

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2024-2025



GENERAL INFORMATION

People You Will Want to Get to Know

Principal	Danielle Ernst
Assistant Principal	Kimberly Jernigan
Assistant Principal	Dyanna Hardaway
Academic Dean	Ben Hale
Academic Dean	Carra Beyma
Counselor	Chelsey Sawyer
Media Center Specialist	Shea Webster
School Secretary	Candice Baugher
Attendance Clerk	Tania Mascorro

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

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

SCHOOL ENTRY

**Anyone entering the building must have their State ID per school district policy. We cannot accept Military ID's per the US Military because we cannot scan the ID's. **

APPOINTMENTS WITH ADMINISTRATION

Administrators want to be available to parents/guardians as needed. Please call or email to schedule an appointment to speak to the administration. If you drop by, you may need to wait, or they may or may not be available 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 (including a protective cover and charger) to use during the school day. Students must always be responsible for their Chromebooks and chargers. To be good stewards of taxpayer dollars, students must be accountable for caring for their Chromebook and not damaging it in any way. Chromebooks are to be carried in a case when not in use. Students who damage Chromebooks and/or accessories can be assessed a replacement fee as per the Board (see MCSD Board Policy JS: Student Fees, Fines, and Charges).

Care and Use of School Property—Chromebooks, Textbooks, and Media Center Checkouts:

Students are responsible for properly caring for all books, supplies, Chromebooks, and accessories or equipment furnished by the school. A student who defaces, damages, or loses school property must pay for the damage or loss (see MCSD Board Policy JS: Student Fees, Fines, and Charges).

A parent/guardian or student must pay all fees and fines owed to the school promptly. The parent/guardian or student must clear all fines or fees during the year the fines are assessed. Fines must be paid/cleared where they were assessed 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 **7:10 to 7:45 AM**. Car riders' beginning arrival time will be at 7:10 to stagger between the bus riders and car riders arriving. Third, fourth,

and fifth-grade 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 no adult or Safety Patrol is present during morning drop-off, you must report to the front, park your car, and walk your student into the building to give them a tardy slip. 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 the door and get out.
- When using the front entrance, you must drive up to the sidewalk 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 toward Veterans and continuing around the loop toward NCES. Cars will maintain one lane of traffic. Only the right lane will be used for student drop-off. Orange cones will mark this area. All 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 be the 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 or daycare van, you must allow them to unload their students before traffic can resume.
- **At 7:45 AM, the front and back doors will be closed and locked.** Students and their parents/guardians are asked NOT TO KNOCK on the back doors to gain entrance. Faculty and staff members have been advised not to open back doors after the back car rider's lane has closed. As a reminder, once there is no staff to receive students outside, the parent/guardian must park in a parking place, enter 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/Guardians will enter the office and print out a tardy pass for their student(s). Students are not allowed to use the kiosk to get a tardy pass.
- Parents/guardians will not be allowed to enter the building via the back door (at any time).
- **All parents/guardians wishing to enter the building must use the front entrance.** They must park in the front parking lot in a parking space and walk their children into the building. Please have your driver's license with you if we need to sign you in.

BREAKFAST

Breakfast begins at 7:15 AM. If your child eats breakfast and comes to school by car, please have them at school by 7:15 AM so he/she has 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, allowing teachers to prepare for dismissal. All visitors must exit the building, proceed to their cars, and enter 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 check or be prepared to wait until dismissal. Please bring your driver's license so you can check your student(s) out. Refrain from calling the office and asking the teacher to prepare your child for your arrival; this disrupts 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 do not talk** on your phone or text while in the pick-up lines. Please avoid videotaping staff or students while in the car line. Using 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 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. The number will be given to you at verification. Each family will be given two of the same car numbers. A sheet of additional car tags can be purchased for \$2.00 cash in the office. Please have the exact change, and we can only accept cash. Without a pickup number displayed, you will be directed to park in the front 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.**

NO WALK-UPS ARE ALLOWED UNLESS THE STUDENT IS ON PRE-APPROVED WALKER LIST. ALL OTHER STUDENTS MUST BE LOADED INTO A VEHICLE.

- Grades Pre-K-2: Pick-up is in the front driveway (two lanes)
- Grades 3-5: Pick-up in the back entrance (bus loading area)

Parents/Guardians 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 how your child goes home, please send a signed and dated note with your child in the morning. Please do not email/text/Dojo/fax this information to your child's teacher/school. He/she may not have time to check email/text/Dojo 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 YOUR CHILD'S "AUTHORIZED TO CHECK OUT" LIST THAT YOU COMPLETED DURING THE ONLINE REGISTRATION PROCESS. No changes will be accepted/relayed after 1:00 p.m.**

A change in bus stops on the same bus requires a written letter from a parent/guardian 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 excuse for future absences to be excused.

