

GRANITE FALLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Granite Falls, NC 28630
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www.caldwellschools.com

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK 2023-2024

GFES Vision:

Give Respect

Fair and Accountable

Encourage Others

Show Kindness

GRANITE FALLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Welcome to Granite Falls Elementary School and the 2023-2024 school year! We are looking forward to the upcoming year! It is important to read, discuss with your children, and keep this handbook as a reference to school processes and policies. The information is listed by topic in alphabetical order in an effort to speed up your access to information you may need about our school. If you do not find the information you need, please call the school office at 396-2222. In addition to this handbook, teachers will provide information and guidelines necessary for their specific classrooms. We look forward to a successful, safe, and exciting school year.

2023-2024 SCHOOL CALENDAR

Aug. 28 th	First Student Day
Sept. 4 th	Holiday- No School
Oct. 20 st	Teacher Planning Day
Nov. 7 th	Pro. Dev./No School
Nov. 10 th	Holiday- No School
Nov. 22 nd -24 th	Thanksgiving Holidays
Dec. 20 th	Early Release
Dec. 21 st -Jan. 5 th	Winter Break
Jan. 15 th	Holiday- No School
Feb. 2 nd	Pro. Dev./No School
Feb. 23 rd	Pro. Dev./No School
Mar. 4 th - 5 th	Pro. Dev./No School
Mar. 29 th	Holiday - No School
April 1 st -5 th	Spring Break
May 27 th	Holiday- No School
May 31 st	Last Day of School/ Early release

ABSTINENCE CURRICULUM

The Caldwell County Board of Education has established policy 3540 entitled "Abstinence Until Marriage Curriculum". Only approved materials at approved grade levels may be used. Fifth grade students are included in this program and their parents will receive a letter informing them of an opportunity to review these materials. Parents who do not want their students to be included must inform the school in writing. A specific notice will be sent to these parents before instruction is given.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

School begins promptly at 7:55 AM for all students. Car riders and walkers should **not** arrive at school **before 7:30 AM** unless they are attending before school daycare. **Staff members are not on supervisory duty in their classrooms until 7:30 AM.** All students should report directly to breakfast carts, if they wish to eat, and directly to their classrooms. Parents will be notified for a conference if children consistently arrive before 7:30.

With the exception of the first 10 days, parents will need to drop their children off at the curb and not to escort them into the building. Even kindergarten students quickly learn how to get to their classrooms. "HUG & GO." If you must come into the building, please park your automobile in a designated

parking place and turn off the car engine. Traffic lanes must be kept open for student use and emergency vehicles.

School is dismissed at 2:40. All students who do not ride the bus or go to daycare should be picked up at this time and **before 3:00.** Parents of children who consistently remain at school beyond 3:00 will be notified and reminded of after-school care. Parents are not permitted to wait inside the school building to pick up their child at the end of the day in order to preserve the safety and integrity of the instructional day.

When a student needs to leave early, the parent or guardian must come to the school office to sign out and pick up the student. Teachers are asked not to release students unless the office notifies them, and parents are asked **not to interrupt classes to pick up children. Please avoid picking up students early unless it is absolutely necessary. Students cannot be picked up early for the convenience of avoiding the traffic.**

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance and prompt arrival at school are **important** every day of the school year. Too many absences or tardies interfere with student progress and interrupt classes that have started. A student must be present for one half of the school day (11:30) to be counted present for the day.

Board Policy 4300 guides school officials in relation to excessive tardies, absences and early dismissals. Ten or more tardies and/or early dismissals make children ineligible for perfect attendance certificates. **Good attendance is particularly important to parents who have been granted transfers to other schools for their children.**

Students who arrive on school grounds after the 7:55 bell will be counted tardy. (See the section on TARDIES for more information.) Regular attendance is a very important factor in achieving a good scholastic record. Work missed while a student is absent is difficult to make up. There is no substitute for actually participating in daily classroom instruction, discussion, and work.

