Grassy Pond Elementary

student Handbook

2026-2027



Grassy Pond Elementary School Instructional Vision

All Grassy Pond Elementary School Staff have a unified commitment to a culture of excellence through collective teacher efficacy, data-driven small group instruction, intentional instructional time, and standards-based academic discourse, thus promoting student ownership of learning.

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****Please sign page 21 after reading the GPES Student Handbook. Return signed page to your student's classroom teacher.**

All Cherokee County School District Board of Education policies, student expectations, and the Code of Conduct are fully in effect during any school-sponsored or school-related activity. This includes, but is not limited to, field trips, extracurricular activities, athletic events, competitions, performances, end of year activities, and any event held on or off school grounds that is organized, supervised, or sanctioned by the school district. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with district standards at all times during these activities. Any behavior that violates school policies or the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, regardless of the location of the event.
Participation in school-sponsored activities is a privilege, and students are expected to demonstrate responsibility, respect, and appropriate behavior while representing the school district.

📬 District & School Contact Information

💻 School Board Contact

Looking to contact a member of the Cherokee County School Board?
Visit: https://www.cherokee1.org/boardoftrustees
This site includes a list of school board members and their email contact links.

🏢 District Administration

Have a question for someone at the district level? Here are the key leaders in our school district:

- Superintendent – Dr. Raashad Fitzpatrick
- Director of Human Resources – Dr. David Smith
- Chief Academic Officer for Teaching & Learning – Dr. Andre Dukes
- Director of Secondary Education – Dr. LaRonda Whitesides
- Director of Elementary Education – Dr. Lisa Blanton
- Director of Special Services – Mrs. Bessie Westmorland
- Director of Transportation –Tim Hartman
- Coordinator of Transportation- Matt Childers
- Director of Finance- Mr. Matt Petitt
- Executive Director of Operations- Dr. Eric Blanton

Grassy Pond Elementary Administration

- Principal: Tessie Bridges
  ✉️ tessie.bridges@cherokee1.org
  📞 (864) 206-6671

- Assistant Principal: Hannah Byars
  ✉️ hannah.byars@cherokee1.org
  📞 (864) 206-6671

☎️ Important Phone Numbers

Cherokee County School District:

- District Office: (864) 206-2201
- School Closings/Delays: (864) 902-3621
- Transportation Office: (864) 902-3646
- Bus Delay Line: (864) 206-2305 (*Press 2 for Gaffney routes*)

Grassy Pond Elementary School:

- Main Office: (864) 206-6671
- Fax: (864) 487-1255
- Cafeteria: (864) 206-6700

Welcome to Grassy Pond Elementary!
This handbook is your go-to guide for understanding how our school and district work. It includes important information about our policies, procedures, and expectations for a successful school year.

Throughout this handbook, you'll see references to Cherokee County School District (CCSD) policies. If you'd like to read any policy in full, visit www.cherokee1.org and look under the Board of Trustees for the online policy manual.

Still have questions? Call us anytime at 864-206-6671—we're happy to help!

🚪 Entering the Building & School Safety

Your child's safety is our top priority.

To help keep everyone safe:

- All visitors must enter and exit through the main office.
- The school doors are locked during school hours.
- Press the buzzer at the front entrance—our office staff will gladly assist you.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in keeping our school secure for all students.

👋 Visiting Our School

We love having families involved at Grassy Pond Elementary!

When visiting during school hours:

- Please check in at the front office.
- You'll receive a visitor's pass, which must be worn while you're in the building.

Pre-arranged classroom visits may include:

- Observing your child with approval from administration
- Helping with a class project
- Attending a scheduled conference with your child's teacher

Open invitations (no appointment needed):

- Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Open House
- Student Awards or Recognition Events
- PTO Meetings & Events (e.g., Donuts for Dads, Muffins for Moms)
- Book Fairs
- School-wide Music Programs
- Field Day
- Family Engagement Nights

We do ask that you arrive no more than 15 minutes before an event starts to help with smooth transitions.

