



Parent/Student Handbook  
2011 ~ 2012

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to 2011 – 2012 School Year! We hope that you find Dominion Trail’s Parent/Student Handbook helpful in understanding our procedures and practices. The goal at Dominion Trail is to provide the best possible atmosphere and setting for student learning that protects the rights of students to learn in a safe environment that is free from disruption. Our handbook highlights important information specific to our school. If you have any questions or comments about the handbook please feel free to contact the school office.

The LCPS Student Rights and Responsibilities handbook provides additional information regarding the school division’s policies and expectations for student behavior.

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## **ATTENDANCE / ABSENTEE PHONE-IN**

Regular attendance will help your child succeed in school. All students have the responsibility to be in school on a regular basis. When a student is absent from school, an explanation is required. Student illness, medical appointments, family emergencies, and religious holidays constitute an excused absence. In addition, absences may be approved for trips or activities that enhance or extend the student's education, when approved by the Principal in advance.

If your child will be absent or tardy from school, please leave a message on the **Absentee Phone-In Line 571.252.2342**. This line is open 24 hours a day. State law requires that schools contact parents when a child is absent from school if the parent has not notified the school of the absence. The purpose of this legislation is to insure the safety of your child. A call will be made to the parent/guardian of any student whose absence has not been accounted for by a call. **Please make sure to contact the school office if your work and/or emergency phone numbers change.**

The school day officially begins at **7:50 a.m.** and ends at **2:35 p.m.** A student will be considered tardy if he or she enters the classroom after **7:50 a.m.** Students who are tardy must report to the office prior to going into the classroom. Students arriving after **8:00 a.m.** must have a parent escort to the office. Office staff will record the student arrival so that attendance records can be changed from an absence to a tardy. The student will be given a tardy slip to give to his/her teacher. If a student is chronically tardy, a letter will be sent to the parent stating concern for the student's tardiness pattern and a request for improvement. If the pattern of tardiness does not improve a referral will be made to the Loudoun County School Attendance Officer.

Whenever a student is absent, a reasonable amount of time, consistent with the length of the absence, will be given the student to make up the work missed. Arrangements should be discussed with the teacher.

## **AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES**

Should a student need to stay after school for make-up work or for an activity, parents are informed and permission sought beforehand. Parents must make arrangements to provide transportation.

Loudoun County Parks and Recreation Department operates CASA, an after school program at DTES, for school aged children during the school year. CASA is not in session on school holidays, snow days or early dismissal days. For information call Loudoun County Parks and Recreation Department at (703) 777 – 0343.

## **BICYCLES/SCOOTERS**

Students who live in the walking area are permitted to ride bikes to and from school with the permission of a parent or guardian. Students who live outside of the walking area must seek special permission from the principal to ride their bikes to and from school. Students must wear helmets and follow bike safety rules. Once on school grounds, students must walk their bikes to the bike rack. Use of a bicycle lock is highly recommended. Scooters must be folded and carried on school property.

The school is not responsible for lost or stolen equipment. Heelies or roller blades are not permitted at school.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Your child can not distribute personal birthday party invitations in the classroom unless all the students in the class will be receiving one. The staff is not able to provide addresses or phone numbers.

Students' birthdays are not celebrated in the classroom. The school will not accept any food items, including cupcakes, cakes, or cookies to celebrate student birthdays during student lunch. In addition non food student gifts of any kind, to include stickers, balloons, trinkets should not be brought to school for a child's birthday. Student birthdays will be recognized each month during the morning announcements. Students will also receive a special birthday pencil from the office. Parents have the option of contacting their child's teacher about purchasing a book for the classroom library, recess equipment, or a table game for the classroom as a way to recognize student birthdays.

## **BUS INFORMATION**

It is extremely important that we take the necessary precautions in transporting students safely to and from the school. We ask your cooperation in the following:

1. Please review bus safety with your child including safety at the bus stop.
2. If your child is to take a different bus or get off at a different stop, **a written note must be given to the teacher.** The student will then be sent to the office to get a bus pass. Phone calls, except in an emergency, will not be accepted.
3. No animals, pets, or any other living creatures are permitted.
4. No glass containers are permitted.
5. No Balloons are permitted.

## **CAFETERIA**

A link to breakfast and lunch menus will be located on the Dominion Trail website. The monthly menu will also be sent home with students.

Breakfast:	Student Price \$2.00	Adult Price \$2.25
Lunch:	Student Price \$3.00	Adult Price \$4.00

The cafeteria's 'brown bag' breakfast is an optional program that students may participate in. Breakfast begins at 7:30 a.m. Students who arrive between 7:30 a.m. and 7:40 a.m. will eat at a breakfast table in the cafeteria. Students who purchase breakfast after 7:40 a.m. will take their brown bag breakfast to the classroom. Breakfast concludes at 7:50 a.m.