IMPORTANT: When a student is absent a written excuse stating the exact reason for the absence is required for our records. Written excuses are due when students return to school. Absences are initially coded unexcused and will remain so if written notification of the reason for the absence is not received and in accordance with state law. Under the compulsory attendance statute, an excessive number of unexcused absences or tardies may lead to court action against the parent or guardian. Students missing in excess of six days of school for unsubstantiated medical reasons may be required to provide a doctor's note for absences to be excused. You will be notified if this is applicable to your child. If you anticipate your child will have an extended absence, please call the school office or teacher to let us know. Missed class work may be picked up, if asked for in advance.

Lawful absences (excused) are identified by the State of North Carolina as those involving personal illness, serious illness or death in the immediate family, religious holidays, or medical emergencies. A written excuse must be sent to the school for any absence to be considered lawful. **In order for an educational trip to be excused, parents must complete a form from the office and have it approved by the principal two weeks before taking the trip. Trips will only be excused**

when there is validation the trip adequately supplants time away from instruction. Family vacations cannot be excused.

AWARDS/HONOR ROLL

Students are recognized throughout the school year for individual accomplishments. Students in grades 3-5 are eligible for the A Honor Roll and B Honor Roll at the end of each grading period. This achievement is submitted to the *Lenoir News Topic* for publication.

- ❖ *A HONOR ROLL* - Straight A's and no marks less than an S-
- ❖ *B HONOR ROLL* - No grade less than a B and no marks less than an S-

BAD WEATHER PROCEDURES

In the event of bad weather, the Caldwell County School System will make announcements concerning school closings or delays on the local radio stations, television stations, the system website, and the Alert Now phone messaging system. If school is called off during the day it will be announced to radio and television stations immediately and you will receive an Alert Now phone call. Listen for these announcements and inform your child ahead of time what to do in case of early dismissal.

Additionally, complete the section on the student information form indicating your child's route home. **Please refrain from calling the school office to check on school closings as this ties up our phone system.**

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CHILD CARE "WRAPAROUND"

Before and after school child care is offered Monday through Friday from 6:00 am until the start of school and from school dismissal until 6:00 pm on school days. Wraparound is also open from 6:00 am until 6:00 pm for child care on teacher workdays and during the summer. Interested parents should see the Director of the Wraparound program for details during normal operating hours. If school is dismissed early due to bad weather, Wraparound will not operate. If school is on a two-hour delay or closed, Wraparound will be on a two-hour delay or closed as well. All closings will be on the following stations/media platforms: GFES Facebook Page, WBTV Channel 3, WSOC-TV Channel 9, KICKS Radio 103.3 FM, CCS Website—the info will scroll across the top of the home page.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are important events to elementary school children. Birthday celebrations should not take away from instructional time. If you wish to provide a small snack for the students in your child's classroom, please discuss it with the teacher ahead of time. Teachers will let you know what is appropriate to send and what time of day is best. Healthy snacks and water are preferred. Please remember that students will **not** be able to receive deliveries of balloons, flowers, etc. at school. Student birthdays are recognized each day on the morning announcements.

BUSES

Students who ride the bus are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner described in a county brochure about school bus safety. Bus transportation is available for all students living in the Granite Falls School district during their 180 school days. Bus stops will only be made at a residence

within the school district. Bus times may vary occasionally but should be very stable after the first week of school, barring mechanical trouble. Students must be outside waiting at the bus stop. The bus garage determines bus routes and stops.

Please encourage your child to follow the driver's instructions and to obey all safety rules. Most important are the following:

1. Wait in a safe spot away from the street until the bus comes to a complete stop and wait on the driver's signal before loading the bus.
2. Stay in your seat until the bus comes to a complete stop before moving or standing when unloading.
3. Sit flat on the seat with your back against it, facing the front.
4. Obey the driver.
5. Keep all arms, hands, objects, etc. inside the bus.
6. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself and out of the aisles.
7. Talk quietly with your friends.
8. Profanity and other inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated.

These rules are in place to help make our bus rides safe for the students and drivers. Any violation of a rule or rules will result in disciplinary action, including suspension from the bus.

