



# **Parent/Student Handbook**

## **2023 – 2024**

**21100 Evergreen Mills Road  
Leesburg, Virginia 20175**

**Telephone: 571-252-2910**

**Absentee: 571-252-2911**

**FAX: 703-771-9616**



# *Sycolin Creek Elementary School*

## *2023 – 2024 School Year*

### *Parent / Student Handbook*



Dear Parents and Students,

On behalf of the faculty, staff and administration, we warmly welcome you to Sycolin Creek Elementary School. As we begin another year preparing your children for their future, we are pleased that you will be part of our school and community. Your involvement and support will help us make this year successful.

We strongly believe that our children represent our future and need the support of school, community, and parents to achieve their dreams. Therefore, we hope to create an environment and provide an instructional program that will enable each student to achieve his/her potential as a lifelong learner. Your role in helping us reach this goal is important. We encourage you to establish clear lines of communication with your child's teacher. He or she will be crucial in assuring success this school year. Take time to familiarize yourself with school practices and know what the expectations are for your child's classroom. Become involved in the Parent Teachers Association, PTA, and support events during the school year. Volunteer in your child's classroom and help support the instructional programs that are provided. Have open lines of communication with your child, your child's teacher and our staff members as we work together to support your child academically, emotionally and physically during the upcoming year. Together, we can and will provide a place that is safe, welcoming, rigorous and caring for you and your child.

This handbook has been prepared to help answer many questions students or parents usually have concerning the activities, procedures and rules for the successful daily operation of Sycolin Creek Elementary School. If you cannot find an answer to your question, please contact school personnel.

Again, welcome to Sycolin Creek Elementary and thank you for joining us as partners in your child's education.

Respectfully,

*Derek A. Racino*

Derek A. Racino  
Principal



# Sycolin Creek Elementary School

## Student School Calendar

### 2023 - 2024

August 22	Kindergarten Orientation, 8:30 a.m.
August 22	Open House for Grades 1-5, 10:00 a.m.
August 22	BTSN for Grades 1-2, 5:30 & 6:10 p.m.
August 23	BTSN for Grades 3-5, 6:10 & 6:50 p.m.
August 24	First Day of School
September 1	Student Holiday
September 4	Holiday (Labor Day)
September 25	Holiday (Yom Kippur)
October 9	Holiday (Indigenous Peoples' Day)
October 27	End of Grading Period
October 30-31	Student Holiday
November 7	Student Holiday
November 13	Holiday (Diwali)
November 22-24	Thanksgiving Break
December 21-29	Winter Break
December 25-26	Holiday (Christmas)
January 1	Holiday (New Year's Day)
January 15	Holiday (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)
January 19	End of Grading Period
January 22	Student Holiday
February 9	Holiday (Lunar New Year)
February 19	Holiday (Presidents' Day)
March 5	Student Holiday
March 25-29	Spring Break
April 4	End of Grading Period
April 5	Student Holiday
April 10	Holiday (Eid al Fitr)
May 27	Holiday (Memorial Day)
June 14	Last Day of School/End of Grading Period

\*\*Parents with childcare or other weekday scheduling concerns – The date of this MOVEABLE Planning/Records/Conference Day between first and second semesters may change, if the school calendar must be changed due to school closings for inclement weather or other emergencies.

9 Week Grading Period Ending Dates  
October 27, 2023  
January 19, 2024  
April 4, 2024  
June 14, 2024

Schedule subject to change based on possible school closing due to inclement weather.



## ATTENDANCE / ABSENTEE PHONE-IN

The school day begins at 7:30 a.m. and ends at 2:15 p.m. Students who are not in their classrooms by 7:30 a.m. will be considered tardy. They will need to be escorted to the office by a parent for a tardy pass. Please do not drop students off prior to 7:10 a.m. Staff is required to arrive by 7:10 a.m. Students may go directly to their classrooms beginning at 7:10 a.m.

Occasional tardiness for valid reasons is not a serious offense; however, repeated or habitual tardiness encourages the formation of undesirable personal habits and disrupts the orderly instructional process of the school. When a student arrives tardy, parents must escort their child to the office and assist him/her in obtaining a tardy pass to class. This is required to ensure the safety and well-being of the student. In addition, the school may require the parent or guardian to provide justification to determine the reason for the student's tardiness. If this does not occur and documentation is not provided by the parent, as to the reason for the tardy, the tardy may be considered unexcused. If a student is tardy more than 10 times, a letter will be sent to the parent as notification of the school's concern for the student's non-attendance, and a physician's note may be required. If the pattern of tardiness does not improve, a referral will be made to the Attendance Officer.