The school cafeteria staff prepares hot lunches daily. Students may purchase milk to go with a lunch brought from home for 50 cents per carton.

Parents and visitors are always welcome to have lunch with their child. Please be sure to sign in at the office for a visitor pass before going to the cafeteria to meet your child.

For safety reasons, no drinks in cans or glass bottles are permitted in the cafeteria.



Low fat ice cream products are available for students to purchase during lunch according to the following schedule:

**Monday – first grade; Tuesday – second grade; Wednesday – third grade; Thursday – fourth grade; Friday – fifth grade.**

Parents may send in a check to school payable to “County of Loudoun” or they may pay via the Internet by visiting [www.cafeprepay.com](http://www.cafeprepay.com). Paying for lunch via the Internet will take 24 hours to post to the child’s account and includes a small usage fee.

Applications for free and reduced lunch are sent home the first day of school with all children and are available in the school office. Should your financial situation change, you may apply for free and reduced lunch at any time during the year. A new application must be completed every school year.

The following procedures will be implemented to manage those instances when children arrive at school without money to pay for lunch or without a packed lunch:

1. Student charges are allowed, however, when a lunch is charged, the account goes into a negative balance and will remain negative until a check or money is received.
2. When a student must charge a lunch and a negative balance is posted to the account, a connect-ed phone call will be made to alert parents of the charge and *negative* balance.
3. Students who incur more than two days in charges will not be permitted to accrue additional charges and will be offered a courtesy cheese sandwich and milk until such time that payment is remitted. No charges are permitted during the last month of school.

### **CAR TRANSPORTATION**

If you are transporting your child to school by car, we ask that you review our **traffic regulations** flier that you received in the first day packet. Car drivers are required to follow the traffic pattern and obey all traffic signs around the school. **DRIVE SLOWLY AND WATCH FOR CROSSING PEDESTRIANS.** Please drop off and pick up your child at designated drop off and pick up points.

### **CELL PHONES**

Students are prohibited from operating beepers, cell phones or other personal communication devices during school hours, either while on school property, under school control or attending any school function or activity. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action. Cell phones must remain turned off and in students’ backpacks during the school day. Students may not bring laser pointers on school property. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen equipment.

## CLASSROOM INTERRUPTIONS

Uninterrupted classroom instruction is vital to student learning. At Dominion Trail, we want to minimize classroom interruptions as much as possible. When lunch or lunch money is brought to school after the start of the school day, parents will be asked to attach a note with their child's name and teacher and deliver the lunch or money to a designated box in the cafeteria. Library books and homework assignments will be placed in the teacher's mailbox for pick up during the day. Your cooperation is important in helping us minimize disruptions during the school day.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Effective communication with the school is vital to your child's educational success. We encourage open and ongoing communication throughout the school year and have many ways in which to accomplish this.

The Dominion Trail Webpage can be accessed at the website address <http://cmsweb2.lcps.org/Dominiontrail>. Our newsletter, the *Husky Herald*, is posted to our web site at the first of each month. The school calendar is updated continuously. Parents are encouraged to visit our website to stay current with school activities and events. If parents do not have Internet access, they are asked to contact the front office and make arrangements for paper copies of our newsletter to be sent home.



Teachers also prepare a monthly newsletter highlighting units of study and important classroom information. Grade level newsletters will also be posted to our website each month. Parents may request paper copies of grade level newsletters by notifying the classroom teacher.

All staff members of LCPS have a professional e-mail address to support their responsibilities as employees with LCPS. Please allow school personnel 24 hours to respond to your e-mails or phone calls.

Following are the guidelines the staff is required to follow when using e-mail as a communication tool with parents:

- E-mail **may be used** for general purposes such as clarification of assignments, due date questions, field trip questions, requests for phone calls, thank you notes.
- E-mail **may not be used** for discussions, discipline issues, confidential student information (schedule a conference for this purpose), and anything of a time-sensitive nature (change of dismissal plans, etc.)

Parent Teacher Conferences are held for all students towards the end of the first nine weeks. Parents or teachers may request additional conferences throughout the school year.

DTES uses Friday Folders to send home student work, notices from school, the PTA and other communications. Parents are asked to review the Friday folder contents and send the folder back to school on Monday.

## DAILY DISMISSAL PLANS AND CHANGES

We require all students to have their parents fill out the “**How I am going home**” and the “**Emergency Early Dismissal**” forms at the beginning of each year. Permanent changes require new forms to be filled out and returned to the teacher. A parent note may be sent in to school for a temporary change of dismissal. Parents are discouraged from phoning in last minute dismissal changes except in the case of an emergency.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Children often confuse the information so we cannot rely on them to know when a change is made. Please understand that if we do not receive parent notification of the change, your child will be going home as designated on the forms completed by you prior to the first day of school.

