

**POPLAR TREE
ELEMENTARY**
"Home of the Panthers"



**STUDENT/PARENT
HANDBOOK
2009-2010**

*"What we believe, is what we
achieve...so soar."*

WELCOME!

Dear Students, Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to the 2009-2010 school year at Poplar Tree Elementary School. This handbook is provided to you to assist us in making our school operations run smoothly.

Poplar Tree dedicates itself to the belief that all children can and will learn. Our mission is to meet the needs of all students by creating an environment that fosters student achievement and literacy, builds character, and honors diversity.

With a strong home-school connection, together we can build character in the children. Help us by using the words at home that our mascot, R2ICH the panther, uses here at school:

Respect
Responsibility
Integrity
Caring
Honesty

Poplar Tree affirms its commitment to helping all students attain their fullest potential.

Please read this handbook carefully and work with us to ensure a safe and orderly environment for learning.

Sharon S. Williams
Principal
and Staff

POPLAR TREE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

13440 MELVILLE LANE

CHANTILLY, VA 20151

(703) 633-7400

(703) 633-7497 Fax

(703) 633-7474 Attendance

(703) 633-7421 Cafeteria

(703) 633-7460 SACC

Administrators

Principal – Mrs. Sharon Smith Williams
Assistant Principal – Mr. Jason Pensler

Office Staff

Maryann Casterline
Kathy Dennis
Kathy Palermo
Betty Rotenberger
Lynn Kiewel, School Health Aide

PTA Officers

President – Christy McFerren
First Vice-President – Jacqueline Woods
Second Vice-President – Carol Cleveland
Secretary – Erica Marsh
Treasurer – Christine Klosky

Cafeteria

Cafeteria Manager - Liz Cunningham

Cafeteria Hostesses

Zenab Deria
Ione Neves

Custodial Supervisors

Building Supervisor - Gary King
Ass't. Building Supervisor – Suh Suh

SAFETY AND SECURITY PLAN

We have a welcoming atmosphere at Poplar Tree, and parents are invited to participate in their children's learning. Volunteers are welcome and encouraged. It is imperative, however, that all adults when coming into the office, sign in and get a badge. Please read the general security measures below.

The following safeguards and security measures are in use at Poplar Tree School:

1. Building entry is limited to the main door entrance. All other exit doors are locked or closely monitored during recess.
2. A sign at the main door reads:

**Welcome to our school.
All visitors must report to the
main office.**

A sign at the other school entrances reads:

In order to ensure the safety of all our students, this door will remain locked. All visitors are asked to enter the building through the front doors and to report to the office.

3. Visitors' badges are issued from the office. Visitors, parents, volunteers, school personnel, and others are required to report to the office, and to sign the register and receive a visitor's badge. Visitors must sign out and return badges to the office.

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2009-2010 SCHOOL CALENDAR

First Grading Period

September 8	School Begins
October 12	Columbus Day - No School
October 30	<i>First Grading Period Ends</i>
November 2-3	Student Holidays- No School

Second Grading Period

November 4	<i>Second Grading Period Begins</i>
November 25	Two-hour early closing
November 26-27	Thanksgiving- No School
December 23	Two-hour early release
Dec. 24-Jan. 1	Winter Vacation
January 4	Students Return to School
January 18	Dr. Martin Luther King's Birthday Holiday- No School
January 28	<i>Second Grading Period Ends</i>
Jan. 29&Feb. 1	Student Holiday/Teacher Workday- No School

Third Grading Period

February 2	<i>Third Grading Period Begins</i>
February 15	George Washington's Birthday Presidents' Day Holiday- No School
Mar. 29-Apr. 2	Spring Vacation- No School
April 5	Students Return to School
April 9	<i>Third Grading Period Ends</i>
April 12	Teacher Workday- No School

Fourth Grading Period

April 13	<i>Fourth Grading Period Begins</i>
May 28	Memorial Day- No School
June 22	Last Day of School**

*This date is subject to change if any days are lost during the school year because of inclement weather. The make-up schedule is as follows: days missed-1, 2, and 3 will not be made up. Day 4 make-up on Feb. 15; day 5 make-up on April 12; day 6 will not be made up; day 7 make-up on June 23; day 8 will not be made up; day 9 will be made up on June 24; and day 10 will not be made up.