It is very important that students attend school on a regular basis in order to be successful. We ask that students not miss school for trips or family vacations whenever possible. While written assignments can be made up, classroom activities and interactions cannot be replaced.

If your child will be absent from school, please call the absentee line. That number is 571.252.2911. 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 ensure the safety of your child. A call will be made to the parent/guardian of any student whose absence has not been accounted for through the absentee line or through notification to our attendance secretary. Please make sure to update ParentVUE if your work and/or emergency phone numbers change.

Whenever a student is absent from school, documentation is required to verify the reason for the absence. Parents are required to notify the school as to the reason for the absence. This may be done through the school's Absentee Phone-in line. Any absence not confirmed by the parent will be considered unexcused. If the parent has not called the school to verify the absence, the school will make a reasonable effort to call the parent to verify the day's absence. Upon the student's return to school, a written explanation from a parent or guardian is required for each absence. The note should include: date(s) of the absence, reason for the absence and signature of the parent/guardian.

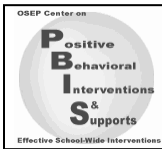
Students are excused for personal illness, a death in the family, medical or dental appointments, court appearances, religious holidays, illness in the immediate family, or emergencies that require the student to be absent.

If a student is absent for more than 10 days or 10% of the total number of days membership, whichever is determined appropriate by the principal, the school will send a letter to the parents requiring a physician's note for all further absences. At the principal's discretion, contact may be made sooner or waived due to extenuating circumstances. At the point at which a student accumulates five unexcused absences, a referral may be made to the Attendance Officer.



## AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Should students need to stay after school for make-up work or a scheduled activity, parents will be informed and permission sought beforehand. Parents will need to make arrangements to provide transportation. No student will be kept after school without written or phone permission.



## BEHAVIOR/PBIS

Sycolin Creek Elementary School follows the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) framework in which staff members are committed to teaching children appropriate behavior and providing the supports necessary to sustain that behavior. Students are expected to follow our school-wide student code of conduct. This code identifies three anchors that will be required of all students in all school settings. These include:

- I will respect myself.
- I will respect others.
- I will respect property.

Our behavior plan is based on positive rewards and appropriate consequences. Trust, caring, respect and developing strong relationships will be a core focus of our behavior and discipline expectations. Students who do not follow these behavior expectations will face consequences that strive to correct the behavior, allow for growth and understanding, and maintain each child's dignity.

Disciplinary consequences are outlined under discipline in this handbook and/or the Student's Rights and Responsibilities provided to each Sycolin Creek Family. Please carefully review these expectations with your children. During the first week of school, the following behavior expectations will be reviewed in the classroom.

	<u>Respect Yourself</u>	<u>Respect Others</u>	<u>Respect Property</u>
<b>Bathroom</b> Expected Behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the bathroom and wash your hands in a timely manner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect privacy and personal space.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leave it clean.</li> </ul>
<b>Hallway</b> Expected Behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk on the white, near the right.</li> <li>• Walk single file.</li> <li>• Use walking feet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay quiet.</li> <li>• Respect personal space.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep your hands to yourself.</li> <li>• Enter with clean feet.</li> </ul>
<b>Cafeteria</b> Expected Behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use good manners.</li> <li>• Raise your hand for help.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be polite.</li> <li>• Stay in your seat.</li> <li>• Use a quiet voice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put items where they belong.</li> </ul>
<b>Bus</b> Expected Behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sit safely in your spot.</li> <li>• Use good manners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow the bus driver's rules.</li> <li>• Use kind words.</li> <li>• Use a quiet voice.</li> <li>• Keep hands and feet to self.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep your feet on the floor.</li> <li>• Keep your hands to yourself.</li> <li>• Keep your backpack closed.</li> </ul>
<b>Recess</b> Expected Behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be safe.</li> <li>• Make good choices.</li> <li>• Use appropriate volume.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include others.</li> <li>• Respect personal space.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share equipment.</li> <li>• Wipe feet when entering school.</li> </ul>

By reinforcing these rules both at school and at home, we hope that together we can guide children toward self-discipline and ensure that learning is always able to take place.