🙌 Volunteering at GPES

Ready to help? Stop by the office for a volunteer packet. We're always looking for helping hands! Whether you're a parent, grandparent, or community member, there are many ways to support our school:

You might help with:

- Reading to a class or listening to students read
- Making copies or preparing classroom materials
- Assisting teachers in the classroom
- Working in the library (media center)
- Supporting PTO events or helping with school beautification

To ensure the safety of all students:

- All volunteers must complete a background check through CCSD (valid for 2 years).
- Volunteers must complete a short training with GPES.
- Once cleared, you're approved to volunteer at any school in the district.

Thank you for being part of our school family and helping us make Grassy Pond a safe and supportive place to learn!

🚌 Bus Transportation

Riding the school bus is a privilege—and we want every ride to be a safe one!

Please talk with your child about the importance of good behavior on the bus. Bus drivers are responsible for keeping students safe during the ride, and they report any misbehavior to the Director of Transportation, who then notifies the school. If problems arise, appropriate steps will be taken to keep the bus ride safe for everyone.

Cameras are installed on all buses to help monitor behavior and ensure safety. These video recordings are considered part of a student's confidential record and can only be viewed by school personnel with a valid educational reason.

🚨 Important Reminders for Families:

- Students may only ride their assigned bus.
- If your child needs to ride a different bus or get off at a different stop, you must send a written note signed by both the parent and the principal.
- These changes should be made in advance (unless it's an emergency), to help us keep all students safe and accounted for.

🕐 Is the Bus Running Late?

If your child's bus seems delayed, you can call the Bus Delay Hotline at 864-206-2305. You'll hear a recorded message with updates—just make sure you know your child's bus number, not the bus driver's name.

Thank you for helping us keep transportation safe, smooth, and respectful for all riders!

🚗 Morning Drop-Off & Student Arrival

We're excited to welcome your child each morning!

Drop-off Time:

Students may be dropped off between 7:00 a.m. and 7:45am. The car rider door will close at 7:45am.

👉 *Please do not drop students off before 7:00am, as staff supervision is not available before then.*

Where to Drop Off:

- Car riders should be dropped off at the lower front entrance near the cafeteria (glass hallway).
- Use the inside lane along the curb between the orange cones.
- Pull all the way forward to the last orange cone before letting your child out.

Breakfast or Classroom?

- Students eating breakfast should go straight to the cafeteria.

- Students not eating breakfast will go to their grade-level holding classroom.

Tardy Notice:
Students are tardy after 7:45am. If you arrive after this time, an adult must walk your child into the front office to sign them in. They will be marked tardy.

Bus Arrival:
Buses drop off students at the back parking lot, near the cafeteria doors.

🏁 Afternoon Dismissal

We want every child to get home safely!

School Hours:

- Instruction begins promptly at 7:45 a.m.
- The school day ends at 2:15 p.m., with dismissal beginning at 2:15 p.m.

Transportation Changes:
Any change in how your child goes home must be:
✅ In writing from a parent/guardian
✅ Turned in no later than 1:30 pm
This includes changes to bus routes or how a student is picked up. *We cannot accept transportation changes over the phone for safety reasons. If no written note is provided, your child will go home using their regular transportation method—this is for their safety!*

Who Can Pick Up My Child?

- Only individuals listed on your child's medical form may check them out.
- Please bring your photo ID—we may ask for identification if we don't recognize you

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🚙 Dismissal Procedures

- Bus and daycare riders are dismissed from the back parking lot (near the gym).
- Car riders are dismissed from the front of the school (outside the cafeteria).

Car Rider Line Tips:

- Use both lanes during pickup to help traffic flow.
- Display your GPES car tag on your dashboard.
    - No tag? You'll need to park and come to the front office to sign your child out.

Late Pickup Policy:
Any student not picked up by 2:50 p.m. will be taken to the front office, and a parent or guardian must come inside to sign them out.