North Columbus Elementary will only accept 6 handwritten excuses from the parent/guardian. You must send in a doctor's excuse if you exceed this number.

Each absence is entered as "unexcused" until a note is sent by the parent/guardian. At that time, a determination will be made as to whether or not the absence is excused. Any student with 6 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 severe 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 parent/guardian may find the Muscogee County School District handbook on the website.

<https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/about-us-clone/families-students/student-services/student-discipline>

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/guardian 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 to prepare makeup work ahead of time for unexcused absences (including family vacations).

STUDENT TARDIES

Students arriving at school who are not in their seats at the 7:45 AM bell are tardy. At 7:45 AM, a parent/guardian or adult must come to the office with the student to sign them in. Students outside the classroom at 7:45 AM will be marked tardy by the teacher.

Parents/Guardians can 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.

ATTENDANCE CALLS

Attendance calls go out at **9:00 a.m.** every morning if your student is marked absent in Infinite Campus. We are sorry, but we cannot stop this call even if you let us know beforehand that your child will not be at school. If you receive the connect-ED call and your student is absent, calling the school back is not necessary.

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/guardian on the MCSD School Information form filled out during Online Registration. Please notify the school when you must change someone on your checkout list. You may notify the office by having the enrolling parent/guardian come to the office with their ID to change the registration form. This cannot be done over the phone.

Any doctor's notes that you have must be turned in to the teacher for the check-out to be excused. If the clinic calls you for your student to be picked up for vomiting, fever, diarrhea, or an injury that the school thinks needs to be checked out by a parent/guardian, your child's checkout is excused but does count towards attendance. Student checkouts will not be permitted after 1:30 PM. If your child has an appointment, please arrange to pick him/her up before 1:30 PM. The office will call the classroom for any student being checked out once the parent/guardian is on campus and has entered the front office with ID. **Please do not call the office and ask us to have your child ready and waiting.** We cannot interrupt class instruction by asking the teacher to have your child packed. Please plan your arrival to allow time for your child to prepare to go home. Parents/guardians are not to bring their child to the office from the classroom for checkout. Anyone checking out a student must have their State ID per MCSD school district policy. We are sorry, but we cannot accept military IDs (per the US Military) because we scan the IDs.

STUDENT WITHDRAWALS

If a student is to be withdrawn from NCES, parents/guardians 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 case of illness or emergency.

Students CANNOT be called from class to accept phone calls from parents/guardians. If it is before 1:00 PM, the front office will gladly relay any message you may need to leave for your child.

- We are unable to disclose certain student information over the phone due to security reasons. To protect the safety of our students, we kindly ask that you visit the school with your ID if you are on the approved list, where we can provide information in person.
- For attendance inquiries, please utilize the Infinite Campus Parent Portal. We are unable to provide this information over the phone.
- In case of emergencies or genuine needs, feel free to call the school to deliver a message to your child.
- It's essential to establish a clear understanding with your child regarding their afternoon transportation method (bus or parent/guardian pick-up).
- Any changes in your child's afternoon transportation arrangements must be submitted **IN WRITING** to the teacher and sent with the student in the morning or dropped off at the office by 1 PM. Changes should be made in person by a parent/guardian and not through Dojo, email, phone, or text.
- Students are not permitted to call and request to go home with friends. If you wish your child to be picked up by someone else, please arrange this in writing with the teacher ahead of time.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

We understand parents/guardians want their students to have electronic devices like 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 stay on their person except during testing when we store all devices securely. Students may not use devices on school property including smart watches. Parents/guardians, please refrain from texting your student(s) that have smartwatches. If the student uses their devices at school, they will be taken up. All devices taken up will remain secure until the parent/guardian can pick them up from an administrator.

PAYMENTS SENT FROM HOME

Please place all money sent from home to NCES in a sealed, labeled envelope. On the outside of the envelope, please write your child's first and last name, classroom/homeroom teacher, the amount, and what the money will be used for. This will help with record keeping and make money collection smoother for the teachers. If your student is enrolled in the NCES ASP, those payments must be made online using "My Payments Plus."

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

INFINITE CAMPUS PARENT PORTAL

To access the Parent Portal, you must have been assigned your child(ren)'s activation code. If you did not do this last year, please come to the office, and we will help. Only a parent/guardian may pick this up, and you must present your state-issued ID. 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 online. This is an excellent way to keep up with your child(ren)'s attendance, 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, and major projects/units will be entered into the Parent Portal within ten (10) school days.

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 be sent via Dojo as needed.

DRESS CODE

Student dress at NCES is expected to reflect pride and self-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. The student and guardian are responsible for observing the dress code. It is the responsibility of the teachers and administrators to ensure that the dress code is enforced. You will be called if your student is out of the dress code.