BELL SCHEDULE

<u>General Education</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tues.-Friday</u>
Grades K – 6	8:35-12:45	8:35-3:15

Students may not be dropped off at school before 8:15 AM. There is no supervision until 8:15 AM.

LATE ARRIVALS

Students arriving late to school must be escorted to the office by an adult to pick up their tardy cards. The tardy card is to be given to the teacher when the student enters the classroom.

ATTENDANCE, ABSENCES, AND TARDIES

Research has shown that there is a strong correlation between successful school performance and attendance at school. Student absences are recorded as excused or unexcused. The current version of FCPS' Regulation 2234 defines excused and unexcused absences as the following:

Excused absences may include:

- Illness of the student
- Death in the family
- Doctor or dentist appointment
- Observance of a religious holiday
- Suspension except for certain violations
- Another reason acceptable by the principal or designee

Unexcused absences may include:

- Family and/or student vacations
- Child care situations
- Missed school bus
- Nonschool-related activities
- Other reasons unacceptable by the principal or designee

Parents and guardians must notify the school when a child is absent. For a prearranged absence from school, late arrival, or early dismissal, please inform the school by writing a note. If your child becomes ill late at night or in the morning, please leave a message on the answering machine (703-633-7474). The answering machine is on from 4:00 p.m. until 7:30 a.m. After 7:30 a.m., call the main number at 703-633-7400. Please call in your child's absence by 8:30 a.m. All absences must be verified by the school.

SCHOOL CLOSING/LATE OPENING/

EARLY DISMISSAL

Schools Are Closed for the Day:

- All extracurricular activities will be canceled.
- Adult evening classes and recreation programs will be canceled.
- Extended Day Care and SACC Centers will be closed all day.

Schools Are Closed Two Hours Early:

- The announcement will be made by 10:30 a.m.
- If it is on a Monday, elementary schools will close two or more hours earlier than their Tuesday through Friday time.
- Early Childhood Education Programs will be dismissed earlier than the usual Tuesday through Friday schedule.
- Extracurricular activities and Adult Programs will be canceled.
- Extended Day Care and SACC Centers will remain open until 6:15 p.m.

Schools Are Opened Two Hours Late:

- If it is on a Monday, elementary schools will close at their usual Tuesday through Friday schedule
- Extended Day Care and SACC Centers will open by 8:00 a.m., when possible.
- Early Childhood Education Programs will be canceled.
- Breakfast will be canceled.

***When FCPS have a schedule change (closing or delay) due to inclement weather or other emergencies, the information is communicated as soon as the decision is made in these ways: Posted on TV Channel 21 (Cox Communications and Reston Comcast cable customers only); Recorded on the FCPS hot line, 800-839-FCPS (3277), in English, Korean, and Spanish; Sent via e-mail to subscribers to the [Keep in Touch e-mail notification system](#); Called in to area radio and television stations; and on www.fcps.edu.

VISITOR'S POLICY

Visitors to the school and classrooms are welcome. Poplar Tree Elementary adheres to the following procedures.

- Visitors may visit classrooms by appointment with the classroom teacher. Classroom observations are limited to no longer than 30 minutes.
- Visitors must sign in the office and take a visitor's badge.
- The maximum number of visitors at the same time during the day will be two visitors.
- Visitors are requested not to interrupt the instructional program while observing in the classroom.
- Visitors may consult with the teacher before or after classroom instructional hours.
- Please advise your child when you will be observing.
- Parents who are observing should refrain from becoming involved in the instruction/lesson.
- To avoid disruptions, parents are encouraged to volunteer to work with student groups that do not include their own child.
- If your child has left something at home that is needed at school, please bring it directly to the school office rather than taking the item to the classroom.

