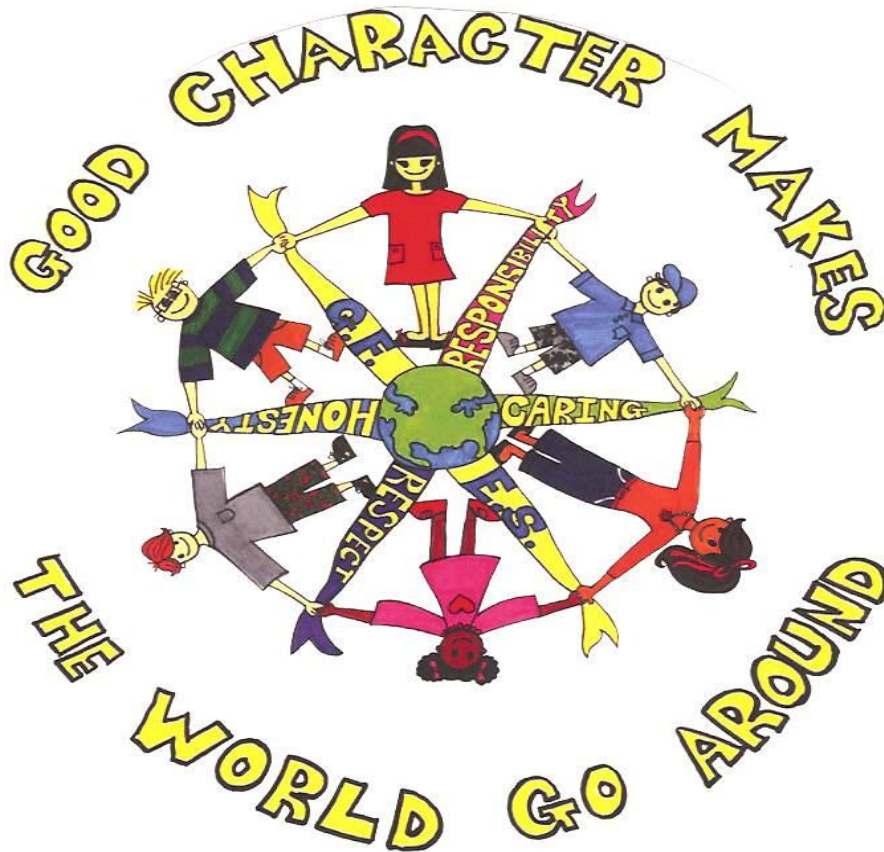


# Great Falls Elementary School

2008-2009

## Parent Handbook



**Great Falls Elementary School, 701 Walker Road, Great Falls, VA 22066**

School Office Telephone 703-757-2100  
Fax Line 703-757-2197  
Attendance Line 703-757-2111 (24 hour answering machine)  
Clinic Telephone 703-757-2110  
Cafeteria Telephone 703-757-2121

Please call the hot line for weather/emergency messages

FCPS Hot Line 1-800-839-FCPS (3277)

Transportation Office 703-249-7100

Transportation Emergency 703-446-2000 (until \*5:00 p.m.)

\*In event of a transportation emergency after 5:00 p.m. call:

Office of Safety and Security 703-764-2400



**GREAT FALLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK**

The information contained in this handbook will answer many questions concerning school policies. Parents will be notified of changes as they occur in the school newsletter. Please keep this handbook for later reference or go to the website. All policies and regulations of the school are made with consideration for students' safety and/or preservation of instructional time.

If you have a question about the school, procedures or student programs, please go to the proper source for an answer. The classroom teacher is the first source of information about your child's academic achievement and social adjustment. The office staff and principal make every effort to answer your questions and to address your concerns.

**INDEX-AT-A-GLANCE**

STATEMENT OF MISSION.....4  
FAIRFAX COUNTY ORGANIZATION.....4  
FCPS SCHOOL CALENDAR.....5

**GREAT FALLS ELEMENTARY ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES**

SCHOOL HOURS.....6  
ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES.....6  
    ABSENCE.....6  
    TARDY STUDENTS.....6  
    RELEASE FROM SCHOOL BEFORE END OF INSTRUCTIONAL DAY.....6  
**EMERGENCY CLOSING AND DELAYED OPENING OF SCHOOL.....7**  
EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS TO PARENTS.....8  
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS.....8  
    STUDENTS.....8  
    PARENTS.....8  
    SECURITY.....9  
ALCOHOL AND DRUGS.....9  
ASSEMBLIES.....9  
CAFETERIA RULES AND ROUTINES.....9  
    LUNCH OPTIONS.....9  
COMMUNICATION.....10  
    CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.....10  
    INTERIM REPORTS.....10  
    PROGRESS REPORTS.....10  
    KEEP IN TOUCH.....10  
    FCPS 24-7 LEARNING (Blackboard).....10  
    PARENT ACCOUNT FOR 24-7.....10  
    WECARE@SCHOOL.....11  
    SCHOOL NEWSLETTERS.....11  
    TUESDAY PACKETS.....11  
    CONFERENCES, PARENT/TEACHER.....11  
COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES.....12  
DRESS AND APPEARANCE.....12  
EMERGENCY CARE FORMS.....12  
FEES.....13  
FORGOTTEN ITEMS BROUGHT TO SCHOOL.....13  
FUND RAISING AND CHARITY CAUSES.....13  
GIFT GIVING.....13  
HOMEWORK.....13  
    HOMEWORK REQUESTS FOR ABSENT STUDENTS.....14  
    FORGOTTEN HOMEWORK.....14

MEDICAL INFORMATION.....	14
ILLNESS OR INJURY DURING SCHOOL .....	14
IMMUNIZATIONS.....	15
PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS.....	16
MEDICINE.....	16
LOST AND FOUND.....	17
PARTIES.....	17
CLASSROOM.....	17
STUDENT BIRTHDAYS.....	17
PETS.....	17
PTA (PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION).....	18
RECESS.....	18
RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS.....	18
BEHAVIOR.....	18
CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM.....	18
SAFETY PATROLS.....	19
SCA (STUDENT COUNCIL ASSOCIATION).....	19
SCHOOL PICTURES.....	19
SCHOOL EDUCATION OFFICER PROGRAM.....	19
STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS AND REFERRALS.....	19
STUDENT RECORDS.....	20
TELEPHONE USAGE.....	20
TEXTBOOKS.....	20
TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM SCHOOL	
SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION.....	20
SCHOOL BUS BEHAVIOR.....	21
CAR RIDERS - KISS & RIDE.....	21
BICYCLE RIDERS.....	21
CHANGE OF TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (Going Home With A Friend).....	21
VANDALISM.....	22
VISITING GREAT FALLS ELEMENTARY.....	22
SIGN IN AT THE OFFICE.....	22
PROTECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL TIME.....	22
VOLUNTEER PROGRAM.....	22
ROOM PARENTS.....	23
WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL.....	23

### **INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY.....	24
COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE PROGRAM.....	24
FIELD TRIPS.....	24
GENERAL MUSIC PROGRAM.....	24
GIFTED/TALENTED PROGRAM.....	24
HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION.....	25
JAPANESE LANGUAGE PARTIAL IMMERSION .....	25
LEARNING DISABILITIES RESOURCE PROGRAM.....	24
LIBRARY .....	25
PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM .....	25
PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES.....	26
READING PROGRAM.....	26
SPECIAL EDUCATION .....	26
SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PROGRAM.....	26
SOCIAL WORK SERVICES .....	27

# STATEMENT OF MISSION

Fairfax County Public Schools, a world-class school system, inspires, enables, and empowers students to meet high academic standards, lead ethical lives, and demonstrate responsible citizenship.

## FAIRFAX COUNTY ORGANIZATION

### **SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION**

The principal at Great Falls Elementary, Ernest Leighty, is the head of a staff and faculty of some 75 full and part-time personnel who serve the nearly 600 children currently registered at the school. The Assistant Principal is Mrs. Barbara DeHart.

### **CLUSTER 1 INFORMATION**

There are 8 clusters under Dr. Dale. Great Falls is in Cluster 1 – Audra Sydnor is the Assistant Superintendent.

**In this decentralized system, the cluster administration is the arm of the Division Superintendent at the local level. The eight cluster design decentralizes the chain of command by giving cluster directors the authority to execute decision for their cluster schools. This will allow the school system to operate more efficiently and be more responsive to individual schools, students, and parents.**

### **SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

The Division Superintendent, Dr. Jack D. Dale, is hired by the School Board. The Superintendent is the full-time executive officer of the School Board. His immediate staff includes assistant superintendents for instruction, administration, and support services

### **SCHOOL BOARD**

Twelve Fairfax County community members are elected to the school board. One representative is elected for each of the nine magisterial districts and three representatives are elected “at large” members. One non-voting student representative on the school board is selected by the student advisory committee. The primary function of the School Board is to develop policies to guide operation of the school program. These policies, as well as regulations and notices, are placed in the “Blue Books.” The school office maintains updated copies of the “Blue Book” for inspection by the public. The “Blue Book” is also available online: fcps.edu (under Policies, Notices and Regulations), and is also available in any Fairfax County Public Library.

