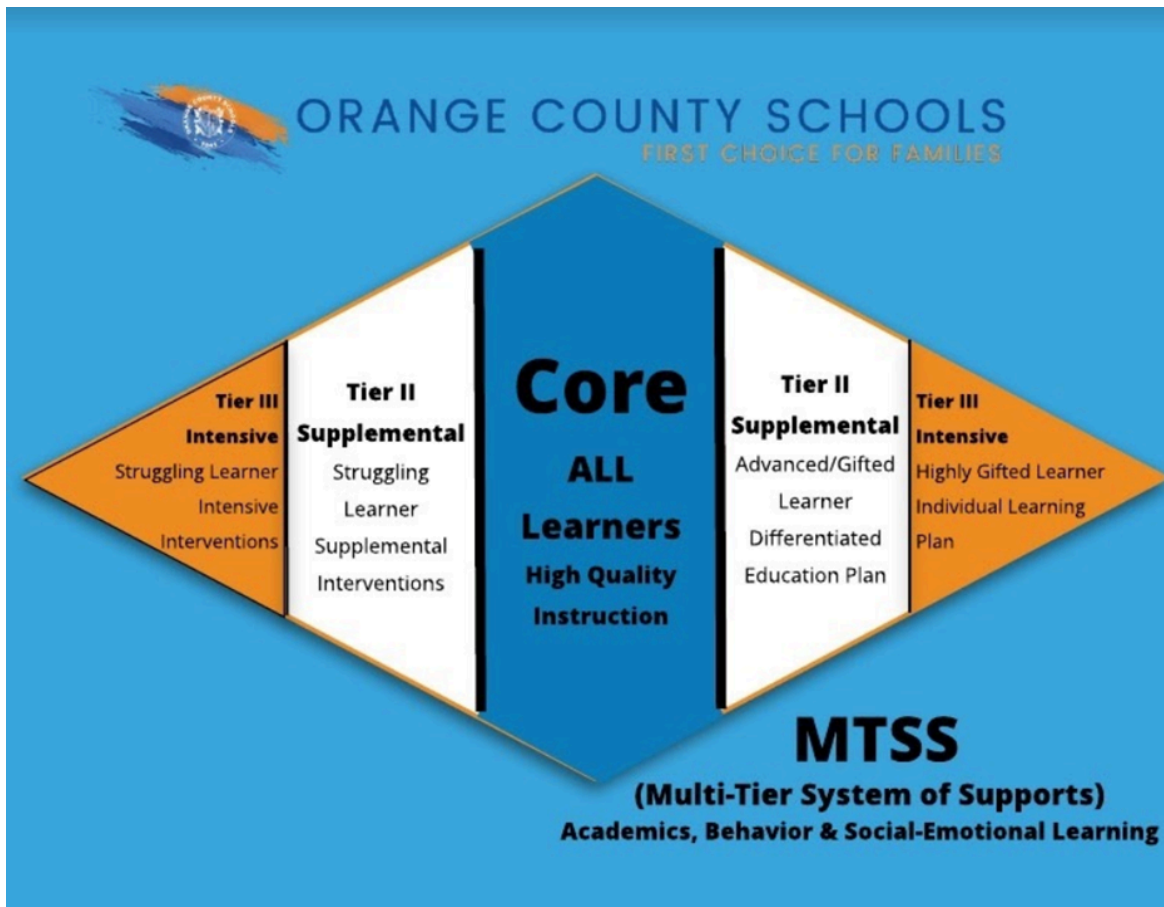
Field Trip Chaperones

Field Trip chaperones are required to complete the [Orange County School District Volunteer Tracker](#) and complete the HES [Chaperone Agreement Form](#) each year. If you require a printed form, you can complete one here: [Chaperone Guidelines Form](#) and return it to your child's teacher or the front office.

MTSS

HES utilizes North Carolina's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) in order to support the needs of our students. MTSS, is designed to match a child's learning needs with research-based instructional practices. If a child is not making progress through core instructional practices, then a supplemental or more intensive support plan is developed. Conversely, if a child is making exceptional progress, then a supplemental enrichment opportunity will be put in place to ensure that s/he continues to be challenged in the classroom. The child's progress is then monitored by the teacher and MTSS Team. In order to ensure success and to facilitate a team approach, the parents are involved at each Tier level.