⏰ Leaving School Early

We know things come up—but we kindly ask that all students remain at school until dismissal at 2:15 p.m. When students leave early, they miss valuable instruction that is difficult to make up.

📌 Guidelines for Early Check-Out:

If your child needs to leave early:

- Please send a note to the teacher that morning explaining the reason and time.

- If your child becomes sick at school, we will contact you or someone listed on your child's Emergency Health Form to come pick them up.
  👉 Be sure your contact information is up to date so we can reach someone quickly if needed

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⚠️ Important Attendance Policy:

To protect your child's learning time:

- Parents may check a student out up to five (5) times per school year without a medical excuse.
- After the 5th early dismissal, a doctor's note will be required for any further early check-outs.
- Frequent early dismissals or late arrivals without valid reasons may result in a referral to our Attendance Director, and an Attendance Intervention Plan may be created.

👨‍👩‍👧 Release of a Child to a Noncustodial Parent

At Grassy Pond Elementary, your child's safety is our top priority—especially when it comes to who is allowed to pick them up from school.

If parents are divorced:

- The school will release the child to either parent listed on the birth certificate *unless* legal custody papers on file state otherwise.
- If the parents share joint custody, either parent may pick up the child.

If one parent has sole custody:

- The school will only release the child to the noncustodial parent if we have written permission on file from the custodial parent.

To help us follow your family's custody arrangement:

- Please provide the school with a copy of the custody papers.
  This helps us take appropriate action if there is ever a question or concern about student pickup.

We appreciate your help in keeping all students safe and ensuring our records are up to date!

📅 Absences & Excuses

At Grassy Pond Elementary, we believe that attendance is key to your child's success. Every missed day is a missed learning opportunity. While we understand that some absences are unavoidable, it's important that students attend school regularly and on time.

✅ What to Do When Your Child is Absent:

Send a written excuse signed by the parent/guardian within 3 days of the absence. Parents may write notes for up to 5 absences per school year. After that, a doctor's note is required for any additional absences.

- The excuse must include:
  - Your child's name
  - The date(s) of the absence
  - The reason for the absence

✔️ Excused (Lawful) Absences Include:

- Your child is sick and attending school would risk their health or others'.
- Medical or dental appointments (must be verified by the doctor/clinic).
- Chronic illness (must be documented by a physician and updated yearly).
- A death or serious illness in the immediate family (up to 3 days).

- Religious holidays (must notify the principal in advance).
- Hospitalization or extended medical care approved by the principal.
- Pre-arranged absences for extreme hardship (must be approved by the principal).
  Foster care students who attend a certified court appearance or related court-ordered activity.

All other absences will be marked as unexcused unless otherwise approved by the principal

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🚫 Unexcused Absences & Truancy

When a student is unlawfully absent for 3 consecutive days or 5 total days, we will step in with support to prevent future truancy. If a student reaches 4 consecutive or 6 total unlawful absences, the District Attendance Supervisor will be contacted.
Please help us by turning in notes on time and communicating with us if you need support.

⏰ Tardiness & Leaving Early

Being on time and staying all day matters—every minute counts!

- School starts at 7:45am. sharp.
- The car rider door will close at 7:45am.
- If your child arrives after 7:45 am., they are tardy and must be signed in by an adult at the front office.
- If your child needs breakfast, please arrive by 7:30am. (The cafeteria closes at 7:35am.)

⚠️ What Happens With Repeated Tardies or Early Check-Outs:

Number	Action
1st Tardy/ Early Leave	Verbal reminder
3rd Tardy/ Early Leave	Second warning and parent/ guardian notification
5th Tardy/ Early Leave	Formal letter sent home/ documentation in student's file
7th Tardy/ Early Leave	Mandatory parent/guardian conference- Develop Intervention Plan
10th Tardy/ Early Leave	Referral to District Truancy Officer/ Potential legal action through Truancy Court, per SC State Law

Help your child build strong habits now that will set them up for success in school and life!