### **BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Since 1968 Fairfax County has utilized the Urban County Executive form of government. The powers of local government are vested in an elected Board of Supervisors - one member from each of the eight magisterial (electoral) districts, plus a chairman elected at large. Great Falls is in the Dranesville District. The Supervisors appropriate annual sums from the county budget to fund the public school system.

## Calendars



September 2, 2008	School Begins
October 13	Columbus Day Holiday
October 31	First Grading Period Ends*+
November 3 - 4	Student Holidays
November 26	Students Released Two Hours Early ( <a href="#">Guidelines for Early Release</a> )
November 27 - 28	Thanksgiving Holidays
December 24 - January 2, 2009	Winter Vacation
January 19	Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday Holiday
January 20	Inauguration Day Holiday
January 23	Second Grading Period Ends*+
January 26 - 27	Student Holiday
February 16	George Washington's Birthday - President's Day Holiday#
April 2	Third Grading Period Ends*+
April 3	Student Holiday
April 6 - 10	Spring Vacation
May 25	Memorial Day Holiday
June 15	Graduation On or After This Date*
June 18	Last Day of School*+ #N

The guidelines for determining the Standard School Year Calendar are outlined in [Regulation 1344](#) (PDF format).

* Schools are open.	<b>Makeup Day Schedule</b>	
+ Report cards are provided to parents at the end of each grading period and at the end of the school year.	<b>Days Missed</b>	<b>Makeup Days</b>
# Date subject to change if more than three school days are lost because of inclement weather.	1	No makeup required
N Early release on the last official day of school.	2	No makeup required
	3	No makeup required
	4	Feb. 16
	5	April 3
	6	Will not be made up
	7	June 19
	8	Will not be made up
	9	June 22
	10	Will not be made up
5		

## SCHOOL HOURS

### Kindergarten

A.M. Session

P.M. Session

### Monday

\*8:25 - 10:30

10:30 - 12:35

### Tuesday - Friday

\*8:25 - 11:45

11:45 - 3:05

### Grades 1-6

### Monday

\*8:25 A.M.- 12:35 P.M.

### Tuesday - Friday

\*8:25 A.M. - 3:05 P.M.

8:00 a.m. - is the earliest students may enter the school building. Students will report to the cafeteria for adult supervision.

8:20 a.m. - 5 minute warning bell.

**\*8:25 a.m. - the school day officially begins.** Students not in their classrooms at this time are considered tardy, and must report to the office to sign in before proceeding to their classroom.

## ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES



### ABSENCE

Every pupil must attend school punctually. School Board regulations authorize the principal to require a satisfactory explanation from the parent or guardian for the absence of a pupil for all or any part of the school day. Please call the school attendance line 703-757-2111 by 9:00 a.m. every day your child will be absent or tardy for any reason. For your convenience, the answering machine is available for leaving messages after hours and on weekends. Failure to notify the school of your child's absence will result as 'unexcused absence' on your child's report card.

This is done for the safety of your child and to assure parents that their children have been accounted for daily. During your child's formative elementary school years, including kindergarten, it is important that regular school attendance be encouraged and practiced. PLEASE DO NOT PLAN VACATIONS DURING SCHEDULED INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS. Regular attendance includes arriving at school before classes begin.

If you would like to obtain homework from the teacher, contact the school before 9 a.m. so that work can be collected and sent to the office for you to pick up after school. If you would like the homework sent home with a sibling or friend, state this child's name and teacher name. Homework is not provided ahead of time for children who are being pulled out of school for family vacations.



### TARDY STUDENTS

Any student arriving late must report to the office and be accompanied by a parent. The student will be given a tardy form which must be presented to the classroom teacher. For safety and security, parents of tardy students are required to walk their children to their classroom door. Late arrivals mean disruptions to the classroom and embarrassment for the late student. Please make every effort to get your child to school on time.



### RELEASE FROM SCHOOL BEFORE THE END OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL DAY

- Please send a Change of Transportation Form to school the day you will need early dismissal for your child.
- Parents must come into the office and sign out their child/ren and put on a visitor badge. Please do not go directly to the classroom.
- The office assistant will call the teacher to notify him/her you (or authorized person) are here to pick up your child.
- Parent will meet their child outside the classroom door. This procedure is followed to prevent further disruption to the class, and for the safety and security of the student. Students are not permitted to sit in the office or lobby to wait for whoever is picking them up.

Students are not released during the school day to anyone not on the students Emergency Care Form, or to any person not authorized in writing to assume responsibility for them. Students shall be released only on request and authorization of parents or guardians. In the event parents send another person to pick up their child at school during school hours, a written note must be signed by the parents. Students may be released to either parent unless a custody order from the court names one to have custody.

---

**EMERGENCY CLOSING and DELAYED OPENING OF SCHOOL**

There are times when schools open late or close early due to heat conditions or inclement weather. School closings and delayed openings are usually announced by 6:00 a.m. Early closings are announced between 10:30 a.m. and noon. All children should know the family's plan for emergencies.

---

**5. EMERGENCY CLOSING SCHEDULE**

**GRADES 1 - 6**

**Tuesday – Friday Schedule**

**LATE OPENING**

Two Hour Late Opening 10:25 a.m. – 3:05 p.m.

**EARLY CLOSING**

Two Hour Early Closing 8:25 a.m. – 1:05 p.m.

**Monday Schedule**

**LATE OPENING**

Two Hour Late Opening 10:25 a.m. – 3:05 p.m.

**EARLY CLOSING**

Two Hours Early Closing 8:25 a.m. – 1:05 p.m.

**A.M. KINDERGARTEN**

**2 HOUR LATE OPENING**

***Tuesday – Friday***

10:25 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

***Monday***

10:25 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

**EARLY CLOSING -Tuesday - Friday**

8:25 a.m. – 1:05 p.m.

**EARLY CLOSING - Monday**

8:25 a.m. – \* 1:05 p.m.

\* In the event of a two hour early closing, kindergarten students will remain at school until 1:05 p.m. They will receive a complementary school lunch in our cafeteria. Students who rode buses to school in the morning will be bused home with other students without special kindergarten bus stops.

**P.M. KINDERGARTEN**

**2 HOUR LATE OPENING**

***Tuesday – Friday***

12:45 a.m. – 3:05 p.m.

***Monday***

12:45 a.m. – 3:05 p.m.

**EARLY CLOSING -Tuesday - Friday**

\*P.M. classes are cancelled

**EARLY CLOSING - Monday**

\*P.M. classes are cancelled

\*Makeup of cancelled kindergarten classes is required if schools cannot meet the 180-day state attendance requirement.

***EMERGENCY CLOSING OF SCHOOLS—LISTEN TO YOUR RADIO/TV***

**Do not call the school for early closing times.**

**In event of early school closing, please follow this Emergency Closing Schedule. The school telephone lines need to remain open for emergency messages.**

## **EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS TO PARENTS**

### **Please do not call the school for Emergency Closing Information.**

Emergency school closings, late openings and early closings are usually called because of extremely hot weather in the early fall as well as snow or ice during the winter. Occasionally, it is necessary to close one or more schools because of heating failure or some other emergency condition such as loss of school-wide power. All day closings due to bad weather, as well as late openings, are announced on local radio stations beginning at 6:00 a.m. Early closings are announced by 11:00 a.m. When there is no announcement, schools operate on schedule. **PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE SCHOOL.** We obtain information in the same way that you do. In every case of a scheduled change, the news will be carried by approx. 35 news and television stations, which are notified as soon as a decision is made. Our school telephone lines need to remain open. Announcements to parents are made via:

- Hot Line- call 800-839-FCPS (3277)
- Sign up to **Keep in Touch** at <http://www.fcps.edu> for emergency related information to be sent directly to any e-mail address.
- **FCPS website:** [www.fcps.edu](http://www.fcps.edu) (Click on Emergency Announcements)
- FCPS Cable TV channels 21 and 25 (Messages are carried on public access channels via Comcast, Cox, and Verizon)
- Listen to your radio
- Watch your local news channel

Please plan ahead make sure your child knows what to do in event school closes early and you may not be home. Great Falls Elementary School does not notify individual parents of emergency schedule changes.

### **Cancellation of After-School Activities**

When school closes early, all after school activities are cancelled. Students are directed to go home in their usual manner. Please note the school does not notify individual parents about these changes.