MAIN PARKING LOT

Office hours are from 7:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. During these hours, visitors may park in the front parking lot between the hours of 9:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

SCHOOL PHONE

Students may use the office phone only with permission from a teacher, administrator, or office personnel in case of an emergency.

We discourage students from calling home for forgotten lunches, lunch money, homework, musical instruments, or permission to visit a friend after school.

THE FCPS GRADING SCALE

Changes in the FCPS grading policy include a modified ten-point scale that uses pluses and minuses. The new grading scale is **not** retroactive and **will be implemented beginning September, 2009 for Grades 4-12.**

A (93-100) = 4.0	C+ (77-79) = 2.3
A- (90-92) = 3.7	C (73-76) = 2.0
B+ (87-89) = 3.3	C- (70-72) = 1.7
B (83-86) = 3.0	D+ (67-69) = 1.3
B- (80-82) = 2.7	D (64-66) = 1.0
	F (below 64) = 0.0

INTERIM/PROGRESS REPORTS SCHEDULE

First Grading Period:

Interims - October 9
Progress Reports - November 20

Second Grading Period:

Interims - December 11
Progress Reports - February 12

Third Grading Period:

Interims - March 12
Progress Reports - April 23

Fourth Grading Period:

Interims - May 14
Progress Reports - June 22

STUDENT RECOGNITIONS

1. Principal's Academic Honor Roll **Begins second quarter**

- Grades 5 and 6 only
- Outstanding achievement (A's and B's in mathematics, science, social studies and language arts)
- Outstanding effort (O's and G's in mathematics, science, social studies and language arts)

Students selected for the Principal's Academic Honor Roll will receive a certificate of recognition. Citizenship and Study Skills grades will not affect students from being on the Principal's Academic Honor Roll. Excellence in citizenship and study skills are an expectation Poplar Tree holds in high regards. Students who excel in citizenship and study skills will be acknowledged in their classroom on a regular basis.

2. Panther Pride Academic Honor Roll **Begins second quarter**

- Grades 5 and 6 only
- Outstanding achievement (A's and B's in mathematics, science, social studies and language arts)
- Outstanding effort (O's, G's, and S's in mathematics, science, social studies and language arts)

Students selected for the Panther Pride Academic Honor Roll will receive a certificate of recognition. Citizenship and Study Skills grades will not affect students from being on the Panther Pride Academic Honor Roll. Excellence in citizenship and study skills are an expectation Poplar Tree holds in high regards. Students who excel in citizenship and study skills will be acknowledged in their classroom on a regular basis.

3. Learning Celebrations will be held in June for grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 to recognize all students.

POPLAR TREE STUDENT PLEDGE

As a Poplar Tree Elementary School Student, I pledge to be . . .

Responsible and Respectful

- I will use appropriate language and tone of voice at all times.
- I will listen carefully and follow directions.
- I will respect the rights and property of others.
- I will be responsible in completing my assignments.

A Person of Integrity

- I will be fair, dependable, and someone others can trust.
- I will do my best work at all times.

A Caring Person

- I will show interest and concern for others.
- I will be helpful, kind, and considerate.

An Honest Person

- I will admit when I make a mistake or do something wrong.
- I will be truthful to others and myself.

In each of these ways I will build a positive reputation for Poplar Tree Elementary School and myself.*

*These behaviors and expectations are included in the rules of conduct and disciplinary procedures explained in the Fairfax County Public Schools Students Responsibilities and Rights booklet.

Please discuss these rules with your parents.

POPLAR TREE PANTHERS ARE R2ICH WITH CHARACTER

Responsibility! **R**espect! **I**ntegrity! **C**aring and **H**onesty! Our school encourages and builds these character traits. They are keys to successful learning and the heart of our positive and safe school environment. We draw from, and build on, being **R2ICH** with character that includes:

Responsibility – We are dependable and accountable; we do not give up easily.

Respect – We treat others and ourselves fairly; we understand and appreciate differences.

Integrity – We stand for what is right and good; we act with purpose and courage and exercise self-control.

