

Catoctin Elementary School

Happily Serving the Children of Catoctin for Over 50 Years!!!



Home of the Cardinals!

PARENT - Student Handbook

Catoctin Elementary School

"Creating and Inspiring Tomorrow's Leaders Today"

Phone: 571-252-2940

Absentee Line: 571-252-2941

Dear Parents and Students,

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the start of the 2023-2024 school year. Each school year is a fresh start and new opportunity for everyone who enters our doors. I am excited about the possibilities that this new school year holds. This handbook contains information about our school that will help you and your child throughout the school year.

We have proudly been serving the students and families of Leesburg for over 50 years. It is really important that we have an open line of communication. If you need anything throughout the school year, please do not hesitate to call the school. I am looking forward to partnering with you.

With Cardinal Pride,

Janet Platenberg

Janet Platenberg
Principal

Catoctin Elementary School's Mission is:

Catoctin Elementary School Staff will create an experience that empowers our community of learners through:

- Rigorous Instruction
- Creativity
- Positive Relationships

Vision: We are Creating & Inspiring Tomorrow's Leaders Today.

IF, DUE TO A DISABILITY, YOU NEED ASSISTANCE TO ENABLE YOU TO PARTICIPATE MEANINGFULLY IN THE ACTIVITIES OF CATOCTIN ELEMENTARY, PLEASE CONTACT THE PRINCIPAL AT 571-252-2940 AT LEAST FIVE DAYS PRIOR TO THE MEETING OR ACTIVITY.

BEGINNING OF THE YEAR / STUDENT INFORMATION and DEVICES

PARENTVUE / STUDENT INFORMATION

In Loudoun County, all beginning of the year forms and student information is in ParentVue for you to access, check, revise if needed and acknowledge. If you register your child online, you will be given login information for ParentVue at that time. If you register on paper, in our office, the registrar will provide you with an activation key to set up your account. It is important that you go into ParentVue before school starts. You will need to check and make sure all of your child's important contact information and emergency contacts are up to date. You will also need to acknowledge the forms such as the LCPS Rights and Responsibilities in ParentVue. ParentVue is also how you can find out who your child's teacher is for the school year and their bus number (if applicable). ParentVue enables you to review the gradebook, interims, and report cards over the course of the year. Report cards will only be printed upon request.

STUDENT DEVICES

LCPS issues devices to students in grades K – 5 at Catoctin Elementary School. The student will be issued a device and a charger. Students in grades 1 - 5 must take the device home each night to charge it. They are expected to bring the device to school fully charged every day. If your student notices that there is something wrong with the device they need to let their teacher know. Devices follow the student within Loudoun Schools, therefore, fifth graders will take the device they have to their middle school. All students keep their devices over the summer. If you plan to move outside of LCPS please turn your student's device & charger back into the school.

COMMUNICATION TO PARENTS

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER FROM MS. PLATENBERG

Each week Ms. Platenberg will send a newsletter email to families. The email will contain updates and information that is important for parents to know. This newsletter will also have upcoming dates so that you can mark your calendars for events and school happenings.

CONNECT ED

Connect Ed allows either the school or LCPS to email or call all parents to convey information. All information related to school closings and delays will be through a Connect Ed to parents and also posted on the LCPS website.

CLASSROOM NEWSLETTERS

Most teachers send out a weekly email to parents with information about what is happening in the classroom, units of study, and important dates. Some teachers will send home a monthly newsletter.

ATTENDANCE

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD ATTENDANCE

Attendance at school on a regular basis is vital. We ask that you have your child attend school each day that he/she is healthy. It can be disruptive to your child's educational program when you remove him or her from school for trips or family outings. Although written assignments can be made up, the classroom activities and interactions with others in the school setting cannot be replaced.

ABSENCES / TARDIES (CALL IN NUMBER – 571-252-2941)

When a student is unable to attend school, parents are required to notify the school by calling the absentee call-in line (571-252-2941) prior to 8:30 A.M or by submitting the absence in ParentVue. 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. Students are excused for personal illness, death in the family, medical or dental appointments, court appearances, religious holidays, illness in the immediate family, or emergencies. If a student is absent from school for 15 consecutive days they are dropped from the roll and must be registered to re-enter school. At the point at which a student accumulates 5 unexcused absences, a referral will be made to the Attendance Officer. If a student is absent for more than 10 days or 10% of the total number of days of membership, whether excused or unexcused, the school may send a letter to the parents requiring a physician's note for all future absences. At the principal's discretion, contact may be made sooner or waived due to extenuating circumstances. The tardy bell rings at 7:30 a.m. Students who are late should be escorted to the office by a parent to ensure their safe arrival.