Fairfax County Recreation Athletic Services has a **hotline number** for use when inclement weather causes cancellations. The number is **703-324-5264**.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**



### **STUDENT EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

FCPS has taken steps to ensure your child's safety while in school. Students and staff practice emergency drills throughout the school year in preparation for situations that may arise during the school day. Drills include monthly fire drills, one tornado drill and one lockdown drill.



### **PARENT EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

Parents are asked not to call the school in emergency situations so phone lines can remain accessible for handling the specific situation. Parents will be kept informed via the [FCPS emergency messaging system](#). Please use the emergency communication systems referenced above.

Parents are encouraged to become familiar with emergency response terminology:

**Lockdown** – lockdown is used to describe enhanced security measures taken to protect against potentially violent intruders who have entered the school.

**Secure the Building** - Used if the threat is outside the building (example, a robbery near the school). Outside activities are cancelled; all exterior doors are secured while staff members and students are free to move about inside the building.

**Shelter-in-Place** – Procedures used to temporarily separate people from hazardous outdoor atmosphere, such as a hazmat incident. No one is allowed to enter the school until public safety officials give the “all clear.”

**Stay Put, Stay Tuned** – implemented at the request of public safety officials to limit the impact on the transportation infrastructure. Normal end-of-day release will not occur until authorized by public safety officials. Parents are allowed to “check out” their students from school.

Please visit the Fairfax County Public Schools website: **Emergency Preparedness and Support Frequently Asked Questions:** <http://www.fcps.edu/emergencyplan/faq.htm#pickup>



## SECURITY

All students, staff members, and parents must work together to provide a safe and secure environment. The following procedures and guidelines have been established to strengthen security within the school.

- ◆ Students are to be accompanied by another student or adult while in the building or on school grounds.
- ◆ Students are never to be alone in rooms inside the building.
- ◆ Students are not to be in *Adults Only* locations.
- ◆ Classrooms are locked whenever a staff member is not in the room.
- ◆ Classrooms are unlocked in the morning by classroom teachers.
- ◆ Classrooms are locked by the classroom teacher at the end of each day or by 4:30 p.m. every afternoon.

Parents and community members are to enter and exit the building only through the front or back lobby doors and must sign in at the office and receive a badge.

## ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

The Great Falls School grounds and building are designated as drug and alcohol free. County policy indicates that any student buying/selling/giving drugs or alcohol or anything identified as a drug or alcoholic beverage to any other student may be expelled from school. This includes elementary school students. Strict alcohol/drug regulations are enforced with all employees.

Additionally, at Great Falls Elementary School, it is expected that **parents and other adult visitors observe the fact that the school is** a drug/alcohol free zone. If an individual is under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, he/she is requested not to enter the school or grounds. This includes participation in evening activities as well as daytime programs or volunteering.

## ASSEMBLIES

Cultural arts assemblies are planned and presented for students throughout the year. Some performances are professional and some are presented by the students and staff of Great Falls. All of our professional assemblies are funded through money from our PTA.

## CAFETERIA RULES AND ROUTINES

All students in grades 1-6 eat their lunch in the cafeteria. In order to serve lunch to this large number of children between 10:30 and 1:30 daily, certain rules and procedures must be followed. The size of the cafeteria limits seating. Schedules permit a 30-minute period. *While supervision is provided by a paid aide referred to as the cafeteria hostess, students are expected to behave in accordance with FCPS Students Rights and Responsibilities.*



## LUNCH OPTIONS

There are three convenient methods of providing lunch for your child:

1. Send a check made out to Great Falls Food and Nutrition Services for a designated amount. Information on the check must include your child's name and homeroom number.
2. Cash may be brought to the food service manager's office or students may pay cash on a daily basis.
3. Online using [www.myLunchMoney.com](http://www.myLunchMoney.com) There is a small convenience fee. Once the account is open, parents may check the fund account at anytime.

All students must have a lunch. Students may bring one from home or purchase lunch at school. When money is put into a child's lunch account, it is transferred to his/her lunch card. At Great Falls each child is encouraged to purchase and maintain a lunch card. This lunch card is a pre-pay way of providing lunch money for each child every day.

A variety of food items are offered each day. A regular lunch (meat, fruit or vegetable, dessert, milk), slices of pizza, pretzels, desserts, etc. are offered and may be purchased instead of, or in addition to, the regular lunch. Menus listing specific daily choices are sent home each month. The monthly lunch menu is also available on the FCPS website. The cost of a student lunch is published each year. Remember that the first lunch a student purchases is provided at a subsidized price. Additional meals or a la carte items will cost more. It is recommended that all children maintain a lunch card with five extra lunches for emergency situations.

## **COMMUNICATION:**

### **CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

Please be assured that any confidential information you share with school personnel will be held in strictest confidence.

Additionally, please consider the following:

**If you do not want your phone number given to the PTA to be included in a class directory, etc., please indicate on the form provided by the PTA and return it to the front office.**

**In the school, there are many opportunities for children to be photographed for newspaper or magazine articles, to be interviewed by television news personnel, or to be videotaped for out-of-school presentation. Be assured that occurrences are handled with care and quality control; however, if you do not want your child included in these activities, please notify the principal in writing.**

### **INTERIM REPORTS**

An interim report will be sent home at the middle of the grading period when:

- there has been significant growth following a report or conference in which a need has been indicated, and/or
- the student's academic performance or behavior indicates a need for action by the parent. A conference may follow this interim report.

Interim reports may also be sent at any time during each quarter.

### **PROGRESS REPORTS**

In accordance with Fairfax County Public Schools policy, grades 1-6 student progress reports are issued four times a year at nine-week intervals. A parent-teacher conference is required at the end of the first nine weeks. Others may be scheduled as needed.

Kindergarten progress reports are issued at the end of the second, third, and fourth marking periods.

Progress reports' grades should not come as a surprise to parents or students. Because the teacher sends work home on a regular basis and conferences periodically with each child and parent, all parties involved will remain informed as to progress.

### **KEEP IN TOUCH**

To effectively communicate important information to parents and community members, in addition to the school website, FCPS has developed an email program called "Keep in Touch."

The program is voluntary, and once you have signed up, you will be notified via your computer of the specific types of information you would like to receive, such as emergency notices, late openings and early school closings, class activities, current events at the school and county level, and so on. Parents can sign up online via the Fairfax County School website: [www.fcps.edu](http://www.fcps.edu)

How do I update my Keep in Touch contact information? **Families have 2 options:**

1. Fill out or update your child's emergency care information form and return it to the school.
2. Update your child's emergency care contact information via **weCare@School** (you must have a Parent View account). **For assistance with Parent View, please contact 1-866-434-8880.**

### **FCPS 24-7 LEARNING** (Blackboard)

24-7 Learning is the online resource that allows Fairfax County Public Schools students to extend learning beyond the traditional school day and beyond school facilities. Students and parents are invited to use FCPS 24-7 Learning to access homework and classroom assignments, view class calendars, explore links to enrichment activities, and much more.

### **PARENT ACCOUNT:** Parents can create their own account for FCPS 24-7. This is called a Parent View account. Registry site: <http://www.fcps.edu/kit/parentview.pdf>

After registering and having their account validated at one of their children's schools, parents will have their own username and password to access all of their children's active courses, and will be able to update their children's

emergency information through weCare@school. Updating weCare with the correct email address will ensure better communication via Keep in Touch.

*Before creating a parent account, please be sure to have the student ID numbers for your children available. You can find the FCPS student ID number on report cards and student class schedules.*



### **WECARE@SCHOOL**

weCare@school (weCare) is a wireless emergency care information service for schools. Parents will have the ability to update their child's emergency care information online. To gain access to wecare@school, parents must have their own account in FCPS24/7 (Blackboard).

weCare is geared toward three groups of end-users, parents, student database operators, and first responders to emergency situations.

- 1) The parent accesses and updates their child(ren)'s emergency care information using this web-based application
- 2) An e-mail from weCare is sent to the parent as confirmation of their submission
- 3) The Student Database Operator at the school accesses the information and confirms it
- 4) An e-mail is sent to the parent as confirmation of the update
- 5) The information verified by the Student Database Operator updates the Student Information Database(s)
- 6) The information is made available to the 1st responders to emergency situations using a handheld device

The paper version of the emergency care form will still be available for parents who choose to use this method. Parents will only need to update their child's emergency information online using weCare *or* use the standard paper version. It will not be necessary to complete both.



### **SCHOOL NEWSLETTERS**

In an effort to continually communicate school news to the community, the following forms of newsletters will be sent to you:

- (1) Class News - Your child's teacher will send you a monthly or quarterly newsletter describing individual class plans/activities. These newsletters are written by the teacher and students.
- (2) School/PTA Newsletter - Will be sent home once a month in the Tuesday Packet. It will also be available online.
- (4) Familygram, a Fairfax County School Board publication, is sent home periodically throughout the school year. It is also available online at the FCPS website: [www.fcps.edu](http://www.fcps.edu)



### **TUESDAY PACKETS**

Although many learning experiences do not culminate in a written product, teachers maintain a folder of written samples for each student. Student work will be sent home weekly in the Tuesday Packet. The **Tuesday Packet** is a durable, handy envelope used to convey student work, notes, newsletters and PTA information to and from school. If parents have questions relating to work or if the work is not received regularly and frequently, contact the teacher as soon as possible.