Caring – We recognize and appreciate the feelings of others; we help each other.

Honesty – We are truthful and trustworthy.

Poplar Tree Panthers apply these character traits in school and in everyday life.

**R2ICH
A
R
E
S**

ELEMENTARY COUNSELING PROGRAMS

Poplar Tree Elementary School has two full-time counselors. Both counselors work directly with students in individual and small group counseling sessions, as well as in classroom guidance lessons. Counselors can help students to:

- build positive feelings about themselves and others;
- develop positive feelings about work, family, and society;
- adjust to a new school and make new friends;
- develop skills in communicating with others;
- establish effective study skills;
- become more successful in school;
- cope with changes that occur in their lives;
- become more responsible for their own behavior;
- express their feelings in acceptable ways; and
- identify and accept their own strengths and weaknesses.

The counselors at Poplar Tree also work with parents, teachers, and other staff members to help students experience success and happiness during the elementary school years. Students can be referred to their school counselor by parents, teachers, or other staff members. Students can also refer themselves directly to their school counselor for assistance.

SCA (STUDENT COUNCIL ASSOCIATION)

Two students from each class in grades 1-6 serve on the student council. Only fourth, fifth and sixth grade students are elected to hold office.

The purpose of the SCA is to foster and nurture leadership skills in the children.

SCA activities include sponsoring student activities such as Crazy Hat Day, conducting a canned food drive, etc.

CAFETERIA

- A complete lunch includes one entrée, choice of two different vegetables and/or fruits, bread, and choice of milk. Daily milk choices include 1% chocolate, 1% unflavored, or skim @ 60¢.
- Vanilla Soy Milk is available upon request @ 75¢.
- Yogurt Lunch includes: yogurt, string cheese, crackers, two vegetables or fruits, and milk.
- Vegetarian options available daily. Offer vs. Serve allows students to refuse meat entrée and request additional vegetables, fruit, and bread items.
- Entrees containing pork are indicated by the pig on the menu.
- Menus Subject to Change Due to Availability of Foods and Emergency School Closings.

Students without lunch money will be offered a courtesy meal from the Principal's Lunch Fund in lieu of the daily lunch menu options.

PRICES

- Students can purchase only one breakfast (\$1.50) and one lunch (\$2.65) per day.
- Additional meals are available at adult prices (breakfast \$1.95 and lunch \$3.65) or a la carte, whichever is less.
- Students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch (40¢) receive breakfast free or at a reduced-price (30¢).

THREE WAYS TO PURCHASE MEALS:

1. ONLINE USING www.myLunchMoney.com

- o The service is easy to use, convenient, private and secure. There is a \$1.95 convenience fee.
- o Once the account is open, parents may check the fund account at anytime.

2. CHECK

- o Make checks payable to Poplar Tree Elementary Food Services and bring the check to the food service manager's office.
- o A local address and phone number are required to be either printed or handwritten on the check.
- o The student name and PIN number are required on the check memo line.

3. CASH

- o Cash may be brought to the food service manager's office for deposit on student's account.
- o Students may pay cash on a daily basis.

Important Notice!

- o Please remind your children not to share their personal identification number (PIN) with their friends.

BAND AND STRINGS

Students in fifth and sixth grades may receive instruction in band, and students in fourth through sixth grades may receive strings instruction. Students who participate in these programs must have the approval of the principal, teacher, and parent. Students will have the opportunity to perform in concerts during the year.



Students are responsible for classroom assignments they may miss during practice.

HOMEWORK

The purpose of assigned homework is to help students learn to work independently, to strengthen skills which have been taught, and to complete projects. Students are expected to complete all assignments as assigned by the teacher.

In the primary grades (1-3), on the average, homework assignments should not exceed thirty minutes. In grades 4-6, homework assignments should not exceed one hour.

Set aside a quiet time each evening for homework or reading for pleasure.



