

West Buncombe Elementary Student/Parent Handbook 2023-2024

Principal – Brad Johnson
Assistant Principal – Robin Paine



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SCHOOL SCHEDULE

7:15 – 7:30 am	<u>All early students go to the theater.</u>
7:30 am	Students may go directly to their class as they arrive.
7:30 – 7:45 am	Breakfast
7:50 am	Instructional day begins. Tardy slips are needed.
2:30 pm	First Load Bus & Car rider dismissal bell.
2:45 pm	Second Load Buses begin loading.
3:00 pm	Car rider line ends and ALL students should be dismissed.

WEST BUNCOMBE MISSION STATEMENT

To work together as a school community to create an environment that embraces diversity, cultivates academic excellence, encourages citizenship and nurtures a love of learning.

VALUES

- ★ All students can learn.
- ★ Each student is a valued individual with unique needs and talents.
- ★ Students will receive an enriched and well-rounded curriculum.
- ★ Students learn in different ways and will be provided with a variety of instructional approaches to support and challenge their learning.
- ★ The staff, parents, and community share the responsibility for educating our children.
- ★ The school is a safe and nurturing environment which will promote the highest levels of achievement.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS:

VISITING SCHOOL AND CLASSROOMS

When wishing to visit classrooms between 7:50 am – 2:30 pm, you must enter through the front door, check in with the office, and wear your nametag at all times in the building. Parents and visitors may park in the bus parking lot when visiting between 8:00am -2:00pm. We ask you to be considerate of academics and not to interrupt instructional time. Conferences should be arranged for non-instructional times. ALL parents, visitors and volunteers must check in with the office and complete the LobbyGuard check in security system. Please be prepared for check in by having your identification with you.

DELIVERIES TO SCHOOL

If you send flowers, candy and/or balloon arrangements to celebrate a birthday or other special event, you should make arrangements to pick up your child at the end of the school day. These items are not allowed on the school bus. Deliveries will not be sent to the classroom during instructional time.

LOST AND FOUND

Please write your child's name in his/her coats, jackets, etc. There is a lost and found space in the hall between the theater and the office, and every effort will be made to return items to the owner. If a child's name is on the item, it makes finding the owner much easier. Each year we have many items that are never claimed. Unclaimed items are given to charity at the end of each semester.

CELLPHONES/SMARTWATCHES/DEVICES

Prohibited Use: Instructional Classroom Time – Students may not possess or use cell phones, smartwatches or other personal communication devices during any classroom time or when teachers or the school principal specifically prohibit their use.

CARE OF SCHOOL & PERSONAL PROPERTY

Please reinforce with your child the importance of taking care of school materials and personal items. Damaged and lost devices, books or school materials must be paid for before yearbooks and grades are issued at the end of the year. **The trading/selling of personal items from home is not appropriate at school.** Often this happens without parent knowledge and/or permission. Students are not to trade, sell or give away personal items at school or on the school bus.

VOLUNTEERING & PARENT INVOLVEMENT/COMMUNICATION

VOLUNTEER TRACKER

Our parent volunteer program is very important. Our volunteers provide important services for our school and help establish a vital link between school and community. Volunteers may work one day a year or several days a week as their schedule permits. All support and time given are greatly appreciated. Please consider joining our volunteer program. We do ask that all volunteers check in at the office, log in using the LobbyGuard system, and wear badges while they are in the building. ALL volunteers must register using the **Volunteer Tracker**. For more information about Buncombe County School's Volunteer policies, please visit <https://www.buncombeschools.org/o/bcs/page/volunteering>

PTO

We consider the PTO at West Buncombe Elementary to be one of the best and most active in the state. PTO makes a difference in the lives of the children at West Buncombe and makes our staff feel very special and appreciated! There are multiple opportunities to become members of PTO throughout the school year. Signing up for PTO is free! The PTO BOARD meets once a month to plan special events and fundraisers which will be announced. If you are interested in volunteering for the PTO BOARD, helping to make plans, or supporting our school, please call the school office with your contact information. We appreciate our PTO BOARD and members.

ADVISORY COUNCIL

We believe that people want good schools, that they have reasonable ideas about the things the schools should do, and that they are willing to help the schools attain established goals. A purpose of the advisory structure is to provide informed advice to the school authorities. The Advisory Council might discuss and advise on such matters as human relations, school facilities, school activities, community/Board of Education relations, and/or other matters related to the school. The elementary school Advisory Council is made up of the PTO President (if co-presidents are elected, both members serve on the Advisory Council, but each will have one-half vote), one teacher elected by the school's teachers, and three lay people appointed by the Board of Education, with the school administration serving as ex-officio members. More information about Advisory Councils can be found on the district and school website.

2023-2024 Members: Manori Dockery, Caitlin Johnson, Allison Francis and Irene Oramas (Teacher Rep)

REPORT CARDS / PROGRESS REPORTS

Regular communication to parents about academic success is sent home through report cards and progress reports. Students in grades 1-4 receive report cards every nine weeks. Your child will bring the report card home or you may access the information on the Parent Portal. Please read and discuss with your child, then sign and return to school. Mid-term progress reports may be sent home. If you are unsure of your child's progress, please contact the teacher to set up a parent conference.

Buncombe County Schools will follow a 10-point grading scale for all students in grades three through twelve (3-12). Grade point average calculations will be applied as follows:

A: 90-100 B: 80-89 C: 70-79 D: 60-69 F: <59

First and second grade students do not receive grades but are given achievement indicators.

Progress information for Kindergarten students is given at parent conferences.

CONFERENCES AND COMMUNICATION

Parent-teacher conferences promote an opportunity for you to be involved in your child's education. We encourage you to visit the school for pre-arranged conferences. Teachers will not be available for conferences on a drop-in basis as we are committed to protecting the instructional time of our classes. Please give the teacher 24-hour notice when scheduling a conference. We recommend at least two parent-teacher conferences per year. Any time you feel it is appropriate, you can request additional conferences. Please call the school office, email your child's teacher or write the teacher a note to schedule parent conferences.

CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

TIPS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

The West Buncombe staff sets extremely high expectations for students' academic growth. These tips will help students be successful at school:

1. Get plenty of sleep. Ten to twelve hours are recommended for most kids.
2. Get up in plenty of time to have a "stress free morning" so that you can be relaxed and wide awake for daily school activities.
3. Wear neat, clean, comfortable clothes.
4. Get to school on time every day!
5. Eat a good healthy breakfast either at home or at school.
6. Be prepared and always have supplies you need to complete your work.
7. Do your very best and try to be neat and accurate.
8. Listen carefully to directions and respect each teacher's right to teach and each student's right to learn.
9. Participate in class discussions.
10. Organize your assignments so you will have needed books and supplies ready for school and at home.
11. Use your time wisely at school and at home.
12. Have assignments completed and turned in on time.
13. Read every night.

HOMEWORK/NIGHTLY READING

Homework is used to reinforce and enrich skills that have been previously taught at school. There are three specific goals for homework.

- 1) To bring the parent into the triangle of what the student is learning.
- 2) To reinforce that reading is not a subject in school, but a life skill.
- 3) To increase a student's academic success.

Parents may be required to sign a homework or reading log that tracks student progress. Please make this a priority and part of your routine with your child at home each and every day. This also instills a good work ethic for your child.

MAKE-UP WORK

If your child is sick and has missed school, we will be glad to organize some school work to be completed at home. Some assignments are in class or hands-on activities that require an explanation or direct teacher instruction and cannot be sent home. Always remember that reading as little as 20-30 minutes a day with your child can help them stay prepared for when they return to school. Please call early enough that the teacher can prepare materials without interrupting regular instruction. You may pick up make-up work in the school office after 3:00pm.

FUN FRIDAY (STUDY HALL FOR MISSING WORK)

This strategy is designed to improve student behavior and motivate students to complete assignments on time. The Fun Friday block occurs on the last thing on Fridays. Each grade level will plan fun, motivating activities for students to do. One teacher per grade level will host Study Hall. Students will be required to go to Study Hall if they receive a minor or major referral during the week. They will also be required to attend if they have not completed all assignments for the week. If a student misses a day, is tardy/leaves early, and does not make up the missed work in a sufficient amount of time, they will attend Study Hall to complete those missed assignments.

FIELD TRIPS

At various times throughout the year, classes may be scheduled for trips away from campus. In that event, a permission slip will be sent home with details of the trip. Field trip fees must be paid in advance and are not refundable. Cash only will be accepted for Field Trips. These trips are an extension of classroom learning and are a valuable part of a student's education. Parents may be asked to chaperone; however, siblings are not allowed on field trips. Field trip parents must complete the Volunteer Tracker process to be approved to chaperone field trips. We ask that parents get directions ahead of time and do not depend on following the buses to know where you are going. Please meet us at the site of the field trip.

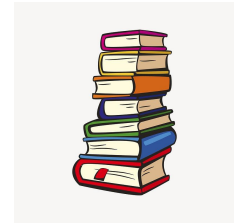
MEDIA SERVICES

FACILITIES & RESOURCES: Our library houses more than 17,000 books and conducts regular student instruction every day of the week. All students are scheduled to visit the library each week for regular classes and book exchange. The library is also open to all students for book exchange each morning from 7:30 a.m. to 7:50 a.m.

CIRCULATION POLICY:

Student check out will begin each school year after student records and library cards are completed. This is normally a few days into the school calendar.

- Kindergarteners will check out 1 book initially and work up to 2.
- 1st and 2nd graders may check out 2 books at a time. Typically, one book is their choice and one should be on their reading level.
- 3rd and 4th graders may check out 2 books and a magazine.
- Additional check outs are permitted if a student is working on a research project.



Students may keep their books for a week before they must renew them by bringing them back into the library for scanning.

OVERDUE/LOST BOOK POLICY:

The Media Center does not charge late fees; however, students are held responsible for lost or damaged books. Students are notified of overdue books by the computer (it beeps), orally by their teacher, and in writing.

If a book has not been returned after four to six weeks, a notice will be sent to the parents/guardians. At this point, the student may not check out any other books until the book issue is resolved. The student is offered these possible solutions:

- (1) Return the loaned book
- (2) Pay for the title – CASH ONLY/NO REFUNDS
- (3) Work off the cost in the Media Center

Once the overdue book is returned, or the cost paid, library privileges will be restored.

Students with outstanding books at the end of the school year will have their yearbooks held until books have been returned or paid for.

DAMAGED BOOK POLICY:

Students who damage a book beyond repair are required to pay towards replacing the book. The bill will have a prorated amount based on the book's age. A student who damages a book will not be able to check out another book until the damaged book is paid for.

TECHNOLOGY - 1:1 DEVICES

Buncombe County Schools believes that the implementation of a 1:1 device initiative will enhance individualized instruction for critical thinking and creativity. This will maximize student opportunities for self-assessment and deeper understanding of content, resulting in interactive, engaging, collaborative, on demand instruction, and infinite levels of learning.

Each student will be assigned a county-provided device and is responsible for its care. There is currently no cost or fee associated with being assigned a student device. However, charges vary for lost or damaged devices and chargers. Students **MUST** use and return the original school-issued charger with the device.

To avoid damaging/losing devices:

- Always carry with two hands and store in bookbags if taking the device home.
- Keep devices on tables or counters, not on the couch or floor where it may be stepped or sat on.
- Close laptop lids when not in use.
- Charge devices in a safe manner so they do not overheat.
- Keep chargers with devices.

HEALTH & SAFETY

ACCIDENTS OR ILLNESS

Your child's safety is our first concern. Should an accident or injury occur during the school day, parents will be contacted immediately.

Should your child become ill during the day, he/she should tell the teacher. Parents will be called if it is determined he/she is too ill to remain at school. The following guidelines for keeping a student home while sick should be followed and monitored by parents in order to maintain the general health of our school. These guidelines are set forth by the Buncombe County Health Center and approved by Buncombe County Schools.