## **BIRTHDAY PARTY INVITATIONS / NO FOOD TREATS ALLOWED**

Birthday party invitations may only be distributed at school if all students in the class will be receiving an invitation. The staff will not be able to provide addresses or phone numbers. Students in grades K-5 may only bring a **non-food treat** for the class if you choose on your child's birthday. The purchase of ice cream for an entire class as a birthday treat is also not permitted. Suggestions are fun pencils, stickers, school supplies, recess equipment or board games, to be handed out at the end of the school day. No birthday parties will be held in the classrooms.



## **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 home or get off at a different stop from their normal one, a written note must be given to the teacher. The student will be sent to the office for a bus pass. On the note, please provide a contact phone number and if possible, the number of the bus they will be riding.
3. Kindergarten students are required to wear a "Bus Tag" that identifies them as needing a family member, friend, or sibling to escort them from the bus stop. The responsible second party must have a matching "Bus Tag" as evidence of permission to take the child home.
4. No animals, pets, or any other living creatures are permitted.
5. No glass containers are permitted.



## **CAR TRANSPORTATION**

If you are transporting your child to school, we ask, if at all possible, that families carpool. Please follow the traffic pattern and obey all traffic signs around the school. Please drop off and pick up at designated points. Students are not allowed to exit their cars before approaching the cross walk. Please do not allow your child to exit the car before the cross walk unless a staff member on duty is present to assist your child with exiting the car.



## DAILY DISMISSAL PLANS AND CHANGES

Parents will be asked to fill out a “**How I Am Going Home**” and the “**Emergency Early Dismissal**” forms at the beginning of each year. If there are permanent changes to these forms, please pick up a blank form and fill it out for the teacher. Temporary changes require a note or phone call from the parents.

### 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 proper notification of the change (via note or phone call), your child will be going home as designated on the forms completed by you prior to the first day of school. Please use the form found at the back of this handbook to change daily dismissal information. The form can also be found on the school website.



## DISCIPLINE

Teachers and staff members have the responsibility to maintain discipline. Students are expected to follow our student code of conduct as outlined in the “behavior” section. When a student’s behavior is not acceptable, the teacher may confer with the student, implement appropriate consequences in a fair and consistent manner, contact parents, or refer the situation directly to the administration. Parental support is an important aspect of any positive and effective behavior plan and disciplinary action. We encourage parents to become partners in supporting their child’s behavior to ensure a climate of respect, courtesy, and safety. Thank you for helping us to ensure that every child has the right to learn in a safe and respectful environment.



## DRESS

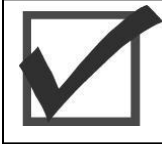
Students will be required to dress appropriately for school. Please help us observe the following rules:

1. Midriff shirts and blouses are not appropriate.
2. Hats and bandanas 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 or high heeled sandals.
7. Shorts should be a longer length. Short shorts are not appropriate.
8. P. E. days, students should wear appropriate clothing and shoes. Only shoes may be changed for P.E. Only sneakers may be worn in P.E.
9. No Heelys or shoes with wheels of any kind may be worn in the building.



## EARLY DISMISSALS

If your child needs to leave school before the normal dismissal time for an appointment, please send a note to the teacher. If circumstances during the day arise which requires 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.**

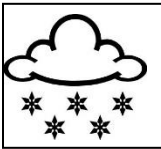


## EMERGENCY CARDS

A form with your child's emergency information will be available to be completed in ParentVUE.

### The following is extremely important:

1. Update this form as often as necessary to keep it up to date.



## EMERGENCY EARLY CLOSING

Schools may have to close early under certain circumstances. Announcements are made over local TV and radio stations, on the LCPS Website (lcps.org) or by registering with Loudoun Citizen Alert System. You may register by going on the LCPS Website and clicking on "Closings and Delay Registration." **PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE SCHOOL WHEN YOU SUSPECT AN EARLY CLOSING.** The school phone lines must remain open to receive instruction from the School Board Office and for emergencies.

Parents, please discuss a plan with your children that 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 any early dismissal. The school buses will run normal routes.

### **One-Hour Early Closing**

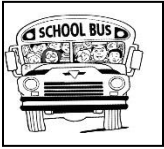
All bus routes operate as usual except for starting one hour earlier than the normal time, 1:35 p.m.

