

Gunston Elementary

Fairfax County
Public Schools



Parent Handbook

2007 - 2008

SCHOOL HOURS

Kindergarten through 6th grade

MONDAY	8:25 a.m. to 12:35 p.m.
TUESDAY through FRIDAY	8:25 a.m. to 3:05 p.m.

10100 Gunston Road
Lorton, VA 22079

Main Office	703-541-3600
Clinic	703-541-3610
Fax	703-541-3697

www.fcps.edu/GunstonES

www.fcps.edu

Weather and Emergency Messages:

FCPS Hot Line 1800-839-FCPS (3277)

- **Early – 8:15 a.m.**
- **On Time – 8:25 a.m.**
- **Tardy – 8:35 a.m.**

attendance

Early—8:15 a.m.

Gunston Elementary will supervise students starting at 8:15 a.m. To keep our students safe, walkers and car riders should arrive at school no earlier than 8:15 a.m.

On Time—8:25 a.m.

Our first bell rings at 8:25 a.m. Students should be in their seats by the second bell at 8:35 a.m.

Absent or Tardy—8:35 a.m.

If your child is either going to be absent for the entire day or late for any reason, call the school attendance line at 703-541-3600 by 9:00 a.m. The attendance line is available 24-7 for your message. If the school does not receive a call from a parent, the absence will be considered unexcused. Each student returning from an absence should present a note from a parent/guardian stating the reason for the absence.

Excused Absence and Tardy — Illness of the student, death in the family, doctor or dentist appointment, and observance of a religious holiday.

Unexcused Absence and Tardy — Family trip, child care situation, oversleeping, non-school related activity, traffic, or missed bus.

Family Trips

We encourage family trips during scheduled school vacations. We strongly discourage such trips during the school year because these extended absences interrupt sequential learning in many subject areas. We must withdraw any student who is absent from school for 15 days or more from our enrollment. Upon the student's return, a parent must again officially enroll him or her.

Release of Students During the Day

Gunston will excuse a student during the day for valid reasons. Parents should send a written request to the teacher when your child must leave early. Parents must come to the school office to pick up and sign out their child. Gunston will not release your child to anyone other than a parent or guardian without a written request signed by a parent. Persons other than parents will be required to show identification.

School Hours

MONDAY

8:25 – 12:35

TUESDAY – FRIDAY

8:25 – 3:05

Calendars

The school attendance calendar is available at www.fcps.edu/cal.htm. Gunston

Elementary is on the standard schedule.

The standard calendar includes holidays, breaks, grading periods and early release dates. Information about days missed and makeup days also are available.

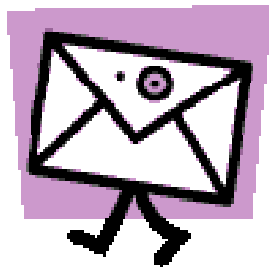


Keep Us in the Loop.

How Do We Contact You?

Your emergency contact information is very important. It accompanies your child everywhere he or she goes—even on field trips. The information is vital to us and to you. Phone numbers, addresses, and the names of the adults you permit to take your child from school should all be kept current.

You can input, access, and update your child's emergency care information via the new FCPS program, weCare@school, which is available through the new Parent View account for parents and guardians on [FCPS 24-7](#). It is fast, easy, and safe.



The paper version of the emergency care form is still available if you choose to use this method to provide your information. It is not necessary for you to complete both the paper form and the new online tool.

Call the school clinic at 703-541-3610 for more information.

clinic services

When to Stay Home

Students with symptoms, such as rashes, watery and inflamed eyes, fever, sore throat, vomiting, or diarrhea, should stay home until a doctor evaluates their symptoms and determines whether or not they are contagious. The Fairfax County Department of Health recommends that children remain home fever-free for 24 hours after an illness prior to returning to school. Remember to call the Attendance Line at 703-541-3600 to report your child's absence.

