

**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**2023-2024**

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## People You Will Want to Get to Know

Principal	<u>Danielle Ernst</u>
Assistant Principal	<u>Kimberly Jernigan</u>
School Secretary	<u>Stacy Boswell</u>
Academic Dean	<u>Virginia Suggs</u>
Counselor	<u>Chelsey Sawyer</u>
Media Center Specialist	<u>Shea Webster</u>
Front Office Clerk	<u>Candice Baugher</u>

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**Welcome to North Columbus Elementary;  
Home of the STARS!**

North Columbus Elementary School shares the vision and mission of the Muscogee County School District.

**Mission**

To inspire and equip all students to achieve unlimited potential.

**Vision**

The MCSD is a beacon of educational excellence where all are known, valued, and inspired.

**Values**

North Columbus Elementary fosters a healthy organization where...

- ❖ **WE** embrace equity and diversity
- ❖ **WE** hold ourselves and others to the same high standards
- ❖ **WE** commit to continuous learning and improvement
- ❖ **WE** treat everyone with dignity and respect

...as **WE** serve the needs of others.

**Strategic Anchors**

**WE** will make decisions ...

- ❖ that benefit student achievement
- ❖ that are fiscally responsible with an eye on Return on Investment
- ❖ that invest in stakeholders
- ❖ that promote equity and access

## **SCHOOL HOURS**

K-5th Grade Student	7:45-2:15	Teachers	7:15-2:45
Administration/Secretary	7:00-3:00	Clerk/Clinic Worker	7:00-3:00

## **APPOINTMENTS WITH ADMINISTRATION**

Administrators want to be available to parents as needed. If possible, please call to set up an appointment to speak to one of us. If you drop by, you may need to wait, or we may or may not be able to meet with you at that moment. Unless there is an emergency, most calls will be returned after students are dismissed or within 48 hours.

## **CHROMEBOOKS**

All students have been issued a Chromebook (to include case and charger) to use during the school day. Students must be responsible for their Chromebook/Case/Charger at all times. In an effort to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars, students must be responsible for the care of their Chromebook and not damage it in any way. Chromebooks are to be carried in a case at all times when not in use. Students who damage Chromebooks and/or accessories can be assessed a replacement fee as per Board (see MCSD Board Policy JS: Student Fees, Fines, and Charges).

### **Care and Use of School Property - Chromebooks, Textbooks, and Media Center Checkouts:**

Students will be held responsible for the proper care of all books, supplies, Chromebooks, and accessories or equipment furnished to them by the school. A student who defaces, damages, or loses school property shall be required to pay for the damage or loss(see MCSD Board Policy JS: Student Fees, Fines, and Charges).

A Parent/Student must pay all fees and fines owed to the school in a timely fashion. Parent/Student must clear all fines or fees during the year the fines are assessed. Fines must be paid/cleared where they were assessed and before moving to the next level in school.

## **ARRIVAL**

Please plan for your child(ren) to arrive by 7:45 AM each day, and remember to allow time for your child(ren) to walk to classrooms by 7:45 AM. Students who are not in their class at 7:45 will be marked tardy by the teacher. Morning drop-off procedures are as follows:

- Morning drop off time is officially from 7:15 AM to 7:45 AM. Car riders beginning arrival time will be at 7:15 to stagger between the bus riders and car riders arriving. Third, fourth and fifth

students should be dropped off in the back bus loop. All Pre-K, Kindergarten, first and second grade students should be dropped off in the front. **If there is not an adult or Safety Patrol out during morning drop off you must report to the front of the building, park your car and walk your student into the building. Thank you for helping us keep your child safe.**

- Opening car doors is a courtesy we try to offer, but once you are in the drop off zone please allow your students to open up the door and get out.
- When using the front entrance, you must drive all the way up to the side walk to drop your student off. Please do not let your student out before you reach the white line on the sidewalk. Students should not be dropped off anywhere else in the parking lot.
- When using the back bus loop please enter the drop-off zone by veering right towards Veterans and continue around the loop toward NCES. Cars will maintain one lane of traffic. Only the right lane will be used for student drop-off. This area will be marked by orange cones. All parent vehicles should stay within the coned lane. All students will exit the cars and enter the building via the Blue House at the end of the walkway.
- **Buses and daycare vans will have first priority in the bus loop/drop off area.** They will be the only vehicles allowed to go into the left lane for student drop off. If you are behind a bus/day care van you must allow them to completely unload their students before traffic can resume.
- **At 7:45 AM the front and back doors will be closed and locked.** Students and parents are asked to NOT knock on the back doors to gain entrance. Faculty and staff members have been advised to NOT open back doors after the back car rider's lane has closed. As a reminder, once there is no staff to receive students outside, parents must enter at the front of the building by ringing the doorbell by the front entrance and make a tardy pass for their student(s).
- Students are tardy at 7:45 AM and must be escorted into the front office by an adult via the front door of the building. Parents will enter the office and print out a tardy pass for their student. Students are not allowed to use the kiosk to get a tardy pass.
- Parents will not be allowed to enter the building via the back door (at any time).
- **All parents wishing to come into the building must use the front entrance.** Parents must park in the front parking lot and walk their children into the building. Please have your driver's license with you in case we need to sign you in.

## **BREAKFAST**

Breakfast begins at 7:15 AM. If your child will be eating breakfast and comes to school by car, please have them at school by 7:15 AM so he/she will have time to eat and get to class before the tardy bell rings. Breakfast ends at 7:45 AM.

