

Pine Trail Elementary

Parent/Student Handbook

2026-2027

Principal's Welcome

Dear Pine Trail Families:

The beginning of the school year is always a time of great excitement for students, parents, guardians, and teachers. From the first day of school, we only have 180 days to work with your children and make sure they are ready for the next step in their education. The valuable information contained in this student handbook can be used as a reference throughout the year. You will find information ranging from absences, medications, as well as information about our PTA and how you can become involved here at school.

Thank you for making the time to read this information and keep it in a safe place for future reference if needed. As always, you can contact us here at school if you should have any further questions.

Sincerely,
Charles D. Bynum
Principal

Absences

Florida Statute 1003.21 requires the regular attendance of children between the ages of 6 and 16.

If your child is absent, please call the school office at 386-258-4672. If calling outside of school hours, please leave a message with the student's name, teacher's name, and reason for absence. Based on research, habitual absences have a significant negative impact on learning and student achievement. In the event a student accumulates 10 unexcused absences within a 90-day period a formal letter will be sent home. According to school attendance policy 206, in compliance with Florida Statute 1003.24, the parent/guardian must provide a doctor's verification for all absences due to illness beyond 15 days to be excused.

Office hours are Monday-Friday 7:30 AM - 3:00 PM.

Animals

Animals are not allowed at school for health and safety reasons. Pet visits may be considered for specific instructional purposes for a short time during the day with prior written permission of the classroom teacher and an administrator.

Arrival and Dismissal

Students should not arrive on campus **prior to 7:15 AM** due to **NO** supervision. Student hours are 7:50 AM - 2:30 PM. All students should be **picked up by 2:45 PM**. On early release Wednesday's, dismissal is 1:30 PM and all students should be picked up no later than **1:45 PM**.

Before School

Students arriving on campus are expected to report directly to their designated area (Grade K - Bldg. 11 Hallway, Grade 1-2 - Cafeteria, Grades 3-5 - Covered Classroom). Students who eat breakfast in the cafeteria are expected to report to the designated areas immediately after breakfast (7:15 AM - 7:45 AM).

Bicycles

Students who ride a bike to school must secure it with a lock to the bike racks located outside the front office and next to building 5. *Bicycles may not be parked elsewhere on campus.* All students must wear a safety helmet and walk the bicycle until they are off school grounds.

Bus Conduct

Students who ride the school bus are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous, respectful manner and must adhere to the Code of Student Conduct rules when transported and at all bus stops. Students who do not obey the bus rules will lose the privilege of riding the bus for a period of time. In addition, Florida Statute 316.6145 requires students to use provided safety restraints ("seat belts"). Students are required to wear the fastened belt low and snug; the seat belt is not intended to be worn loosely. Improper use will not protect student safety. Students who do not comply with this legal requirement will not be transported by the bus operator.

Bus Conduct (cont.)

Students may ride only their assigned bus to and from their designated stop. A temporary emergency request for a change in bus stop must be made in writing by the parent/guardian to school administration prior to the requested date. A temporary pass may be used for up to three days. Requests to ride home with another student for purposes of sleepovers or for the completion of homework/project assignments are not emergencies, so all requests of this sort will be denied. School administration retains the right to deny a request for a temporary pass.

1. For student safety, students must obey driver.
2. Students must be at the school bus stop ten (10) minutes prior to the scheduled time of pickup. The bus will not wait for late students.
3. Students must stand off roadway when waiting for bus. The behavior and safety of students to and from the bus stop is the family's responsibility.
4. Students may get on and off only at their assigned bus stop.
5. Students must remain seated in assigned seats.
6. Only quiet talk is permitted on the bus. Students must be silent when dome lights are on and/or while bus is approaching and crossing railroad tracks.
7. Students may be assigned to sit three (3) to a seat when bus is at capacity.
8. Students are never to stand in front of the white line while bus is in motion.
9. Students may not eat food or drink beverages on the bus.
10. Students may not possess items that would threaten the safety of students or personnel.
11. Students must not use abusive signs, language, or gestures.
12. Students must not fight, push or create any kind of disturbance.
13. Skateboards are prohibited.
14. Students cannot bring live reptiles, insects, animals, or marine life on the bus.
15. Both the parent/guardian and the student will be held responsible for any vandalism to the school bus. Restitution for damages will be required.
16. Students must not throw any items out the windows or doors of the bus. This offense is a violation of state law.
17. If it is necessary to cross in front of the bus before loading or when exiting, students must cross ten (10) feet in front of the bus after receiving an "all-clear" sign from the driver.