*Please note that students cannot be dropped off before 7:00 a.m. each morning. There is no one on duty to supervise students until that time.

🏅 Perfect Attendance

We love celebrating students who are present and on time every day!

- Nine Weeks Perfect Attendance: Students must be present every day during the nine-week period.
- Yearly Perfect Attendance: Students must attend all 180 school days.
- Tardies or early check-outs may affect your child's eligibility for Perfect Attendance.

5th Grade Recognition: Students who have earned Perfect Attendance every year from 1st–5th grade will be recognized at 5th Grade Day. This is modeled after the 12-year Perfect Attendance award given in high school.

📚 Textbooks

All textbooks are provided free by the State of South Carolina. Please help your child care for their books. If a textbook is lost or damaged, families must pay for the repair or replacement cost.

📖 *This also applies to any books checked out from the Media Center.*

📵 Electronic Devices (Cell Phones & More)

Students do not need cell phones during the school day. If your child brings a phone for after-school use:

- It must remain turned off and in their bookbag.
- Phones may never be used in restrooms or on the playground.

Violations:

1. 1st Offense: Device taken and returned to a parent/guardian.
2. 2nd Offense: Device taken, 1-day out-of-school suspension, returned to parent.
3. 3rd Offense: Device taken, 3-day out-of-school suspension, returned to parent.

🔐 The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged devices.

💻 Technology & Internet Use

Technology is a key part of learning at GPES! Students may use school devices and the internet for:

- Research and learning activities
- School email
- Accessing libraries and educational websites

Before using technology, students receive training and must sign an Acceptable Use Agreement each year to show they understand the rules. **ALL STUDENT DEVICES WILL REMAIN IN THE SCHOOL BUILDING.**

🌐 Internet Safety

Students are taught how to use the internet safely and responsibly. Cherokee County School District follows an Internet Safety Policy to:

- Block access to inappropriate content
- Keep student information safe
- Protect students while using email, chat, or online tools

🚫 Bullying & Cyberbullying

We take all reports of bullying very seriously. Cyberbullying includes:

- Sending mean or hurtful messages
- Spreading rumors or lies online
- Posting embarrassing content about others

If your child experiences or sees bullying—online or in person—please report it to the principal or a school staff member. Reports can be made anonymously, though formal consequences require a full investigation. All bullying, including cyberbullying, is strictly prohibited and will lead to disciplinary action.

🚌 Field Trips

Field trips are exciting learning opportunities outside the classroom!

- A signed permission slip is required for every field trip.
- Students who display inappropriate behavior may not be allowed to attend.
- Students must ride the school bus to and from the trip, unless special arrangements are approved by the principal.
- For safety and accountability, only school employees serve as chaperones on field trips

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📞 Emergency Contacts

Your child's safety is always our top priority.
In the event of an accident or emergency, it's essential that we have your child's most up-to-date contact information.Please notify the school immediately if there are any changes to:

- Parent/guardian names
- Home, work, or cell phone numbers
- Home address
- Family doctor
- Emergency contacts (trusted adults who can pick up your child if you're unavailable)

💡 ***Note:*** School staff provide only basic first aid. If further medical attention is needed, we will contact you right away.

Did You Know?

Cherokee County School District provides supplemental insurance that helps cover school-related injuries. This coverage only applies after your primary health insurance has paid.

💊 Medication at School

We follow strict policies to keep your child safe when medication is needed during the school day.

📝 To Give Medicine at School:

- A parent/guardian must bring the medication to school in its original, labeled container.
- You must provide written permission for the school to give the medication.
- A physician's statement is required for all medications, including over-the-counter items like Tylenol, Motrin, or Pepto-Bismol.
- We can only accept up to a 30-day supply of medication.

🔒 Medication Safety:

- All medicines are stored in a locked cabinet in the health room.
- Students may not carry medication in backpacks or pockets.
    - Doing so may lead to disciplinary action per district policy.