Guidelines for excluding a student from school and school activities:

- Temperature of 100.0 degrees or higher (keep at home until fever-free for 24 hours).
- Rash with fever or behavior change (until seen by a doctor).
- Illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities.
- Difficulty breathing or other signs of serious illness.
- Diarrhea or vomiting (keep at home until diarrhea and/or vomiting has ended for 24 hours).
- Pink eye (until treated by a doctor).
- Strep throat (until treated with antibiotics for 24 hours).
- Head lice (see additional information on Head Lice).
- Scabies (until treatment is complete).
- Chicken Pox (until the sixth day of onset of the rash or sooner if all sores are dried and crusted).
- Flu-like symptoms that include fever (over 100.0), feverishness, cough, sore throat, runny nose, muscle pain, fatigue and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea.
- Impetigo (until treated with antibiotics for 24 hours).

It is imperative that an emergency number be provided on the student data sheet on the first day of school or upon registering. This enables us to reach you in a timely manner. Please make sure that your child knows a phone number to contact you during the school day.

HEALTH SCREENINGS

As a service to the children of Buncombe County, Health Department personnel and school staff execute screenings for various health purposes. Our Health Fair will be held in the fall and will help us complete most of the screenings. Included are a vision screening, hearing test, check of height and weight, and a dental screening (grade levels vary for each screening).

IMMUNIZATIONS

Every individual in North Carolina required to be immunized pursuant to G.S. 130A-152 through 130A-157 shall be immunized against the following diseases by receiving the specified minimum doses of vaccines by the specified ages:

1. diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough – five doses: three doses by age one year and two booster doses, one in the second year of life and the second on or after the fourth birthday and before enrolling in school (K-1) for the first time. Individuals who receive the first booster dose of diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough vaccine on or after the fourth birthday shall not be required to have a second booster.
2. oral poliomyelitis vaccine – three doses of trivalent type by age two years and a booster dose of trivalent type on or after the fourth birthday and before enrolling in school (K-1) for the first time, two doses of enhanced-potency inactivated poliomyelitis vaccine. Individuals who receive the third dose of oral poliomyelitis vaccine on or after the fourth birthday shall not be required to receive a fourth dose.
3. measles (rubella), mumps and rubella vaccine – two doses of live, attenuated vaccine: one dose by age two years and a second dose before enrolling in school (K-1) for the first time.
4. haemophilus influenzae, b, conjugate vaccine – three doses of HbOC or two doses of PRP-OMMP by age one year and a booster dose of any type by the second birthday. Individuals who receive the first dose of Haemophilus influenzae, b, vaccine on or after 12 months of age and before 15 months of age shall be required to have only two doses of HbOC or PRP-OMP. Individuals who after 15 months of age shall be required to have only one dose of any of the haemophilus influenzae

conjugate vaccines, including PRP-D. However, no individual who has passed their fifth birthday shall be required to be vaccinated against Haemophilus influenzae,b.

5. hepatitis B – 3 doses required for children born on or after July 1, 1994.

Exceptions to the immunization requirement will be made only for religious or medical waivers.

LICE CHECKS

In accordance with the health department guidelines, we may routinely screen students for head lice. We urge you to help us by frequently checking your child at home. Children with living head lice will be sent home and must be re-checked before returning to school. Parents must send a note for the child's absences to be excused due to head lice. On the day the child returns, a parent must bring the child to school and remain with them while they are checked and cleared through the office before returning to class. Students cannot ride the bus until they are cleared through the office.

MEDICATION AT SCHOOL

If your child needs to take medicine while at school, please follow these procedures (this procedure applies to BOTH prescription and non-prescription/over-the-counter medications):

- A signed note (by the parent and the physician) giving the time and amount to be given needs to accompany the medicine. The medicine should be kept in the original container.
- Medication must be sent to the office. It will be stored and administered there. Medicine may not remain in the classroom.
- When your child runs out of medicine, you must bring the new prescription into school and sign it in. Under no circumstances may a child hand carry the medicine to school in their book bag.

A copy of the medication form can be obtained from the office. This document can be faxed to our office for your convenience at 232-1316. You are also welcome to come to school and administer medicine to your child. To ensure our students receive medication safely, NO EXCEPTIONS will be made. Medicine sent to school in a manner not in compliance with Board Policy will not be administered.

SCHOOL NURSE

A nurse is at school on a limited basis since he/she serves multiple schools. If you need to conference with him/her, please call the school office and we can send him/her your information.

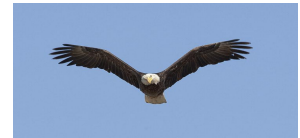
SCHOOL SAFETY & STUDENT CONDUCT

STUDENT CONDUCT

West Buncombe Elementary School believes in the ability of all students to behave in a manner appropriate to both the school setting and to life. Therefore, we hold high expectations regarding student behavior and have as our own expectation that students will succeed in meeting those expectations.

Positive Behavior Interventions & Support (PBIS) is a system for improving student behavior by acknowledging all the positive things that students do on a daily basis. It is used with all students and in all environments in the school. The goal of using PBIS is to create a safe and effective learning environment. We have a PBIS team of teachers, counselors, administrators, and support staff.

West Buncombe SOAR behaviors
Safe, Optimistic, Accountable, and Respectful



Students are taught ways they can SOAR in all areas of the school. See the Matrix on our school website for more detail.

We recognize SOARing behaviors in several ways. Students receive Soaring Eagle tickets from teachers and staff for following the SOAR behaviors. In addition, staff members give out a limited number of SOAR positive referrals each month to outstanding students. Those are announced on the intercom and then the referral is sent home to parents. Students may also be given Eagle Eye stickers for when they are caught meeting expectations in school or on the school bus. We may also announce special students occasionally as Student of the Week or Student of the Month. We love to celebrate when students SOAR!

When students do not meet SOAR expectations, they might receive a referral. Those referrals are defined as minor behaviors and major behaviors.

When a student exhibits a minor behavior, there is an order of steps they will go through. Some minor behaviors include inappropriate language, physical contact, non-compliance, property misuse, disturbing

class, dishonesty or dress code violations. For a minor behavior, the student will be warned first and then the teacher will take additional steps such as moving the student closer to the front or reviewing the school rules. If this does not work, the student will receive a minor referral. The PBIS team will then meet with the teacher to discuss interventions that can be put in place to help that student be successful. Students with minor referrals may miss Fun Friday activities.