## **DRESS**

Students are expected to arrive at school dressed in appropriate attire. Parents will be called if their child arrives at school dressed inappropriately. Please help us observe the following rules:

1. Midriff shirts and blouses are not appropriate.
2. Hats and bandanas/scarves are not to be worn in the building.
3. Students may not wear shirts with inappropriate language or pictures.
4. Tube tops and spaghetti strap tops are not appropriate.
5. Shoes must be worn at all times.
6. No flip flops, wheelies or high heeled sandals or any other shoes that may pose a safety hazard on the playground may be worn.
7. Shorts should be a decent length. Short shorts are not appropriate.
8. On P.E. days, students may change only their shoes. Elementary students may not bring a change of clothing for P.E. classes. They must participate in P.E. in the clothing worn to school that day.

## **EARLY DISMISSALS**

If you need your child to leave school earlier than normal for an appointment, please send a note to the teacher. If circumstances arise during the day which creates the need for your child to be dismissed early, please come into the school office and ask the secretary to call for your child. **Please do not go directly to the classroom. Teachers are instructed not to dismiss a child unless the office calls for them.**

## **EMERGENCY CARDS**

A form with all your child’s emergency information will come home with the “First Day packet”. The following is **extremely important:**

1. Update this card, sign and return to school immediately.
2. If any information changes during the year, notify the school immediately.

*We must be able to reach you or your emergency contact if your child is sick or injured. Please keep all this information current.*

### **EMERGENCY EARLY CLOSING**

Schools may have to close early under certain circumstances. Announcements are made over WAGE radio (1200 AM), your local TV and Radio stations, on the LCPS Web site (loudoun.k12.va.us) and by LCPS Connect Ed. You may also register with Alert Loudoun at <https://alert.loudoun.gov> . **PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE SCHOOL WHEN YOU SUSPECT A POSSIBLE EARLY CLOSING.** The school phone lines must remain open to receive instructions from the School Board Office and for emergencies.

Parents should discuss a plan with their children, which should be followed in the event of an emergency early dismissal. With your first day packet, you will receive an “**Emergency Early Dismissal**” form to be completed and returned to school. It is important that you state clearly what your child is to do in the case of an early dismissal. This form will be sent home with first and second report cards to be updated. In the event of an early dismissal, the school buses will run their normal routes.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips can provide excellent educational experiences for students by enriching the curriculum and by making learning experiences of the classroom more meaningful. Students at Dominion Trail Elementary will be given the opportunity to participate in field trips that enhance the grade level curriculum. Students must have a signed permission slip to participate. Parents who chaperone on a field trip may not bring younger children and must ride with the class on the bus.

### **FIRE DRILLS**

Schools are required by law to have a fire drill once a week during the month of September and then one fire drill per month thereafter. It is suggested that parents have a fire exit plan in their homes and conduct appropriate drills.

### **HOMEWORK**

The individual teacher defines the scope and style of homework. The amount of homework that a teacher assigns will vary from day to day. As a general rule primary students should be required to spend no more than thirty (30) minutes daily doing homework; students in grades 4 and 5 should spend no more than one (1) hour. All homework that is assigned will be based on one or more of the following purposes:

- To practice skills that have been introduced and developed in the class
- To relate understandings and skills developed at school to everyday life

- To enrich the school program by pursuing activities that can be shared with classmates the following day

All written homework will be reviewed. Other homework may be discussed informally. Homework is not graded. A child should be able to complete his or her work independently; however, we encourage parents to take some time to check over the child's work.

### **INSURANCE**

Dental and accident insurance forms are sent home with students at the beginning of each school year. Enrollment is at the option of the parent.

### **KINDERGARTEN SNACK**

The kindergarten will have a daily snack break. Kindergarten students may purchase milk at school for a fee of \$50.00 per year. Kindergarten students may bring a healthy snack from home to be eaten during this break. There will be no snack purchases available at school.

### **LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER**

The library is open during the school day. Primary classes will have a weekly scheduled library period. During this period, the librarian instructs the students on how to use the library and media center materials. Students are permitted to check out library books during their weekly visit if they have brought back their books from the previous week. . In addition, several open check-out times are available throughout the week. Grades 4 – 5 visit the library to check out books and to receive instruction as arranged with the classroom teacher. The librarian allows students who are researching a subject to use the resources of the library individually or in small groups during the school day.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

All lost and found items are kept in a designated area across from the gym. Small and more valuable items are kept in the school office. At the end of each semester, unclaimed articles are given to charity.