### **Two-Hour Early Closing**

All bus routes operate as usual except for starting two hours earlier than the normal time, 12:35 p.m.

**(Full Schedule is on Page 14)**





## FIELD TRIPS

Students at Sycolin Creek Elementary will be given the opportunity to visit places within the county as well as the Washington, D. C. area. Children must have a signed permission slip to participate.



## FIRE DRILLS

Schools are required by law to have four Fire Drills and two Lockdown Drills within the first 20 instructional days and one per month thereafter. It is suggested that parents have a fire exit plan in their homes and conduct regular drills.



## HOMEWORK

The individual teacher defines the scope and style of homework. However, all homework that is assigned will be based on one or more of the following purposes:

1. To practice skills that have been introduced and developed in the classroom
2. To complete unfinished work or projects
3. To relate understandings and skills developed at school to everyday life
4. To enrich the school program by pursuing activities that can be shared with classmates

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

Accident insurance forms are sent home with students at the beginning of each school year. Enrollment is totally at the discretion of the parent.



## LIBRARY / MEDIA CENTER

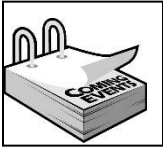
The library will remain open during the school day. All classes will have a weekly scheduled library period. During this period, the librarian instructs students on how to use the library and media center materials, as well as provides reinforcement of grade level SOLs. In addition, there will be open times during the day for students to come to exchange books.



## LUNCH / BREAKFAST

The cafeteria staff prepares hot meals daily. This year, breakfast will cost \$2.00 and lunch will be \$3.05.

Parents and visitors are always welcome to have lunch with their child. Please be sure to sign in at the office and get a Visitor Badge before going to the cafeteria.



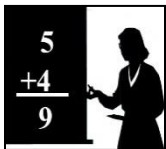
## MENU / NEWSLETTER / CALENDAR

The monthly menu, newsletter and calendar will be posted on the school website. The online calendar on our website will be updated regularly.



## MOVING OUT OF SCHOOL BOUNDARIES DURING SCHOOL YEAR

If you move out of our school boundaries during the school year and wish to stay at Sycolin Creek Elementary for the remainder of the year, please contact the Special Permission Office to complete the required paperwork. Obtaining permission is not usually a problem; however, you will need to transport your child to and from school.



## PARENT CONFERENCES

To help provide the most productive school year for students, communication between home and school is very important. Teachers will plan a fall conference and any additional conferences as requested or needed.



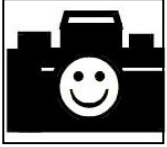
## PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

A strong parent organization is vital to the success of Sycolin Creek 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. The PTA will meet the first Tuesday of each month. Times and locations of these meetings can be found on the PTA website.



## PARTIES

Each classroom will have three parties in addition to the end-of-the-year party. Students' birthdays are not celebrated in the classroom.



## PICTURES

A professional photographer will take individual school pictures in September. These pictures will be available to purchase at that time. These pictures will appear in the school yearbook, which will be offered for sale in the spring. Delivery of the yearbook to students will be 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. *If a parent has not given permission for a student's picture to be used for media purposes, specific permission must be given in writing for a student's picture to appear in the yearbook.*

Report  
Card  
Sycolin  
Creek

## REPORT CARDS

Report cards will be available online through ParentVue every nine-week period. Exact dates will be posted in the school newsletter and on the website calendar. The final report card of the year will also be available in digital format. If for any reason, you do not have access to the internet, please contact the main office for support. In addition, an interim report may be sent home midway through the nine-week period if a student has made considerable progress in a subject, if a student is currently receiving a failing grade or their 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 (green and blue) or spirit clothes (t-shirts, sweatshirts and other spirit clothes offered for sale by the PTA). Other days may be designated as crazy hair day, hat day, sport jersey day, etc.



## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

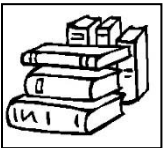
- The Telecommunications Acceptable Use Policy is intended to assure appropriate and responsible use of the internet by all students. A digital version of the Acceptable Use policy, as well as the students' Rights and Responsibilities will be sent to each LCPS family. Each document should be digitally acknowledged in ParentVUE.
- All staff members of LCPS have a professional e-mail address to support their responsibilities as employees with LCPS. The following are the guidelines the staff is required to follow when using e-mail in an educational setting:

E-mail *may be used* for general purposes such as clarification of assignments, due date questions, field trip questions, requests for phone calls and 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.)