When students exhibit major behaviors, they may be sent to the office immediately. Some examples are abusive language, physical aggression, overt defiance, property vandalism, disrupting class, harassment, bullying, possessing a weapon, and stealing. The consequence will depend upon the severity of the behavior. Parents will be notified about major referrals by phone or written report. Students with a major referral will not be able to participate in Fun Friday activities or the PBIS reward day for that grading period (subject to administrator and PBIS team discretion).

Please contact us if you have any questions regarding our positive behavior plan for students.

BULLYING

West Buncombe Elementary is committed to making our school a safe place for all students. Students and staff will treat each other with respect and refrain from remarks or actions that would cause bad or hurt feelings. We will respect each individual's race, gender, physical condition, religion, nationality and language. As a school community, we will refuse to tolerate bullying of any kind at our school. Bullying happens when someone keeps hurting, frightening, threatening, or leaving someone out on purpose. Teachers and staff at WBES will watch for signs of bullying and stop it immediately when it occurs. If your child is a victim of bullying, please contact your child's teacher or the administration. Anyone with knowledge of a situation involving bullying can either report the incident to school officials, or if preferred, may report the situation anonymously by either going to the school's homepage to complete an online form (Click on "Safety & Reporting"). All reported bullying incidents will be investigated. Consequences will be assigned to students for bullying. We want every student to feel safe at school.

STUDENT DRESS

Students are encouraged to wear comfortable clothes, shoes and socks that are conducive to a variety of activities. T-shirts that promote the use of tobacco products or alcohol may not be worn at school. Clothing should not appear to be out of place or cause unnecessary attention. Vulgar words and tasteless messages on clothing are inappropriate. Parents will be called to arrange appropriate dress if a child arrives at school in offensive clothing. No short shorts (they should be fingertip length when standing with arms at sides), halter-tops, spaghetti strap tops or baggy pants. Students should wear shirts that cover their tummies. Shoes should be a type suitable for physical education. Flip flops and sandals should not be worn on PE days. Also be aware that art supplies may get on student clothing. Please make a note of scheduled art and gym days and plan to wear suitable clothing on those days. Stress good health habits and cleanliness. Students should also refrain from wearing strong/offensive perfumes that could create allergy issues for others.

INTERNET SAFETY / MEDIA POLICY

The Internet is a valuable learning resource, and we are pleased that our classrooms are Internet accessible. Buncombe County Schools has a very effective filtering system. We make every effort to monitor student use of the Internet to ensure that materials accessed are appropriate. However, on a global network it is impossible to control all materials. Students, therefore, are given the privilege to use the Internet along with the responsibility of using it properly and only under adult supervision. Students and staff should report any questionable content immediately to the principal so the technology department can address the situation.

SCHOOL SAFETY

To ensure your child's safety we lock all exterior doors of the school. All visitors will need to enter the building at the front bus entrance. The door is equipped with an intercom/doorbell system. (Visitors between 8:00am and 2:00 pm may park in the bus parking area.) We will request your identification as you enter the building. We also ask that adults wear visitor and volunteer badges when in the building, dropping off students in the morning, or on field trips. A school employee will be at the side entrance during morning student drop-off times. Students will travel in pairs when outside their pod area. Our staff continuously evaluates our safety procedures. Please use the LobbyGuard check-in computer system when you visit or volunteer at our school. This machine is user friendly and is located in the front office as you enter the building. It monitors outside visitors and also tracks volunteer hours. Anyone not wearing a visitor badge will be escorted back to the office. You will need your ID to sign out a student.

SAFETY DRILLS

According to state law, schools must conduct monthly fire drills and other school safety drills. All students will be instructed on appropriate actions by classroom teachers/staff. Parents and volunteers must follow the direction of staff members during drills, and if appropriate, exit the building.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

There are several safety procedures being continued this year. Please read this information carefully.

LOCKED EXTERIOR DOORS: ALL exterior doors are locked. Parents and visitors should enter using the main entrance which has a doorbell and video camera. Please do not prop doors open for convenience and do not open doors for others who have not checked in at the office.

LOBBYGUARD CHECK IN SECURITY: ALL parents, visitors and volunteers must check in with the office and complete the LobbyGuard check in security system. It will help with added security in monitoring parents, visitors, and volunteers on campus. Please be prepared for check in by having your identification with you. This system can check the identities of visitors and run background checks to help monitor people visiting our school.

VIDEO MONITORING SYSTEMS: Many areas of the building and school exterior are monitored by video cameras.

VOLUNTEER TRACKER: This is an automated volunteer management program where parents/volunteers will be able to select schools they wish to serve and identify activities they are willing to participate in when volunteering. Volunteers are able to track their time spent in schools. All volunteers must register.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY & DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

School bus transportation is a privilege, not a student right. Students are expected to behave at all times on the bus. This is necessary for the safety and protection of all students. It is extremely important that the home and the school work together to make certain that all children know and follow school bus safety rules. Your child will be instructed by the administration or teachers at school in appropriate school bus safety procedures. Our bus safety rules are designed to be short and simple so all students can remember that:

1. We remain seated while on the bus.
2. We keep our hands, feet, and objects to ourselves.
3. We keep words kind. (No name calling, loud or vulgar talk, and no eating/spitting.)

We request that you constantly reinforce these rules in your daily conversation with your child. In addition to these on-the-bus rules, establish a safe spot where your child shall wait for the bus each morning. Remind them to go directly home after they depart the bus each afternoon. When crossing the road to board the bus, please watch for the bus driver's hand signal to indicate it's safe to cross the road. Watch for the driver signal!

If your child violates the bus rules and is reported by the bus driver, the consequences may be as follows:

1. Warning from bus driver.
2. Warning from administrator and parent notification.
3. Parent notification from administration and bus suspension at the discretion of the principal.
4. 3-Day suspension from bus.
5. Suspension from bus 5 days or more.

In the event your child is guilty of any extreme violation of bus safety rules and/or endangers the lives of others, he/she will be immediately suspended from the bus even if it is his/her first offense. If your child damages a bus in such a manner that you are required to pay for the damage, he/she will be suspended from the bus until the bill is paid. An example of this would be cutting seats or breaking windows or mirrors.