Masks

- Masks are no longer required, but if you choose for your child to wear one of the masks you provide, please follow the protocol below.
 - Masks should have no words unless they support education (ie. Colleges, high schools, or NCES)
- Masks may have the student's 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/damaging/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 appropriately worn on or above the waist, no belt is required.
- Pants with holes above the knee area are not allowed.
- Shorts must be no more than three inches above the knee for 3rd through 5th-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

- For 3rd through 5th grade students, dresses, skirts, and skorts must be no more than three inches above the knee.
- If leggings are worn, dresses, skirts, and skorts must still follow the length requirements.

Shoes

- All students must wear closed-toed shoes 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 concerning 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 are permitted, including 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 essential for students to realize that logical and natural consequences occur from their choices. We believe 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 parent/guardian involvement that will make parent/guardians partners in achieving the goals of a safe and well-disciplined school

SCHOOL RULES/CODE OF CONDUCT

In order to provide a safe and positive school climate 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
- Respect the 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/guardians by phone, e-mail, and/or in writing (assignment book) when constant inappropriate behavior occurs. The teacher will schedule a parents/guardians 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 the student
- Telephone call/email/written note to a parent/guardian
- 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/guardian contact has been made
- Continuous major/disruptive behavior after a parent/guardian 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/guardian (A phone call home to notify parent/guardian is considered a parent/guardian 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/Guardian is 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 acts 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 online at

<https://www.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 online at <https://www.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 appropriately identified by presenting their State ID. We cannot accept Military IDs as we have to scan them, and the Military does not allow us to do that.** 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 dress appropriately and follow the same dress standard set for the students. At this time, we cannot accommodate visitors for lunch every day. We allow parents/guardians to eat with their child on birthdays utilizing the picnic tables outside and a table in the cafeteria. Parents/Guardians may not sit with the students at the class table or bring other classmates to separate tables. Summer Birthdays will be honored in May.

Parent/Guardian visitation in the classrooms is encouraged, although there may be times when classroom visitation is limited. We do not let parents/guardians walk students to class in the morning to allow teachers to begin instruction promptly at 7:45 AM. Any item being dropped off for a student should be left in the front office. If any item is dropped off before 8:30 AM, the office will call the classroom, and the teacher will send them up at their convenience. If any items are dropped off after 8:30 AM, the office will email the teacher and the item will be picked up at the end of the day. Teachers arrive early in the morning to prepare to receive students. Teachers need to be focused on accepting their students. If you would like a conference, please schedule one with the teacher via Dojo, email, phone, or text. Morning and afternoon pick-ups are not the proper times for conferences. If you

show up 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 conference, and they will contact you within 48 hours to schedule an appointment.

As teachers prepare for dismissal, all passes into the building end at 1:30. All visitors must exit, 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, lunchtime, and various other instructional activities. There will be a variety of celebrations conducted during the year that will 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 that 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 at the office before the tardy bell, and the teacher will come to pick them 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 cannot be taken on a bus. Also, please DO NOT put signs on NCES' campus wishing your child a "Happy Birthday." If a sign is placed on the 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/Guardians: As our school is large, please ensure your student(s) have all necessary items before arriving. This includes book bags, lunch boxes, binders, jackets, etc. We will allow a one-time courtesy for students to retrieve forgotten items. Any personal belongings or money dropped off after 8:30 AM will be given to the student or teacher at the end of the day. We will notify the teacher via email for pickup from the office.

If you are bringing snacks or birthday items, kindly drop them off at the office before the tardy bell. The teacher will collect them before lunch or snack time. To minimize disruptions to classes, teachers have requested that we avoid calling students out to retrieve forgotten items.

Thank you for your cooperation in helping us maintain an efficient and focused learning environment.

GIFTED EDUCATION

Gifted education is provided for all K-12 students 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. MCSD opens the application process at certain times of the year. Please check the MCSD website (<https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/>) for information or the St Elmo Center for the Gifted website (<https://e044550.wixsite.com/my-site-1>)for information regarding this program. MCSD will send information on when the window will open and close via all their connections to parents/guardians.

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 5 minutes late or more, the parent/guardian will receive a warning. If a student is picked up late more than once (even a few minutes late), they will be removed from the club once the second offense occurs.

ACADEMIC GRADES

NCES operates on a nine-week academic grading period. At the midterm of nine weeks, each student will receive a midterm progress report available on the Parent Portal. Report cards are available on the Parent Portal at the end of the nine weeks. 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

Students who arrive in the second semester are not eligible for these awards.

At the Awards Program, at the end of the school year, students are recognized with trophies, medals, and certificates. Students who have met specific criteria for each award will be recognized now. The dress for this occasion is dressy, casual attire. Listed below are the requirements 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 special areas (P.E., music, and art) and conduct grade(must score Satisfactory).

