



HIGHLANDS ELEMENTARY PARENT HANDBOOK



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ATTENDANCE

The compulsory School Attendance Law—F.S. 232 requires all children from the age of 6 until the age of 18 attend school on a regular basis. This law holds parents/guardians responsible for their child's school attendance.

Open communication between parents and schools is an integral component of the educational process. Regular attendance is necessary for a student to be successful. Missed work shall be made up for all absences including suspension.

DCPS School Board Policy 5.42 states: When your child has accumulated five unexcused absences within a calendar month or ten unexcused absences within a 90day calendar period, the teacher must report absences to the principal and the parent will be requested to attend a conference with the Attendance Intervention Team (AIT) comprised of the following individuals: Administrator, School Social Worker, and School Counselor. The meeting is to help identify potential remedies. If appropriate, a contract will be developed and signed by all participating parties. If the contract is violated, the case may be referred to the State Attorney's office. A student may be subject to retention if absent 20 or more days in the school year.

Procedure for Student Absences

Policy 5.42, Part 3, clearly outlines the steps for students returning from an absence. Students are required to submit a written explanatory excuse, from their parent or guardian, stating the cause for the absence. The following causes are acceptable excuses for being absent:

- (a) Illness or injury of the student
- (b) Serious illness or death in the student's family
- (c) Inclement weather
- (d) Official religious holiday or a religious sect or for religious instruction

- (e) Insurmountable conditions as determined by the principal
- (f) A bus failure or irregular schedule which causes the absence or tardiness

The excuse note should include the following information:

- Date written and date of absence
- Student's first and last name
- Homeroom teacher's name
- Reason for absence
- Parent's home and work phone number
- Parent or guardian signature

Should the student fail to submit a note, the absence will remain unexcused.

Make Up Work

Work assigned prior to an absence is due the day the student returns to school. Students will receive a zero for any missed assignments. Students will be provided make up work from the teacher(s) for the class time that was missed. Work assigned during the absence will be due in the amount of time equal to the number of days absent. Allow the teacher 24 hours to get the work together for extended absences (over 3 days). Work assigned and due during the time of an unexcused absence may be accepted for credit at the discretion of the teacher.

Arrival at School

Students are not to be on campus before 8:00am unless he/she is enrolled in the Extended Day Program. Before/After school care is available via Extended Day Program from 7:00am to 8:00am and 3:10pm to 6:00pm. Please see our front office staff if you would like more information about Extended Day.

Adult supervision is in place for all students from 8:00am to 8:30am. Instruction begins at 8:30am. Students in Pre-K will report to their classroom. Students in Kindergarten and 1st grade report to their media center. 2nd and 5th grade students report to the multi-purpose

room. Students in grades 3th and 4th grade will report to the café each morning as breakfast begins at 8:00am. Students in grades K-5 will be picked up by their teacher at approximately 8:25am and transition to their classroom. Students in grades Pre-K thru 2nd will have breakfast in the classroom each morning at 8:30am.

Prompt arrival at school is essential for your child to have a successful day. Students are expected to be in their classes at 8:30am. Students arriving in their classroom after 8:30am will be considered tardy. Parents of students who are habitually tardy will be contacted. The school is not responsible for students on campus prior to 8:00am or after 3:10pm, unless enrolled in the Extended Day Program.

BOOKS

Students are responsible for the care of textbooks, workbooks, journals, daily folders, and library books. Students losing or damaging books will be charged for the cost of repair or replacement. Charges will also be made for excessive wear of textbooks.

F.S. 233.24 – the failure to collect such sum upon reasonable effort by the principal may result in the suspension of the pupil from the participation in extracurricular activities until the book is returned or paid for.

CAFETERIA

All students at Highlands Elementary receive free breakfast and lunch regardless of socioeconomic status. Breakfast is served daily in the café from 8:00am to 8:25am for students in 3rd and 4th grade students. All Pre-K thru 2nd and 5th grade students will have breakfast in the classroom each day from 8:30am to 8:40am. Any student who arrives late to school due to a bus not being on time will be given the opportunity to have breakfast in the café.

Students dining in the café are expected to use good manners. We invite parents and community members to join us for lunch. Students may eat lunch outside at the

picnic tables with their parents. Picture I.D. and an approved background screening is required prior to having lunch with your child.