Once a student is assigned to a bus, he/she should ride that bus each day unless a note from a parent or guardian states otherwise. **Any requests for a change in bus transportation must be made in writing.** If your child is to ride his regular bus and get off at a different stop, please send a note for the office to sign. If your child is to ride home on a different bus to visit a friend, etc., please send a note to school with your child for the office to sign. If a student is riding home with your child please also send a note. Such requests must be approved and signed by an administrator. **Call-Ins: For obvious safety reasons, we cannot take telephone messages pertaining to changes in transportation unless it is an emergency situation. All such calls will be directed to an administrator.**

CAFETERIA

Our school cafeteria serves a nutritious breakfast and lunch daily. The cafeteria is a place for enjoyment and learning where good table manners and eating habits are encouraged. Good citizenship is expected when in the cafeteria. Parents and relatives are welcome to eat lunch with your child. We ask that you get in contact with your child's teacher or school office to schedule an appointment.

Breakfast and Lunch will be free for all students during the 2023/2024 school year. Money for additional purchases (ice cream, water, etc) may be paid in advance. Checks should be made payable to Granite Falls Elementary School and the child's account number written on the check. An online payment system is also available. Check cashing is not allowed; checks are to be accepted for the amount of purchase only. Change is to be given only for the purpose of completing a purchase transaction. Changing money to smaller denominations without making a purchase is not permitted.

Children may pack their lunch; however, soft drinks are not allowed. Student use of the microwave is not permitted. Adults may not use the microwave to heat food for students. Refrigerator space is unavailable, so please send food that will

not spoil. Ice cream, juice, milk, and other extra food items are available for students to purchase during lunch.

Meal Prices:

- ❖ Breakfast (student) Free
- ❖ Lunch (student) Free
- ❖ Adult Breakfast - \$1.25
- ❖ Adult Lunch - A La Cart Pricing
- ❖ Ice Cream - \$ 1.00; Other items - \$.50- \$1.00

Note: These prices are subject to change after printing of this handbook due to increasing costs.

Granite Falls Elementary School is an "Allergy Aware" school. This is for the safety and protection of students who are so allergic to peanuts and peanut related products that it is life threatening for them to even have skin contact with a peanut product. There will be no peanut butter or related products used in the cafeteria or sold in school vending machines. Parents are asked not to send any peanut related products to school with your child for lunch, snack, or classroom/birthday celebrations. We appreciate your cooperation and support of our efforts to protect the life of every child at GFES.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND/OR TELEPHONE NUMBER

It is very important that the school always have the correct address and telephone numbers for each student for use in an emergency and the Alert Now phone messaging system. This includes current work locations, telephone numbers, and cell phone numbers for each parent, guardian, and emergency contact. Please notify the school immediately of any changes.

CUSTODY

When parents share custodial rights granted by the court, a copy of the court documents should be filed in the office. Your child (ren)'s teachers should be informed of your expectations during orientation or a parent conference. Generally, the school should be a "safe" zone for children and not a place to carry out parental visitation rights or custody disputes.

DELIVERIES

Food deliveries to the school campus and deliveries of flowers, balloons, etc. for students are not permitted.

DIRECTORY INFORMATION

Under the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, public schools may release "Directory Information" about students so that their awards, honors, participation, etc. can be noted to the media and others. This includes name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, participation in school activities, height, weight, dates of attendance, and school last attended. Such information will be available for release unless the parent or student over 18 requests that such information is withheld.

Parents or eligible students have the right to object to the release of directory information or challenge the accuracy of the information by informing the school principal in writing. If

dissatisfied with the principal's decision, the parent or eligible student may appeal to the Superintendent.

DISCIPLINE

Students in the Caldwell County School System are expected to behave in a manner that will reflect favorably on themselves and their schools during school hours and at any out of school activity. Such behavior will promote a safe, orderly learning environment for all students. It is the shared responsibility of the home and school to develop self discipline skills within students appropriate to their age. While the exercise of individual rights and liberties within schools is encouraged and protected, it is also recognized those rights and liberties are muted by the need of the system to provide a quality education to all.

Schools should develop activities that promote self-discipline, reward good conduct and develop understanding of the board's expectations for student behavior. Additionally, staff should be educated in techniques that support and enhance these efforts. Students are expected to:

- ★ Support and participate in all school activities.
- ★ Be respectful, cooperative and honest with others.
- ★ Be informed regarding their rights and responsibilities.
- ★ Assist the school staff in operating a safe school.
- ★ Exhibit self-discipline and self- motivation.