UNLAWFUL ITEMS

Students are not allowed to bring any type of weapon to school. This includes toy weapons such as plastic guns and swords and other items like BB guns, airsoft weapons, and pocket knives. Having a weapon on campus is a criminal offense and the incident must be reported to law enforcement. The school system has to report the unlawful item on campus as a "violent act". Please help us monitor what is brought onto school campus by checking your child's bookbag, pockets and coats/pants periodically.

ATTENDANCE AND PROCEDURES

ABSENCES & ATTENDANCE

The Buncombe County Board of Education believes that regular school attendance is important and directly contributes to the positive achievement of students. While the school and home share the responsibility for promoting regular attendance, the Board of Education maintains that the **primary responsibility for regular attendance lies with the parent and the individual student**. The importance of regular attendance cannot be overemphasized. Good attendance in school establishes a strong work ethic for life! A child should be in school every day that he/she is physically able. It is mandatory that you write an excuse for your child each time he/she is absent and send to the school within several days of the absence. Otherwise, your child's absence will be coded "unexcused". If your child is absent for more than three days, someone from the school may call to check on them. **An accumulation of unexcused absences violates the North Carolina Compulsory School Attendance Laws. Our Family/School Specialist monitors student absences carefully. Excessive absences will cause a student to have to attend Attendance Summer School, Saturday School, or alternate plan for making up missed school days.** Vacation leave, including trips to theme parks, the beach, etc. is an unexcused absence. (See also attendance Summer/ Saturday school section.)

ATTENDANCE SUMMER SCHOOL/SATURDAY SCHOOL

State law requires that we notify parents when a student has three unexcused absences. If your child reaches 10 unexcused absences, you will be notified in writing, and asked to come in for a conference. If a student attends school less than 166 days (misses in excess of 14 days), he/she may be required to attend Attendance Summer School, Saturday School, or an alternative program. **Five unexcused tardies or five unexcused early dismissals or any combination of five unexcused tardies or unexcused early dismissals will count the same as an absence in determining assignment to Attendance Summer School.** Violation of the attendance law and not attending summer school (attendance) could prevent a student from being promoted to the next grade.

An Attendance Program for Elementary Schools will be determined. The schedule and cost of the Attendance program will be sent to parents of students who qualify. There is a mandatory fee that parents are required to pay.

FAMILY SCHOOL SPECIALIST (SOCIAL WORKER)

The family school specialist counsels with students and parents on issues related to school attendance. Excessive absences and tardiness lead to poor academic performance. The Family School Specialist is able to help with extenuating circumstances that may cause students to have difficulties in regular school attendance.

ARRIVAL TO SCHOOL

No student is to arrive at school before 7:15 a.m. Prior to this time there is no staff in place for supervision; therefore, it is your responsibility to provide your child's before school care. Teachers are on duty to supervise students that arrive between 7:15 and 7:30. ALL students should report to the theater if arriving between 7:15 and 7:30. They will be dismissed to their homerooms at 7:30.

TARDINESS

Tardiness causes students to miss important information and are strongly discouraged. All students should arrive at school by 7:45a.m. **Any student arriving at school after the 7:50 a.m. bell shall report to the office for a tardy slip.** Tardiness is marked on your child's record. If your child arrives after 11:15, he/she is counted absent. When a child is tardy more than three times during a grading period, he/she can be denied perfect attendance recognition for that grading period. Five unexcused tardies or five unexcused early dismissals, or any combination of five unexcused tardies or unexcused early dismissals will be equated to one day of absence for the purpose of assigning students to summer attendance school.

EARLY CHECK OUTS

If it is necessary for you to pick up your child during the school day before the first bell at 2:30, please come to the office first to complete early check out procedures at the front desk. **Our office staff will ask for your identification. This procedure is for your child's safety!** Your child will be called to the office to meet you. It is advisable for you to send a note to your child's teacher when you know you will be picking up

a child early. If your child leaves before 11:15, he/she will be counted absent; however, if he/she returns to school and gets in three hours and fifteen minutes of instruction, he/she is counted present. When a child has an early dismissal more than three times during a grading period, he/she will be denied perfect attendance recognition for that grading period. FIVE UNEXCUSED EARLY DISMISSALS SHALL COUNT AS ONE DAY OF ABSENCE FOR ATTENDANCE SUMMER SCHOOL. **Please do not make a habit of picking up a child between 1:45 and 2:30 to avoid getting in the car rider traffic.** When you do this, your child is missing the last minutes of valued class time, final assignments and the important closure of their instructional day. This will not be permitted unless your child has a documented appointment. ALL early sign outs will be monitored and recorded.

TRANSPORTATION CHANGES / DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

It is expected that your child will have a consistent routine for departure home each day. It is very confusing and stressful for an elementary student to be unsure or unclear about how they are going to get home. **Since it is not possible to identify callers, the school does not accept transportation changes over the phone. Sorry, NO EXCEPTIONS.** The safety risk to our students becomes extremely high in this situation. Frequently, a child will argue that they are to go home on the bus, when they are normally a car rider. **If we do not have written communication from a parent your child will go home in the manner they normally go. Do not call, email or text a teacher/staff member with changes.** Teachers may not check messages during instructional time and changes may not be seen.

AFTER SCHOOL CARE

The YMCA provides after school care daily in the gym/cafeteria until 6:00pm. For more information or to register for after school care, please see the YMCA site director in the cafeteria after 2:00 p.m. The YMCA main office phone number is 210-2273.

After school care is also offered by a variety of other daycares that have pick-up service at our school. Please see our website for more information.

TRAFFIC

Please read this section carefully and in its entirety.

Please realize that the car traffic at this school is tremendous. We have safety procedures in place to aid in running the traffic as smoothly as possible, which requires your assistance and cooperation. The one thing that would help matters the very most is to take advantage of the free bus transportation system in place. Your child could probably be home faster riding a bus than fighting the car traffic near campus. Even with staggered schedules, the traffic is a challenge at best. Please follow the guidelines for student pick-up and drop-off. If you absolutely insist on bringing your child or picking them up, please read the following information carefully.