## **DISMISSAL**

All passes into the building end at 1:40. This allows teachers to prepare for dismissal. All visitors must exit the building, proceed to their cars and get in the appropriate car line for your child's grade level.

STUDENT CHECKOUT ENDS AT 1:40 PM. Please plan for appointments and arrive before 1:40 PM to checkout or be prepared to wait until dismissal. Please have your driver's license with you to check your student(s) out. Do not call the office and ask for the teacher to have your child ready for your arrival; this is a disruption of instructional time. Please plan to arrive early enough to allow your child to prepare for departure once you have arrived on campus.

Please be observant and move cautiously while waiting to pick-up your child. **PLEASE**, no talking on your phone or texting while in the pick-up lines. Please avoid videotaping staff or students while in car line. Use of profanity will not be tolerated during dismissal or any other time on school premises. Focus on the children. Teachers will focus on supervising, loading, and moving the line quickly. **If you need to talk to your child's teacher, please wait until after dismissal or schedule a conference.**

## **CAR PICK-UP**

From the first day of school to the last day of school, each vehicle that picks up a student must have a pickup number displayed for easy viewing by the teachers. This number helps with safety and helps to locate your child(ren) quickly, load your vehicle, and get you on your way in a timely manner. This number will be given to you at registration. Each family will be given two of the same car numbers. Additional car tags can be purchased two for \$2.00 in the office. Please have exact change and we can only accept cash. Without a pickup number displayed, you will be directed to park in the parking lot. You then will need to go to the office to provide identification. NO EXCEPTIONS. **All students should be picked up by 2:30 at the latest.**

### **NO WALK UPS ARE ALLOWED. ALL STUDENTS MUST BE LOADED INTO A CAR.**

Grades Pre-K-2: Parent pick-up is in the front driveway (two lanes)

Grades 3-5: Parent pick-up in the back entrance (bus loading area)

Parents with children in BOTH groups should instruct the older child to meet the younger child at the front of the school for pick up. Please let the teachers know this will be the dismissal routine in written form. Older students are to remain seated and be a positive example for the younger students waiting to be picked up.

## **CHANGES IN A STUDENT'S TRANSPORTATION**

If there is a change in the way your child goes home, please send a signed and dated note with your child in the morning. Please do not email/text/fax this information to your child's teacher/school. He/she may not have time to check email/text messages before your child goes home. If it is an emergency, please call the school, and inform the office of the need for a change for that day. **PLEASE REMEMBER THAT EVEN IN AN EMERGENCY, THE PERSON PICKING YOUR CHILD UP FROM SCHOOL MUST BE ON THE YOUR CHILD'S "AUTHORIZED TO CHECK OUT" LIST THAT YOU COMPLETED ON THE REGISTRATION FORM. No changes will be relayed after 1:30 p.m.**

A change in bus stops on the same bus requires a written letter from a parent with prior approval from an administrator. Frequent requests or requests to ride a different bus cannot be approved.

## **STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

The 2004 Georgia General Assembly passed a new law which affects every public school student in the state of Georgia. The law, O.C.G.A. §20-2-690.1, provides penalties for any parent, guardian, or other person residing in Georgia who has control or charge of a child or children who violate this law after the School District serves notification. Any student of compulsory school age with five unexcused absences will be referred to the school social worker. Each day's violation of this law will subject the person notified to the following measures:

1. Fine of not less than \$25 and not greater than \$100
2. Imprisonment not to exceed 30 days
3. Community service
4. Any combination of the above penalties

When a student is absent from school, a written excuse is to be brought to school explaining the reason for the absence. This excuse is to be brought to school within three (3) school days of each absence, as required by school district policy. It is the responsibility of the parent, guardian, or person in control of a child to ensure that the school receives each and every written excuse. If a child was at a doctor's appointment, please provide the excuse from the doctor. Students with excessive excused sick absences may be asked for a doctor's excuses for future absences to be excused.

**North Columbus Elementary will only accept 6 handwritten excuses, from parents/guardians. If you exceed this number, you must send in a doctor's excuse.**

Each absence is entered as "unexcused" until a note is sent by the parent or guardian. At that time, a determination will be made as to whether or not the absence is excused. Any student with 5 or more unexcused absences will be referred to the school social worker for further action as outlined above.

Children may be temporarily excused from school (1) when they are personally ill and their attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others; (2) when in the immediate family there is a serious illness or death which would reasonably necessitate absence



from school; (3) on special and recognized religious holidays observed by their faith; (4) when mandated by order of governmental agencies (e.g., pre-induction physical examination for military service or court order); (5) with principal's approval of attendance at school related experiences. Family vacations will not be excused.

Every student receives a Student Behavior Code and Disciplinary Handbook, which describes the attendance policy adopted by the school district. The Muscogee County School District policy states that a student who misses more than 15 days in any class during the school year may not receive credit and may be retained in that grade level. NCES will schedule a retention meeting with the parent at the end of the school year for absences that exceed 15 days which includes excused and unexcused absences.

It is the responsibility of the student and parent, guardian, or person in control to read and understand the contents of the handbook. Also, for the purpose of monitoring school and class attendance, it is the responsibility of the parent, guardian, or person in control to initiate regular contact with school personnel to ensure that their child attends school and class regularly.

Makeup work is given upon the student's return to school only in the case of an excused absence. Teachers should not be asked for makeup work ahead of time for unexcused absences (including family vacations).