### **CONFERENCES, PARENT/TEACHER**

Conferences with the teacher will help both parent and teacher to understand the child and plan together for the child's continued development. Parents should not hesitate to contact the school if a conference is desired.

One of the primary purposes for requesting conferences in the first nine weeks is to provide teachers and school with information necessary for specific planning to meet individual needs. Diagnostic tests cannot reveal a child's total growth and progress. This fact clearly underscores the importance of soliciting a high percentage of parent talk in the initial conference.

Conferences with the teacher will help both parent and teacher to understand the child and plan together for the child's continued development. Parents should not hesitate to contact the school if a conference is desired.

The parent-teacher contact provided in a conference meeting is an invaluable means of establishing a child's attitude toward school and in developing a cooperative relationship between school and home. The value of telephone conferences is recognized and in fact encouraged as a supplemental means of allowing both parent and teacher to construct a truer picture of the child's total growth and progress. However, telephone conferences may not accomplish the same as the conference meeting.

FCPS report card procedures indicate that a conference with the teacher will be scheduled at the end of the first reporting period. Additional conferences may be requested by parents or teachers at any time.

## **SUGGESTED FOCUS QUESTIONS FOR PARENT'S USE DURING PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES:**

1. What is your best assessment of my child's ability to learn?
2. What is my child's instructional level in math and reading/language arts?  
How does this correspond with his/her grade placement?
3. When an assignment is given, my child usually:
  - begins right away
  - is slow to start, but completes within expected time
  - is slow to start and does not complete assignment
  - finishes work quickly, then uses time wisely
4. How does my child work independently?
5. How does my child relate to peers?
6. How does my child react to unexpected changes during the school day?
7. Does my child seem to have a positive self-image?
8. What is a specific strength and/or weakness?
9. Are there things going on that I should know about (early warning signals)?

The following questions can be used in future conferences:

How has my child progressed since the last reporting period?

If progress has not been satisfactory, what can we do to improve it?

## **COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES**

Due to school renovation, use of our school building will not be available to the general public. Community groups are encouraged to apply at other local schools or community centers for building use.

## **DRESS AND APPEARANCE**

The following is the Fairfax County School Board policy (Policy 2613) on appearance and dress:

"All students are expected to dress appropriately for a K-12 educational environment. Any clothing that interferes with or disrupts the educational environment is unacceptable. Clothing with language or images that are vulgar, discriminatory, or obscene or clothing that promotes illegal or violent conduct, such as gang symbols, the unlawful use of weapons, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or drug paraphernalia, or clothing that contains threats is prohibited. Clothing should fit, be neat and clean, and conform to standards of safety, good taste, and decency. Clothing that exposes cleavage, private parts, the midriff, or undergarments, or that is otherwise sexually provocative, is prohibited.

Examples of prohibited clothing include, but are not limited to: sagging or low-cut pants, low-cut necklines that show cleavage, tube tops, halter tops, backless blouses or blouses with only ties in the back, studded belts, chain belts, clothing constructed of see-through materials, and head coverings unless required for religious or medical purposes.

Parents or guardians of students requiring accommodation for religious beliefs, disabilities, or other good causes should contact the principal. Students not complying with this code will be asked to cover the noncomplying clothing, change clothes, or go home. Repeated infractions will result in disciplinary action.

Rubber-soled shoes are required for physical education. Children without proper shoes will not be allowed to participate in gym activities. Long dangling jewelry may not be appropriate for some school activities. Hats may be worn outside, but not in the school building.

## **EMERGENCY CARE FORMS**

At the beginning of each school year, parents are asked to complete and return to the office an emergency care form for each child attending Great Falls. It is most important that this be done as soon as possible. Throughout the year, as telephone numbers and other emergency information changes, please let us know so we can keep our records current. Emergency care information can be securely updated by parents online through the FCPS

website: wecare@school. The link to this site can be found in the FCPS 24/7 Learning site. Additionally, it is most important that you identify an emergency contact person who can act in your behalf until the school can reach you. **Please indicate someone other than yourself as an emergency contact.** If your child has an emergency at school, you will be contacted first. If you cannot be located, your emergency designee will be called.

**Only those listed on the Emergency Care Form will be permitted to pick your child up from school.**

### **FEES**

- Student Assignment Notebook - \$3.00
- Tuesday Packet replacement - \$2.00
- Recorders - \$4.25
- Returned Check Fee - \$7.00
- Textbooks or instructional materials – cost will vary. You will receive notification from school Finance Officer of replacement value.
- Copying of student records/transcripts, etc. :
  1. Parents may receive one copy at no cost of all report cards, test scores, and other information about the child. Additional copies may be obtained upon payment of a \$5.00 duplicating fee.
  2. Parents may pick up the sealed records to mail or deliver as they see fit. If mailed directly from school, postage will be charged as appropriate

### **FORGOTTEN ITEMS BROUGHT TO SCHOOL**

**Please help your child to develop a routine of placing things which must be brought to school in a designated place the night before in order that lunch money, school books, and homework will not be left at home. We would like the classrooms to be free of interruptions. Please make sure your child is prepared for school. Making sure everything is in your child's backpack the night before school will help to teach your child responsibility, and help get the day started on the right foot! If you must bring forgotten items to school, do not go directly to your child's classroom. Procedures have been put in place to prevent disruption to classroom instruction. Please put your child's name and teacher name on the item, report to the office to sign in and get a visitor badge, then bring the forgotten item to the appropriate location:**

**Lunch – Cafeteria, place on the table on the stage. The cafeteria hostess will let your child know his/her lunch is there.**

**Musical Instruments – Cafeteria Stage. Students will check here before band/strings class.**

**Homework/Assignments – Leave at the office. Items will be placed in the teacher's mailbox.**

**Anything else – Bring to the office.**

**Teachers and students are aware of these locations. Students are told to check these areas in the event a forgotten item was brought to school. We will not call the classroom, disturbing class instruction, to tell a student a forgotten item has arrived. Again, please do not bring forgotten items directly to the classroom.**

### **FUND RAISING AND CHARITY CAUSES**

School initiated fund raising activities are held to a minimum. All fundraising activities are run on a “pre-pay” basis. Projects must contribute to the educational experience of students and must not conflict with instructional programs. Elementary students are not allowed to sell items or solicit funds door-to-door. Students are not allowed to solicit funds for charity causes, but may participate in non-monetary charity drives such as canned food collections. All such activities must be approved and scheduled by the principal.

Twice a year, Fairfax County Public Schools honors the requests of non-profit agencies to send home information about their organizations with our students. This information is sent home with the following disclaimer: “These materials are neither sponsored nor endorsed by the Fairfax County Public School Board, the Superintendent, or this school.”

## **GIFT GIVING**

The Fairfax County Public Schools policy is: "Students and their parents shall be discouraged from the routine presentation of gifts to school employees on holiday occasions. A staff member shall not accept an elaborate or expensive gift even though a student or parent offers one. The Board shall consider as always welcome, and in most circumstances more appropriate, the writing of letters to staff members expressing gratitude or appreciation."

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework should serve valid purposes to:

**provide additional practice on a principle or skill already taught;**  
**provide real-life application of the matter at hand;**  
**develop appreciation for or knowledge of community resources;**  
**develop the personal culture of the student;**  
**enrich, enhance, and extend school experiences.**

Desirable outcomes of good homework shall include:

**growth in responsibility;**  
**training in good work habits;**  
**opportunities for increasing self-direction;**  
**assistance in learning to budget time;**  
**contact with out-of-school learning resource;**  
**acquisition of additional information.**

No hard and fast rules concerning homework can be made. Some generally accepted principles govern teachers in the assignments to individual students: (1) it serves a definite purpose; (2) it is used as a technique for reinforcing learning; and (3) homework that is a direct carryover of the day's work not being completed should be the exception. Children should go home each day knowing that assigned work is to be finished.

Homework is given in increasing amounts from primary to upper elementary grades. The following are SUGGESTED time allotments for homework:

Maximum

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Amount Daily</u>
1-3	Monday-Thursday	30 minutes
4-6	Monday-Thursday	1 hour

Nightly family reading and writing are encouraged. This activity is encouraged by the teacher and motivated at home by the parent.

During the first conference of the year, the teacher and parent should review common expectations for homework.

If you find that you are teaching your child specific concepts in order for the homework to be completed, please contact the teacher so adjustments can be made. Likewise, if your child is spending an excessive amount of time on homework, contact the teacher.