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STUDENT SUPPORT/CARE TEAM

The Student Support/Care Team includes the social worker, counselor, school nurse, and administrators. This team collaborates with parents/guardians and teachers to create plans that support students' academic and/or behavioral needs.

It serves as a partnership between school and home to ensure students receive timely, effective support.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT /DISCIPLINE

Children have the right to learn in an environment that allows them to access a quality education. Children also have the responsibility to behave in such a manner that does not interfere with the safety and welfare of others. We have high expectations for personal accountability, along with courtesy and respect for adults, other students, school property, and one's self. We will use our [Dolphin Matrix](#) to set expectations and use common language around these expectations schoolwide.

Dolphin Values

Be safe
Be respectful
Be responsible
Be engaged
Be a leader

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Parents/Guardians will be notified if student behavior habitually and/or grossly interferes with teaching and/or learning. Parents/Guardians will also be notified of acts of kindness and positive behavior. We know that positive reinforcement goes a long way. We also know that an engaging curriculum, along with strong relationships (with both students and parents/guardians), will set the stage for both academic and social success.

Click here to learn more about the [OCS Code of Conduct, Character and Support](#), and to see a list of district rules, possible infractions, interventions, consequences, and restorative practices.

[OCS Elementary School Cell Phone Policy](#)

BULLYING

The Orange County Board of Education recognizes that bullying is disruptive, damaging, and sometimes violent, and has a negative effect on school climate. Students who are intimidated and fearful cannot give their education the single-minded attention they need for success. Every student has the right to learn and achieve academic success in a safe and civil school environment. Orange County Schools will not tolerate any acts of bullying of students on school grounds, in school transportation, or at any school-sponsored function. A link to the District discrimination, harassment, and bullying policy can be found here: [OCS Prohibition Against Discrimination Harassment and Bullying](#).

Bullying is a form of aggression that involves one or more students verbally, physically, and/or psychologically harassing another student repeatedly over a period of time. Bullying includes, but is not limited to: acts based on race, gender, color, national origin, sexual orientation, physical characteristics, or mental capacity. Students and parents should report any concerns immediately to their teacher in order for the school to respond appropriately before a potential repeated pattern emerges.

Meghan Dovenbarger, our School Counselor, works with students, parents/legal guardians, and staff throughout the year to ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of this topic.

DRESS CODE

OCS recognizes and supports that students have the desire and right to express themselves through clothing and appearance. The district also has a responsibility to all students and families to create a learning environment that values the diversity of our students and provides a high-quality, safe and respectful education environment that reflects our community as a whole. The responsibility for appropriate student dress lies with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) within approved standards set by the Board of Education. The OCS Student Dress Code (see [Board Policy 4316](#)) outlines items of clothing that should be avoided.

In summary, student dress or appearance deemed disruptive, provocative, or unsafe is unacceptable. Parents/Guardians will be called to provide a change of clothing for your child if their dress does not meet OCS School Board Policy.

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Elementary students are encouraged not to wear high heels, platform shoes, flip flops or backless sandals such as crocs. Shoes that are firmly attached to the feet are recommended to ensure safety.

VOLUNTEER OR VISIT HES

Visitors to Campus

We value your interest in HES and your desire to support our students. To ensure a safe and secure environment, all visitors must follow district safety procedures.

Arrival Procedures:

- All school buildings are secured and equipped with keyless FOB entry, which is accessible only to HES and OCS staff.
- All visitors must ring the buzzer at the front entrance to request entry.
- Once inside, sign in at the front office and wear your visitor badge at all times while on campus.
- Sign out at the office when your visit is complete.

Health Guidelines:

If you are experiencing symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, fatigue, abdominal pain, muscle aches, or headache, please stay home.

Classroom Observations:

If you would like to observe your child in the classroom, please call the office in advance to schedule an appointment with the teacher and principal.

Observations should be limited to 30 minutes or less to minimize disruptions and will be accompanied by an administrator.

Observations are not a substitute for parent-teacher conferences.

In accordance with privacy laws, observations may not be allowed in some classrooms.

Any questions or concerns following the observation should be addressed afterward via a scheduled appointment with the teacher or principal.

If a visit has not been approved through the office, you will be asked to return and reschedule for a later time.