Any behavior, which causes deterioration in the safety, moral or the learning environment of the school, or infringes materially on the rights of others will not be tolerated and may subject the student to corrective measures. Such measures shall be determined on the basis of the facts presented in each instance of misconduct by appropriate school officials under the guidance of applicable Board policies, statutes and school rules. The primary responsibility for classroom discipline rests with the teacher and incidents should be handled within the classroom whenever possible. Reasonable force may be used to control behavior or to remove a person from a scene when it becomes necessary. The consequences listed are intended to serve as guidelines for staff using reasonable discretion and appropriate due process for students who violate board policy or school regulations. Potential consequences include, but are not restricted to the following:

- ❖ Student warning
- ❖ Removal of privileges
- ❖ Parent notice
- ❖ Time out in office or classroom
- ❖ Referral to student support services
- ❖ Parent conference
- ❖ Restitution
- ❖ In-school suspension
- ❖ Out-of-school suspension
- ❖ Long-term suspension or expulsion.

Student misconduct examples include but are not restricted to:

- ❖ Disruptive Behavior
- ❖ Profane or Abusive Language
- ❖ Dishonesty: Lying, Cheating, Plagiarism, etc.
- ❖ Fighting
- ❖ Stealing or Damage to Property

- ❖ Possession/Use of Tobacco or Tobacco Products Drug and Alcohol Use
- ❖ Sexual Misconduct and Harassment
- ❖ Possession/Use of Weapon
- ❖ False Fire Alarms and Bomb Threats
- ❖ Disrespect to or Assault/Battery on Staff
- ❖ Fireworks or Explosives
- ❖ Gambling
- ❖ Inappropriate Dress - See Dress Code
- ❖ Bus Misconduct
- ❖ Leaving Campus
- ❖ Acts with Intent to Create Terror
- ❖ Bullying

DRESS CODE

Student dress and appearance are the responsibility of the parents. Student dress often establishes a pattern for classroom behavior. It also determines how children feel about themselves. Students enrolled in Caldwell County Schools should come appropriately dressed for learning activities, weather conditions, and safety. A student's appearance, mode of dress, or condition of personal hygiene shall not distract or disrupt the learning environment or constitute a threat to the safety, health, or well-being of students and staff. Clothing should fit appropriately and not expose too much of the body.

Clothing and accessories that contain obscene, threatening, or suggestive writing/pictures are not permitted. The display of alcoholic beverages, drugs, or tobacco products is also prohibited.

Shoes must be worn at school at all times. Students should wear safe and comfortable shoes. Tennis shoes are encouraged to allow students safe participation in daily activities and may be required for specific activities such as Physical Education.

Some examples of inappropriate dress include, but are not limited to:

- ❖ Hats inside the building
- ❖ Sunglasses
- ❖ Visible undergarments or undergarments worn as outer garments
- ❖ Unsafe shoes
- ❖ Body piercings/ear gauges
- ❖ Excessively revealing clothing
- ❖ Items that could be considered a weapon

Student dress or appearance that interferes with or disrupts the learning environment may be prohibited at the discretion of the principal or his designee.

EMERGENCY DRILLS - FIRE, TORNADO AND LOCK-DOWN

Monthly fire drills are held in order to help students understand and practice the proper method of evacuating the building. We also participate in state and local tornado alerts during Tornado Awareness Week each year. A lock-down drill will be conducted several times a year to make sure that our classrooms and halls can be secured should an emergency situation arise.