**HOMEWORK REQUESTS FOR ABSENT STUDENTS:** If your child is absent due to illness and you would like to obtain homework from the teacher, leave your homework request on the school attendance line before 9 a.m. Teachers will get the message during their lunch break. They have the rest of the school day to prepare whatever is being sent home. The homework will be sent to the office at dismissal for you to pick up after school. If you would like the homework sent home with a sibling or friend, state this child's name and teacher name with your absence message. Homework is not provided ahead of time for children who are being pulled out of school for family vacations.



**FORGOTTEN HOMEWORK:** Sufficient time is provided at the end of the day for students to get ready to go home. Classrooms are locked when teachers are not in the room during and after school hours. Custodians are not authorized to unlock doors for anyone not employed by FCPS. Staff members are not permitted to give their keys to students or parents. Therefore, we cannot accommodate requests by students or parents to open a teacher's classroom for forgotten items.

## **MEDICAL INFORMATION**

### **◇ ILLNESS OR INJURY DURING SCHOOL**

When a child becomes ill or injured at school and needs to go home, the school clinic will contact the parent by telephone using the information on the child's Emergency Care Form. If neither parent can be reached, the contacts listed on the Emergency Care Form will be called. The person who comes to the school to withdraw the child must go to the school office, show proper identification, and sign the child out.

If emergency personnel recommend a child be taken to the emergency room when he or she is injured, a staff member will accompany the child and stay at the hospital until the parent arrives.

### **◇ IMMUNIZATIONS**

Before entering a public school (preschool, FECEP, and grades K-12), every pupil shall furnish a certificate certifying that the pupil has been immunized against communicable diseases as required by the Code of Virginia or has begun receiving the first series of all such vaccinations. All dates of immunizations or the date of the report of the serological confirmation of immunity must include the month, day, and year. Immunizations required by the Code of Virginia:

#### **IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS:**

Official documentation including complete dates (month, day, year) is required for the following:

**DPT, DTaP, Td, DT (diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus):** a minimum of three (3) doses with one (1) dose given after the fourth birthday unless the student had six (6) doses before the fourth birthday.

\*Effective July 1, 2006, a booster dose of Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis) vaccine is required for all students entering the 6th grade, if at least five years have passed since the last dose of tetanus-containing vaccine. Rising 6<sup>th</sup> grade students cannot begin the school year without documentation that they have complied with the tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis (Tdap) immunization requirement. Students who are 11 and older must provide documentation of having received the Tdap if it has been five years since their last tetanus-toxoid containing vaccine. If a student is still 10 years old, and the eleventh birthday is after the first day of school, the student can provide a written exemption from the doctor stating when he or she will receive the Tdap vaccine.

**OPV, IPV (polio):** a minimum of three (3) doses with one (1) dose given after the fourth birthday unless the student had four (4) doses before the fourth birthday.

**MMR (measles, mumps, rubella):** one (1) dose on or after the first birthday with a second dose of measles or MMR prior to kindergarten entry. Dated report of serological confirmation of measles, mumps, or rubella is acceptable. A physician's dated statement that mumps was diagnosed or a dated serological confirmation is acceptable.

**Hepatitis B:** effective July 1, 2006, a minimum of three (3) doses with at least four (4) months between first and last dose for all enrolled students regardless of birth date or grade level.

**Varicella (chicken pox):** one (1) dose given on or after the first birthday for all students born on or after January 1, 1997, except for children who have evidence of immunity as demonstrated by a dated serological confirmation or a dated statement from a physician of a medical history of the disease.

**HIB (Haemophilus influenzae type B):** age appropriate schedule for children up to 60 months of age.

**PCV (Pneumococcal 7-valent conjugate):** two to four doses, dependent on age at first dose, of properly spaced pneumococcal 7-valent conjugate vaccine (PVC) for students less than two years of age.

#### **TUBERCULOSIS SCREENING REQUIREMENTS:**

For all students who have resided in a foreign country (with the exception of Canada, the countries of Western

Europe, Australia, and New Zealand) during the last five years for a consecutive period of five or more months, one of the following is required:

- Evidence of a negative tuberculin skin test (TST) and a negative symptom screen completed within 90 calendar days prior to registration certified by a licensed physician or department of health.
- Evidence of a normal (negative) chest X-ray taken within 90 calendar days prior to registration.
- Documentation of a negative symptom screen and risk assessment from the health department or private physician for students who present written documentation of having completed prophylaxis treatment for tuberculosis.



### **PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS**

All students entering Fairfax County Public Schools for the first time are required to have a physical examination before entering school. Yearly physical and dental check-ups are recommended for all children. Forms for physical examinations are available in the office.



### **MEDICINE**

At some time during the school year, you may find it necessary on a temporary or long-term basis, to have medication administered to your child during school hours. Medicine at school must be carefully supervised for the safety of all children. Students are never to carry aspirin, cold pills, or “over the counter” medicines of any type to school. If a child needs medication during school hours, certain procedures have to be followed. No School Board employee, school nurse, or clinic room aide shall facilitate any medication or treatment unless all of the required clearances have been personally reviewed by the principal or designee. Exceptions may be made only with written orders and certain stipulations, as described below.

1. Exception for prescribed medication (given for more than ten consecutive school days and/or given on an as-needed basis)
  - a. Written orders from the physician or medical professional must accompany all long-term medications to be taken in the school setting. The order must delineate:
    - (1) Student name
    - (2) Date of birth
    - (3) Reason for medication
    - (4) Name of medication in lay language with no abbreviations
    - (5) Exact dosage to be taken in school
    - (6) Exact time at which the dosage is to be taken in school
    - (7) The sequence in which medications should be taken, in cases where more than one medication is prescribed
    - (8) The exact conditions or symptoms that require repeating medication and the exact time interval between dosages (“repeat as necessary” is unacceptable)
    - (9) Duration of medication order
  - b. Clearance must also be received in the form of a parent’s or guardian’s request for the school staff or clinic room aide to facilitate taking medication prescribed by a physician.
  - c. Medication must be taken to the school by the parent or guardian in a container appropriately labeled and dated by the pharmacist or physician and should include:
    - (1) Name of student
    - (2) Name of medication
    - (3) Exact dosage to be taken
    - (4) Exact time at which the dosage is to be taken in school
  - d. If the medication is prescribed for a student to alleviate specific symptoms (as described by the physician) and the orders state that the medication can be repeated within an exact time period, the parent or guardian must inform the school as to the exact time at which the medication is to be

administered at school. When a new order for this type of medication is received at the school, the parent or guardian should complete the Authorization Medication form, part I, and the physician must complete part II.

- e. At the beginning of each school year, a newly executed authorization form is required for all medications that are to be continued from the previous school year.
2. Exception for antibiotic medication (i.e., ear and eye drops, ointments, as well as oral medication). Parent or guardian can authorize antibiotic/and antiviral medications which are prescribed by a physician.
    - a. Medication must be taken to the school by a parent or guardian in a container appropriately labeled and dated and should include:
      - (1) Name of student
      - (2) Name of medication
      - (3) Exact dosage to be taken
      - (4) Exact time at which the dosage is to be taken in school
    - b. The parent or guardian must complete the Authorization for Medication, part I and part 2.
  3. Exception for over-the-counter medication (applies only to nonprescription drugs). Parent or guardian can authorize medication for relief of symptoms for headache, muscle ache, orthodontic pain and menstrual cramps.
    - a. Parent or guardian must label medication bottle or box with the following:
      - (1) Name of student
      - (2) Name of medication
      - (3) Exact dosage to be taken
      - (4) Exact time at which the dosage is to be taken in school, or time interval between doses.
  4. Exception for epinephrine injection.

When a private physician believes that epinephrine to treat an allergic reaction is necessary during school hours, then it may be facilitated under certain conditions. Please call the clinic room aide for details.

MEDICATION MUST NOT BE LEFT IN THE CLASSROOM, ON THE TEACHER'S DESK, OR IN THE PUPIL'S LUNCH BOX.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

There are two lost and found locations: in the small cafeteria, and in the gym. Items of value such as jewelry or eyeglasses may be held in the main office. It is highly recommended that articles of clothing and other belongings have a name tag or be marked in some manner. Unclaimed items are often donated to local shelters.

Valuable items should not be brought to school. Electronic games/I pods, laser pointers, cell phones, etc. are not appropriate in the school setting. The school will not be responsible for these items should a child bring them to the bus stop or school.

Students are responsible for any money that they bring to school. They should bring only the amount needed on any given day.

### **PARTIES**

#### ◇ **CLASSROOM:**

Each class will be allowed to have two parties during the year. Room parents may provide refreshments.

**Parents should ask the teacher about any dietary or allergy issues regarding snack items.** Teachers are responsible for selecting appropriate activities and for overall party management. Money may be collected from students to cover costs of the parties, or parents may be asked to furnish food items. All school parties will be held on the school grounds. This is due to legal liability.