Important: All visitors must complete the [Orange County School District Volunteer Tracker](#) annually, even if not serving in a volunteer role.

Volunteers

We love and appreciate our volunteers! Your time, skills, and support greatly enhance our students' learning experiences.

Volunteer Requirements:

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- All volunteers and field trip chaperones must complete a One-Time background check through the Orange County Schools Volunteer Management System, “Mind Your Business”.
- All new users must complete a background check through Mind Your Business. To start your background check, [click here](#). Each volunteer will receive an email notification once the background check is approved or denied.
- All existing volunteers previously approved through Volunteer Tracker will remain approved through Mind Your Business. No further action is needed. If you have been approved to volunteer with Orange County Schools, you will no longer need to renew your status on an annual basis.
- Volunteers must also sign the school’s [Chaperone Agreement Form](#).
- Volunteers must be at least high school age.
- Volunteers may not be left alone with students—a staff member must be present at all times.

Security and Check-In:

- School buildings are secured with keyless FOBs, issued only to HES and OCS staff.
- Volunteers must buzz in at the front entrance, sign in at the office, and wear a visitor badge at all times.
- Sign out at the office when your visit is complete.

Thank you for partnering with us at Hillsborough Elementary School! Your involvement supports a safe, enriching environment where all students can thrive.

SCHOOL NUTRITION

Fueling student learning. Orange County Schools Child Nutrition Services is committed to providing our students with quality, nutritious, and appealing meals in support of their academic success.

- All students, except those who are approved for free lunches or those who bring their lunch from home, will be required to pay for meals.
- All students will be served meals through the cafeteria line. Approved meal accountability procedures state that all students must pass through the cash register, enter their personal identification number (PIN) in the keypad or provide a barcoded card to be scanned.
- Universal breakfast will continue to be provided in all OCS elementary schools at no charge.
- School Breakfast/ Lunch Menus can be found on the [OCS School Nutrition website](#). The menu is subject to change due to product availability.

Breakfast Prices (All Elementary Schools) - Free for all students

Lunch Prices (All Elementary Schools) Full Price \$2.75 Reduced Price \$0.40

Free or Reduced Price Meals

Children in households receiving Food Stamps or TANF, and most foster children, can get free meals regardless of family income. Also, your children can get free meals if your household

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income is within the free limits on the Federal Income Guidelines. Now you can apply online for your child(ren) to receive free or reduced-price school meals. Your application will be sent from a secure website directly to us, so you don't need to worry about filling out a paper form that could be lost or misplaced. If you have questions about the Free/Reduced Meals program in Orange County Schools, contact the Child Nutrition office at (919) 245-4002. Apply online for your child(ren) to receive free or reduced-price school meals. www.LunchApplication.com.

Orange County Schools Nutrition Services accepts account payments by these methods:

- Cash or check
- cashier's check
- money order
- online payments at K12PaymentCenter.com



- Student Meal Account Form - Allows student to purchase extra items
- Student Medical Statement - For unique mealtime needs
- Parent Request for Milk Substitution
- [Supplemental sales](#)

OCS [Policy 6220](#) - Operation of School Nutrition Services

B. Meal Charges

Students who are required to pay for meals are expected to provide payment in a timely manner. The Board encourages parents/guardians to assure money is deposited regularly on their student's meal account. Payments can be made via the online payment portal, in person at each school cafeteria, or by sending a check to the school nutrition office.

The Board recognizes, however, that students occasionally may forget or lose their meal money. In the event that a student is unable to pay for a meal on a particular day, the student may charge a reimbursable meal. To safeguard the dignity and confidentiality of students in the serving line, reasonable efforts must be used whenever possible to avoid calling attention to a student's inability to pay. A la carte or additional items including extra milk may not be charged.

The school nutrition director and principal shall work jointly to prevent meal charges from accumulating and make every effort to collect all funds due to the child nutrition program on a regular basis and before the end of the school term. The following guidelines will be used to collect funds for charged meals:

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1. 1st charge, the cashier will remind the student to bring money the next day.
2. Notices negative balances in a child's meal account will be sent to parents via phone call, email, or a letter, indicating the amount owed on a weekly basis during the school year.
3. Notices of unpaid balances will be provided to the principal weekly.
4. For charges that are \$25 or more, the school nutrition director or designee shall inform the principal, who shall determine the next course of action including informing the social worker, who can determine whether supports are needed, contacting the parent/guardian to discuss a payment schedule, and/or assisting with the completion of a meal application. Completion and approval of a meal application does not eliminate prior meal charges.
5. If a parent maintains an excessive unpaid balance despite the supports and interventions described in this policy, the district may take legal steps to recover unpaid meal charges.