SCHOOL HOURS

School hours are from 7:30 A.M. until 2:15 P.M. daily. Students who walk to school and those transported by parents should not arrive at school before 7:10 A.M to ensure their safety. Our building will be open each day between 7:10 A.M. and 3:00 P.M.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Parents are encouraged to arrange appointments, trips and other activities so children do not miss instructional time. Occasionally, it may be necessary to pick up your child during school hours. Please send a note to the classroom teacher on the morning of the early dismissal. A photo ID will be requested from the adult to pick up the child. A member of the office staff will call the child to the office.

EMERGENCY CLOSING/DELAYS

In the event of a delayed opening, closing, or an early dismissal due to inclement weather you will be sent a Connect Ed from LCPS. You can also check on the LCPS website for updates. There is a form in ParentVue for families to complete in ParentVue regarding dismissal. Please complete this prior to the start of the school year with any other forms.

VISITORS/ADULT ENTRY TO THE BUILDING

During instructional time the school building has a locked entryway system with a video camera surveillance system. All visitors will be buzzed into our building when identification is shown and the purpose of their visit is provided. Visitors may be denied entry if identity cannot be verified and/or the purpose of their visit cannot be established. Visitors will sign in and receive a visitor pass which will be worn at all times while in the building. Prior to departure, visitors are asked to return to the office, return their badge and sign out. Our goal is to keep the school secure for students and staff members.

PARENT VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Our parent volunteer program is organized through the PTA and by individual teachers. Parents are invited to share their talents and expertise in many ways throughout our school. Parents can assist teachers in the following activities: classroom tutors, aides, storybook readers, art, or as a field trip chaperone. Parents can also provide clerical assistance to office staff, as well to classroom teachers. Additionally, we are always in need of parental assistance for the many PTA activities that take place during the year. Please reach out to your child's teacher and the PTA!

KEEPING HEALTHY

ALLERGIES & MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Parents of students with severe allergies or other medical conditions should have a Physician order form completed by a medical doctor and submitted to the Health Clinic Specialists. Parents should communicate any medical needs to the teacher or if there are any activity restrictions due to a medical condition. Information about developing a medical plan and medical forms are available at <https://www.lcps.org/page/2014>.

MEDICATION AT SCHOOL

School personnel cannot administer any kind of over-the-counter or prescribed medication unless requested to do so in writing by the parent. The medication must have the child's name, grade, and the time medication is to be administered on the original container. All medicine, prescription or over-the-counter, will be kept in the health office during school hours. This includes aspirin, cough drops, etc. Any child who is receiving medication on a regular, daily basis that is prescribed by a doctor must have a completed Medical Release Form/Plan prior to the administration of the medicine. Parents must transport all medication to school in the original container.

HEALTH OFFICE

Our health office will check temperatures, render limited first aid, contact parents as necessary regarding medical issues, document daily clinic visits and care provided, administer and document the distribution of medication per the school district's medication policy, and maintain a file of accident reports. In the event of a medical emergency, the parents and rescue personnel will be called.

ILLNESS OR INJURY/DOCTOR'S RESTRICTION FROM ACTIVITIES

In case of illness or injury, a student will be cared for temporarily by our health specialist. If emergency medical treatment is necessary the parents will be contacted and if needed 911 will be called. An emergency telephone number where parents can be reached and the name and telephone number of the student's family doctor must be on file in ParentVue. It is also extremely important to keep emergency contacts in ParentVue up to date in the event we cannot reach the parent.

If a student has an injury or illness preventing him/her from participating in PE class/recess, a note is required from a parent or doctor. If the injury/illness requires prolonged restrictions (3 or more PE classes) a doctor's note is required for removal from P.E. and also clearing to return the student to P.E. All restrictions to physical activities will also extend to recess activities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION



Physical education is an important part of the educational experience. The development and maintenance of a healthy body is essential for physical well-being and good mental health. Students in grades one through five are instructed by the physical education teacher two times per week. Full day kindergarten will receive two fifty-minute periods of P.E. a week. Students should wear comfortable clothes and shoes with rubber soles in order to fully benefit from the program. Sandals and plastic shoes are highly discouraged.

THE SCHOOL DAY

CHANGING AFTER-SCHOOL ARRANGEMENTS

All children are expected to go home or to their child care provider each afternoon following the school day. Changes from the original dismissal plan must be given to the teacher in writing the morning of the change in plan. If your child will be visiting friends after school please send in a written message giving your permission. The message should include the name of the child whose home he/she will be visiting. Bus passes will only be issued if space permits. If we do not receive written directions from the parent we will make a reasonable attempt to call you and then the child will follow their original dismissal plan.