#### ◇ **STUDENT BIRTHDAYS:**

Many times children want to share their birthday with other children in the class. It is appropriate for a child having a birthday to bring small individual snacks for all classmates. These snacks will be distributed by the student to all classmates during the last ten minutes of their class lunch period. Birthday treats may not be

shared with students from another class. Birthday party invitations must be mailed or delivered to students' homes. Invitations may not be delivered at bus stops, on a school bus, or on any school grounds, including classrooms, hallways and the cafeteria. A parent need only think about his or her child being "left out" to understand the need for this rule.

It is inappropriate for a parent to bring a birthday cake, candles, balloons, toys, etc. to the cafeteria or classroom. It is not the responsibility of the school to provide students with a birthday party.

### **PETS**

Service animals are the only animals permitted on FCPS school grounds. Please refrain from bringing family pets into the building. If you are a pet owner, please make sure your pet does not follow your children to the bus stop.

### **PTA (PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION)**

The PTA Board is composed of the officers and committee chairpersons of the PTA. Officers are elected by the general membership for a two year term, and committee chairpersons are appointed by the PTA president.

The support of the PTA is a vital ingredient to the success of the school. Our PTA has become known for its large volunteer program and active parent involvement. Please visit the PTA website: [www.gfespta.org](http://www.gfespta.org) for an updated list of PTA officers. Contact any of these officers if you want to be part of the PTA.

### **RECESS**

Each class has at least one recess daily, except on Mondays. It is a teacher expectation that every child is physically active during this period. Please do not ask your child's teacher to use recess as a punishment or for completion of work. Staff members are responsible for the supervision of students during recess times.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

It is important for you to review the Student Responsibilities and Rights Handbook with your child. In addition, all parents will receive a *Rules of Conduct* outlining school regulations. Parents are expected to sign and return the tear-off section to the school office. The parental signature requirement pertains to all students, kindergarten through grade twelve. This action, while mandated by Section 22.1-279.3 of the Code of Virginia, is designed to ensure school personnel that parents have read this important information and discussed it with their child.

All students shall be guaranteed the right to an education for the purpose of developing their natural abilities and ensuring their participating in this democracy to the fullest extent possible. The privileges and rights of all students shall be guaranteed without regard to race, color, religion, sex, creed, national origin, or education.

Students share with the administrators, faculty, staff, and parents the responsibility for creating the conditions wherein the respect for the individual and recognition of one's inherent value as a human being with dignity and self-worth are freely given to one another.

Students also share with the administrators, faculty, staff, and parents the responsibility for maintaining the safe and healthy school environment.



### **BEHAVIOR**

Each Great Falls student deserves a school environment where good behavior promotes learning. Inappropriate behavior will not be permitted to interfere with instruction or threaten the welfare of students in this school.

Your child's teacher will teach appropriate school behavior to the entire class. Follow-up activities will recognize children displaying good behavior. Likewise, the school counselors spend much of their classroom time in reinforcing expected individual and group behaviors.

Although it may be disconcerting to read the following, it is very important for parents and students to know of the FCPS system and Great Falls' commitment to the following:

- Any child bringing a gun to school will be suspended for ten days. There will also be a recommendation for expulsion.

- Any child bringing any type of knife, look-alike knife or gun, toy weapon, fireworks, or any other type of weapon-like instrument will be suspended from school activities. Please make sure your child does not accidentally bring one of these items to school in a backpack.
- Any child distributing drugs, alcohol or any substance presented as drugs or alcohol will be suspended from school with a possible recommendation for expulsion.

Whenever a child is suspended from school, he/she may re-enter only after there has been a conference between the parent, student, administrator, and teacher. Be assured that the aforementioned expectations, behaviors and consequences are established to provide a safe learning environment for each child in the school. (See **FCPS Student Responsibilities and Rights Grades K-12**)



## **CHARACTER EDUCATION**

The Great Falls Elementary Character Education Program is a collaborative effort among students, staff, and parents. The core values of the program are “Respect, Responsibility, Caring, and Honesty.” Our hope is that these words will become common vocabulary throughout our school community. All Great Falls students deserve a school environment where they feel that school is a safe and welcoming place. There is no toleration for bullying and GFES will work toward helping students care for each other.

## **SAFETY PATROLS**

The school safety patrol gives much of its time to ensure safe practices. Please encourage your child to give his complete cooperation. School patrols serve on buses, at street crossings, and in other areas at school. The objectives for the patrols are:

1. to protect children from automobile accidents while they are on the way to and from school;
2. to help children develop a positive attitude toward safety habits; and
3. to develop qualities of leadership and good citizenship (in patrol members).

Generally, patrols are on duty before and after school. Should you observe an incident involving walking or bused students that warrants attention, please contact the school office. Patrols, as children, are not expected to serve in a disciplinary role.

Patrols are required to report students for repeated violations of safety rules. This practice provides adult intervention and attempts to correct behavior which could result in injury. Students who receive several patrol reports are brought to an administrator and the parent is contacted.

## **SCA (STUDENT COUNCIL ASSOCIATION)**

All students are members of our Student Council Association. The SCA functions in our school to develop leadership, responsibility, and good citizenship in students. Student officers are elected in the fall for the school year. Each homeroom is represented by at least one student on the council that meets monthly. The council also includes various committee chairpersons who work with other students on school-wide projects.

## **SCHOOL PICTURES**

School pictures are scheduled to be taken in the early fall and spring each year. You will be notified as to the dates. The school receives a certain amount of profit from the sale of school pictures. This profit is used to buy items for our school. The decision to purchase pictures is voluntary. Our photographer is selected through a Fairfax County bidding process.

## **SCHOOL EDUCATION OFFICER PROGRAM**

The School Education Officer is a member of the Fairfax County Police Department. The officer visits our school on a monthly basis, and provides safety education classes for students in each grade level. The SEO also oversees training for the safety patrols and helps to address any safety issues that arise within the school.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS AND REFERRALS**

**Parents may need staff members to complete recommendation or referral forms for an external organization. Listed below are the guidelines and procedures for the completion of any form.**

**Submission of Forms:** All recommendation and referral forms for outside organizations, including but not limited to summer camps, must be submitted through the school office.

**All requests for student information must be accompanied by written parent permission authorizing the school to release the indicated records.**

**Parents requesting individual staff input must write the staff member's name in the upper right hand corner of the first page.**

**Transfer of Information:** All recommendation and referral forms must be submitted within a time frame that allows staff members a minimum of 10 working days for completion.

**All forms will be reviewed to determine if similar information is provided in the student's scholastic records.**

A staff member's time will not be used to duplicate information established in these records.

**Student behavior information requested by a physician or psychologist for diagnostic purposes will be limited to a maximum of two forms. Student behavior checklists requested by a physician or psychologist for ongoing assessment will be completed by teachers for a maximum of six consecutive weeks or ten forms per year.**

**Fees and Delivery of Forms:** Parents with whom a child resides receive one copy at no cost of all report cards, test scores, and other information about the child. Additional copies may be obtained upon payment of a \$5.00 duplicating fee. Parents may pick up the sealed records to mail or deliver as they see fit. If mailed directly from school, postage will be charged as appropriate. Please refer to the Fees section on page 12 for further information.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

As required by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, Fairfax County Public Schools has adopted a policy which:

- provides that parents have the right to inspect any and all records relating directly to their dependents;
- authorizes students with written parental permission to inspect their records;**
- provides for release of information to others only under carefully described conditions;
  - establishes fees for the duplication of records; and
  - provides a procedure for challenge of the contents of a student's record by parents or adult students.

Educational records are forwarded on request to a school to which a student has applied for admission.

As provided by the Act, certain information may be classified as "directory information" and may be released to others without parental consent. Fairfax County Public Schools considers these categories of student information to be directory information:

- name and picture
- participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- height and weight if a member of an athletic team
- dates of attendance
- awards and honors

In addition, a student's address and telephone number will be in this category but may be released to others only for school-related activities such as PTA, booster clubs, volunteer activities, and to county special services. Directory information may be made available on an individual basis, or be printed in school directories, team rosters, class lists, school yearbooks, etc. should the school wish to do so, without parental consent.

Student information will be released only according to the provisions of School Board policy. Parents who wish to review their child's record should make an appointment with an administrator. The record of a handicapped student who has been enrolled in a special education program is destroyed by Fairfax County Public Schools when the student graduates or reaches age 21, whichever comes first. Parents should be aware that information from this record could be needed by the child or parents for Social Security or other benefits and should request necessary copies from the area office before the student graduates or leaves the school system.