CELEBRATIONS

We recognize that there are occasions throughout the school year such as birthdays and holidays where parents bring in treats for the class. Because we have students that have specific food, allergies we ask that if you choose to bring in a food product that you bring in store bought treats only. These food products have a list of ingredients that the teachers can consult if necessary.

All invitations should be delivered outside of the school.

CHECK POLICY

Unfortunately, we do not accept checks at this time.

CHECKOUT POLICY

Every possible effort should be made for each student to attend school for the entire day. Please make every attempt to schedule doctor appointments before or after school to minimize the disruption of your child's education. To insure the safety of all students, all persons checking out students will be asked for picture identification.

Students may only be released to persons on the child's blue card, unless other written parental notification is provided in advance. School Board Policy states that there is no student checkout after 2:15pm. Due to end of the day activities, it is difficult for the office to contact students for checkout after 2:15pm.

CLIMATE SURVEY

Annually, every parent and a select group of students have the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional employees by completing annual school climate surveys. Additionally, parents and students may submit concerns or commendations relative to performance directly to the school principal, assistant principal, or designee. Results from the survey are

reviewed by school administration and assist supervisors in recognizing performance or identifying growth opportunities.

CLINIC

Please make certain that all parent and emergency contact information on file is current at ALL times. Highland Elementary has a clinic and a school nurse is on site 1 day per week on most weeks. In addition, the school nurse, other front office personnel have been trained in First Aid. Students who become ill will obtain a clinic pass from their teacher. Student will be escorted to the clinic by 2 of their classmates. Students will not be allowed into the clinic without a pass. Students will return to class as quickly as possible, unless it is necessary for the student to be sent home. We urge every parent/guardian to encourage their child(ren) to visit the clinic only when necessary.

Should a student develop vomiting, diarrhea or fever of 100 degrees or higher at school, they will be sent home. Student should not return to school unless fever and symptom free without medication for 24 hours.

Crutches and Wheelchairs

Unfortunately, we do not have crutches and/or wheelchairs to provide to students. This is the responsibility of the parents to provide. Parents should obtain an Orthopedic Injury Assistive Device Authorization form from their physician. The physician should complete the form and submit a copy to the school clinic, if such items are needed for use at the school.

Medications

Designated school staff personnel are trained annually to administer medication. Administration of any medications (non—prescription and prescription) are discouraged unless a physician determines that a student's health needs require medication during school hours.

All prescription medications shall be delivered to the office/clinic with the following information provided:

1. Name and purpose of medication
2. Time the medication is to be given
3. Specific instructions on the administration of the medication
4. Approximate duration of the medication
5. Beginning date and ending date
6. A note signed by the student's parents or legal guardian
7. Medication must be received, counted, and stored in original container

All medications must be registered with the school nurse and/or health clinic designee. Unless medically necessary, no medications may be transported to the school via school bus. Students will only be allowed to carry medication unless medically necessary (according to physician) and with pre-approval of nurse.

Medications are maintained in a locked cabinet in the clinic. All medications not picked up or expired will be discarded accordingly. Please see DCPS School Board Policy 5.62 for more information pertaining to the administration of medication.

Routine health screenings are required for particular grade levels. If you do not wish for your child to participate in the state mandated health screenings you may opt out by notifying the school in writing.

CONFERENCES

Conferences are encouraged between parents and teachers. A cooperative relationship between parents and teachers contributes greatly to the degree of success a child achieves. Conferences can be arranged on any day either before or after school hours. In addition, we will have 2 opportunities this year in which students will be sharing their data with parents here at the school. Conferences between teachers and parents should be pre-arranged for a mutually agreeable time. If you are unable to attend a scheduled conference, please call the school or send a note with the student prior to the

conference. You may reach out to an administrator after you have had a chance to discuss the issue with the teacher.

DAILY DISMISSAL

Students are dismissed in stages at the end of the day. Car riders are dismissed first to their designated area, followed by bus riders, and finally walkers. Students transition to their designed area under adult supervision—student safety is our number 1 priority.

Car riders are called as their parent's car makes their way through the car rider circle. Please note, the first couple of weeks of school are traditionally busy times for car riders as students and parents alike begin to understand the procedures. Please work with us to ensure a smooth and safe transition. Under no circumstance should any parent approach the holding area to request a student.

Parents, who are waiting for their students that are walkers, may do so right outside the fence. If there is inclement weather, parents may use the awning in the bus-loading zone.