A Physician's Note

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

Taking Your Child Home

Our clinic works to control and manage student exposure to contagious diseases. We will call you if your child exhibits symptoms of illness, such as:

- Fever over 100 degrees
- Persistent abdominal pain
- Vomiting
- Unexplained rash
- Diarrhea
- Head lice
- Inflamed eyes with discharge
- Persistent cough

We ask that you make arrangements to pick up your child as soon as possible. It is important to have all emergency numbers up to date in case we need to contact you. Anyone picking up your child must show identification. Parents will be notified immediately if 911 is called for their child.

Medication at School

Prescription and most over-the-counter medications require strict adult supervision. Forms to authorize school staff members to administer medications are available in the school office and online at www.fcps.edu/forms.htm. Call the school clinic at 703-541-3610 for more information.

Medication Guidelines

- A parent or guardian must bring the medication to and from school.
- Your child must have the first dose of any new medication at home.
- A parent or guardian must personally collect any unused portion of the medication. Medications not claimed will be destroyed.
- A parent or guardian is responsible for submitting a new form to the school each time the dosage is changed or that the time at which the medication is to be taken is changed.
- Students are never allowed to bring medication (prescription or over-the-counter) to school.

Remember

To limit the spread of illnesses, notify the school office if your child gets head lice, strep throat, chicken pox, or other contagious illnesses. Effective July 1, 2006, a booster of Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis) is required for all students entering sixth grade if at least five years have passed since the last dose of tetanus-containing vaccine.

c a f e t e r i a

Breakfast—\$1.25

Lunch—\$2.15

How to Pay

Parents have three options to pay for school meals:

- **Online**—Using myLunchMoney.com

The service is easy to use, convenient, private, and secure. There is a convenience fee of \$1.95 per transaction. Once the account is open, parents may check the fund at any time from computer or phone.

- **Check**—Send a check—made out to Gunston Elementary School Food Services—to the cafeteria manager with your child in the morning. Be sure to include your child's name and his or her teacher's name in the memo portion of the check. Indicate on the check if you want your child to purchase meals only (no a la carte items). When a lunch account has only three (3) lunches left, the cashier will send home a notice. Food and Nutrition Services uses a "no lunch charges" procedure when a student's account balance is down to three meals to ensure that no student goes without lunch.

- **Cash**—Parents can deposit cash in their child's account at the food service manager's office, or students may pay cash on a daily basis.

Free or Reduced Meals

FCPS provides free or reduced price meals to students in need of assistance to help meet their nutritional needs. Food and Nutrition Services mails application forms to every family in August. Parents must complete the forms to renew this program each year. Translated copies are available in the school office.

Got Milk?

Daily milk options include one percent chocolate, unflavored, and skim milk for 50 cents. Soy milk is available upon request for 75 cents.

A la Carte

A la carte snacks are available to supplement students' lunches for an additional cost (varies by item). Students must have a school lunch or home lunch to purchase an a la carte item.

Healthy and Safe Meals

The cafeteria offers a nutritionally balanced meal daily. A menu is sent home monthly. We strongly encourage healthy lunches and discourage students from bringing in fast food, carbonated soft drinks, and glass bottles.

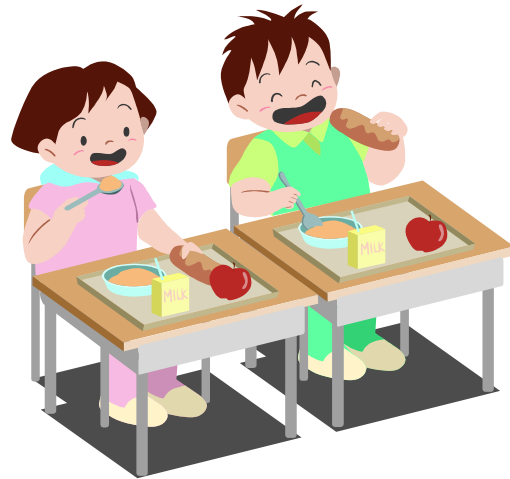
Birthday Treats

Gunston Elementary does not allow the delivery of balloons or gifts or the presence of clowns, gorillas, strolling minstrels, etc. Parents who want to provide a class treat should:

- Notify your child's classroom teacher in advance. The teacher knows of food allergies and will be able to monitor all children's health and safety.
- Treats should be single-portion finger foods that do not require adult assistance to cut or supervision to distribute.
- Check with the food service manager for a catered birthday treat for your child's classroom. Choices include chocolate chip cookies, ice cream, or popcorn for 50 cents per child. A birthday surprise is included for the birthday child.
- Deliver treats to the office before 9:00 a.m. or to the class at lunchtime. As you can understand, party invitations are not suitable for distribution at school. Social arrangements should be made from home to avoid hurt feelings and to minimize distractions from the school's academic focus. The Gunston PTA directory is a great resource for names and addresses.