## **TELEPHONE USAGE**

Cell phone use is not permitted during the school day. Children are discouraged from making telephone calls home during the school day unless it is an emergency. In case of illness, the clinic aide will make the call home. Please help your child to develop a routine of placing things which must be brought to school in a designated place the night before in order that lunch money, school books, and homework will not be left at home. We would like the classrooms to be free of interruptions. Cell phone use by students and visiting adults is not permitted during the school day.

## **TEXTBOOKS**

Textbooks are furnished for student use. Children are responsible for the care and safekeeping of these texts. Fines will be assessed for lost books and for all damage beyond normal use.

## **TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM SCHOOL**



### **SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION**

The Code of Virginia states that the county School Board “may provide for the transportation of pupils; but nothing herein contained shall be construed as requiring such transportation.” **Bus transportation is a privilege.**

Fairfax County Public Schools policy provides, in part, that “daily bus service will be provided for all elementary pupils living in excess of one mile from school, and for intermediate and high school pupils living in excess of one and one-half miles from school. Elementary students eligible for transportation may be required to walk up to one mile and intermediate and high schools students eligible for bus transportation may be required to walk up to one and one-half miles to reach a bus stop.” Elementary students who live within one mile and intermediate and high school students who live within one and one-half miles are not eligible to be transported unless walking conditions are hazardous.

Standards of Conduct for Pupils Riding School Buses’ is included in the Fairfax County Public Schools Student Responsibilities and Rights booklet. The regulations are furnished as information for parents and for pupils who ride Fairfax County Public Schools buses. All parents and pupils should read this information, sign the Parent or Guardian and Student Signature Sheet, and return it to the teacher by the date noted on the bottom of the form. Please put your child’s full name on the form. A new form must be signed each year.

All kindergarten students ride with the older children in the morning and afternoon under the above policy. Noon transportation (either home from the morning session or pick-up for the afternoon session) will be provided for all kindergarten children.

If any child is reported to the school principal for misbehavior, the school administration will be responsible for the disciplinary action, including loss of the privilege of bus transportation, until the parents, the bus driver, and the principal can arrive at an understanding. The parents will be responsible for the transportation of any pupils who have lost school bus transportation privileges.

If you have concerns or problems relative to the transportation of your child, please contact the Transportation Office (703-446-2000) The office is open until 5:00 p.m. After 5:00 p.m., emergency calls will be handled by the Office of Safety and Security at 703-764-2400. Your cooperation in the safe transportation of your child is appreciated.



### **SCHOOL BUS BEHAVIOR**

The safety of children riding school buses is of primary concern for all parents, staff members, bus drivers, students and community. PLEASE:

**Review the FCPS Standards of Conduct for Pupils Riding the School Bus with your child.**

**Emphasize the importance of loading and unloading the bus properly.**

**Ensure that your child follows these rules daily.**

**See that your child arrives at the bus stop on time.**

**Monitor what your child brings to school. Please check the contents of your child’s backpack on at least a weekly, if not daily, basis.**

**Remind your child if he/she drops something not to retrieve it from under or around a bus.**

**Report any unsafe acts to school personnel.**

- Please remember that riding the bus is a privilege. Students who continue to break bus safety rules may have their bus privilege suspended.

Together, we can promote safe habits and prevent accidents. Thank you for your cooperation and attention.



### **CAR RIDERS – KISS & RIDE**

A Kiss & Ride Contract for safety was sent home in a September school newsletter. This contract provides the times and procedures for morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up. Extra copies of the Kiss & Ride Contract are available in the school office.

Car riders are asked to arrive at school no earlier than 8:00 a.m. Students should report to the cafeteria for supervision until dismissal to class. Parents are asked not to use the driveway in front of the school immediately before or after school since we must keep the area clear for the buses. Please always observe the handicap parking spaces, fire lanes, and do not block the ramp in front of the school. Parents and students arriving after the 8:20 a.m. bell should use the front door entrance.

PLEASE DISCHARGE STUDENTS ONLY AT THE STUDENT DROP-OFF **KISS AND RIDE ARE** CURRENTLY LOCATED IN THE REAR PARKING LOT ON THE GYM SIDE OF THE SCHOOL. Discharging a child from other locations is unsafe and should not occur. Use the student drop-off and encourage your child to make safe choices by not running across the parking lot or the bus driveway. **PLEASE DRIVE SLOWLY!**



### **BICYCLE RIDERS**

Due to heavy traffic congestion and high speed in the vicinity of the school, children are NOT permitted to ride bicycles.



### **CHANGE OF TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (Going Home With A Friend)**

Great Falls Elementary School PTA provides parents with **Change of Transportation forms**, which are to be used whenever a child's regular routine of going home is changed. We ask all parents to use these forms in lieu of handwritten notes. If students will be going home with one another, each parent is responsible for completing a COT form, and sending it to school with their child. Forms are collected by the classroom teacher and sent to the office with the daily attendance information each morning. All notes are reviewed and returned to the teacher before the end of the day. This procedure is used to ensure the staff of the whereabouts of children after leaving the school grounds at the end of each day.

**BOTH CHILDREN MUST BRING A CHANGE OF TRANSPORTATION FORM FROM THEIR PARENTS.** This prevents problems encountered when one parent does not expect a guest and the children come home to a locked, empty house.

Also, transportation rules are such that bus drivers must have school permission for children to be dropped off at bus stops other than their own. The privilege of using the bus to visit a friend should be used only two times per month in order to prevent overcrowding on buses.

### **VANDALISM**

Vandalism to our school is costly to your child's learning and to you as a taxpayer. Therefore, all students, staff, and parents are requested to report any damage to or destruction of school property.

If you see anyone doing damage to the school building or grounds, please call our office (703-757-2100), School Security (703-764-2400), or the Fairfax County Police. Reports of vandalism may be given anonymously. This includes the unauthorized use of school dumpsters.

### **VISITING GREAT FALLS ELEMENTARY**



### **SIGN IN AT THE OFFICE**

Please note the sign on all entrances to our building. (The signs are placed on all FCPS entrances.) **ALL VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL BUILDING ARE TO REPORT TO THE OFFICE.** A visitor is defined as anyone who is not employed regularly at Great Falls. Visitors, therefore, would be all parents, employees of the School Board who do not work regularly at the school, and others. We have placed a Visitor's Book in our office. **Each visitor will be requested to register in our visitor book and wear a name tag while in the building.** This request is made in order to provide a safe environment for each child in the school.

Being proud of our school, we welcome visitors! However, we remind our guests that visitations may only occur when they do not distract from the instructional program. Therefore, all classroom visitations must be prearranged with the teacher and/or principal. Requests for visiting children or adults to visit classes will normally be disapproved.

Please turn off your cell phone when visiting Great Falls Elementary School.



### **PROTECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL TIME**

Every effort is made to protect instructional time from outside interruptions. This is the reason that parents and visitors are encouraged to contact the teacher to schedule a conference time rather than interrupt during the school day. The teacher has a responsibility to the 25+ children in the classroom at that time and is not always able to attend to your question if you "drop in" during the school day. The teacher wants to talk to you, but please do not put him or her in an awkward position of having to choose between answering your question and attending to the needs of an entire classroom of children.

Therefore, unless your child is tardy, please encourage your child to walk independently to the classroom door in the morning. Staff telephone numbers and e-mail addresses are available in the school directory and on the GFES website. If you have a need to talk to the teacher, please contact him/her and make an appointment or request the teacher to return your call.



### **VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

Our volunteer program is an important extension of the curriculum. Volunteers do a variety of useful (and most appreciated!) jobs. Some require a regular commitment while others require only a one-time commitment. Classroom Club members are trained volunteers who work directly with classroom teachers. Training for the Classroom Club in language arts, math, or technology is scheduled throughout the year based on the need for volunteers in specific curriculum areas.

For safety reasons, siblings are not allowed in the teachers' workroom while parent is doing a volunteer task.



### **ROOM PARENTS**

PTA room parents are valuable volunteers in our school. A room parent will work with the classroom teacher to coordinate classroom activities. If you would like to be considered to serve as a room parent, please contact your child's teacher in early September. All parents are asked to sign a "Confidentiality Agreement" available from the classroom teacher.

**Clinic:** We are very much in need of volunteers to help cover the clinic when Mrs. Santana is not available. No experience is necessary, training will be provided by the Fairfax County Health Dept. for this very important position. Please consider volunteering for a few hours during the year. Please call Mrs. Santana 703-757-2110.

**PTA:** Volunteer opportunities are plentiful. The PTA Student Directory lists PTA committees and the chair person name and contact information. If you are interested in being a volunteer, please contact the office or a PTA Classroom Club Coordinator or appropriate chairperson.

### **WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL**

Parents are requested to inform the school office as soon as the student's withdrawal from school is known so that student records, report cards and textbook check-in can be completed in good order. Any student missing 15 consecutive days is automatically withdrawn from enrollment.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

The elementary curriculum is made up of the following programs: language arts (reading, spelling, handwriting, punctuation and capitalization, language usage, organization of ideas, and creative expression), mathematics, social studies, science, art, music, health, and physical education. Provisions are made for students to function at levels where they are able to work to their fullest potential. In order to achieve academic success with each child, the teacher uses various materials, teaching strategies, and grouping techniques.