LIBRARY

Our library is open to all students during school hours. Teacher approval is needed by students to visit the library on an as needed basis. Special Ed., Kindergarten, and Grade 1 are scheduled to visit the library once each week for stories and checkout time. Grades 2 and 3 are scheduled every other week. Grades 4 – 6 use a flexible schedule arranged by the teacher and librarian.

It is recommended that kindergarten students check out one item at a time. Students in grades 1-6 may check out two items. If a student needs materials for research or a project, he/she may exceed the two-item limit. There are no overdue fines; however, students are billed for damaged or lost materials at replacement cost.

Available for checkout are a wide variety of fiction and nonfiction books, book and cassette tape sets, and magazines. During school hours, students have access to the reference section, audiovisual materials, computer software, and CD-ROM programs in the library and in the classroom.

Students can access our collection using the on-line catalog terminals. Using the INLEX software, students can search by author, title, or subject to locate materials. Our library is networked with all Fairfax County Public Schools through the INLEX system, which allows us to honor interlibrary loans between schools. We also have the capability to access the Fairfax County Public Library System for students and teachers. At this time, we are not able to reserve books using INLEX with the public library system.

The Internet is available for student research using our on-line computers. Children in grades 4 – 6 are asked to abide by Poplar Tree School's Acceptable Use Policy when using the Internet.

Students in grades 4 – 6 are invited to apply to be a library helper. Library helpers work one morning each week from 8:40 – 9:00 a.m. shelving books. All students are encouraged to visit our library often to enjoy our wonderful collection of materials.

HEALTH ROOM

The School Health Aide's hours are Mondays 8:20 a.m. to 1:20 p.m. and Tuesdays through Fridays 8:20 a.m. to 3:20 p.m. Please see the School Health Aide for the proper county forms that must accompany any medicine that is to be kept at the school. No student is allowed to bring in his/her medicine to school, nor keep it on his/her person. Please call the clinic aide at **703-633-7410** for more information. If a child becomes ill at school, it is requested that the child is picked up from school by the designated person.



MEDICATION

If it is necessary for your child to take medication during the school day, please follow the following instructions:

1. Obtain a Fairfax County Public School Medication Administration Authorization Form from the clinic aide at school.
2. Medications may be either prescriptions or non-prescription (ointments, creams, drops, aspirin, cough drops, etc.)
3. All medications must be in a prescription bottle or the manufacturer's packaging.
4. An adult must bring all medication to school. **CHILDREN MAY NOT BRING MEDICATION TO AND FROM SCHOOL.**



BICYCLE RIDING REGULATIONS

If you ride your bike to school, you must observe all safety rules:

1. Bicycles should be walked across streets and on school grounds.
2. Bicycles are to be locked in the rack provided.
3. Riders should know and obey traffic regulations, use hand signals, and have control of the bike at all times.
4. Only one child to a bicycle.
5. Permission will be denied if regulations are violated.
6. Bicycle safety helmets are required by law.



**Only 4th through 6th graders are eligible to ride a bicycle to school. In addition, only those 4th-6th graders who would normally walk to school are eligible. No bus riders may opt to ride their bicycles. A Bicycle Permission Form must be filled out and signed by the student, parent, and principal before permission is granted to ride a bicycle to and from school.

BUS RIDING REGULATIONS

If you ride the bus, you are expected to observe the following rules:

1. Load and unload in an orderly manner.
2. Remain seated, talk quietly, keep all parts of the body inside bus windows.
3. It is forbidden to throw any objects from the bus and/or inside the bus.
4. Eating and/or gum chewing are not allowed on the bus.
5. You must ride the bus to which you have been assigned both to and from your designated pickup point.
6. The bus driver is in complete charge of the bus.

Bus safety rules and regulations apply not only to students who ride regularly to and from school each day, but also to those who ride buses on field trips and special excursions.

DRESS CODE GUIDELINES

All students are expected to dress appropriately. Any clothing that interferes with or disrupts the educational environment is unacceptable. Clothing with language that is vulgar, discriminatory or obscene, or that promotes or depicts weapons, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, drug paraphernalia, violence, or gang symbols 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, and clothing constructed of see-through materials. Students not complying with this code will be asked to cover the non-complying clothing, change clothes, or go home. Repeated infractions will result in disciplinary action.