### **MOVING OUT OF SCHOOL BOUNDARIES DURING SCHOOL YEAR**

If you should move out of Dominion Trail's boundaries during the school year and wish to stay at Dominion Trail, please contact the school office. We will give you the appropriate forms to submit to the school board for permission to remain at Dominion Trail until the last day of the current school year. Parents are responsible for providing transportation for students on special permission.

### **PARENT CONFERENCES**

In order for the school year to be the most productive for students, there needs to be communication between the home and school. The teacher's goal is to meet with each child's parent or guardian at least once during the school year. The help of parents is requested in attaining this goal. Additional conferences will be scheduled as needed.

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

A strong parent organization is vital to the success of Dominion Trail Elementary. The PTA has numerous objectives, such as working to inform and communicate with parents, sponsor social events for the school community, raise funds to enhance the school's instructional program, and coordinate the volunteer program.

Meetings are held at Dominion Trail Elementary the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month alternating between 8:45 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.

### **PARTIES**

Each classroom is permitted to have three parties during the school year corresponding to the fall break, winter break, Valentine's Day, or the last day of school. The decision about which parties will be held is up to the classroom teacher. Room parents generally help organize the parties. Special considerations for classrooms with students who have severe allergies will be made. Foods containing specific allergens to a child will not be included. Parties may begin no earlier than 1:30 p.m. except for morning kindergarten. Surprise parties for staff members during instructional time are not permitted.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

If your child is unable to participate in physical education class, you must send a note to school with your child. A student may be excused from P.E. by a parent or guardian for no more than one week (3 consecutive classes) per quarter. A doctor's note must be presented to the physical education teacher for any period beyond a week. The doctor will be requested to complete a checklist of appropriate activities that the student may take part in while recovering from the illness or injury.

### **PICTURES**

A professional photographer will take individual school pictures in the fall. These pictures are available to purchase at that time. These pictures will appear in the school yearbook, which will be offered for sale in January or February. Delivery of the yearbook will be before the last week of school. We will also take class pictures in the spring and individual student pictures with a choice of backgrounds will be offered at that time. Purchasing any of the yearbook or picture packages offered is optional.

### **REPORT CARDS**

Report cards are sent home at the end of each nine-week period. The exact dates can be found in your newsletter and/or calendar. *The final report card of each year will be mailed home.* An interim report may be sent home midway through the nine-week period if a student has made considerable progress in a subject, if the student is currently receiving a failing grade or the grade has dropped two letter grades.

### **SPIRIT DAY**

Every Friday will be set aside as spirit day. Students and staff will have the option of wearing school colors (purple and teal) or spirit clothes (t-shirts, sweatshirts and sweatpants offered for sale by the PTA). The SCA (Student Council Association) will periodically designate different types of spirit days throughout the year (For example: crazy hair day, hat day, or sport jersey day).

### **TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

The Telecommunications Acceptable Use Policy is intended to assure appropriate and responsible use of the Internet by all students. Students and parents will be informed of acceptable use in the Students Rights and Responsibilities booklet, which is sent home the first day of school.

### **TEXTBOOKS**

All textbooks are provided to students free of charge. The parent, however, assumes the responsibility of compensating the school for book loss and/or damage. A book contract is brought home early in the school year for both parent and student signatures for students in grades 3 – 5.

### **TESTING**

Students are administered certain standardized tests during the school year. These tests are given to monitor the effectiveness of the instructional program and to evaluate the achievement of students.

### **VISITORS**

In order to assure the safety of students and staff, parents or other visitors to Dominion Trail must go directly to the office before visiting any other area of the building. All visitors to the school are required to produce a picture ID to gain entry to the school. When school is in session, please sign in the Visitor Book and wear a Visitor Badge while in the building. Please remember to sign out when you return your badge to the office.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers play an extremely important role in the entire educational process. They improve instruction by permitting more individual help to students under the direction of the classroom teacher.

They enrich curriculum by adding the experience of the volunteers' special interests and hobbies to the knowledge of the classroom teachers.

As always, we ask that you sign in the Volunteer Book and wear a Volunteer or Visitor badge while in the building. The volunteer hours are added up by the Volunteer Coordinator each month and turned into the Director of Elementary Education.

Volunteers also help in areas such as the office, cafeteria, Xeroxing and other activities. We hope to have a very active volunteer program at Dominion Trail.

**Please note:**

(1) For the health and safety of everyone, volunteers who are in the building on a regular basis need to have either a TB test or a TB Screening and have the results on file in the school office. You do not need to have this done every year, if you are unsure if we have your results on file, stop by the office to check.

(2) Volunteers are asked to make child care arrangements for their younger children. The work room contains equipment that could be dangerous to children, i.e., the hot laminator, a paper cutter, etc. Also, bringing younger children into the classroom while you are volunteering is too disruptive to instruction.