### **STUDENT TARDIES**

Students arriving at school after the 7:45 AM bell are tardy. At 7:45 AM, a parent or adult must come to the office with the student to sign them in. Students who are not in the classroom at 7:45 AM will be marked tardy by the teacher. Parents are allowed to write three tardy excuses per year if your child is tardy because he/she did not feel well that morning. Students who are consistently tardy will receive a letter and a referral will be made to the school social worker or a referral to support agencies outside the school system which may include the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS), Juvenile Court, Family Connection, or other external agencies. If your child had a doctor's appointment, please provide the excuse for the tardy to be counted as excused.

### **STUDENT CHECKOUTS**

Students leaving school for appointments, or if they become ill during the day, must be signed out in the office. Persons checking out a student must show their driver's license. Students will be released to individuals listed by the parent on the MCSD School Information form filled out during registration. Please notify the school any time this information changes during the year. You may notify the office by having the enrolling parent come into the office to make changes on the registration form. This cannot be done over the phone.

Any doctor's notes need to be turned in to the teacher for the check-out to be excused. If called

by the clinic, your child's checkout is excused but does count towards attendance. Student checkouts will not be permitted after 1:40 PM. If your child has an appointment please make arrangements to pick him/her up before 1:40 PM. The office will call the classroom for any student who is being checked out once the parent is on campus and has entered the front office. **Please do not call the office and ask us to have your child ready and waiting.** We are unable to interrupt class instruction to ask the teacher to have your child packed. Please plan your arrival to allow time for your child to prepare to go home. Parents are not to bring their child to the office from the classroom for checkout. **Please bring your driver's license with you for check-out.**

### **STUDENT WITHDRAWALS**

If a student is to be withdrawn from NCES, parents should notify the school office TWO DAYS IN ADVANCE (48 hours) to begin the withdrawal process.

### **SCHOOL TELEPHONE**

The school telephone is a business phone and can be used by the students only in the case of illness or emergency. The following suggestions are made for parents:

- Feel free to call the school to deliver a message to your child in case of an emergency or a real need.
- Have an understanding with your child in the morning as to how they are getting home in the afternoon (bus or parent pick-up).
- Changes in the way your child goes home should be **IN WRITING** to the teacher. Changes should not be made by phone or email.
- Students will not be allowed to call to ask if they may go home with a friend. If you wish your child to go home with someone, that arrangement should be made ahead of time in writing to the teacher.

**Students CANNOT be called from class to accept phone calls from parents.** As long as it is before 1:45, the front office will be glad to relay any message you may need to leave for your child.

### **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

We understand that parents want their students to have electronic devices such as cell phones, tablets and smartwatches. However, while at school, cell phones and tablets must remain turned off and in the student's backpack. Watches may remain on their person except during testing, when we take up all devices and store them in a secure location. Students may not use the devices while in the building, that includes smart watches. Parents please refrain from texting your student(s) that have smart watches. If the student is using their smart watch at school it will be taken up. All devices that are taken up will remain in a secure location until the parent is able to come pick it up from an administrator.

### **PAYMENTS SENT FROM HOME**

Please place all money sent from home to NCES in a sealed, labeled envelope. Please write your child's first and last name, classroom/homeroom teacher, the amount and what the

money is to be used for on the outside of the envelope. This will help with record keeping, and make money collection smoother for the teachers.

Please note NCES does not accept checks, debit/credit cards or money orders. Please send cash only and in exact change.

### **PARENT PORTAL**

To access the Parent Portal, you need to have been assigned your child(ren)'s activation code. If you did not do this last year, please come into the office and we will help you. Only a parent/guardian may pick this up and you must present your driver's license. Please keep your password written down somewhere as you will use the same user login and password every year. You only need to do this once, so if you got it last year, you will use the same number to access your child(ren)'s grades on-line. This is an excellent way to keep up with your child(ren)'s grades, missing assignments, etc. If you need your login/ password, you must provide a driver's license at the school to receive/reset it. We can do this via email or in-person.

MCSD has established that daily assignments and test grades will be entered into the Parent Portal within five (5) school days. Major projects/units will be entered into the Parent Portal within ten (10) school days. If, due to complications, a teacher needs to make modifications to this schedule, then he/she will address those modifications in the message section on the Parent Portal.

### **COMMUNICATION**

We will communicate with families through Blackboard Connect and Class Dojo. All formal communication will come through Blackboard Connect. Blackboard Connect pulls from your contact information in Infinite Campus. We keep our school website updated at all times. Our school website is: <https://sites.muscogee.k12.ga.us/northcolumbus/>

- Bus updates will go through Dojo.

### **DRESS CODE**

Student dress at NCES is expected to reflect self-pride and pride in our school. The staff at NCES believes it is in the best interests of the students and the instructional program that dress code guidelines are set for the students. It is the responsibility of the student and parent to ensure that the dress code is observed. It is the responsibility of the teachers and administrators to ensure that the dress code is enforced. If your student is out of dress code, you will be called.

#### **Masks**

- Masks should have no words unless they support education (ie. Colleges, high schools, or NCES)
- Masks may have the student initials or name on them.

#### **Shirts**

- Undergarments should not be worn as outer garments.
- Midriffs should not be bare. Shirts must cover the midriff when the arms are raised.
- See-through shirts or blouses are not permitted.
- No tank tops, spaghetti straps, tube-tops, fishnet shirts, or body armor (tight form fitting)
- Nothing that advocates drugs, sex, alcohol, violence, gangs, hate, profanity, or degrading/negative/offensive wording is allowed (including negative attitude towards

school, family or self-worth)

### Pants and Shorts

- Pants should be worn on or above the waist.
- If pants can be worn properly on or above the waist, no belt is required.
- Pants with holes are not allowed.
- Shorts must not be more than three inches above the knee for 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students.
- Cut-off shorts are not allowed.
- Leggings/Jeggings are to be worn as undergarments only. They DO NOT take the place of pants when worn with tops.