Arrangements concerning how a student will get home after school should be made prior to the start of the school day. Any changes to your child's dismissal plan should be made in writing and submitted to your child's teacher. We ask that you call the school with a message for your child in case of emergency only.

DISCIPLINE

At Highlands Elementary, the safety of our students is paramount and so we have a school-wide discipline plan in place to ensure a safe environment for all students.

The vision of our school-wide discipline plan is to provide a loving, nurturing, and structured learning community that encourages, inspires, and challenges the academic and social needs of all students.

The mission of our school-wide discipline plan is to empower students with effective social responsibility by providing a structured, loving, learning environment

through positive relationship building, teaching character traits, and consistently teaching CHAMPs.

GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESS

As the Highlands Elementary Eagles, we want all children to SOAR. In order to do so we have developed some "guidelines for success."

- *Show Respect*
- *Own Your Actions*
- *Accept Differences*
- *Realize Your Potential*

Students will strive to demonstrate the following success traits:

- Hard work – failing to prepare is preparing to fail
- Friendship – to make friends, be a friend
- Loyalty – be trustworthy
- Cooperation – be more interested in finding the best way, not in having your way
- Enthusiasm – make each day special
- Self-control – control yourself so others won't have to
- Alertness – what you learn after you know it all is what counts
- Action – be quick, but don't hurry
- Determination – slow and steady gets you ready
- Fitness – act, eat, and think right
- Skill – practice makes perfect
- Team Spirit – be eager to help your team
- Poise – just be yourself
- Confidence – you must believe in yourself if you expect others to believe in you
- Personal best – put forth your best effort, every time, every day

Behavioral Expectations for Students

1. Children are in school to learn and to allow others to learn.
2. Children are expected to be respectful, courteous, and helpful to others.
3. Children are responsible for their own behavior.

4. Children will respect our school and its property.

At HES, we employ a number of different positive incentives to encourage our students to maintain the behavioral expectations. Our Student of the Month Celebration recognizes a student from each homeroom who exemplifies the character trait of the month. Students who receive a "Positive Referral" are recognized via the Morning News and receive a small prize. Students who meet their reading goal for the quarter are also able to participate in a celebration—some examples include the following: build your own ice cream sundae party, popcorn and juice, dance, etc. During the month of May we also do a random drawing for students from each grade level to have Pizza with the Principal.

Students at Highlands Elementary are held accountable for the expectations outlined in the DCPS Student Code of Conduct. An electronic copy of the Code of Conduct is maintained on the District's website.

DRESS CODE

Appropriate attire and appearance are necessary to establish an atmosphere conducive to successful learning. Students shall be dressed so they will not present a danger to health and safety or a distraction to the learning environment. The Highlands Elementary dress code is within the expectations outlined in School Board Policy 5.25.

- Shoes must be worn at all times; slippers are not permitted; students are not permitted to wear shoes without closed heels or back straps.
- Halter tops, tank tops, backless tops, tops with thin or no straps, or tops that show midriff or expose the body are prohibited.
- See-through or mesh garments shall not be worn without appropriate undergarments.
- Form fitting or overly tight clothing shall not be worn without appropriate outer garments.
- Clothing and accessories shall not be worn if they display profanity, violence, lewd and obscene messages.

- Head coverings such as hats, caps, bandannas, hair curlers, and/or sunglasses shall not be worn unless required by physician or authorized by school personnel.
- The waistband of shorts, slacks, skirts, and similar garments shall not be worn below the hips.
- School officials reserve the right to determine if the dress code is being violated.
- All students must adhere to these minimal guidelines for acceptable apparel and appearance. In order to maximize instructional time, students will be given an opportunity to correct violations. Consideration of the child's grade level will be taken into account. Disciplinary actions for students who fail to correct violations or commit subsequent violations will be disciplined in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct.

EARLY DISMISSAL DAYS

The School Board provides early dismissal days throughout the school year. These days will always be on select Wednesday's throughout the year. Please know that early dismissal days are instructional days so it is imperative that students attend on these days.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

We conduct a monthly fire drill. Other emergency drills will also be conducted throughout the school year. These include tornado drills, code yellow drills, and code red drills. These drills are to ensure that our staff and students are properly instructed and prepared in the event of an actual emergency.

EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM

Students believed to be in need of special education programs are referred to the RTI team by their teacher for interventions and possible testing. Parent permission must be obtained prior to any testing.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips will be directly related to curriculum and the Florida Standards. The STEAM Passport program provides our students with a variety of different field trips throughout the year at no direct cost to parents or children. All students are required to return a signed permission slip by the deadline set by the sponsor prior to the trip. Students who are excessively disruptive may be excluded from field trips or require a parent/guardian attend with them. Chaperones should not bring younger siblings on the field trip.

GRADES

All student grades are available via the Parent Portal in FOCUS. Please stop by the Main Office if you need any assistance with gaining access to the Parent Portal.

HOMEWORK

Homework is practice and/or enrichment of the day's work and is not given simply as busy work. Most children should complete assignments in less than an hour of on-task time. For the student who spends much more time completing assignments, the parent should inform the teacher. Make up or incomplete class work, which must be completed at home, is not considered homework but a continuation of the student's daily classroom responsibilities.

INSURANCE

Student accident insurance for your child may be purchased at the beginning of the school year. You should receive this information along with all of the other beginning of the year documents during the first week of school.

INTERNET ACCESS

Students have access to computers and the internet here at school. Students use the computers to access blended

learning software and to supplement instruction. The internet access comes to HES through our Duval County server, which has filters to screen non-educational information.

LOST AND FOUND

A specific area in the cafeteria is provided for placement of lost and found articles. Parents are free to come and look for items that may have been lost by their children. At the end of each semester, unclaimed items are given to organizations for the needy.

MAIN OFFICE

You may call the main office for general information or to set up a conference with teacher or administrator. For conferences with administration, please ensure that you have already spoken with the teacher regarding the issue. Also, please note that in order to avoid any classroom disruptions, you will be provided teacher voicemail. Please allow up to 24 hours for the teacher to return your call.

MEDIA CENTER

Students will attend media resource once every other week and will be able to check out books at that time. Students with an overdue book will not be allowed to check out again until their overdue book is returned. If books are damaged or lost while checked out to a student, the student must pay for the book before they can check out any additional books.

NON-EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

Non-educational items such as toys, skateboards, roller blades, scooters, playing/trading cards, squirt guns, yo-yos, radios/headphones, hand held electronic games, i-Pods, i-Pads, or tape recorders are not to be brought to school. Fad and/or collectable toys are not allowed. Parents must make arrangements to pick up items taken

by the teacher either before or after school. Please note that any items left after the end of the school year will be discarded.

PROGRESSION THROUGH THE GRADES

With appropriate motivation, the vast majority of Duval County public school students who receive appropriate instruction can make satisfactory progress. Most students will be able, each year, to achieve a level of academic proficiency along with social and emotional development, which will enable them to benefit from instruction in the next grade. However, for a variety of reasons, individuals may require more than the usual amount of time at school to develop their educational potential.

It is intended that grade placement be made to serve the best interest of the student. Promotion, retention, or special assignment procedures contained in the Pupil Progression Plan are designed to ensure that each student in Duval County Public Schools is placed in an instructional program in which the student can achieve academically and develop emotionally, socially, and physically.

RESOURCE CLASSES

HES resource classes are Art, Media, Music, and PE. Guidelines for resource classes include:

1. Be prepared for class (materials/shoes)
2. Listen and follow directions
3. Participate in every activity
4. Stay on task
5. Respect teachers/other students

Music

The music class is designed to allow the student to experience the many aspects of music in a variety of

ways. Based on the Florida Standards, the student will explore music through hands on activities such as singing, playing instruments, listening, writing, and moving to music.

Physical Education (PE)

The role of physical education is to assist the students in the development of health-related fitness concepts, motor and social skills, sportsmanship, and life skills. Research has proven that what makes us move is also, what makes us think; therefore, physical education is an integral part of the learning process.

If activity restrictions are necessary due to illness or injury for a short time, please provide a note and include the reason, date, duration, and parent/guardian signature—an alternate activity may be assigned. If long-term restrictions are necessary, a note from a doctor should be provided. Students are evaluated according to their participation and effort level.

RESPECTFUL EAGLES

Classes at Highlands have the opportunity to earn "eagles" when showing respectful behavior and observance of the Guidelines for Success around campus. Classes that earn 20 eagles during a Nine Weeks will be provided an incentive such as dance party, popsicle party, pizza party, etc.