Join Your Child for Lunch!

No advance notice is needed; just check in at the office and meet your child's class in the lobby. Adult lunches cost \$3.15.



Change in transportation plans? Remember to send a note to the teacher.

t r a n s p o r t a t i o n

Children thrive on the consistency of a routine. You should make changes in transportation only when necessary. If you require a change, such as riding a different bus or walking home with a friend or meeting a parent at the Kiss and Ride site, send a note to your child's teacher on the morning of the change. If student is visiting a friend, **both students must bring permission notes from their parents.** Buses operate at capacity and cannot accommodate extra passengers. Play dates should be arranged after your child has arrived home.

For the safety of all children, students may not ride skateboards or scooters to school.

Kiss and Ride (8:15-8:25 a.m. and 3:00-3:10 p.m.)

We will continue to use entrance #3 and ask that you abide by the following:

- Obtain your Kiss and Ride tag from the main office.
- Drop your child off only in the Kiss and Ride traffic pattern.
- Pull your car forward as far as possible in the line.
- Make sure that your child exits your car on the building side.
- Do not pass other cars in line.
- Refrain from using the bus access lane in front of the school.
- Parents please remain in your cars.
- Students are not to be dropped off before 8:15 a.m.

Note: To minimize traffic in the bus lanes in front of the school, Kiss and Ride remains open until 8:25 a.m. Afterwards please drop off students in the front of the building. Students are not to be crossed on Gunston Road.

Bus Riders and Walkers

FCPS provides bus transportation for students who reside more than a mile from school. Check with the school office for exceptions. Bus riders should follow these guidelines:

- Refrain from crossing or playing on private property.
- Cooperate with the safety patrols and obey the bus drivers.
- Arrive at the bus stop five to ten minutes before the scheduled pickup time.
- Remain seated and talk quietly after boarding the bus.

Walking students must use designated paths or sidewalks where safety patrols are stationed and are not to cross Gunston Road.

Parking and Picking Up Children

Virginia state law forbids the passing of a school bus that is loading or unloading children; this law applies on school grounds, too. We do not allow parking in front of the school during arrival and dismissal. To avoid being blocked in by the buses, you should avoid parking in front of the school after 2:30 p.m. (noon on Mondays).

Field Trips

During the school year, classes may take field trips that relate directly to the regular instructional program. We send permission slips home prior to the trip, and parents must return them to the school no later than the day before the scheduled trip. We cannot accept verbal permission. Gunston often asks parents to help chaperon field trips. For safety and insurance reasons, younger siblings may not accompany chaperoning parents on field trips.

Calendars for each school year are available at www.fcps.edu/cal.htm

your child

Discipline

Gunston ES staff is committed to the success of all students and implements a positive behavior support program in which students are recognized with “Eagle Tickets” for demonstrating appropriate behavior. We expect students to respect the rights and privileges of others and accept responsibility for their own actions and the consequences of their behavior. The principal and assistant principal will review the FCPS Regulation 2610 and the Student Responsibilities and Rights booklet with all students during the first week of school. It is essential that you support your child by taking time to carefully review these regulations and guidelines with him/her when you receive a copy.

The “**Turn Around Room**” is another component of our discipline program. The room is used for students who require a time out due to disruptive and inappropriate behaviors. When needed students spend a short period of time there to regroup and complete an action plan for self-improvement and their classroom assignment. You will be notified if your child is sent to the Turn Around Room.

Homework

Homework is a key point of contact between home and school. Parents should create a home environment that reinforces the school message that education is important and that life is enriched by learning. Homework is assigned to reinforce skills taught in the classroom and to enrich the school experience. Teachers decide on the amount and type of work considering the level, maturity, and ability of the child. The responsibility for homework gradually increases for students in grades 1

through 6. Your child is expected to read daily (or be read to) for an amount of time determined by the teacher. Each student is given an assignment book and is responsible for recording assignments and bringing it daily.