### Dresses, Skirts, and Skorts

- Dresses, skirts, and skorts must not be more than three inches above the knee for 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students.
- If leggings are worn, dresses, skirts, and skorts must still follow the length requirements.

### Shoes

- Closed-toed shoes must be worn by all students each day. If the student has PE with the coach, tennis shoes must be worn that day. Crocs may be worn with the strap covering the heel. NO flip flop type shoes, slides or slippers may be worn.

### Hats

- Hats, gloves, hoods from coats/jackets, and caps may not be worn in the building.
- No stockings, doo-rags, sweatbands, or bandanas.

### Jewelry

- No jewelry with reference to gangs, drugs, hate, violence, or sex is allowed.
- Items such as large hoop-earrings, long dangling earrings, chains on a belt, wallet, etc. or items with spikes are not permitted.

### Costume Like Items

- No animal ears or tails permitted. This includes headbands with horns, ears, or costume-like attire.

ALL CLOTHING MUST FIT PROPERLY. NO OVERSIZED CLOTHING IS ALLOWED

## **DISCIPLINE HONOR CODE**

It is the philosophy at NCES that the purpose of discipline is to foster responsibility, independence, self-discipline and positive behavior. We believe it is important for students to realize that logical and natural consequences occur from the choices they make. It is our belief that a disciplined philosophy, when applied consistently by teachers and staff, will result in a wholesome atmosphere for teaching and learning.

## **DISCIPLINE GOALS**

- To provide a safe and consistent environment where children can learn reasonable rules, limits, and consequences, as well as the reasons for them

- To develop self-discipline and self-control
- To promote respect and appreciation for cultural differences
- To achieve and maintain academic excellence.
- To pursue a course of parental involvement that will make parents partners in achieving goals of a safe and well-disciplined school

### **SCHOOL RULES/CODE OF CONDUCT**

In order to provide a positive school climate that is safe, where students can attain their potential both academically and socially, NCES will enforce the following reasonable expectations of student conduct:

#### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

The conduct grade on the report card is determined by, but not limited to, the following behaviors:

- Shows self-control
- Listens to and follows instructions
- Obeys school rules
- Treats everyone with respect
- Respects rights and property of others
- Shows a positive/cooperative attitude
- Assumes responsibility for actions
- Controls talking
- Cafeteria behaviors/manners are appropriate
- Plays and interacts well with others

The teacher will notify parents by phone, e-mail, and/or in writing (assignment book) when constant inappropriate behavior occurs. The teacher will schedule a parent conference if any inappropriate behavior is continuous.

#### Violations and Behavioral Consequences

Behavioral consequences are stepped and sequential following the code of conduct:

##### Level 1 Violations

The following are handled by the teacher and include, but are not limited to:

- Horseplay, wrestling, clowning, acting out
- Name calling or verbal exchanges not involving profanity or threats
- Excessive talking
- Throwing objects in class (other than those which could cause injury)
- Pencil pops, spitballs
- Minor hall disruptions, out of class without a pass
- Possession of unauthorized objects/toys (other than drugs or weapons)
- Inappropriate behavior in the lunchroom (loud talking, playing with food, breaking in line etc.) or bathroom

- Continuous lack of instructional materials
- Dress code violations
- Cheating/Plagiarism

### Level 1 Interventions

Handled by the teacher as appropriate for the age and individual needs of the child

(Any other consequences or interventions used must be approved by the administration):

- Verbal warning
- Loss of conduct points
- Low profile intervention (classroom behavior system)
- Change of seating
- Discussion with grade level team
- Private conference with student
- Telephone call/email/written note to parents
- Denial of privileges
- Detention with the teacher
- Time out in another teacher's room
- Behavior contract
- Action plan
- POI (Pyramid of Interventions Tier I)

### Level 2 Violations

The following are violations which have consequences specified in the Muscogee County School District Student Behavior Code or which have more serious consequences. The student will be taken directly to the office.

- Repeated Level 1 infractions after a parent contact has been made
- Continuous major/disruptive behavior after a parent conference is held
- Bullying/Intimidation (MCSD Handbook)
- Fighting (exchange of blows with intent to do bodily harm), biting, spitting
- Horseplay, wrestling, pushing, scuffling, clowning, acting out, hitting, kicking
- Obscene or inappropriate language, gestures, or acts; profanity, abusive/disrespectful gestures and/or language
- Leaving class or designated area without permission
- Major insubordination (defiance of authority)
- Stealing
- Forgery or altering school forms or documents
- Damage to school property

### Level 2 Interventions

Handled by the administration as appropriate for the age and individual needs of the child, but not limited to:

- Conference with the parent (A phone call home to notify parents is considered a parent

conference.)