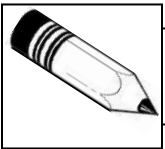
Please allow school personnel 24 hours to respond to your e-mails.

- In addition, students should not utilize cell phones or any device with the capability to text during the school day. If there is an emergency situation that requires parent contact, students will be able to utilize the phone in the office.



## TEXTBOOKS

All textbooks are provided to students free of charge. The parent, however, assumes the responsibility for returning the textbooks at the end of the year.



## TESTING

The Commonwealth of Virginia requires that certain standardized tests be given to students during the course of the school year. In addition, Loudoun County Schools may give supplemental standardized tests to monitor the effectiveness of the instructional program and to evaluate the achievement of students. The classroom teacher and the school administration communicate the dates and the purposes of tests to parents via a letter and/or the school's newsletter. Parents are permitted access to and may obtain copies of their child's test scores through ParentVue. The classroom teacher and the administration are available to help with the interpretation of these scores during the course of the school year.

## Visitor Pass

### VISITORS

In order to assure the safety of students, staff, parents and other visitors to Sycolin Creek Elementary, all visitors must go directly to the office before proceeding to other areas of the building. A picture ID is required to enter the school. Please come to the office, sign-in and wear a Visitor Badge while in the building. Please also remember to sign out prior to leaving the school building.



### 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 come to the office to sign in and wear a Visitor badge while in the building. The volunteer hours are calculated by the Volunteer Coordinator each month and turned in to the Director of Elementary Education.

Volunteers help out in the office and cafeteria with copying for teachers and other classroom and school-wide activities. We hope to have a very active volunteer program at Sycolin Creek Elementary.

**Please note:**

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.

## Sycolin Creek Elementary School's Bell Schedule

<b>Regular Bell Schedule</b>	<b>Grades K – 5</b>	7:10 a.m. 7:10 a.m.  7:30 a.m.  7:35 a.m. 2:10 p.m.  2:15 p.m. 2:20 p.m. 2:40 p.m.	Staff Arrive Students arrive and report to their classroom. Classes Begin (any student not in class is considered tardy)  A.M. Announcements P.M. Announcements  Bus/CASA Students Released Parent Pick up Released End of regular teacher day
	<b>ECSE</b>	7:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. 10:15 a.m. – 2:15 p.m.	AM Session PM Session

<b>One – Hour Delayed</b>	<b>Grades K – 5</b>	8:10 a.m. 8:10 a.m. 8:30 a.m.	Staff Arrive Students Arrive Classes Begin
	<b>ECSE</b>	8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. 10:15 a.m. – 2:15 p.m.	AM Session PM Session

<b>One – Hour Early Closing</b>	<b>Grades K – 5</b>	Lunch 1:15 p.m.	Regular Lunch Schedule Dismissal
	<b>ECSE</b>	No Changes 1:15 p.m.	AM Session Dismissal PM Session Dismissal

<b>Two – Hour Delayed</b>	<b>Grades K – 5</b>	9:10 a.m. 9:10 a.m. 9:30 a.m.	Staff Arrive Student's Arrive Classes Begin
	<b>ECSE</b>	9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. 11:15 a.m. – 2:15 p.m.	AM Session PM Session

<b>Two-Hour Early Closing</b>	<b>Grades K – 5</b>	Lunch 12:15 p.m.	Begins @ 10:00 Dismissal
	<b>ECSE</b>	11:30 a.m. 12:15 p.m.	AM Session Dismissal PM Session



**SYCOLIN CREEK  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

My Child will be:

- going home on bus # \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ (Child's name)
- going home on bus # \_\_\_\_\_ rather than normal afterschool arrangements
- picked up at \_\_\_\_\_ (time) by \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name: Please have ID ready)
- other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Guardian Signature



**SYCOLIN CREEK  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

My Child will be:

- going home on bus # \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ (Child's name)
- going home on bus # \_\_\_\_\_ rather than normal afterschool arrangements
- picked up at \_\_\_\_\_ (time) by \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name: Please have ID ready)
- other \_\_\_\_\_
- 

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Guardian Signature