The Parent Resource page on the FCPS website offers links to valuable information, including the Fairfax County Public Library homework and student support. Go to www.fcps.edu/parents.htm.

Gunston Partners Tutoring Program

The Gunston Partners Tutoring Program, located at Pohick Episcopal Church (corner of Richmond Highway and Old Colchester Road), is an outstanding evening program for Gunston ES students. The basic goal is to provide one hour a week of concentrated academic assistance and skill building to aid our students’ success. Gunston ES teachers collaborate with the tutoring staff providing weekly focuses and assignments in areas of need. Students are recommended by their classroom teachers. Registration begins in September and sessions start in October. Parents are responsible for transportation.

Parties

Room parents and your child’s classroom teacher make the arrangements for the class parties, which are limited to two per year (end of the year and one additional one). Room parents may request a one-time donation from families to help defray costs.

Personal Property

FCPS does not assume responsibility for the personal property of students and does not purchase insurance for their property. Gunston Elementary urges parents and students to carefully consider the types and value of property taken to school, especially items with monetary or sentimental value. Electronic games, music devices, etc. are not allowed at school. Unidentified articles found in the school are placed in a designated location.

School Clothes

We expect students to come to school dressed in proper attire for school activities. Clothing should fit, be neat and clean, and conform to standards of decency. We do not permit:

- Clothing with improper language or images.
- Sagging or low-cut pants
- Tank tops, midriff tops, low-cut necklines, tube tops, halter tops, backless blouses, shirts with see through material, or short shorts.
- Head coverings, such as scarves or bandannas, unless required for religious or medical reasons.

Tennis shoes or shoes with rubber soles are necessary for physical education classes and active recess play. To prevent scarring the floor, white sole shoes are preferred.

Student Progress Reports

The school year is divided into four nine-week grading periods. At the end of the first nine week period, your child's teacher will schedule a conference with you to discuss your child's progress. Shortly after each grading period, you will receive a printed Progress Report.

Visitors and Security

Gunston welcomes parents at all times during the school day. All parents and guests are required to stop at the main office to sign in and receive a badge to wear when visiting the school. We do not permit younger children, friends of students, or students from other schools to visit classrooms except with the principal's approval. Prior notice is strongly encouraged in efforts to maximize instructional time without distractions.

Volunteers

Gunston Elementary School enjoys the support of an extensive volunteer program. Typically, volunteers work with students, assist in the library, help with art projects, perform clerical jobs, prepare instructional materials, or work on Parent Teacher Association (PTA) projects. You may sign up at Back-to-School Night or contact your child's teacher, the school office, or a PTA officer to participate.

Go to www.fcps.edu/ocr/fcallphone.htm for frequently called phone numbers for FCPS services and programs.

resources

Communicating with our Gunston Elementary Parents

Parents can find the latest news about school events and happenings via the:

- Gunston Friday Folder. Check your child's folder weekly.
- FCPS 24-7 Parent View at <http://fcps.blackboard.com> for online access to class information for your child.
- School home page at www.fcps.edu/GunstonES/.
- Keep in Touch e-mail system. Subscribe to this helpful service provided by FCPS at <https://fcps.medianext.com/fcps/signup.html>
- Gunston's newsletter-distributed monthly to all students and available on the Gunston web site.

Your Participation Counts!

Research shows that students achieve academic goals and learn essential life skills and responsibility to the community when parents and teachers build partnerships of trust and collaboration. Gunston Elementary invites our parents to:

- Attend open house prior to the first day of school to meet your child's teacher and see your child's classroom for the new school year.
- Attend Back to School Night to see an overview of your child's school year.
- Attend your child's Parent-Teacher Conference to discuss your child's progress with his or her teacher.
- Volunteer in your child's classroom. Your child's teacher can provide you with opportunities.
- Join your child in all of the special events and activities our school sponsors each year; such as Halloween and Valentine Bingo, International Night, Fun Fair, etc.