Morning: All cars dropping off students shall enter our campus each morning by way of the drive off Lee's Creek Road. Proceed straight around the parking area to circle to the covered walkway. Let children depart your vehicle adjacent to any section of the sidewalk at the covered walkway. It is important that we unload five or six cars at one time. Please make sure you have already taken care of details like lunch money, notes to the teacher and signing homework prior to getting in the drop off lane. **There is no student drop off in the bus parking lot until after 8am.** PLEASE DO NOT ENTER THE STAFF PARKING LOT BEHIND THE GYM/CAFE. Also, please be courteous to teachers and staff members who are trying to park and enter the building.

Afternoon: All cars shall enter our campus each afternoon using the drive off Lee's Creek Road so that you can circle to the covered walkway. Car riders are dismissed at approximately 2:30. Students **may not be signed out between 2:00-2:30 unless it is an emergency, or the child has a doctor's appointment. This will be monitored very closely.** We do not want you to disturb the last 20 minutes of their instructional day. **You may not come into the lobby or theater in the middle of dismissal and sign out children early that are to be car riders. This has become a tremendous safety issue for our children. If your child is going to be a car rider, you must get in the car rider line.** All car riders shall be picked up no later than 3:00p.m.

DISCRETIONARY TRANSFER/RELEASE POLICY

The Buncombe County Board of Education allows students to be assigned to a school district other than the one in which they live when reasons for reassignment fall within the guidelines of board policy. Parents must complete an application, pay a \$20 processing fee and return it to the school office to request

reassignment for the next school year. This form must first be approved and signed by the principal of both the releasing school and the receiving school. It is the responsibility of the parent to obtain both signatures before submitting the request to the school office. The principal has the right to revoke a previously approved discretionary admission/release form at any time. An example of this would be poor attendance or discipline issues. In this event, the parent will be notified in writing. It is standard policy at WBES to ask for proof of residence upon registration. You may also be asked to provide proof of residence if the student's permanent residence is questionable, or excessive absences and tardiness warrant the request by administration.

WEATHER WATCH

The safety of children is the first concern when deciding if schools must be closed or if there is a delayed opening. Here are some important things to remember.

- The central office/transportation department will attempt to make a decision about a delayed opening or school closing by no later than 6:00 am. If possible, the decision will be made the evening before.
- Tune in to area radio and television stations for the announcement. Please do not call school.
- During the winter months, it is recommended to check local weather daily due to the geographical size and differences within our county.
- Generally, all Buncombe County Schools will be affected by the decision. However, occasionally they will call for no school in one or two districts where weather is most severe. If more than two districts need to be closed due to bad weather, the entire county will close school that day.

**West Buncombe is a part
of the Erwin District.**



- If no announcement is made you may assume that schools will operate on a normal schedule. Weather conditions sometimes worsen during the day after children arrive at school. If early dismissal of schools is necessary, local radio and television stations will make the announcement. Working parents are advised to plan ahead and make special provisions for childcare for those days when schools must be dismissed early.

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY! – EARLY DISMISSALS

There may be occasions during the year when school will be dismissed early due to weather conditions or other problems. Parents will be asked to provide student emergency information to be kept on file for such an event. **If an early dismissal situation arises, we will follow that information unless we receive other directions from you in writing.** The earliest word of an early closing due to weather is usually obtained by radio/TV and we encourage you to tune into your radio/TV if conditions seem to suggest an early closing. Please do not call the school! We need our phone lines to contact bus drivers. We do not hear the announcement any earlier than you do. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding.

**PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER(S) KNOW YOUR INSTRUCTIONS
REGARDING EARLY DISMISSALS.**

Other notes:

- If schools are closed, students do not report.
- If school opening is delayed, buses will start their regular runs at the delayed time. Pick-up times may differ due to ridership.
- If a bus does not cover an ice- or snow-covered road on the morning run, it may not cover that road during the afternoon run. Also, if road conditions deteriorate later in the day, the administrators and bus drivers will determine which roads can be safely traveled in the afternoon.

STUDENT RECORDS

STUDENT INFORMATION

Parents will complete or update a student information sheet for their child at the beginning of school. Please notify the school of any address, telephone, bus or car rider changes that occur during the school year.

It is extremely important that we have up-to-date information and a working number to be able to reach parents at all times in the event of an emergency.

"WHO CAN PICK UP?" FORMS – The office uses this form to verify who is able to pick up your child from school. We will ask for a picture ID in order to verify if the person is allowed to pick up your child. Anyone not listed on the form will not be allowed to sign the student out of school. If circumstances change mid-year, you may come to the main office at any time to make changes to your child's form.

STUDENT RECORDS

The school maintains a cumulative education record on each of its students. This record contains important information such as personal data, a health record, attendance reports, standardized tests results, and subject area grades. It is useful for many reasons: in case of an emergency, to comply with the Compulsory Attendance Law, for course placement, to meet graduation requirements, etc. The following is considered "directory information," and can be made public unless a parent/guardian or eligible student requests that any or all of the information not be released without prior consent: your child's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, dates of school attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous school attended. Your child's education record is confidential and only available to you and to school officials or other agencies with legitimate educational interests. The Buckley Amendment explains your rights regarding your child's school record.

1. The school is not allowed to disseminate data personally identifying your child without your consent.
2. When officials of another school or school system in which your child intends to enroll request a record transfer, the school will make a copy of the record and mail it to the new school. Student records are official documents and are not hand carried by the student or parent to the new school.
3. The school must honor your request to review your child's record within a reasonable time period, but in no case more than 45 days. If you believe the information in your child's record is inaccurate or misleading, you may request it to be amended. The school's refusal to amend the record entitles you to a hearing. If the school agrees with you as a result of the hearing, the school must amend the record accordingly and notify you in writing. However, if the school continues to disagree with you after the hearing, you may place a statement of disagreement in the education record.
4. Access privileges awarded to you are transferred to the student when the student reaches 18 years of age or is attending an institution of post-secondary education.
5. Both divorced parents have access to a student's record unless the courts have denied access to one of the parents.
6. A stepparent does not have access to a student's record without the consent of the natural parent. If legal adoption of the student by the stepparent has occurred, consent of the natural parent can be assumed.
7. The principal may furnish student record information to the courts without parent/guardian or eligible student's consent when required by judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. For instance, attendance records could be useful to an attorney in a child abuse case. However, the parent/guardian or eligible student should be notified by the school in advance of compliance. The parent/guardian or eligible student has the right to review and challenge the student's record prior to compliance.
8. A record of access, provided by an inspection log, must be kept with, but not part of, each student's cumulative record. The record is available only to the record custodian, parent/guardian, eligible student, or federal/state/local official and is maintained as long as educational records are maintained. It is to be completed by non-school personnel, parent/guardian, or eligible student each time a request is made to review the cumulative record.
9. Although access rights transfer from the parent/guardian to the student when the student reaches 18 years of age or attends an institution of post-secondary education, it is permissible to allow the parent/guardian to continue access privileges if the student is not available and requests student information.