ENROLLING A STUDENT

A student must turn 5 on or before August 31 of the school year to enroll in kindergarten. Basic requirements for enrolling a student in school for the first time (kindergarten) are:

1. Birth certificate with raised seal
2. Immunization record
3. Physical form
4. Proof of Residence

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are valuable learning experiences and teachers are encouraged to plan a limited number of them and to ensure they correlate with the curriculum. Teachers will inform parents in advance of the trip's itinerary, purpose, lunch arrangements, and the cost of the trip. Before the trip occurs, each student must have a signed permission slip filed at the school. Transportation is by yellow school bus or activity bus from the school system's bus fleet or on a commercial bus. A fee may be necessary for each trip to help cover the cost of mileage. If you need financial assistance for a field trip, please contact the school or teacher so that we may help you. Scholarships may be available to pay for part, or all of the trip expense. Field trip insurance is paid by the school system and covers all students while on a field trip. While away from school, students are expected to behave appropriately and may be disciplined for misbehavior after returning. All students must ride to the field trip destination on the bus. They may ride home with parents only after the parents have signed the student out through the teacher. Parents will be allowed to take their child only. Chaperones will need to drive to the destination in private vehicles. In order to be fair to all concerned, older and younger siblings should not be taken along on field trips.

GRADES

Communication about student progress between the school and parents is essential for a productive school year. Progress Reports will be available on Parent Portal, mid way thru the term, with your child providing you with feedback concerning effort, work accomplishment, and behavior. Parents will also be notified if a student's grades have declined 2 letter grades or if he/she is in jeopardy of failing for the reporting period.

Report cards are viewable every nine weeks and are available on Parent Portal 10 days after the end of the grading period. Grading in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade is based on the level of mastery of the curriculum exhibited by the student (described on report card). A traditional grading scale is used in grades 3-5 (A=90-100, B=80-89, C=70-79, D=60-69, F=59 and below). Specialty area classes and conduct are graded on the following scale: S (Satisfactory), , N (Needs Improvement), U (Unsatisfactory).

Grades are computed by a teacher using formulas designed by that teacher. Parents should contact the teacher when there is a question concerning grades and may schedule a conference with the teacher to discuss any concerns. School board policy strongly encourages students to make up low and failing grades.

HOMEWORK

Each teacher assigns homework as he/she feels it best benefits the students in his/her class. Homework is assigned to practice,

reinforce, or enhance a skill learned in class. Since any homework assigned is considered to be meaningful, it is expected to be completed and turned in on time. Parents should provide support by questioning children about homework and by providing a suitable location and schedule for completing assignments.

IMMUNIZATIONS

North Carolina state law requires that all students enrolling in public school for the first time or coming from outside our school system present their birth certificate and immunization record when registering. A physical examination must also be completed for students entering school for the first time in a North Carolina Public School. Each child in North Carolina must be immunized against the following diseases by receiving the specified doses of vaccine by certain ages:

- DTaP
- Polio vaccine-four doses required.
- Measles, mumps, and rubella-two doses
- Hib-three doses prior to their 5th birthday.
- Hep B-three doses
- Varicella (chicken pox)-two doses.

Parents/guardians are given 30 days grace period to fulfill this requirement or the child must be suspended until records are in order.

INJURY OR ILLNESS

Should your child become injured or sick while at school, the staff will use their best judgment concerning contacting the parent. Immediate contact to parents will be made in at least the following circumstances: 1) Fever above 100 degrees, 2) a child vomits, 3) suspected fractures, PLEASE MAKE SURE THE SCHOOL ALWAYS HAS YOUR CURRENT WORK, HOME, AND CELL NUMBERS IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY. Children should not be sent to school with significant untreated symptoms of illness. This request is made to protect the health of our other students and staff.

INSURANCE

School accident insurance is available for students to purchase to provide coverage during the school day or during a full 24-hour period. Forms are available on the school website each year. Coverage begins on the day the insurance premium is paid. All coverage will be explained in the forms.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

The Caldwell County School system utilizes an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach for controlling insects, rodents, and other pests. Parents have the right to be notified in advance of specific pesticide applications made at the school. To view Policy 4302 in its entirety and to download a notification request form, go to www.caldwellschools.com/Parents and Students/Integrated Pest Management.

ITEMS TO LEAVE AT HOME

- CELL PHONES (unless being used as part of the county's BYOD policy)
- Cosmetics-make-up, fingernail polish, perfume, etc.
- Drugs or medication not prescribed by a doctor
- Expensive jewelry

- Hats/caps
- Money in excess of actual needs
- Pets, except on the invitation of the teacher
- Radios, MP3 Players, CD players, electronic games, etc.
- Tobacco or any tobacco product
- Toys, except on the invitation of the teacher
- Trading cards of any kind (Pokemon, Yugio, etc.)
- Weapons, knives, toy guns, sharp-pointed objects, etc. (The school is required to notify the parents and law enforcement of any student who brings a weapon to school. Students will be suspended from school according to Caldwell County School Board Policy 4300.)