WALKERS

Students are expected to cooperate fully with the crossing guard and safety patrols.

Students who walk to school are to observe the following safety rules:

1. Cross the street only where there is a traffic signal or someone to help – safety patrols or crossing guard.
2. Obey the crossing guard and safety patrols.
3. Walk on the sidewalk – do not run into the street after a ball or pet.
4. Refrain from crossing private property.
5. Do nothing that will intimidate another student while that student is en route to or from school.
6. Do not detour in any manner from the most direct route home.
7. Go directly home after school unless prior permission has been granted by parents to go elsewhere.
8. Report any unusual or suspicious events while en route to or from school to parents and/or to the school principal.

GOING HOME WITH FRIENDS

Any student planning to visit a friend after school must have a note from his/her parent giving permission to visit the friend, and permission to ride a different bus or walk. This also includes students who are having a friend visit after school. You must have a note of permission from your parent allowing you to bring a friend home. These rules are for bus riders and walkers. Remember that it takes TWO notes to change your regular after school plans!

PLAYGROUND SAFETY RULES

1. ALWAYS slide in sitting position, feet first. DO NOT run up the slide.
2. Hang from monkey bars with arms only. Never walk or crawl across the top of them.
3. Avoid running under the monkey bars when in use.
4. NEVER crawl under the clatter bridge.
5. Go through the tunnel, not on top of it.
6. Running and chasing games should be played on the grassy areas – NOT on the mulch.
7. NEVER walk or sit on top of the railings.
8. Stand or jump on the clatter bridge – NEVER sit while others are jumping.
9. Mulch stays on the ground, NOT in hands or in the air.
10. NO FLIPS over the high bars above the slides.
11. Report any injuries to the classroom teacher.
12. No more than two classes at a time on the playground.



SAFETY PATROLS

Students in the fifth and sixth grades are eligible, with the written permission of a parent or guardian and teacher recommendations to be a Safety Patrol. There are building and bus patrols, as well as patrols stationed at certain locations for walkers.

LOST AND FOUND

Students should keep track of their personal items (clothing, lunch boxes, etc.)

Lost items should be turned in to the office. Students who have lost items are to check the Lost and Found.

RADIOS, IPODS, AND ELECTRONIC GAMES

Radios, tape recorders, walkmans, toys, and electronic games are not allowed in school unless they are part of an instructional project and are authorized by a teacher. Do not bring any item to school that you would not be able to replace if it were lost.



HEELEYS

Students are prohibited from the wearing of shoes that contain wheels in the heel, better known as Heeleys. These shoes when use in school buildings can cause injury to self, other students and staff when the wearer looses control and slides into other individuals. These shoes were designed to be used outside in an area where children have lots of room to skate and with a helmet.



ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

Students are encouraged to become involved in all curriculum areas, including Science and Social Studies.

- Grade level celebrations throughout the school year allow students to participate in a variety of learning experiences. Some of these celebrations include Medieval Day, Colonial Day, Fairy Tale Dress-Up Day, and Hundred's Day.
- Science Expo is an evening for students to demonstrate their knowledge. Science experiments and other displays are featured.
- Heritage Night is an opportunity for students to share their heritage and culture with the Poplar Tree community. It is an evening celebration featuring foods, exhibits, games, and dance of countries worldwide.
- Winter music performance by 5th grade choral students.
- Spring music performance by 6th grade choral students.

PARENT VIEW AND KEEP IN TOUCH ON BLACKBOARD

Why

- You can connect to information in all of your children's blackboard accounts easily through one single login.
- You can update your Emergency Care Card information from your computer.
- You can register with Keep in Touch to get school information sent to your email, blackberry, and/or phone.

What you need to get started

- Student ID numbers for all your children
- An email address
- Computer with internet connection

For additional information, visit

<http://www.fcps.edu/kit/>

<http://www.fcps.edu/DIT/fcps247.html>

NOTES