FIELD TRIPS

Students are afforded the opportunity to visit various places of educational interest in the Washington area to enrich their classroom experiences. These trips are designed to supplement different aspects of the classroom curriculum and introduce students to the resources of the community. Field trips are usually taken in a school bus under the supervision of the classroom teacher with at least one other adult present. **Parents who chaperone a field trip may not bring other children on the trip.** Parental permission is required before any student is taken on a field trip. Students also take Virtual Field Trips.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Children respond more readily to school expectations when parents and teachers work together. If you would like a conference with your child's teacher or the principal, please call the school or send a note to arrange a mutually agreeable time. Conferences may be in person or virtual. All parents will be scheduled for a conference during the first grading period.

HOMEWORK

Homework is an extension of the learning that takes place in school. Homework is an extension of topics and skills learned in the classroom. Parents can help their children by arranging a quiet, comfortable place for the students to work and by seeing that assignments are completed. The LCPS guidelines for the amount of homework given each evening are as follows: children in grades one through three should be given no more than thirty minutes of homework each night; children in grades four and five should be given no more than sixty minutes of homework a night. Children in the primary grades are often asked to read nightly and study math facts for their homework assignment.

Teachers in the upper grades may assign children long-term projects such as reports, research, or projects. The expectation is that the children will learn to "pace themselves" and not save all of the work for one or two nights. If you have a question about the amount of homework your child is receiving (too much or too little) please discuss this with your child's teacher.



EMERGENCY DRILLS

Fire drills are held once a week during the first month of school and once a month thereafter. They are mandatory by state law. During a fire drill each class has an evacuation route to an outside area that is a safe distance from the building. Students are expected to walk quietly to the designated exit. Other emergency drills such as tornado, earthquake, school lock down, and school-wide evacuation drills are also practiced during the school year. A school response plan is reviewed several times over the course of the school year. Should parents have specific questions about emergency response please contact the administration team.

VALENTINE'S / BIRTHDAY TREATS AND PARTY INVITATIONS

In an effort to keep all children safe and healthy, LCPS has produced guidelines that do not allow any food to be brought in for Valentine's exchanges / birthdays. Parents may wish to donate children's books to the library in honor of a birthday or distribute other NON-FOOD items as Valentine / birthday treats. **To spare hurt feelings, party invitations will not be distributed at school unless the entire class is being invited.**

BREAKFAST & LUNCH

Breakfast and lunch accounts can be paid through a check or Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) has a meal payment system, called TITAN Family Portal. This meal payment system allows students & families to put money on an account to purchase school meals or other food items in our school cafeterias.

1. Register: Register at family.titank12.com by clicking on "Sign up today!"
2. Confirm Email: Confirm your email address by clicking on the email verification link sent to your email address.
3. Sign In: Now you can sign in at family.titank12.com using your email and password.

If you have any questions, please review our FAQs (FAQs in Spanish) or reach out to our School Nutrition Services office at CAFE@LCPS.org.

LIBRARY/COUNSELING/ART/MUSIC LESSONS

The library is open on a regularly scheduled basis and is supervised by the librarian. Library classes are held for grades K-5, every other week. On alternate weeks, students will have counseling lessons. Students will have art and music once a week as well.

REPORT CARDS

The intent of the Loudoun County Public Schools' Report Card is to inform parents of their child's academic and social progress. Report cards are issued four times a year, about two weeks after the end of each nine-week grading period and are available to parents in ParentVue. Any student who shows a marked drop in achievement, or who is doing poorly in any subject, will receive an interim report before the end of the grading period to inform parents of any problems.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION SYSTEM (PBIS)

Students are recognized on a regular basis at Catoctin. We are using a "house" system in which students earn points for their "house" when they are recognized for positive acts. Houses are arranged randomly from K – 5 and have quarterly house meetings & Pep Rallies.

SCHOOL COUNSELING

A School Counselor is someone who helps your child develop academically, socially, and emotionally, just as his or her teacher does. A school counselor maintains relationships with students by leading classroom guidance lessons, organized counseling groups and lunch bunches, individual counseling sessions, mediations, and by other casual daily interactions. Some of the topics counselors will be working on with all grade levels will include Character Education, Conflict Resolution, Bullying Prevention, Violence Prevention, and much more.