Parents are expected to pay all charges in full by the last day of the school year. Negative balances on student accounts will be carried forward to the following school year. However, the Superintendent shall ensure federal child nutrition funds are not used to offset the cost of unpaid meals and that the CNP is reimbursed for bad debt resulting from uncollected student meal charges prior to September 30 each year.

OCS Board Policy: Student Wellness

Schools play a critical role in promoting student health, preventing childhood hunger and obesity, and combating issues associated with poor nutrition and physical activity. Please refer to OCS [Policy 6140](#) - Student Wellness

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, which can be obtained online at:

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<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax:
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email:
program.intake@usda.gov

Lunch Procedures @ HES

- All students purchasing food or milk must go through the lunch line.
- Lunch begins with a brief quiet time for focused eating. Afterward, students may continue eating and talk quietly at a level 1 voice.
- Students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves.

Lunch Visits by Parents/Guardians and Family Members

- Family members on the student's pick-up list may eat lunch with their child after signing in at the front office and receiving a visitor badge.
- Please let the teacher know in advance if you plan to come.
- Wait under the cafeteria awning for your child to arrive.
- You may eat together at the designated hexagonal parent tables in the cafeteria or outside, weather permitting.
- To maintain safety and avoid hurt feelings, please do not invite other students to join your table.
- After lunch, your child will return to class with their teacher.

Meal Purchases for Adults

- Adults must purchase meals in person and may not charge to a student's account.

STUDENT BIRTHDAYS & PRIVATE INVITATIONS

Orange County Schools require each school to promote healthy nutritional habits, respect a variety of cultural and religious beliefs, and support different dietary needs.

Student Birthdays

- Birthdays will be recognized in the classroom.
- Parents/guardians may celebrate by:
Sending non-food items (e.g., pencils, stickers, erasers) for classmates to take home

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Donating a book to the class in honor of their child

Joining their child for lunch

To protect instructional time, birthday parties are not permitted.

- Please do not send cake, cupcakes, or other food/drinks for the class at any time during the school day.

Private Invitations

In an effort to prevent hurt feelings, private party invitations (inviting only selected classmates) should be sent outside the school environment. Invitations being issued to ALL class members can be distributed at school. School staff are not permitted to give out any student contact information.

HOLIDAYS

At HES, we learn about various holidays impacting our students and our greater community. We ask families not to send in individual cards/toys/candy from home for specific holidays so that teachers can create meaningful experiences within their classroom setting that each child can access equitably, maintaining the integrity of the instructional day.

STUDENT HEALTH INFORMATION

It is well known that healthy children learn best. School nurses are instrumental in helping students attend school healthy and prepared to learn. OCS provides registered nurses to serve as a resource in caring for student and staff healthcare needs during the school day.

Growing numbers of students attending our schools suffer from health concerns such as asthma, severe allergies, diabetes, sickle cell, and seizures. Nurses work with parents and physicians to complete **Individual Healthcare Plans** or **Emergency Action Plans** to meet students' known or potential healthcare needs during the school day. Nurses are instrumental in establishing guidelines for care. School nurses instruct and monitor non-medical school staff to care for children in the classroom who may be undergoing chemotherapy treatments, require catheterizations, feeding tubes, insulin pumps, tracheostomy care or other stoma care.

School nurses are often the only source of healthcare for many students attending our schools. Nurses will work with parents, teachers, social workers and other school staff as well as accessing various community and state resources to meet the healthcare needs of our students. Parents and teachers may refer student health concerns to the school nurse for evaluation and consideration.

School nurses contribute to the successful educational outcomes of students by providing ongoing screenings, assessments, and interventions to ensure students have the necessary support to allow optimum learning.