💡 Other Reminders:

- If the prescription changes, a new label and updated instructions must be provided.
- The school keeps a daily medication log for each child.
- Students are responsible for coming to the office to take their medicine unless a doctor provides written instructions saying otherwise.
- Unused medicine must be picked up within one week of the last dose or it will be safely disposed of.

Questions? Call the school nurse at 864-206-6671

🤒 Sickness Policy

Let's work together to keep our school healthy! **Please keep your child home if they have:**

- A fever (100.4°F or higher) – Keep them home until fever-free for 24 hours without medicine.
- Vomiting or diarrhea – Wait at least 24 hours after symptoms have stopped before returning.

If your child complains of not feeling well but has no visible symptoms, we recommend sending them to school. We will monitor them and contact you if symptoms develop.

Still unsure? Call the school nurse at 864-206-6671—we're happy to help!

🎒 Personal Belongings

We encourage students to leave personal items at home that are not needed for learning. This includes:

- Toys
- Trading cards
- Jewelry
- Game systems
- iPads/iPods/Air Pods/ Electronic Watches

Such items can cause distractions, arguments, or damage. If brought to school, these items will be kept in the office until picked up by a parent or guardian.
🚫 The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal items.

🧥 Lost and Found

Please label all your child's belongings—jackets, lunchboxes, book bags, etc.—with their full name.

- Lost items are placed in our Lost and Found container.
- Students and parents should check it regularly.
- Unclaimed items will be donated to charity at regular intervals.

💵 Bringing Money to School

If your child needs to bring money (for book fairs, lunches, etc.):

- Place it in an envelope labeled with your child's name and the reason for the money.
- Teachers and staff are not responsible for lost money, so clear labeling helps us keep track.

✏️ School Supplies

Having the right supplies helps students feel prepared and ready to learn each day! Each grade level has created a supply list specific to what students will need throughout the year. You can find these lists on our school website or by contacting your child's teacher directly.

- It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to provide pencils, paper, notebooks, and other required items.
- Supplies may need to be replenished during the school year, especially items like pencils, glue sticks, and crayons.
- If you have questions about any items on the list, don't hesitate to reach out to your child's teacher for clarification or examples.

🚫 Rolling Book Bags

Rolling book bags are not allowed inside the school building unless your child has a documented medical condition.

- A doctor's note is required and must be turned in to the office.
- This documentation must be renewed each school year.

📈 Student Progress

We're committed to keeping you informed about your child's academic progress!

- Report cards are sent home every 9 weeks.
- Interim progress reports are sent midway through each 9-week period.
- Both reports must be signed by a parent or guardian and returned to school.
- Student grades will be updated in PowerSchool weekly.
- You can request a PowerSchool login from the front office to monitor your child's grades online.

🗓️ Parent-Teacher Conferences

We value strong partnerships with our families! The district offers **three** scheduled parent-teacher conference opportunities during the school year:

- October 15, 2026
- January 7, 2027
- March 18, 2027

📞 Parents are also welcome to request a conference anytime by calling the school, emailing the teacher, or sending a note. Teachers may also request a meeting with parents as needed.

🧮 Grading Scale

We follow South Carolina's statewide uniform grading scale. This scale will be utilized for students in second through twelfth grades. Students in kindergarten and first grade receive separate standards based report cards.

- **A** = 90–100
- **B** = 80–89
- **C** = 70–79
- **D** = 60–69
- **F** = 59 and below

Beginning with the **2026–2027 school year**, South Carolina law requires that student grades accurately reflect the work students complete and the level of learning they demonstrate.

At Grassy Pond Elementary School, we believe grades should communicate a student's progress and achievement while encouraging responsibility, perseverance, and academic growth.

To support this expectation:

- Students are expected to complete and submit all assigned classwork, homework, projects, and assessments by the teacher's established deadlines.
- Grades will reflect the quality of a student's completed work and academic performance. Teachers may not assign a minimum grade that is higher than the student's actual performance on required assignments.