- Action Plan/Student conference with a verbal reprimand
- Behavior Plan
- Student written letter
- Referral to Counselor
- Detention with an administrator to do assigned classwork
- Loss of privileges
- After school detention with an administrator
- Parent required to sit in class with student
- Sent home for the day
- Suspension
- Referral to Discipline Tribunal

### Level 3 Violations/Critical Infractions

These are the most serious misbehaviors and may result in an automatic referral to the Disciplinary Tribunal at any time:

- Possession of toy guns/knives at the bus stop, on the bus, or at school.
- Continued bullying behavior/intimidation
- Possession of a firearm or deadly weapon
- Verbal threats or physical assaults toward students or staff
- Student assault or battery upon a student (fighting)
- Use of a dangerous weapon to intimidate or injure
- Substantial damage to personal or school property (vandalism)
- Issuance of a bomb threat
- Possession, sale, attempted sale, use of, or distribution of alcohol, controlled substances, and/or controlled paraphernalia
- Smoking, dipping, or possession of tobacco-related products such as lighters, matches
- Verbal threats (oral or written) of violence
- Sexual harassment
- Terroristic threats
- Willful or dangerous act such as throwing any object with intent to do harm; possession of or setting off firecrackers, stink or smoke bombs or setting fires
- False fire alarm
- Technology tampering/Inappropriate Internet use
- Possession of any dangerous items

### Level 3 Interventions

Handled by the administration or disciplinary tribunal

- Referral to the disciplinary tribunal (suspension until tribunal date set)
- Suspension

## **BULLYING**

MCSD and NCES prohibit bullying at school, at school functions, on school property, or in any manner which directly affects the learning environment.

PLEASE SEE THE MCSD POLICY IN THE *MCSD BEHAVIOR CODE AND DISCIPLINE HANDBOOK*. Your child(ren) has(have) received one of these, and it is also available on-line at [muscogee.k12.ga.us](http://muscogee.k12.ga.us).

## **MUSCOGEE COUNTY SCHOOL BUS POLICY**

See the *MCSD Behavior Code and Discipline Policy Handbook*. Your child(ren) has(have) received one of these, and it is also available on-line at [muscogee.k12.ga.us](http://muscogee.k12.ga.us).

## **VISITORS BUILDING, CAFETERIA AND CLASSROOM**

Visitors to NCES are welcome! We require that ALL visitors check in through the office and be properly identified by presenting your driver's license. You must do this before visiting a classroom, attending a meeting, going to the cafeteria or any other location in the building including being on the grounds. Visitors will be given a temporary pass to visit our school and campus. This pass must be worn at all times while visiting and returned to the office before leaving the campus. All campus visitors must be dressed appropriately, following the same standard of dress that is set for the students. At this time we are unable to accommodate visitors for lunch on an everyday basis. We are allowing parents to eat with their child on birthdays utilizing picnic tables.

Parental visitation in the classrooms is encouraged although there may be times when classroom visitation is limited. We do not currently let parents walk down students in the morning, so that teachers may begin instruction promptly at 7:45 AM . Any item being dropped off for a student should be left in the front office. Please note that teachers arrive in the mornings early to prepare for receiving students. This is not the proper time to have a parent conference. Teachers need to be focused on receiving their students. If you would like a parent conference please schedule one with the teacher. Mornings and afternoon pick-up are not proper times to have a parent conference. If you show for an unscheduled conference, the teacher may or may not be able to speak with you due to prior commitments. Please call or let your teacher know if you would like a parent/teacher conference and they will call you within 48 hours to schedule an appointment.

As teachers prepare for dismissal, all passes into the building end at 1:40. All visitors must exit the building, proceed to their cars and get in the appropriate car line for your child's grade level.



## **CLASSROOM PARTIES/BIRTHDAYS**

The Georgia Dept. of Education requires a specific amount of time each day to be used for instructional purposes. This time requirement allows for physical education time, lunch time, and a variety of other instructional activities. There will be a variety of celebrations conducted during the year which support and enhance the instructional program. As much as we would like to have the time to celebrate each child's birthday with a party, the time needed for instruction will not allow this. Please limit birthday celebrations to a small snack which can be served as part of the regularly scheduled lunch time. The small snack should be passed out to your child's class only. Please remember that the food items must be peanut free. If you are dropping off snacks or birthday items, we ask that you please drop them off to the office prior to the tardy bell and the teacher will come pick it up during their planning time or on the way to lunch or snack time. Flowers, presents and/or balloons will not be sent to any classroom and they cannot be taken on a bus. Also, please DO NOT put signs on NCES' campus wishing your child a "Happy Birthday". If there is a sign placed on NCES' campus it will be removed by administration or school personnel. Student party invitations may not be distributed at school unless all students in the class are given invitations. NO EXCEPTIONS.

### **DROPPING OFF ITEMS**

Parents: Since we are a large school, we ask that you please make sure that your student(s) have all the items they need before coming to school. This would include book bags, lunch boxes, binders, jackets etc. If you are dropping off snacks or birthday items we ask that you please drop them off to the office prior to the tardy bell and the teacher will come pick it up prior to lunch or snack time. Teachers have asked that we try and not disrupt classes calling students to get forgotten items. We will offer a one time courtesy for a student to come pick up items.

### **ACADEMIC GRADES**

NCES operates on a nine-week academic grading period. At the midterm of a nine week period, each student will receive a midterm progress report. Report cards are issued to students at the end of each nine-weeks period. Students are to return the signed report card cover to their homeroom teacher. The grading scale approved by the Muscogee County School District for academics is as follows:

A = 100-90	(excellent progress)
B = 89-80	(above average progress)
C = 79-70	(average progress)
F = 69 and below	(unsatisfactory progress/failure)

### **AWARDS PROGRAM**

At the Awards Program held at the end of the school year, students are recognized with the presentation of trophies, medals and certificates. Students who have met specific criteria for each

award will be recognized at this time. The dress for this occasion is dressy, casual attire. Listed below are the criteria for each award:

- Principal's List – All A's on the report card for every grading period, no B's (this is not a yearly average but the face value of each grade for all four grading periods). This includes specials areas (P.E., music, and art).
- Honor Roll – All A's and B's on the report card for every grading period. No C's can be earned to receive this award. This includes specials areas (P.E., music, and art).
- Life Skill Award – Each teacher selects a student as the overall good citizen for the year.
- Excellence in Academics Awards – For the five academic areas (math, language arts, reading, social studies, and science), each teacher will select a student who strives for excellence and exhibits a passion for learning in the respective subjects.
- Excellence in Music/Physical Education/Art Awards – One top male and one top female student from each class will be selected for outstanding performance in each area.
- Most Outstanding 5th Grade Student – Presented to the most all around student in the fifth grade who has most exemplified the spirit of NCES Elementary School students academically, through their character, as a role-model, etc. This award is voted on and selected by fifth grade teachers and the Principal.
- Perfect Attendance – Perfect attendance is when your student is at school all day every day. We will present a Perfect Attendance award to students who fall under the following parameters. Absolutely no absences, unexcused tardies, or early check-outs. No more than three EXCUSED tardies (with a doctor excuse note) or three EXCUSED check-outs (with a doctor excuse note).
- Accelerated Reader Award – Presented to the student who, within his/her class, has the most accelerated reader points earned within their ZPD (reading ability) with a passing average of 85% or higher. A special recognition will be given to the student with the MOST overall A/R points within their ZPD and an 85% or higher average.
- Reading Growth Award: Presented to the students who made a years worth of growth as determined by reading program usage (Lexia, Achieve, STAR Reading, etc).
- Doreen Sears: Presented to the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade who has shown the most gains in reading during the school year.
- Non-fiction club: Students must take 25 A.R. tests on their reading level and score 80% or higher. Students have the opportunity to make it into the 25, 50, 75, 100 non-fiction club!
- Hall of Fame: Students must score 80% or higher on AR tests. Kindergarten goal is 20 points, first grade is 30 points, second grade is 45 points, third grade is 60 points, fourth grade is 80 points, fifth grade is 100 points.
- Math Growth Award: Presented to the students who had a years worth of growth as determined by math program usage (IXL, STAR Math, etc).

## GIFTED EDUCATION

Gifted education is provided for all students, K-12, who have the potential for exceptional academic achievement. To be eligible for gifted education services, a student must meet specific criteria established by the State Board of Education.

To have a student evaluated for gifted education, two forms should be completed and returned to Programs for the Gifted. The parent should complete the "Parent Referral" and return it to the school. The school will complete the "Teacher Referral". The student will be scheduled for evaluation after these forms are received. (Forms are available at <https://mcsd.instructure.com/courses/156351/pages/admissions>)

## NCES CLUBS

We are fortunate enough to have wonderful teachers who volunteer to host after school clubs. This is done on the teacher's personal time. Students participating in any after school club must be picked up on time. If a student is picked up 10 minutes late or more, they are automatically removed from the club. If a student is picked up late more than once (even if it is a few minutes late), they will be removed from the club after the second offense.

## NCES RECOGNIZES STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

### STARS ARE THE GREATEST STUDENTS!

Throughout the year, we recognize students for achievements in many different ways. Listed below are examples of student recognition:

- **Life Skill Winner of the Month** – Selected each month by each teacher and given a certificate and group picture displayed in the hallway.
- **Non-fiction Book Club** - Students must take 25 A.R. test on their reading level and score 80% or higher. Students have the opportunity to make it into the 25, 50, 75, 100 non-fiction club! Students will receive a star on the wall and a pencil.
- **Principal's List** - Students who maintain an "A" average, 90 or above in all academic and conduct areas will be recognized quarterly with a lanyard and pen.
- **Honor Roll:** Students who maintain a minimum of a "B" average, 80 or above in all academic and conduct areas will be recognized quarterly with a lanyard and pen.

## STUDENT TESTING AND ASSESSMENT

SGM's (Student Growth Measures) K-3 – All students in grades K-3<sup>rd</sup> will be given a test in various subject areas at the beginning of the school year. These same tests will be administered the last month of school to track the progress and growth of each child during the school year.

Georgia Milestone End of Grade Test (EOG) – In April, all students in grades 3, 4, and 5 are required to take the Georgia Milestone End of Grade Test. This is a summative test in the content areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

The Georgia Milestone End of Grade Test will include:

- open-ended (constructed-response) items in language arts and mathematics
- a writing component (in response to text) within the language arts assessment
- norm-referenced items in all content areas to complement the criterion-referenced information and to provide a national comparison.

The GA Milestones testing window is between April - May and could span the whole month. On testing days, testing will take place through the entire school day. To help North Columbus experience a successful and smooth testing window, please ensure that your child arrives at school on time (by 7:45 a.m.). Also, please be mindful of appointments during this month so that your student will be able to test with their peers. We ask that visitors please refrain from coming to the school during testing.

## School Nutrition Program (SNP)

### School Year 2023- 2024

**Mission Statement of the Muscogee County School Nutrition Program is to provide a nutrition program that will maintain and improve the health of school children and the educational community and encourage the development of sound nutritional habits that will foster academic success.**

USDA has regulations that the School Nutrition Program (SNP) has to meet to be in compliance with their guidelines. Caloric and nutrient requirements are based on age and grade. Also, MCSD Board Approved Wellness Program (EEE and EE-R) encourages and promotes healthy guidelines to be followed including, but not limited to, FDA standards for portion sizes and the elimination of the consumption of fried foods as well as foods containing > 35 % sugar by weight. School lunches also offer a variety of foods, whole grains, and fat free and low-fat milk choices. Muscogee County School District shall abide by nutrient standards of the School Nutrition Program for all foods sold and served on campus during the school day. The sale of foods or beverages to students on school premises other than through SNP is prohibited from 12:01 a.m. until 30 minutes after the end

of the school day. Food shall not be used as a reward or punishment. The use of candy and other food rewards for academic performance or good behavior is prohibited. Fundraising efforts shall be supportive of healthy eating, encouraging the sale of non-food items or nutrient dense foods. USDA regulations ban the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value.