In addition to the regular instructional program, special services are available for students identified as having particular needs. Some special programs include learning disabilities, reading resource, gifted/talented (G/T), and speech therapy.

Each grade level has specific instructional objectives outlined in the FCPS Program of Studies. These POS curriculum guides may be reviewed at the school, on the FCPS web site, or at any public library. Quarter grade level plans, established by teachers using the appropriate grade level Program of Studies, outline instructional goals by the nine week block.

### **COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY**

Computers and technology are used throughout the school building in order to enhance instruction. The availability of up-to-date computers is increasing due to support and funding from our PTA. For specific information about the use of technology in your child's classroom, please contact the teacher.

### **GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PROGRAM**

One full-time and one part-time school counselor support the total school program by conducting guidance lessons; consulting with parents, teachers, and other professionals; and coordinating student services in the school.

The guidance and counseling program provides elementary students with assistance in:

**Understanding self and developing a positive self-image.**

**Showing respect for the feelings of others.**

**Understanding the decision-making process.**

**Maintaining effective relationships with peers and adults.**

**Developing effective study skills.**

**Being prepared to make the transition to the middle school.**

**Gaining an understanding of the world of work.**

### **FIELD TRIPS**

As an extension of the instructional program, occasional field trips are planned to implement units of study. A field trip is planned by the teacher well in advance. Transportation is generally provided by a county school bus. A field trip permission slip and a bus rider contract form, signed by the parent and student, must be on file in the school office when a pupil is transported to any school-connected or approved activity.

Students not having signed permission slips will be excluded from the field trip activity. Parents are invited to serve as chaperone(s) with the responsibility of monitoring small groups of students during the field trip. Because of this responsibility, parent chaperone(s) may not bring other children on the field trip.

Financial support from the PTA helps to subsidize the cost of field trips.

### **GENERAL MUSIC PROGRAM**

For students in their first, second and third year, emphasis is on music fundamentals, rhythmic imitation, and notation. The program helps the children learn the basics of music and develop their fine and gross motor skills.

Older children study the same concepts of music at a more advanced level. Harmony, tone color, textures, and forms are introduced at this level.

**Chorus** is open to fifth and sixth grade students. Parental permission is required. Rehearsals/instructions will be held once a week for 30-45 minutes. Concerts will be held in the winter and spring.

**Strings** instruction is offered to students in 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades

**Band** instruction is offered to students in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades.

### **GIFTED/TALENTED PROGRAM**

A **school-based program** (grades 4-6) for children identified as gifted and talented is available at each elementary school. Approximately 7% of the school's eligible population is placed in this special activities program. An itinerant teacher works with these children to provide special instruction/activities for approximately one and one-half hours per week.

All students (K-6) are provided G/T lessons by either the classroom teacher or the itinerant teacher throughout the school year. Students demonstrating unique talents are provided **Differentiated Services** in the classroom.

A **center-based program** (Level IV Services) for 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade students identified as academically gifted is available at different locations throughout the county. Qualified students from Great Falls Elementary may attend Colvin Run Elementary in Vienna. Great Falls launched a GT school based center for qualified students in the 2006-07 school year. The center expanded to the fourth grade students in the 2007-08 school year, the fifth grade students this year.

### **HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION**

Five hours of instruction per week in the home are available when a child will be out of school more than four weeks due to an injury or illness. Parents should contact the school to obtain more information regarding regulations governing this service.

### **JAPANESE LANGUAGE PARTIAL IMMERSION**

Great Falls is fortunate to have a Japanese Partial Language Immersion Program. Approximately 25% of our students in grades 1 - 6 participate in this program daily. Students enrolled in the program receive ½ of their daily instruction in Japanese from native Japanese teachers. Subjects taught in Japanese include math, science, health, Japanese culture, and language.

### **LEARNING DISABILITIES RESOURCE PROGRAM**

The learning disabilities resource program is a special education program. Students who manifest mild to moderate difficulties in one or more of the skills involved in receiving, processing, or transmitting information and are achieving below expected levels in basic skill areas may be evaluated to determine the need for this program.

The LD teacher works with the classroom teacher and provides supplementary individual and small group instruction to students who are in the regular program. Students receive assistance in coping with or circumventing learning problems by adapting individualized programs based on their assessed needs. Collaborative efforts between learning disabilities resource teachers and regular classroom teachers in implementing instructional strategies are an integral part of the resource program.

### **LIBRARY**

The library is staffed with a full-time professional librarian and volunteer parent aides who provide essential support. Students can return or check out materials and conduct individual research during school hours with the classroom teacher's permission. Resources from the media center are available to classrooms throughout the school. Basic information tools including encyclopedias, dictionaries, globes, and similar materials, are available to the classrooms for indefinite loan periods. Audio-visual and technology materials and books from the regular collection are available for the classrooms upon request.

Primary classes are scheduled to visit the library weekly for storytelling, library instruction, and book checkout. Curriculum for elementary classes covers developing basic research skills necessary to use the card catalog, encyclopedias, and special reference works.

**Students are responsible for all materials "checked out" in their names.**

**Students with overdue materials are not permitted to "check out" other materials until the overdue items are returned. (A weekly overdue list is published to help students remember their books.)**

**If overdue or lost books are not returned by the end of the school year, the student and parents are billed for the current replacement price for the lost item.**

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Our primary children concentrate on the basic body movements including the locomotor skills (walking, running, leaping, etc.) and ball handling skills (catching, throwing, hitting, etc.) while working on perceptual motor skills (body and spatial awareness, directionality, balance, and visual motor coordination such as eye-hand eye-foot coordination). All of these are important developments for a child to reach with optimum success.

Older students work on the above mentioned skills, lead-up activities to major sports, (volleyball, basketball, etc.) and tumbling. They participate in the President's Physical Fitness Test in October and May.

Students have physical education activities daily. Direct instruction by a physical education teacher is provided two times a week for 30 - 45 minutes per lesson.

All students should wear clothing, including shoes, which allow for a safe active physical education program. Rubber-soled shoes are required in the gym. If your child is to be excused from physical education, please provide the teacher with a note stating the reason and number of days the child should not participate.

In general, students should participate in all activities of the school day. Students may be excused from physical education for a short-term condition, such as return to school after an illness. With written parental requests, a pupil may be excused one or two days from vigorous activities. When a child has a written statement from a doctor, he or she may be excused from physical education for the length of time identified.

### **PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**

A certified school psychologist provides psychological services. Services include consultation, evaluation, and referrals. Referrals are made through the school administration personnel and are carefully considered by the Local Screening Committee. Services are provided only with parent permission.

### **READING PROGRAM**

The reading program provides opportunities for all students to improve reading through basic skills, comprehension, analysis, interpretation, and literature appreciation. Great Falls has the services of a full-time reading resource teacher who works with the principal, teachers, students, and parents. Below is a list of services provided by the reading teacher:

1. Tests, if needed, students who are new to the school.
2. Provides additional small group instruction to students needing remediation or enrichment as a support to the classroom reading/writing program.
3. Works with teachers to provide appropriate learning strategies and teaching methods.
4. Conferences with parents.
5. Serves on the school's local screening and GT committees.
6. Coordinates the Publishing Center.
7. Provides parent training.
8. Serves as school test coordinator

The Elementary Language Arts (ELA) program at Great Falls Elementary combines the use of literature, phonics, trade books, individualized materials, language experience (writing) approaches, spelling, and enrichment.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Special education programs which meet the Virginia State mandate for providing an educational program for each handicapped youngster between the ages of 2 and 21 are available within the public school system. Following is a list of programs available:

**Hearing Impaired**

**Visually Impaired**

**Speech and Language Impaired**

**Learning Disabled**

**Physically Handicapped**

**Emotionally Disturbed**

**Autistic Children**

**Multiple Handicapped**

**Mildly Retarded**

**Moderately Retarded**

**Preschool Program**

**Non Categorical Program**

Contract services are approved for attendance at state-approved private schools for children who cannot be accommodated in available public programs. A program description on special education program offerings is available. For further information, call the school office.

### **SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PROGRAM**

Speech and language services are provided to students with communication disorders in oral language, articulation, voice, and fluency. These services are provided to students with the entire range of abilities and impairments. Full program services include assessment, consultation, and direct instruction. Services are provided to schools on an itinerant basis. Referrals to the speech and language clinician are made through the school office or classroom teacher.

### **SOCIAL WORK SERVICES**

Social Work Services are provided by certified school social workers. Services include consultation, case work, short-term counseling, referrals, and visitation in the home when necessary. Referrals are made through the school office.