- Missing or incomplete assignments may result in a grade that reflects the work submitted, including a zero when no work is turned in, in accordance with district grading procedures and opportunities for make-up work.
- Families are encouraged to regularly monitor student grades and communicate with teachers if concerns arise. Working together early can help prevent academic difficulties.
- Students who need additional academic support are encouraged to seek help from their teacher and participate in available intervention opportunities.

South Carolina law also requires that students complete all required assignments before they may be eligible for certain district-approved academic recovery opportunities in courses where those programs apply.

Our goal is to partner with families to help every student develop strong work habits, take responsibility for learning, and achieve academic success.

❄️ School Closings Due to Weather

When bad weather hits:

- Please do not call the school—we need phone lines open for emergencies.
- Tune in to local news stations (WSPA, WYFF, WLOS) or check www.cherokee1.org for updates.
- The district also uses an automated call system, so be sure we have your current phone number on file.

🏫 On questionable weather days, always make sure someone is at school before dropping off your child.

🍎 Snacks

- 4K and 5K students receive a snack daily as part of their school day.
- Grades 1–5: Teachers may allow snacks in the classroom at their discretion.

☎️ School Phone Use & Messages

The school phone number is 864-206-6671 and our fax number is 864-487-1255.

- Students will not be called out of class for phone calls unless it's an emergency.
- Students can use the office phone with permission if they need to call home.
- Parents should try to call teachers before or after school unless a teacher requests a call during planning time.

🚨 Emergency Drills

We regularly practice emergency drills to keep our students and staff safe. Types of drills include:

- Fire drills (held monthly)
- Tornado, earthquake, and lockdown drills (held as needed)
- Intruder drill (conducted within the first month of school, per district policy)

🚪 Evacuation routes are posted in each classroom.

Please talk with your child about the importance of staying calm, listening to adults, and following directions during all drills.

🎂 Birthdays

We love to celebrate student birthdays in a safe and inclusive way!

🎉 If you'd like to send a treat:

- Please contact your child's teacher ahead of time to schedule.
- All treats must be store-bought and sent in the unopened, original container.
- Be sure to bring enough for every student in the class.

🎈 *Birthday invitations* for parties outside of school can only be passed out at school if every child in the class is invited.

👕 Student Dress Code

At Grassy Pond Elementary, we believe that students learn best in an environment where they feel comfortable and confident—and where there are minimal distractions. We ask that all students dress in a way that is neat, clean, and appropriate for school.

Student clothing should:

- Be safe and appropriate for school activities
- Not disrupt learning or the classroom environment
- Be modest and non-revealing
- Not damage school property

👨‍👩‍👧 *We appreciate our families working with us to help students enjoy current styles while also developing respectful and responsible dress habits.*

❌ Clothing That Is Not Allowed:

- Tight or revealing clothing (such as spandex or workout wear)
- Tank tops or tops that show the midriff or undergarments
- See-through clothing
- Clothing with inappropriate or suggestive language, images, or references to alcohol, drugs, tobacco, sex, or violence
- Pajamas, nightgowns, house slippers
- Spikes, chains, or anything that could be considered dangerous
- Head coverings (including hats, bandanas, and headbands) unless for religious or medical reasons
- Sunglasses worn inside the building
- Pants or shorts worn below the waist (sagging)
- Leggings unless worn with a top or dress that is long enough to reach the end of the fingertips
- Shorts and skirts that are shorter than fingertip length when arms are at your sides
- Jeans with holes above fingertip length

📌 If Dress Code Is Not Followed:

- Students will be asked to change into appropriate clothing.
- If a change of clothes is not available, the student may be held in the office until a parent can bring suitable attire.
- Time missed from class due to a dress code violation will be marked as an unexcused absence.
- Repeated violations may result in out-of-school suspension.

Thank you for helping us maintain a respectful and focused learning environment for all students! If you have any questions about the dress code, please contact the school office.

🏫 School Improvement Council (SIC)

The School Improvement Council (SIC) helps guide the direction and continuous improvement of Grassy Pond Elementary.