* Items confiscated by a staff member may only be returned to the parent.

LEAVING SCHOOL EARLY

Any child leaving school early must be checked out through the office. Early dismissals are recorded in the office and a parent contacted if the number becomes excessive.

Please do not go to the child's class first! The adult must fill out the dismissal log in the office and the secretary will contact the child's teacher and have him/her sent to the office ready for dismissal. This method is used to assure the safety of our students at all times.

After-school arrangements should be clearly understood before your child leaves home. Notes to teachers are required if any change in afternoon routine is requested. If your child needs to ride another bus home, the note should be sent to the principal or assistant principal by the teacher and should be approved by the school administrator unless the bus becomes overcrowded.

LICE

Each year students arrive at school with infestations of lice. Board policy requires students with live lice to be sent home until their hair is totally free of live bugs. Generally, students should be in school the next day free of lice. Information forms will be sent home with children having lice. Excessive absences due to head lice will be considered unlawful and reported to the appropriate authorities.

LOST AND FOUND

A lost and found area is located in the breezeway for any item found on the school grounds. Please label all items brought or worn to school with your child's name so that they might be returned to them if misplaced. Items left at the end of each nine weeks will be donated to South Caldwell Christian Ministries.

MEDIA CENTER

The Granite Falls Elementary School Media Center operates on a flexible schedule. It is open every day for book checkout. Classes are scheduled to enhance the regular grade-level curriculum.

Kindergarten and 1st grade students are allowed to have one book out at a time and 2nd through 5th grade students are allowed to have two books out at a time. These books are loaned for a period of 10 days. After this loan period has expired, overdue notices are sent. If books are out over one month, a charge slip is sent home. If a lost book that has been paid for is found and returned in good condition, reimbursement can be

made before July 1st of the current school year. Fees will be charged for books that have been damaged, in accordance with the disrepair. Reference books are loaned for one night only in 3rd - 5th grades. Students should keep all books in good repair.

MEDICATION

The Caldwell County Board of Education and the Caldwell County Health Department have established a medication procedure to provide for the safe administration of medicines that cannot be scheduled outside of the school day, but are necessary for a student's well-being. A Medication Consent Form must be completed by a doctor and on file with the teacher for any over-the-counter or prescription medication to be given to a student. The teacher will log the administration of any medicine. Generally, medications should be scheduled for administration outside of the school day. The parent must deliver all medicine to the school in its original container. Students must never transport medicine.

NONDISCRIMINATION CLAUSE

Programs, activities and facilities of the Caldwell County School System are available to all on a non-discriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, sex, age, handicap, or national origin. The school system is an equal access Equal Opportunity Employer. Questions pertaining to educational equity, equal opportunity, or equal access should be addressed to the Associate Superintendent of Human Resources, Dr. Bill Griffin, or Carol Sturgis, Title IX Coordinator, Caldwell County Schools, 1914 Hickory Blvd. SW, Lenoir, NC 28645; 828-728-8407.

NOTICE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The Caldwell County School System follows the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) when disclosing any personally identifiable information from student education records. The school district may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent. This information, generally not considered harmful, such as student's name, address, participation in school activities and sports, weight and height of athletic team members, dates of attendance, awards, and the most recent previous school attended, may be utilized by the school district, individual schools or organizations, unless parents advise the Caldwell County Schools that they do not want their student's information disclosed. To prevent disclosure, parents or eligible students (one who is at least 18 years old or is married) must notify the school in writing within the first 20 calendar days of the school year. The Board of Education strongly discourages the release of directory information to outside organizations which have requested the information for their own purposes, including private, commercial or religious organizations.