SAFETY PATROLS

Safety Patrols are selected from 5th grade students based on recognized leadership ability, personality, courteous manners, dependability, and grades. Under direction of a faculty coordinator(s), they assist all grade levels in a program of safety and orderly conduct within the school.

SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC)

The School Advisory Council (SAC) is an organization made up of elected representatives. Council members include parents, support personnel, community members, administration, and teachers. Although the committee is called upon to discuss a variety of issues

confronting Highlands Elementary, its primary purpose is to approve the development of the School Improvement Plan.

SCHOOL MISSION

Every student is inspired and prepared for success in college or a career, and life.

SCHOOL VISION

To provide educational excellence in every school, in every classroom, for every student, every day.

STUDENT GIFTS

Flowers, balloons, etc., cannot be delivered to the students' classroom during the school day. Deliveries can be viewed by the student then remain in the office until the end of the day. Please note that gifts of this variety cannot be carried on the school bus.

STUDENT TELEPHONE USE

In the event that students need to contact their parents during the school day, they may be allowed to call from their classroom or sent to the office with a pass to use the phone in the main office. We ask that you provide the school with current phone numbers in order to be contacted. Students must have written permission from their teacher to come to the office for this purpose.

STUDENT SERVICES

A variety of student services is available to all students at Highlands Elementary School. Ms. Fleming, our School Counselor, makes classroom presentations, conducts individual and small group counseling sessions, and helps to identify students in need of special programs. Ms. Fleming, School Counselor, may be reached at (904) 696-8754 ext. 104. Student services are also provided by county level resource personnel such as school psychologist, social worker, and the county nurse.

SMOKING AND TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Smoking or even the possession of tobacco products on the campus of any Duval County Public School is both unlawful and a violation of the Student Code of Conduct. This prohibition applies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Matches, lighters, or other smoking implements are also prohibited. Violators may be suspended from the school.

TRANSPORTATION

Bus transportation will be provided to transport eligible children from the bus stop nearest to their home, to school, and back again to the bus stop. Parents seeking information about bus transportation may inquire with the front office staff. Parents and guardians can also obtain bus information from the District web page at www.duvalschools.org. A student is to ride only the bus that they are assigned nearest to their home. Students are asked to be at the bus stop 5 minutes prior to scheduled pick up time.

VIDEOTAPES, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND ART DISPLAYS

Videotaping, photographs, and art of students could possibly be subject to our school web page, Facebook page, or morning news program. If you have any objection to your child being videotaped, photographed, or art work being displayed, please submit your objections in writing within the first week of your child's enrollment.

VISITORS

All visitors must check in at the main office upon arrival and obtain a visitor's badge. Please note that a picture ID is required. For the safety of our students, we must know who is on our campus at all times. Unfortunately, school age relatives and friends are not allowed to attend classes of enrolled students at Highlands Elementary.

VOLUNTEERS

Highlands Elementary seeks to establish a supportive and active volunteer program. Our parents possess a myriad of experiences and talents, which help to enrich our students' education. We hope that you will become an

active volunteer here at Highlands. If you are looking for more information about volunteering, please contact Ms. Jones in the Main Office. Ms. Jones can be reached at (904) 696-8754. There is a volunteer training each fall and this year's training is scheduled for Friday, September 8, at 9:00am.

WEB PAGE

Highlands Elementary School's web page is a great resource when trying to find out information about the school. You can access the page at

www.duvalschools.org/highlands

WIRELESS COMMUNICATION DEVICE (CELL PHONES)

Students may possess a wireless communication device while the student is on school property or in attendance at a school function for after-hours usage. The wireless device must be powered off and kept secure to prevent theft (suggest either in a backpack or on their person), unless approved for use by the classroom teacher for instructional purposes and learning activities. If emergency calls are necessary to/from student, they should go through the main office and not the child's wireless device. Violation of these provisions will result in the phone being confiscated and returned only to the parent/guardian. Please note, any student who chooses to bring a wireless communication device to school shall do so at his/her own risk. Policy 5.38 specifically states that school personnel are not responsible for loss or theft of the wireless communication device.

WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENTS

The school shall be notified in advance of a student's withdrawal date. Any/All debts should be paid prior to withdrawal. If you have any questions regarding how to go about withdrawing your child, please contact Ms. Vereen in the Main Office. She can be reached at (904) 696-8754.