The School Nutrition Program provides a healthy breakfast and lunch choice for students every day. Students may bring their own lunches from home. Restaurant containers are not allowed in the cafeteria. Parents are encouraged to have lunch with their children and a school lunch may be purchased to eat in the cafeteria with the students.

School meals may be captured at the point of sale in a variety of ways. Pin pads or bar code scanners will be used.

### **Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)**

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) was established by Congress through the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, which reauthorized the Child Nutrition Programs. CEP aims to increase access to the School Meal Programs by offering breakfast and lunch at no charge to all students, without the need to process or collect individual free and reduced meal applications. Forty-one of our schools are CEP schools. Please contact your student's school office or call the School Nutrition Office at (706) 748-2386 to see if your student's school is a CEP school.

### **Non-CEP Schools:**

**Aaron Cohn Middle School**

**Blackmon Road Middle School**

**Britt David Magnet Academy**

**Clubview Elementary**

**Columbus High School**

**Double Churches Elementary**

**Eagle Ridge Elementary**

**Mathews Elementary**

**North Columbus Elementary**

**Northside High School**

**Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts**

**Veterans Middle School**

### **Free and Reduced Meal Priced Meal Applications (Non-CEP Schools Only): Continued**

#### **Free and Reduced Meal Priced Meal Applications (Non-CEP Schools Only):**






If your student is enrolled in one of the 12 Non-CEP schools (see list on previous page), a new application must be completed and approved every school year before your child can qualify for free or reduced-price meal benefits. For quicker processing, an online application is available at [www.myschoolapps.com](http://www.myschoolapps.com). If you prefer, a paper application is available upon request at your child's school or at the School Nutrition Office at 2960 Macon Road. If completing a paper application, we must receive the original since these applications are scanned. We cannot accept

a faxed or copied application. ONLY ONE application needs to be completed for your entire household. If someone receives SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) OR TANF, you must include the current CASE number on the application (NOT the EBT or food stamp card number) and indicate whether the program is SNAP or TANF. We receive thousands of applications every year. Completed applications are processed within 10 days. You will be notified with a letter regarding the outcome of your application.

**Applications CANNOT be approved if they are not completely filled out so please COMPLETE ALL REQUIRED FIELDS on the application. Until your application is approved, please provide your child(ren) with money to purchase meals.**

If you have an approved MCSD application from the previous year on file, benefits will be extended for the first 30 days of the new school year (or until a new eligibility determination is made, whichever comes first). After 30 days, your child's status will change to PAYING and they will be charged for meals until a new application is approved. If your application is denied or incomplete, please call our office with any questions at 706-748-2389. Applications can be submitted at any time throughout the year, especially if your income goes down, you lose your job, your family qualifies for SNAP or TANF benefits, or there is a change in your family size. *For quicker processing of meal benefit applications, the Family Meal Application is available online at [www.myschoolapps.com](http://www.myschoolapps.com). If you prefer, you may complete a paper application at your child's school or at the School Nutrition Office located at the Muscogee County Public Education Center, 2960 Macon Road. Computers will also be available in the School Nutrition Main office.*

**5 REASONS FOR COMPLETING  
Free & Reduced Applications**  
**ONE MEAL APPLICATION AFFECTS MANY AREAS!**

<b>1</b>  INCREASED FUNDING TO SUPPORT STUDENT EDUCATION	<b>2</b>  ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR TECHNOLOGY AND INTERNET ACCESS	<b>3</b>  DISCOUNTS FOR FEES ASSOCIATED WITH COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESSES	<b>4</b>  DISCOUNTED FEES FOR SAT, ACT & AP TESTS. SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES	<b>5</b>  FREE OR REDUCED MEAL PRICES FOR HEALTHY, NUTRITIOUS STUDENT MEALS
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**Contact your child's school for details today**

<b>BREAKFAST PRICES</b>	
Elementary, Paid	1.00
Middle/High, Paid	1.25
Reduced	.30
Adult, MCSD Staff Adult, Outside MCSD	1.75
Adult, Outside MCSD	2.00
<b>LUNCH PRICES</b>	
Elementary, Paid	2.45
Middle/High, Paid	2.70
Reduced	.40
Adult, MCSD Staff	4.00
Adult, Outside MCSD	4.50
Free and reduced priced meals for breakfast and lunch are available for eligible students. Parents may contact the School Nutrition Manager at any school for more information.	

### **Charging Meals**

Charging meals is discouraged, but may be necessary in certain cases. Elementary students will be allowed to charge a total of three breakfasts and three lunches. Middle and high school students will be allowed to charge a total of one breakfast and one lunch. If your child reaches his/her charge limit and does not have money in his/her account, and does not have cash with which to purchase their meal, an alternative meal will be provided. There is no provision for adults to charge. No charges will be accepted for a la carte items. Students will not be able to charge any meal after May 1<sup>st</sup> through the duration of the school year. It is necessary that all outstanding charges be paid to the cafeteria Manager prior to the last day of school.

**Please respond promptly to messages that you receive, both written and phone calls, regarding charges on your student's account.**

### **Menus**

Monthly menus can be found on your school's website. Menus may change on a very short notice due to supply chain issues, market conditions, deliveries, or special school activities.