- The council is made up of our assistant principal, parents, teachers, and community members, along with the principal and PTO president (ex-officio members).
- The SIC meets at least three times per year to discuss ways to support student success and school growth.
- Meetings focus on school improvement planning, reviewing school progress, advising on funding use (such as incentive grants), and offering support to the principal as needed.

📅 *Per our bylaws, the first SIC meeting of the school year is held before September 30.*

We welcome your input and involvement in helping our school thrive!

👨‍👩‍👧‍👦 Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

The PTO at Grassy Pond Elementary is a fun and active group of parents, teachers, and caregivers working together to make our school the best it can be!

💡 All parents, guardians, and grandparents are welcome to join!

Each year, the PTO:

- Hosts family events and student celebrations
- Organizes fundraisers like the Fall Festival, Santa Shoppe, and Spring Fundraiser
- Supports students through projects like the 5th grade "Too Good for Drugs" T-shirts
- Shows appreciation for staff with events like the Faculty Luncheon
- Helps sponsor the 5th Grade Dance

🎉 We'd love your help this year! Join the PTO and support the students and staff of GPES!

🏅 National Junior Beta Club

The National Junior Beta Club honors students who excel in academics, character, leadership, and service.

- Students in 4th & 5th grade who meet the criteria will receive an invitation to join. Those accepted will be recognized in a special induction ceremony.

The Beta Club provides opportunities for students to develop leadership skills and give back through community service projects.

🧒 YMCA After School Program

Need after school care? The YMCA After School Program is available right here at GPES—no transportation required! The program runs from dismissal until 6:00 p.m. and includes:

- Snack
- Homework time
- Daily devotion
- Recreation and games

📞 For more information, call the YMCA at 864-487-7556. Ask for Summer Parker, who oversees all school programs.

Note: This program is operated by the YMCA and is not run by Cherokee County School District.

🥗 Breakfast & Lunch at School

Grassy Pond Elementary offers hot, nutritious meals every school day through our breakfast and lunch program. Meals are planned to meet national nutrition standards and fuel our students for learning!

🍽️ For 2025–2026: All Students Eat FREE!

That means all students can enjoy free breakfast and lunch every day.

🧾 Adult Meal Prices:

- Breakfast: $3.25
- Lunch: $5.50
- Extra milk: $0.50

⏰ Breakfast Time

If your child plans to eat breakfast at school, please have them arrive by 7:30am. so they have enough time to eat and still make it to class on time. The cafeteria closes at 7:35am.

💳 Lunch Accounts & Payments

While students eat free, families may still add funds for extra items (such as additional milk or snacks).

- Payments can be made weekly (on Mondays) or in advance for longer periods.
- Send money in a sealed envelope labeled with your child's name.
- You can also pay online through MySchoolBucks.com (formerly MyLunchMoney.com) for easy, secure payments.

Questions? Call the cafeteria at 864-206-6700 (please avoid calling during meal times).

🍱 Bringing Lunch from Home

Students may bring lunch from home. Please do not send items that need to be heated—microwaves are not available for student use. If your child has dietary or medical needs, contact the school nurse.

👫 Eating Lunch With Your Child

We love having family members join us for lunch! Parents, guardians, and grandparents are invited to eat lunch with students on:

Mondays and Tuesdays only- *Our gym is used for PE during lunch on other days.*

To help us plan enough food:

- Please call the cafeteria at 864-206-6700 the morning of your visit or the day before.
- Adult lunches are $5.50.

Important Notes:

- If you bring food from outside (fast food, etc.), it must be for your child only.
- Visitors are asked to follow the same cafeteria expectations as students to help us maintain a respectful, calm lunch environment.