ILLNESS GUIDELINES

To protect the health of all students and staff, please keep your child home if they have any of the following symptoms: [OCS guidance can be found here.](#)

- Fever (100°F or higher)

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- Diarrhea
- Vomiting or nausea
- Red, watery eyes with drainage
- Severe headache
- Undiagnosed rash

Important: Students must be fever-free, diarrhea-free, and vomit-free for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

If your child becomes ill at school, you will be contacted to pick them up immediately. If you are unavailable, an emergency contact from your child's approved pick-up list will be called. Please ensure this information is up to date.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICINE

The administration of prescription and nonprescription (over-the-counter) medicine will require a written authorization.

Law prohibits teachers and other school personnel from giving prescribed medication to students without the following criteria having been met:

1. A medical form must be filled out by your child's doctor stating the medication to be given, the dosage, and the time of day the medication is to be taken. This form is available at your doctor's office, on the OCS website, or at the school. The completed form must be brought to the school office or scanned/faxed to us.
2. You, the parent/guardian, must present a labeled prescription bottle containing the prescribed medication to the school office.
3. At the designated time each day, your child will report to the nurse/office, where we will give the medication. The date and the time the medication was given will be recorded with our signature.

Students may not take or be given any over-the-counter medication (including aspirin, acetaminophen, etc.) at school without a completed [Student Medication Form](#) on file.

COVID-19 & Infectious Disease Protocols and Procedures

At HES, we continue to follow our district's and Health Department protocols. This includes:

- Optional masking
- Required masking in the event we are required to by the Orange County Health Department
- Students will wash their hands before all mealtimes.
- Orange County Schools no longer require exclusion based on all COVID-19 symptoms; it will be handled on a case-by-case basis.
- In partnership with the Orange County Health Department, OCS continues to ask for self-reporting of positive COVID cases and for individuals to follow isolation guidelines.
- School nurses must still keep track of positive cases and report clusters to the health department, then notify those groups by direct communication.
- School nurses are agents of OCHD and may exclude individuals who test positive (students, and also staff).
 - Please remind your children to wash their hands for 20 seconds.
- Sanitization stations are prevalent throughout campus for frequent hand sanitizing.

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- Each classroom is provided with Oxiver 516 for sanitizing desks and chairs.

OCS Policy 4230 Communicable Disease - Students

“In order to address the needs of the students within the school environment, parents/guardians will notify the principal/school nurse in the event they are aware of any student suffering from a communicable disease,” which would include COVID-19.

“Collaboration and cooperation is needed by each individual to ensure protection of all in the school system. Infection control measures, such as hand-washing, respiratory etiquette, and social distancing, adopted by OCS shall follow health practices deemed successful in preventing and controlling the spread of communicable disease. . . . All employees shall implement infection control measures per OCS procedure and encourage students to do the same.” During the COVID-19 pandemic, these infection control measures may include wearing a face covering to limit the spread of COVID-19.

INCLEMENT WEATHER AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

In cases of severe/inclement weather (snow, heat, flooding, etc.), schools may close, open late, or dismiss early to ensure student safety.

- Stay tuned to local news and radio stations for updates.
- The district will send automated messages to the number listed in Infinite Campus
- For delayed start school days, do not drop off students before the announced start time, as staff may also follow a delayed schedule.
- If the weather worsens during the day, the district will decide and notify families.

Important: Please do not call the school about closings—phone lines must remain open for official communication.

Make sure we have **up-to-date contact numbers** for you and your emergency contacts to ensure we can reach someone at all times.

LOCKERS

Students in grades 3-5 will be permitted to use lockers. Students may decorate the inside of their lockers with magnetic and removable decorations. Stickers are not permitted to be placed on the outside or inside of our lockers, as they become very difficult to remove over time, and students’ locker numbers will change every year. Students should remove all items from lockers at the end of the school year.

LOST AND FOUND

Students should leave valuables at home, as the school is not responsible for lost items.

Toys, tablets, electronic games, and cell phones should not be brought to school.

Label coats, backpacks, and lunch boxes with your child’s name to help identify lost items.

Parents/guardians may check the lost and found in the gym lobby for missing belongings. Unclaimed items will be donated to a local charity throughout the year.

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PARENT/TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

At HES, we know that family involvement is key to student success — we can't do it without you! There are many ways to volunteer at Hillsborough Elementary, and we encourage you to join the PTA. Connect with any PTA officer or member to learn more and get involved. Together, we can make this a great year for all our students!