- 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 special areas (P.E., music, and art) and conduct grade (must score Satisfactory)
- Life Skill Award: Each teacher selects one female student and one male student as the overall good citizens for the year.
- Excellence in Academics Awards: For each of the five academic areas (math, language arts, reading, social studies, and science), each teacher will select a student who strives for excellence and is passionate about 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 under the following parameters. Absolutely no absences, unexcused tardies, or early check-outs. No more than three EXCUSED tardies (with a doctor's excuse note) or three EXCUSED check-outs (with a doctor's excuse note).
- Accelerated Reader Award: This award is presented to the student who, within his/her class, has earned the most accelerated reader points within their ZPD (reading ability) with a passing average of 85% or higher. 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 year's worth of growth as determined by STAR Reading.
- Reading Achievement Award: Presented to students who score at least 1.0 grade levels above their current grade as measured by STAR Reading.
- Doreen Sears: Presented to the 5th Grade, who showed the most gains in reading during the school year.
- Non-fiction club: Students must take 50 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 15 points, first grade is 25 points, second grade is 35 points, third grade is 50 points, fourth grade is 60 points, fifth grade is 75 points.
- Math Growth Award: Presented to the students who made a year's worth of growth as determined by STAR Math.
- Math Achievement Award: Presented to students who score at least 1.0 grade levels above their current grade as measured by STAR Math .

NCES RECOGNIZES STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS EAGLES 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 the 25 A.R. test on their reading level and score 80% or higher. They have the opportunity to make it into the 25, 50, 75, or 100 non-fiction club! Students will receive a star and a pencil on the wall.
- **Principal's List**—Students who achieve an "A" average of 90 or above in all academic subjects and demonstrate satisfactory conduct will be recognized on a quarterly basis.
- **Honor Roll**: Students who achieve a "B" average of 80 or above in all academic subjects and demonstrate satisfactory conduct will be recognized quarterly basis.

STUDENT TESTING AND ASSESSMENT

SGM's (Student Growth Measures) - All students in grades K-3 will be given a test in various subject areas at the beginning of the school year. These same tests will be administered during 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/May, all 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students must 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 and May and could span the whole month. On testing days, testing will take place throughout the entire school day. To help North Columbus experience a successful and smooth testing window, please ensure 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.

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. Parents/Guardians or emergency contacts are notified if a serious injury occurs, and/or emergency services are called. Parents/Guardians are notified when a student becomes ill at school. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, we will contact 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 parent/guardian must fill out and sign a release form for ALL medication when they bring the medication to the clinic. Medicine will be administered 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 requires an inhaler, or diabetic items must keep them in the clinic unless they have a MCSD "Permission to Carry" 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 that makes all school grounds smoke-free zones. Smoking is not allowed by employees, students, or visitors.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire and disaster drills are necessary and should not 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. When Muscogee County is placed under a TORNADO WARNING, we ask that parents/guardians NOT come to pick up students or call the school during the WARNING. No one will leave the building during an active tornado 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 be clear during a tornado WARNING for emergency use. 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. The Internet is a valuable tool for research and communication, and we have the technology to use online services. Such activities will always be under the supervision of an adult. Parents/Guardians 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 address the curriculum/standards required for that grade level. Please do not bring siblings on field trips to maximize the learning process. Many field trips are at locations with limited seating or admission, and we may be unable to accommodate parent/guardian 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 a focus on mindset and behavior, academic, career, and social-emotional development. The NCES School Counseling Program meets students' needs 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.

SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM (SNP) SCHOOL YEAR 2023- 2024

The 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. 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. 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.*

BREAKFAST PRICES	
Elementary, Paid	1.00
Middle/High, Paid	1.25
Reduced	.30
Adult, MCSD Staff Adult, Outside MCSD	1.75
Adult, Outside MCSD	2.00
LUNCH PRICES	
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.	

**5 REASONS FOR COMPLETING
Free & Reduced Applications**

ONE MEAL APPLICATION AFFECTS MANY AREAS!

1	2	3	4	5
				
INCREASED FUNDING TO SUPPORT STUDENT EDUCATION	ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR TECHNOLOGY AND INTERNET ACCESS	DISCOUNTS FOR FEES ASSOCIATED WITH COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESSES	DISCOUNTED FEES FOR SAT, ACT & AP TESTS, SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES	FREE OR REDUCED MEAL PRICES FOR HEALTHY, NUTRITIOUS STUDENT MEALS

Contact your child's school for details today

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 1st 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 website, at the school clinic, or school 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 MCSD 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, and 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 lunch.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

BEHAVIOR CODE AND DISCIPLINE POLICY BOOK

For your convenience, the *Behavior Code and Discipline Policy Book* is accessible online at <https://www.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

The Muscogee County School District *Code and Discipline Policy Handbook* is available on the MCSD website for review. Parents/Guardians should visit the website during the first week of school and study the book with their children so that they 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.