Students transported are subject to the "Code of Student Conduct" (School Board Policy 208) as well as these "Standards for Transported Students."

Cafeteria

The PTE cafeteria offers breakfast and lunch for all students. Breakfast is served from 7:15 - 7:45 AM. For this school year, meals are still be provided at no cost. Should that change, the procedure for paying for meals is parents are asked to pay for lunches in advance whenever possible. Send cash or check in a sealed envelope with the student's name, lunch number and teacher's name. You may also pre-pay for student meals by credit or debit card using www.myschoolbucks.com. Student lunch numbers are issued the first day of school. Maintaining a safe and orderly cafeteria is a priority at Pine Trail. Instructing students on proper table manners promotes the LifeSkills of respect and responsibility. Students are expected to follow cafeteria expectations.

- Elementary Breakfast, Student: Free (25-26 SY)
- Elementary Lunch, Student: Free (25-26 SY)
- Elementary Breakfast, Adult: \$1.50
- Elementary Lunch, Adult: \$3.25

Early Check Out

A PARENT OR GUARDIAN MUST COME TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE TO SIGN OUT THEIR CHILD. If the adult picking up the child is not listed on their emergency card, the parent/guardian will be called to confirm. If parent/guardian cannot be reached by the phone number(s) listed in the school's database, your child will not be released. If you need to pick up your child early, please do so by 2:00 PM (1:00 PM on Early Release days) to prevent delays with dismissal procedures.

Checks

When paying for field trips, supplies, etc. by check make the check payable to PINE TRAIL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. Lunch money checks should be made payable to SCHOOL WAY CAFE. **All checks must include written or printed phone number. Please use blue or black ink.**

Conferences

Teachers are available for scheduled conferences. An appointment must be made prior to your visit to ensure a private conference time. Conferences are not permitted while school is in session unless scheduled during a teacher's planning period.

Dress Code/Uniform Policy

Please review the "Student Appearance and Dress Code" in the 2025-2026 Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

Newsletter

The *PARENT PRESS*, our weekly newsletter, is distributed via email from the principal. Please look for information on academics and school events.

Custody/Court Orders

It is the responsibility of the parent and/or guardian to provide the school with legal documentation as it relates to court orders or custody issues pertaining to the child or children. Legal documentation refers to any paperwork from the courts with a signature and seal. Drafts or paperwork not formally signed by a judge will not be accepted. Please provide updated documents if situations change.

Emergency Cards

Please complete the emergency card as soon as possible and revisit throughout the year as needed to ensure that the school has updated information. In the event of an emergency, it is imperative the school has your most current phone number. If you change your name, address, home phone number or work number, be sure that the office has been given a copy of the change. If you have an unlisted number, it will remain confidential, but we do need to know it in case an emergency arises.

Field Trips

Field trips are a part of the instructional program and are planned by the teacher to reinforce/enhance instructional objectives. All field trips must have prior permission from the administration, and all students must have written permission from a parent or guardian on a formal permission form to participate. Verbal permission is not acceptable. School lunches for field trips must be ordered prior to the day of the field trip. **Please note that a student who has a history of insubordination may not be permitted to attend field trips** if their behavior presents a risk to their safety off-site. All chaperones must be cleared as a volunteer through the V.I.P.S. program. Field trips are an extension of a specific academic standard, therefore children not in a specific grade level or siblings will not be allowed to attend.

School Counselor Services

Classroom lessons, small group counseling, and individual counseling are available to all students. Please remember our counselors are educational counselors, not mental health therapists. Parent consultations and information about community services are also available. For further information or special concerns, please contact the office at 258-4672.

Lost and Found

Please label all items with your child's name (*jackets, sweaters, backpacks, lunchboxes, etc.*). Lost articles will be placed in the *Lost and Found* area. All articles not claimed by the end of each quarter will be donated to charity.