PTA

The PTA is involved in improving our school and will sponsor several fundraisers to support activities or purchase items to enhance the instructional program. The Catoctin Elementary School PTA primarily meets once a month. For more information you can reach the PTA at catocinctpta@gmail.com

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR**ARTICLES BROUGHT TO SCHOOL**

Extremely valuable items and those creating danger to others (knives, guns of any kind, slingshots, and matches) should not be brought to school. Parents should make themselves aware of the School Board Policy regarding weapons and electronics (phones, iPad, etc.) in the school. Toys, including any type of trading cards and toy weapons, should not be brought to school for use during school hours. If your child is involved in CASA they may bring items to use at CASA but must keep them in their book bags during school hours. The school is NOT liable for items you elect to send in to school for use at CASA.

DISCIPLINE

The faculty, staff and administration at Catoctin Elementary School seek to provide a school environment in which students feel safe, secure and happy. Our goal is to teach children to be respectful and responsible members of our school. Teachers have the authority and responsibility to maintain discipline in the classroom. When a student is having a problem, the teacher may: conference with the student, conference with the parents, or use classroom disciplinary procedures. Children who continually disregard classroom or school rules may be sent to the administration team. The administration team may:

1. Give the student a very stern warning.
2. Take privileges away from the student.
3. Teach replacement behaviors
4. Notify the parents of continuing problems.
5. Assign the student to in-school suspension.
6. Suspend the student from school.

Student conduct that: disrupts normal classroom and/or school procedures; is disrespectful to school staff or other students' disregards school property or the property of others, will be managed according to policies, rules and regulations of LCPS.

STUDENT DRESS

The primary responsibility for the proper dress and grooming of students rests with the parent or the guardian of each student. Any clothing that distracts from learning is discouraged.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Free bus transportation is provided to all students who live more than eight-tenths of a mile from the school. The Transportation Department will assure safe transit of all bus riders. Bus routes are planned and established by the transportation department. Bus information can be found in ParentVue prior to school starting. Bus times will fluctuate the first week of school. If we are notified by transportation that a bus is late in the afternoon, we will do our best to get a Connect Ed out to parents.

Each morning, students should be at their bus stops at least five, but not more than ten, minutes before their designated time. It is preferable that a parent stays and supervises their child at the bus stop. Kindergarten students will be issued tags for dismissal from buses. One tag must be on the

Kindergartener's backpack. Whoever is picking up the kindergarten student must have a matching tag. If a parent would like an older sibling to have a tag they can attach a tag to their backpack. Kindergarten students are not allowed off the bus if they do not have someone to escort or meet them.



For the safety of your child the following bus rules are enforced. Students choosing to disregard bus safety rules may be denied the privilege of riding the bus.

TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

Please follow all directional signs upon entering and exiting the school parking areas.

Car traffic is prohibited in the bus loops directly in the front of the building in the morning between 7:05 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. and in the afternoon between 2:10 p.m. and 2:40 p.m.

Parents who drive their children to school should use the parking lot on the multipurpose room side of the building. Cars cannot turn left into the Kiss & Ride Parking Lot from Catoctin Circle. Please enter the parking lot from Dry Mill road up Catoctin Circle and take a right into the parking lot. There will be a car line that forms along the curb.

To ensure students safety the following procedures will be followed:

1. A car line will be formed in the lane on the multipurpose room side of the building. In the afternoon cars double up to get more cars into the parking lot and off of the street. When they reach the building in the pick up area cars alternate to form a single line.
2. Children should be dropped off along the sidewalk on the side of the school in our Kiss & Ride area. Please pull forward to the end of the sidewalk to allow as many cars to stop as possible. Children should be ready to exit quickly to keep traffic flowing smoothly.
3. Kiss & Ride is open from 7:10 to 7:30 and 2:15 – 2:30.
4. If a parent wishes to drop-off or pick-up a child from any of the other parking areas, the parent **must park his/her car** and accompany the child across the parking lot and onto the sidewalk.
5. The school will provide a Name Plaque to display for regular car riders. If you are not a regular car rider please write your student's name on a piece of paper that the staff member on duty can read to have your child come out.

BICYCLE, SCOOTER & WALKER SAFETY

Due to heavy traffic on Catoctin Circle, riding of bicycles or "razor" type scooters to school is NOT recommended; however, children may ride them if they are in a "walking zone", with parental consent and when accompanied by an adult ONLY. Town of Leesburg Sec 32-273 specifically states: "No person shall ride a bicycle or other similar machine on or over the sidewalks. Excepted from this provision are minors who are on a cycle who are accompanied by an adult." The Town of Leesburg also requires elementary children to wear a helmet. Students not following these laws will be refused permission to continue riding. A bike rack is available and bikes and other riding devices left in the rack should be locked. School personnel will not be responsible for the security of bicycles/scooters during the school day.