### **Special Dietary Needs**

MCSD School Nutrition will make meal modifications and substitutions to the regular school meals for a student with a disability that restricts their diet. The Special Dietary Needs Prescription Form must be completed and signed by a licensed physician, unless the child has a healthcare plan or an IEP/504 Plan on file, and returned to MCSD School Nutrition Program, including the school cafeteria manager and the Nutrition Specialist before the school cafeteria can provide any modifications or substitutions. A form and instructions can be found on the School Nutrition page of the MCSD web site, or at the school clinic or cafeteria. You may contact the School Nutrition office at 706-748-2386 for more information.

A nutrition analysis chart for menu items is available on the website. Please be aware that there are factors that may affect a product's actual nutritional value and/or ingredient composition at any given time: Supply chain issues may cause substitutions; manufacturers' formulations may change without notice. USDA donated products may become available at any time during the year and may replace a purchased item. Product brands may change during the year as new bids are approved. Schools may be using inventory from a previous bid or manufacturer. Our recipes may change during the school year. A la carte snack items vary from school to school, so check with the Nutrition Manager at your student's school for specific information.

### **Seamless Summer Option**

SNP provides breakfast and lunch at various schools throughout the district during the summer. Please check the website or call 706-748-2386 for locations. All children up to 18 years of age receive a free meal. Adults may purchase a lunch.

**This institution is an equal opportunity provider.**

**Updated 6/5/2023**



## HEALTH SERVICES

First aid is given in the classroom, school office or by the school clinic worker. The clinic is staffed by a school clinic worker four hours a day. If there is a serious injury, parents or emergency contacts are notified and/or the family physician is called. Parents are notified when a student becomes ill at school. If the parents are unable to be reached we will call the emergency numbers listed on your registration paper filled out at the beginning of the school year.

All medication is administered to students and logged in the office. A release form must be filled out and signed by a parent for ALL medication. Medicine will be given only when a release form is signed and sent along with the medication container with the original label (including name, type of medication, physician's name, dosage, and instructions regarding medication to be administered). Students may not self-administer medication (prescription or non-prescription) and no medication will be given to students without the signed form. Students may not have any medicine (prescription or over the counter), eye/ear drops, lotion or cough drops etc. in their pocket, lunch box, purse, backpack, or classroom. Students with allergies that require an epi-pen, asthma that require an inhaler, or diabetic needs, must keep them in the clinic unless they have a MCSD permission to carry a form filled out by their physician.

## DRUG/SMOKE FREE SCHOOL ZONE

Legislation enacted by the General Assembly of Georgia makes it unlawful to manufacture, distribute, dispense, or possess a controlled substance in, on, or within 1000 feet of a school. **(This includes your personal vehicle)** Violation of this law is punishable by up to 20 years in prison and/or up to a \$20,000 fine. The Muscogee County School Board has enacted a policy making all school grounds smoke free zones. Smoking is not allowed by employees, students, or visitors.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire and disaster drills are a necessity and are not to be treated lightly. These drills will be held at irregular and unannounced intervals. All signals and procedures are rehearsed with students to provide the safest actions in the case of an emergency. In case Muscogee County is placed under a TORNADO WARNING, we ask that parents NOT come to pick up students or call the school during the WARNING. Emergency procedures will be followed. Shelter areas have been assigned to each classroom and all NCES personnel know what to do in an emergency. The driveway in front of the school and the telephone line must both be clear for emergency use during a tornado WARNING. In the event of a "lockdown" no one will enter or leave the building until it is determined safe by school officials and/or law enforcement. The MCSD and NCES have emergency/crisis management plans in place.

## **INTERNET USE**

Students at NCES will not be allowed independent access to the Internet. We believe that the Internet is a valuable tool for research and communication and we do have the technology to use on-line services. Such activities will always be under the supervision of an adult. Parents will be asked to sign an Internet Use Form allowing such research and for publication of student achievements and works.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field Trips are designed for a specific age group and to address the curriculum/standards required for that grade level. Please do not bring siblings to field trips in order to maximize the learning process. Many field trips are at locations that have limited seating or admission and we may not be able to accommodate parental attendance. Please check with the office or your child's teacher before planning to attend. You cannot check your child out during a field trip.

## **COUNSELING PROGRAM**

Counselor: Chelsey Sawyer

The NCES School Counseling Program follows the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) framework. ASCA supports focus on mindset and behavior, academic, career, and social-emotional development. The NCES School Counseling Program meets the needs of students through individual, small group, and whole group classroom counseling. Student needs are also met through consultation and collaboration with teachers, families, and other school personnel. The program strives to advocate for every student, using data to inform program decisions and ethical standards to guide work.

## **BEHAVIOR CODE AND DISCIPLINE POLICY BOOK**

For your convenience, the *Behavior Code and Discipline Policy Book* is accessible on-line at [muscogee.k12.ga.us](http://muscogee.k12.ga.us).

## **DISCLAIMER**

\*\*The administration reserves the right to determine the class and consequences for offenses not listed.

\*\*The administration reserves the right to change and/or alter consequences as deemed appropriate.

\*\*The administration reserves the right to change and/or alter policies and procedures stated in the NCES Handbook as deemed necessary and/or appropriate.

## **SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICIES**

Each student will be issued a copy of the *Muscogee County School District Behavior Code and Discipline Policy Book* during the first week of school. Parents should study that book with their children and understand that violations of School District policies may result in a hearing before the Superintendent's Disciplinary Tribunal.

**North Columbus Elementary does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age and provides equal access to all school programs and activities.**