2025-2026 General Membership PTA Meetings

The PTA typically holds five general PTA meetings for its members at 6:00 pm throughout the year. These will be held in person at HES and childcare and pizza will be available for all participants. More specific information about dates will be shared. If you would like more information about joining the PTA, please reach out to one of our officers.

Erin Day , President, president@hesdolphinspta.com

Katie Hambrick, Vice President, vicepresident@hesdolphinspta.com

Megan Bartman, Treasurer, treasurer@hesdolphinspta.com

Chelsey Morrison, Secretary, secretary@hesdolphinspta.com

We welcome your suggestions and hope to see you soon! **Follow the HES PTA on Facebook and Instragram for the most up-to-date information.**

PET POLICY

Safety is our top priority at HES. Therefore, pets are not to be brought to campus during arrival, dismissal, or other times of the day with the exception of service animals according to [OCS School Board Policy 5029](#). For a special learning experience, the principal may allow animals to be brought to school in a limited and supervised manner with prior approval according to [OCS School Board Policy 3550](#)

PICTURES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Parents/guardians are welcome to post photos of themselves and their child(ren) at school events to celebrate the great things happening at HES.

However, **please do not post photos of other students** without permission from their parents/guardians, as not all families have granted photo consent. Many of our families HAVE NOT granted permission for their children to be photographed.

If you're unsure, feel free to share the photo with your child's teacher, who can confirm if all students pictured have photo permission.

Follow us: on Instagram @HESDolphins

Technology

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OCS is a 1:1 district, which means that our students have access to either an iPad (kindergarten) or Chromebook for various activities in the classroom throughout the day. Teachers and staff are mindful of using technology to maximize instruction. Our HES responsible use plan for student use of technology is linked here: [25-26 Responsible Technology Use Plan](#).

Sensory Tools, Fidgets, and Toys

In order for your child to bring a fidget or sensory tool to school, you must have prior permission from the classroom teacher.

YEARLY STATEMENT OF ASBESTOS COMPLIANCE

We are required by Federal Law to maintain an Asbestos Hazard Management Plan under the Hazard Emergency Response Act. The Plan is housed in the office for your inspection and information. The plan will show that there is No Friable or Dangerous Asbestos in the building.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Your child's **teacher** should be your **first point of contact** for questions about academic performance and overall progress.

We also have a dedicated team of staff members available to support families with questions related to the **Exceptional Children's (EC) program, Student Support/MTSS Team, Student Support/CARE Team, and the Academically & Intellectually Gifted (AIG) program.**

To ensure you receive accurate and helpful information, we kindly ask that you **reach out to school staff directly** rather than posting questions on social media.

For specific support, please contact the following staff members:

[Jessica Nagy](#), Principal, [Alexis Magill](#), Assistant Principal: We will support and assist you with transportation issues, disciplinary matters, state and local testing, and in understanding your rights and procedures involved in the Special Education process. Please contact us if you have any concerns about your child's educational process.

[Meghan Dovenbarger](#), School Counselor: Ms. Dovenbarger helps lead the Multi-tiered System of Support Team which works to find strategies for parents and teachers who have concerns about a student. **She also coordinates the 504 process and communicates with families.**

[Amanda Strong](#), EC Department Chair: offers our EC team ongoing support with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). She can also offer parents advice and support regarding our Exceptional Children's program.

[Sarah Bongarten](#) Literacy Coach: Ms. Bongarten provides Literacy support at HES through classroom instruction/modeling/co-teaching, intervention support, staff development, and parent conferences.

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Alisan Royster, Math Coach: Ms. Royster provides Math support at HES through classroom instruction/modeling/co-teaching, intervention support, staff development, and parent conferences.

Cindy Sinicrope, AIG Teacher: Ms. Sinicrope provides academic support and enrichment to students. She supports classroom instruction through modeling/co-teaching, staff development, and parent conferences.

Amy Sheets, Reading Teacher: Mrs. Sheets provides reading support at HES through co-teaching as well as directly working with small groups of students who may need additional reading support.

Zach Krenzler, School Social Worker; Mr. Krenzler provides support to students and families in crisis; Connects families to school and community resources; Partners with school staff to support individual student needs; Monitors school attendance.

Please feel free to call the front office or your child's teacher if you have a question or concern not addressed in this handbook.

We look forward to a great year in 2025-2026!