REFER TO THE CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE HANDBOOK FOR RULES AND REGULATIONS.

Homework Policy

Homework may be given Monday through Thursday at teachers' discretion. The amount of homework assigned will vary by student grade level. Times may be adjusted for special needs.

Primary grades (K, 1, 2) - 15-20 minutes per night
Intermediate grades (3, 4, 5) - 30-50 minutes per night

Many classroom activities cannot be replicated at home, so we encourage regular daily attendance.

However, if an absence is unavoidable (illness, medical appointment, etc.), appropriate work will be sent home with the student once the missed concepts/skills are taught to him/her. The child will be allotted the number of days missed to complete the assignment. For example, if a child is absent one day, then one additional day will be provided to complete the missed assignments.

LifeSkills

CARING - To feel concern for others

COOPERATION - To work together toward a common goal

PATIENCE - To wait calmly for someone or something

RESPONSIBILITY - To be accountable for your actions and do what is appropriate

EFFORT - To try your hardest

PROBLEM- SOLVING - To seek solutions to everyday problems and difficult situations

ORGANIZATION - To plan, arrange and implement in an orderly way; to keep things in an orderly, readily usable way

FLEXIBILITY - The ability to change plans when necessary

INITIATIVE - To do something because it needs to be done

INTEGRITY - To conduct oneself according to a sense of what is right and wrong

Media Center

The media center is available for student use Monday through Friday from 8:05 AM to 2:25 PM. The media center is available after school until 2:40 PM with parent supervision. Students in grades K-1 may check out one book. Students in grades 2-5 may check out two books. Students with public library cards may check out an additional book.

Parent Drop Off and Pick Up

Parents transporting or picking up students utilize the parent loop to ensure the safety of his/her child. Students are not permitted to be dropped off in the bus loop prior to 7:45 AM. Children should be picked up by 2:45 PM daily. **DO NOT PARK IN LOOP IF WALKING STUDENT TO OFFICE.**

Medication

Permission to take prescribed medication at school for chronic ailments must be secured through proper channels. If you find it necessary for your child to take prescribed medication at school, **YOU MUST OBTAIN THE APPROPRIATE FORMS FROM THE SCHOOL OFFICE AND HAVE DOCTOR COMPLETE AND SIGN.** Please call the school nurse for details at 258-4672 ext. 51398. Please deliver in person, all medication in its original container, as school personnel are required by Florida statute to count and receipt all medication in its original container. Container must have the prescribed directions on the bottle. Prescribed medication is never to be transported by students to or from school. Over-the-counter medicines such as cough drops, cold or allergy medicines, etc. may not be transported by students. HB 1537 allows for only FDA regulated OTC headache medicine to be self-administered by students.

Parent-Teacher Association

PTA meetings are held throughout the school year. We urge families to become active members of our PTA and to participate in PTA meetings and events. If you would like to be involved in planning or volunteering for one of the many PTA activities, there are various committees that require only a short-term commitment as well as committees that are on-going throughout the entire school year. Names and phone numbers for the current PTA Executive Board can be found on the PTA website <https://ptepta.com>. Your support will help to ensure a better school.

Phone Use

Children may use the school telephone only in the case of an emergency. Teachers and/or office personnel will be responsible for deciding what constitutes an emergency. **HB 1105 prohibits students from using cell phones or personal communication devices during school hours in all elementary and middle schools.** Personal communication devices include smart phones, smart watches, and smart glasses. We highly recommend having students leave these items at home to prevent any possibility of loss/theft/damage from storing devices in their backpacks. If a student is observed with a phone out of their backpack, it will be taken to an administrator, and a parent/guardian will be contacted.

Parties and Treats

Parents should communicate with the teacher if they would like to send in treats. Please do not bring invitations to school which are meant for a student's private party if the entire class is not invited to avoid possible hurt feelings. **Please know that it is inappropriate to have birthday balloons, flowers or other specialty items delivered to the school.** Such items will not be sent to the classroom during school hours but will be held in the office for pick-up by the student after 2:30 PM. Busses will not permit these items to be transported.