The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Caldwell County Schools to include this type of information in certain school publications. Examples include:

- The yearbook;
- Honor rolls or recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parents are encouraged to schedule parent conferences with teachers at any time. Both parents and teachers gain insight into a child by sharing their knowledge and observations. Parents may also call teachers to discuss problems or concerns, but are asked to do so after 3:00, or during the teacher's planning time so that the teacher is not disturbed during the instructional day. Teachers will plan parent conferences or parent meetings with you throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to try to resolve problems with teachers before contacting an administrator.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parental involvement is a foundation for successful students. Studies have indicated that children whose parents and/or other significant adults share in their formal education tend to do better in school. Parents have the privilege and responsibility to share the world with their children. Talking with your child about life's everyday experiences will help each of you understand the others' viewpoints values, dreams, and interests. Parents need not only talk to their children, but also listen to their children. Answering questions, or helping children find the answers, will help your child develop a sense of value and self-respect. Parents are encouraged to be active participants in their child's education. This may include attending parent conferences with teachers, having lunch with your child, keeping up-to-date with your child's progress and assignments, attending PTO and school events, and volunteering to help in the classroom. Parents may also become involved with tutoring/mentoring students with special remedial needs after attending school training sessions. Visitors and volunteers are welcome at school, but are required to report to the office to sign in and receive an ID badge upon arrival. All parents and visitors must obtain permission of the administration before entering the classroom. Visitors are expected to leave promptly when their business is completed and sign out in the office. Parents are not permitted to wait inside the school building to pick up their child at the end of the day in order to preserve the safety and integrity of the instructional day. This ensures the normal routine of your child's education is interrupted as little as possible. Volunteers should coordinate activities with the classroom teacher prior to the date of service.

PARKING

All cars should be parked in marked parking spaces. This includes parents with children in the WrapAround Program. Traffic lanes are not for parking. **Please do not leave vehicles in the traffic lanes or areas marked "No Parking" spaces are reserved for buses and staff and are set aside for safety purposes. No cars are to be parked in the bus parking area at any time.** These spaces are set aside to ensure the safety of staff, buses, and bus travel.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Children generally love to participate in well-planned physical education classes. Teachers are expected to use their professional discretion in determining whether children should participate. Please communicate with your child's teacher if there is a reason he/she should not participate in Physical Education on a given day, or if there are accommodations that

should be made on an ongoing basis. The NC State Board of Education has recommended that all students participate in at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day.

PTO

The PTO is an active and important part of our school. We are looking forward to an exciting year in our PTO and encourage parents to support our various projects throughout the year. We encourage you to take an active role in fund-raisers and the various volunteer opportunities. All funds raised by our PTO are spent for the benefit of all children and their educational needs. From educational supplies to beautification projects, the GFES PTO strives to make our school better year after year. Please take an active role in making this the best year ever in our PTO.

SCHEDULE FOR STUDENTS

7:30	Students may begin arriving at school, unless they are enrolled in daycare or ride an early arriving bus. Breakfast will also begin to be served.
7:55	The instructional day begins with the ringing of the tardy bell. Students arriving after this time should report to the office with a parent to be signed in on the computer.
2:40	School dismissed.
3:00	All car riders should have been picked up.

SCHOOL PICTURES

School Pictures are made at least twice each year to be purchased at the discretion of the parents(s). A notice will be sent home prior to pictures being made. A full color yearbook will be offered in the spring.

- 10/12/2023 Fall Pictures
- 11/16/2023 Fall picture makeup
- 11/16/2023 Holiday Pictures
- 2/8/2024 Class Pictures
- 3/14/2024 Spring Pictures
- 4/18/2024 Kinder Cap and Gown Pictures

SPEECH AND HEARING/LANGUAGE SCREENINGS

Mass Speech / Language screenings are no longer being conducted in Caldwell County; however, individual screenings will be performed upon teacher referral and given parental permission or upon parental request. Mass hearing screenings will be conducted on all 1st, 3rd and 5th graders. Parents who do not wish to have their child's hearing screened should indicate this in writing to the school's Speech Pathologist within the first 2 weeks of the school year. Hearing screenings are available for children in other grades upon referral to the Speech Pathologist, given parental permission.