BUNCOMBE COUNTY SCHOOLS DISTRICT POLICIES AND PUBLIC NOTICES

Some BCS district policies are referenced in this handbook for your convenience. Please review Policy 1310/4002 – Parental Involvement located on the BCS website. This policy reviews the parental notifications that building principals are required to share annually. If you would like to view any of the policies, you may access them at the following direct link: <https://www.buncombeschools.org/o/bcs/page/district-policies>.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

It is the School District's policy not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, age, genetic information or veteran's status in its educational programs, activities or employment policies. For inquiries or complaints or to request a copy of the School District's grievance procedures, please contact:

Shane Cassida/Kimberly Fisher
Title IX Coordinator or 504/ADA Coordinator
175 Bingham Road
Asheville, NC 28806
(828)255-5918

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (IDEA)

Pursuant to the IDEA, a federal law, the School District must provide special education services to all children residing in the school district who are between the ages of three (3) and twenty-one (21) who have been diagnosed with or are suspected to have mental, physical or emotional disabilities and who are unable to benefit from a regular school program without special assistance. If your child or a child you know may qualify for such special assistance, please contact:

Amy Dupree
Exceptional Children's Director
175 Bingham Road
Asheville, NC 28806
(828) 255-5971

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS and PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"), a federal law, gives parents and students over eighteen (18) years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights can be found on the Buncombe County Schools website under 2023-2024 ANNUAL PUBLIC NOTICES or at <https://www.buncombeschools.org/page/annual-public-notice-ferpa>. If you wish to restrict the disclosure of your student's directory information, the Opt-Out letter is included on the last page of the Annual Public Notices.

MEDIA/LIKENESS RELEASE

Buncombe County Schools does not require parent permission for students to be photographed, and/or interviewed by system employees or media on routine school topics, activities for public information, awards and honors, instructional and/or promotional purposes. Parents or guardians may request not to be photographed, videotaped and/or interviewed by notifying the school in writing with ten (10) days of publication of this policy in the handbook or by the 10th day of school. Please note that this restriction applies to inclusion in the school yearbook.

GANG RELATED ACTIVITY

Buncombe County Schools defines a "gang" as any ongoing alliance or association of three or more individuals, formal or informal, having as one of its primary activities the commission of criminal acts or purposeful violation of school policy. Inherent to the gang's structure is a common set of identifying traits including names, signs, colors, and symbols.

The following conduct or activity is prohibited and subject to consequences ranging from an initial warning accompanied by parent contact to assigned periods of short-term suspension to administrative recommendation for long-term suspension:

- 1) Displaying, possessing or distributing any clothing, jewelry, emblem, visible body marking, or literature that communicates or symbolizes affiliation with a gang.
- 2) Communicating gang affiliation through either verbal or non-verbal methods including, but not limited to, hand gestures, drawing, and electronic texting.
- 3) Tagging school or personal property with gang related symbols.
- 4) Harassment, intimidation, or solicitation directed toward a student or staff member relative to gang activity.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

If you have a concern regarding matters pertaining to your child, we ask that you follow the steps listed below. This will ensure that all parties involved have an opportunity to help resolve the situation. First, talk to your child's classroom teacher about any problems your child is having in the classroom. If the problem is not resolved, ask for a conference with the teacher, or teachers involved, and a principal. Together we will create a plan to address the problem. If the problem persists, contact the Buncombe County Schools Superintendent's office: 255-5921 or see policy code: 1740/4010.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES - PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Policy Code: 4240/7312

N.C. law requires that local county departments of Social Work Services ensure children's safety in their homes. A child protective services investigative assessment determines whether abuse or neglect has occurred and whether other services may be needed to help the family. This agency has the right to question your child in private without your permission. We are not required to notify parents when this occurs.

LEGAL ISSUES

In order for the school to acknowledge custody of a child, legal custody papers must be on file in the school office. Please send these papers within the first week of school or as a situation creates a change. According to the law a school cannot deny a natural parent the right to pick up his/her child from school. **If your child's situation is different, it is your responsibility to send a copy of the custody papers to school.** If there are other concerns with regard to your child's safety, the office and your child's homeroom teacher should be informed so that the child's records can be flagged.

TOBACCO FREE SCHOOLS

As per Buncombe County Board Policy 7250/5026 and to comply with state and federal law, the board adopted a tobacco-free policy that prohibits smoking and the use of tobacco products on all school grounds and at school events. For the purposes of this policy, the term "tobacco product" means any product that contains or is made or derived from tobacco and is intended for human consumption, including electronic cigarettes and all lighted and smokeless tobacco products.

TITLE I - PARENTS RIGHT-TO-KNOW

To: All Parents
From: West Buncombe Elementary
Date: August 1, 2023
Re: Parents Right-to-Know Letter and Notification

As a parent of a student at West Buncombe Elementary and part of our beginning of each school year notification, you have the right to know about the (1) professional qualifications and licensing criteria of the teachers who instruct your child, (2) information regarding student participation in mandatory State or local testing and affiliated policies, (3) language instruction and English learner identification protocols and services, and our assurance, that such information will occur in an understandable language and accessible format. This is a requirement for all public school units (PSUs) that receive Title I funds and allows you to request such information and receive a response in a timely manner. Below are additional details about the Parents Right-To Know information.