Physical Education

Every student participates in physical education two to three times per week and recess daily. Students are required to wear closed toe/closed heel appropriate shoes for running to participate in physical education instruction and recess to reduce the possibility of injury. A written request from the parent or guardian will be necessary if a student needs to be excused from physical activity for a short period of time. A written statement from a doctor will be necessary if there is any physical reason a student needs to be excused from physical activity for an extended amount of time. In such cases, doctor's permission must also be obtained for the student to resume participation in physical education instruction.

Volunteers in Public Schools (VIPS)

We often need volunteers to assist with various school activities and to assist with supervision on field trips. Interested persons should complete the volunteer application on the district website. Please be aware that all volunteers must complete the online Volunteer Application and must be approved for volunteer service by the district office before being allowed to volunteer or chaperone.

Visitors

Anyone on campus during the times of 7:50 AM – 2:30 PM is expected to formally sign-in at the main office and display a visitor's pass for the specific day in a highly visible location. **A current driver license or identification card will be needed to utilize our system which checks names with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.** Visitors may only be in the destination designated upon sign-in. Visitors may not wander the campus or go to other classrooms /locations other than the location they are designated to volunteer in. When leaving campus, it is expected that the visitor signs out in the main office using the system. This will ensure that administration will be able to account for any individual who has visited the campus or who may still be on campus in the event of an emergency.

Report Cards/Interim Reports

Report cards and interims are issued four times each year and can be accessed via Parent Portal. Parent-teacher conferences are encouraged.

Security

In the event of an emergency requiring campus evacuation, the media/parent staging area will be communicated by the district. Representatives will be on-site to direct parents where and when to pick-up their child(ren).

School Rules

Students are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly, polite manner at school and while being transported by the school bus.

1. Respect school property and the personal property of teachers and fellow students.
2. Treat others respectfully—no fighting, put downs, or abusive language. Bullying behavior will not be tolerated and is subject to disciplinary action. Please see VCS *Code of Student Conduct*.
3. Walk quietly on walkways.
4. **Leave toys, playing cards, trading cards (Pokémon, Yugi-oh, etc.), Game-Boys, i-Pods and other recreational games/devices at home.**
5. No knives, guns, drugs, alcohol, tobacco products or laser lights are permitted at school or on the school bus at any time. The term “guns” includes but is not limited to toy guns, bb guns, cap guns and/or any other toy or weapon resembling a firearm.
6. Remain on school grounds after arriving at school unless permission to leave is granted by the school administration.

Tardies

Tardiness has a significant negative impact on learning and student achievement. Students arriving after the 7:50 AM tardy bell are to stop at the main office for a tardy pass before being admitted to class. Five unexcused tardies and/or early checkouts equate to one unexcused absence. Students who are habitually absent/tardy will be referred to the school social worker. Please keep in mind, instruction begins promptly at 7:50 AM. Each minute your child is tardy, is another minute of instruction lost. In addition, when your child enters the classroom tardy, your child must unpack and prepare for their day while other students are trying to attend to the lesson. This can cause an uncomfortable start to your child's school day.

Textbooks, Library Books, School Property

Schoolbooks are expected to last for many years. It is the responsibility of each student to keep their books, desk, and all school property clean and undamaged. Parents are expected to pay for lost or damaged school property.

1:1 Technology

VCS is a 1:1 technology district. Each child in grades Kg-2 will have an iPad assigned to them for use in school, and each child in grades 3-5 will have a laptop. These items remain at school. Students found in violation of the Student Code of Conduct regarding acceptable use of technology will lose the privilege of technology use for a period of time. Please discuss the necessary use of the school devices **SOLELY** for educational purposes with your child.

Volusia County Schools Drug Policy

Possession and/or sale of controlled substances, as defined in Florida Statutes, chapter 893, by any student while on school property or in attendance at a school function, is grounds for expulsion. Prescribed medication is never to be transported by students to and/or from school.

Volusia County Schools Search Policy

All individuals entering the school premises may be subject to search, including but not limited to the person, vehicles, briefcases, book bags, lunch bags or boxes, purses and packages.

Withdrawing or Transferring

You are requested to contact the office in advance if your child is withdrawing or transferring to another school.