STATE AND LOCAL TESTING SCHEDULE

Specific testing dates are not available at the time of this printing, but will be sent home as soon as they are available. Group Aptitude Testing will be given to third grade. K-5th grade students will participate in appropriate writing test samples throughout the year. EOG tests in math and reading for grades 3-5 and science in grade 5 will be given during the last weeks of school. Specific dates will be sent out when available. Please acknowledge our testing schedule so that your child (ren) can have the best testing environment possible. There is always a possibility of other field tests for which we may be selected during the year. Benchmark assessments will be given periodically in grades 3-5 and all K-2 students are given the K-2 assessment and DIBELS.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Granite Falls Elementary School is a large school with many outside doors and is located on a large campus. Many parents and others visit our campus daily and our driveway handles a lot of non-school traffic. Student field trips extend the classroom into our community.

A school safety plan has been developed to deal with most contingencies. The effectiveness of the plan depends on responsible adults within the school informing school officials of unusual, illegal or dangerous situations or conditions. Staff members supervise and monitor areas around our school throughout the day, but cannot be at all places at all times. Parents are encouraged to inform school officials of situations or circumstances that may endanger students.

All visitors must sign in at the office upon arrival at school and wear a nametag provided by the school. All outer doors will be locked during the school day except for the office entrance. School safety is a top priority for school administration and teachers. Each school has a Crisis Management Plan that addresses major crises, such as bad weather, armed intruder on campus, chemical spill, etc. and defines the steps that should be taken to ensure the safety of all children. Law enforcement and emergency agencies work closely with school administration to prevent or prepare for these incidents that would threaten the safety of students. As our culture and environment continue to change, crisis response is modified to meet the most current demands in society. For more information, contact the School-Community Relations Office, 728-8407, ext. 140142

School safety is a top priority for school administration, faculty and staff. The school district's Crisis Management Plan addresses major crises, such as bad weather, armed intruders on campus, chemical spills, etc., specific emergencies that could possibly occur on any school campus at any given time. Responses to these incidents are clearly defined in the Crisis Management Plan and law enforcement, accompanied by emergency service agencies, are trained to work closely with school administration in preventing injury or threats. School administrators are required to conduct at least two lockdown drills each year in an effort to be prepared for any type of emergency. A fire safety drill is also conducted monthly. For more information, contact the Community Services Office, 728-8407.

SOCIAL SERVICES

The Caldwell County Department of Social Services is an institutional advocate for children. Allegations of abuse and

neglect must be reported by citizens and investigated by the department. Sometimes those visits happen at school. Social workers sign in at our office, but are not directly supervised by school staff. Social workers have independent investigative authority that allows them to privately interview students while at school. While these visits are rare, we cannot interfere with social workers while carrying out their duties.

SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS

Classroom student supply lists are provided at the beginning of the school year. Sometimes teachers may ask that students have special supplies for projects or assignments. Each student is supplied with a set of textbooks and will be asked to pay fees for damages or the replacement cost for lost books.

TRANSPORTATION CHANGES

For the safety of all students, GFES does not accept transportation changes of any kind over the telephone unless it is an emergency situation and your "specific code word" is directed to a school administrator. **Transportation changes must be in writing and should include the date and parent signature.** Once a student is assigned to a bus, he/she should ride that bus each day unless a note from a parent or guardian states otherwise. If your child is to ride home on a different bus to visit a friend, change bus stops on his regular bus route, etc., please send a note to school with your child. If a student is riding home with your child please also send a note. Such requests must be approved and signed by an administrator. Car rider and after school daycare changes should be submitted in writing to the classroom teacher. No transportation changes should be left on the voicemail of teachers. Please don't wait until the end of the school day to attempt to make a transportation change.

VISITING SCHOOL

Parents, friends and relatives are invited to visit school on birthdays or special occasions. The school provides opportunities for visitation during and after school hours. Please register in the office and secure a nametag upon your arrival if you are visiting during the school day. The office is the only entrance for the school. If you are volunteering in a classroom please sign in at the office and sign the volunteer log in the hallway.

Thank you for taking the time to read through our handbook. If you have any questions, please call the school at 396-2222. While we cannot include all rules and regulations for every situation, we have tried to cover information for safe and orderly schools. We appreciate your support. Sign below to indicate you have read and understand the guidelines, policies, and procedures of Granite Falls Elementary School.