(1) Professional Qualifications and Licensing Criteria of Teachers

- a. West Buncombe Elementary School informs parents that they have the right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of their student's classroom teachers, and our response will occur in a timely manner, including the following information and whether the student's teacher—
 - i. has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction,
 - ii. is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived, and
 - iii. is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.
- b. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.
- c. Information on the level of achievement and academic growth of the student, if applicable and available, on each of the State academic assessments required; and
- d. Timely notice that your child has been taught for 4 or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet applicable State certification or licensure requirements at the assigned grade level and subject area.

(2) Testing Transparency and Information, Student Participation in Mandatory State or Local Testing, and Affiliated Policies

- a. Parents may request and receive a response in a timely manner, information regarding any State or local school policy regarding student participation in any assessments mandated and affiliated procedures, or parental right to opt the child out of such assessment, where applicable.
- b. West Buncombe Elementary School shall make widely available through public means and notice, including by posting in a clear and accessible manner on our website each grade served with information on each assessment as required by the State and locally, to comply where such information is available and feasible to report, including—
 - i. the subject matter assessed,
 - ii. the purpose for which the assessment is designed and used,
 - iii. the source of the requirement for the assessment, and
 - iv. where such information is available—
 1. the amount of time students will spend taking the assessment and the schedule for the assessment; and
 2. the time and format for disseminating results.

(3) Language Instruction and English Learner Identification Protocols and Services

- a. Not later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year, West Buncombe Elementary School will inform parents of an English learner identified for participation in such a program with the following information—

- i. the reasons for the identification of their child as an English learner and in need of placement in a language instruction educational program,
- ii. the child’s level of English proficiency, how such level was assessed, and the status of the child’s academic achievement,
- iii. the methods of instruction used in the program in which their child is, or will be, participating and the methods of instruction used in other available programs, including how such programs differ in content, instructional goals, and the use of English and a native language in instruction,
- iv. how the program in which their child is, or will be, participating will meet the educational strengths and needs of their child,
- v. how such a program will specifically help their child learn English and meet academic achievement standards for grade promotion and graduation,
- vi. the specific exit requirements for the program, including the expected rate of transition from such program into classrooms that are not tailored for English learners and the expected rate of graduation from high school,
- vii. in the case of a child with a disability, how such programs and services meet the objectives of the individualized education program of the child, and
- viii. information pertaining to parental rights that includes written guidance
 - 1. detailing the right that parents have to have their child immediately removed from such program upon their request,
 - 2. detailing the options that parents have to decline to enroll their child in such a program or to choose another program or method of instruction, if available, and,
 - 3. assist parents in selecting various programs and methods of instruction if more than 1 program/method is offered.
- b. Special Rule During the School Year—For those children identified as English learners during the current school year, West Buncombe Elementary School shall notify the children’s parents during the first 2 weeks of the child being placed in a language instruction educational program.
- c. Parent Participation—West Buncombe Elementary School shall implement an effective means of outreach to parents of English learners to inform such parents—
 - i. how they can be involved in the education of their children; and
 - ii. be active participants in assisting their children to—
 - 1. attain English proficiency,
 - 2. achieve high levels within a well-rounded education; and meet the challenging State academic standards expected of all students.
 - iii. West Buncombe Elementary School is committed to implementing an effective means of outreach to parents, which includes holding and sending notice of opportunities for regular meetings to formulate and respond to recommendations from parents of English Learners.

Please contact Brad Johnson at 828-232-4282 or bradley.johnson@bcsemail.org if you have additional requests, questions, or would like to receive more about this information. Thank you.

TITLE I FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

The Title I Staff and Faculty at West Buncombe Elementary School believe the education of each child is a partnership between parents, the child, and the school. Each partner needs to do their part to ensure the success of the children. The duties of each partner are explained in the Student/Parent/School Compact.

We believe the involvement and education of our parents enhance the effectiveness of our program. Research shows parents involved in their children's education, creates a highly successful student. Therefore, we will provide opportunities through workshops and conferences to keep all parents informed and involved.

Goals for WBES Title I:

- Establishing effective two-way communication with all parents.
- Developing strategies and programs which enable parents to participate actively in their child’s education.
- Providing support and coordination for school staff and parents to implement and sustain appropriate parent involvement at all grade levels.
- Utilizing community resources to enrich the educational environment and promote family and student success.
- Supporting parents in their roles as the child’s first and most important teacher

The overall ambition of West Buncombe Elementary School’s Title I program is to promote partnerships that will increase family involvement and participation in fostering the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.

TITLE I WBES FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PLAN 2023-2024

West Buncombe Elementary strives to create a working relationship between staff, community and parents to better our children’s educational process. Our school will involve parents in creating policies, plans, SIT decisions, etc. We look forward to inviting our parents to our school throughout the year to advise them of the happenings in our school and to do workshops to help parents understand what their children are learning in their classroom.

Engagement activities (Dates and times subject to change) scheduled throughout the year are listed below. More information will be provided as events get closer.

Date/Time	Event	Audience
August 25, 2023 8:00-9:30 am	Meet Your Teacher Kindergarten - 8:00am presentation All other grades - Drop In	All WBES students/families
September 25-29, 2023	Book Fair	All WBES students/families
September 26, 2023 5:00pm – 6:30pm	Title I Annual Meeting Open House	All WBES students/families
October 24, 2023 6:00-7:00 pm	Cookies for Kindergarten	Kindergarten Families
November 8, 2023 9:00-11:00 am	Grandparents/Parents Day Focus on Fluency	Third Grade Families
November 2023 February - April, 2024	Kindergarten Tours	Rising Kindergarten Families
December 2023	Music Presentation Connect to Fluency	Grade Levels performing concerts
December 13, 2023	Games Galore and Reading More (book give away!)	WBES Title I Families
January 18, 2024 5:00-6:30 pm	A Day in the Life of a Second Grader	2nd grade families
February 18, 2024 Lunchtime	First Grade Lunch and Learn	1st Grade families
March 2024	International Family Night	All WBES families
April 16, 2024	EOG information session	3rd and 4th grade families
April 2024	Kindergarten Registration	Rising Kindergarten Families
April 2024	Book Fair	All WBES families
May 8, 2024 8:30-10:00 am	Title I Celebration/Breakfast Book Giveaway	Title I students and families (K-4)