🧼 Cafeteria Expectations

We show our Gator Pride by keeping the cafeteria clean! Students are expected to:

- Pick up trash (napkins, milk cartons, wrappers, etc.)
- Follow school rules while eating

- Not take food or drinks outside of the cafeteria

📣 Communication Plan

At Grassy Pond Elementary, we believe that strong communication between school and home is essential for your child's success. We are committed to keeping you informed and connected through a variety of tools and opportunities. **How Parents Can Stay Connected:**

- 🍽️ Eat lunch with your child on Mondays and Tuesdays
- 📅 Schedule a conference with your child's teacher or the principal
- 📞 Request a phone call from a teacher or school leader
- 🙌 Volunteer or become a part of PTO

📝 Written Communication Tools:

- Classroom newsletters with updates on learning and upcoming events
- Parent communication folders (for behavior and academic updates)
- Student/Parent Handbook & Calendar (outlines policies and procedures)
- Monthly school newsletters (sent home and posted online)
- The Gaffney Ledger & Cherokee Chronicle (feature school events)
- School yearbook (available at the end of the year)
- Grassy Pond Elementary website
  🌐 www.cherokee1.org → Elementary Schools → Grassy Pond Elementary
- School Facebook page (follow us for updates and celebrations)
- School marquee/sign updated with important events

☎️ Phone & App Communication:

- KINVO Alert System (texts/calls for updates and reminders)
- Ron Clark Academy House App
  🔗 https://app.rcahousepoints.com

🎉 School Events & Programs:

Throughout the year, we host a wide range of school programs and special events where families are invited to participate and celebrate our students:

- Open House / Back-to-School Orientation
- PTO Meetings
- Parent Conference Days
- Student Recognition Assemblies (every 9 weeks) / End-of- Year Awards Programs
- Student Music & Holiday Programs (Christmas, 4K, 5th Grade)
- BETA Club Induction
- Grandparents' Day Breakfast
- Veteran's Day Program
- Fall Festival
- Field Days
- Book Fairs (Fall & Spring)
- School Improvement Council Meetings/ School Report Card Meeting
- Title I Parent Information Sessions

🗓️ *Parents will be informed about these events through:*

- The monthly school newsletter
- Notes from the office or teacher
- The school marquee/sign
- The school website and calendar
- Alert Now phone calls
- The RCA House Points App
- Facebook Post

We look forward to working together with our families to make every year at Grassy Pond Elementary a great one! If you ever have a question, concern, or idea—please reach out!

🎯 Discipline & Student Conduct

At Grassy Pond Elementary, we want every student to feel safe, respected, and ready to learn. We believe that children learn best in a positive and orderly environment where expectations are clear and consistent. The Cherokee County School District has established a Code of Conduct to guide student behavior in all schools. For students in grades 4K–5, discipline is handled thoughtfully by the school principal using school-based plans along with district policy JICDA-R.

📍 When the Code of Conduct Applies:

The rules and expectations apply during:

- The school day (before, during, and after school)
- Any time the school building is in use by a school group
- School events, field trips, or activities off campus
- Travel to and from school, including at bus stops and on school bus

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💡 Our Approach at GPES:

At Grassy Pond, we emphasize:

- Self-discipline and accountability
- Respect for peers, staff, and the learning environment
- Learning from mistakes and making better choices next time

🌟 *We believe that students are not "bad" when they break a rule—they've simply made a poor choice, and we're here to help them learn and grow from it.*

Each teacher has their own classroom expectations, and we all work together to support behavior that helps students succeed.

📌 To review the **Elementary Code of Conduct**, visit:
🔗 Cherokee County Attendance & Discipline Policies

🚫 Harassment, Intimidation, & Bullying

We are committed to maintaining a school environment that is safe, respectful, and free from bullying. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying includes:

- Physical or emotional harm
- Threats or damage to property
- Repeated insults or harmful language that disrupt learning

- Any gesture or electronic message (including text or social media posts) meant to hurt or intimidate another student

🔒 *This also applies to off-campus behavior, including cyberbullying, if it disrupts the school environment.*

Any student who engages in bullying may face disciplinary action up to suspension or expulsion, and possibly referral to law enforcement if necessary.

If your child experiences or witnesses bullying:

- Please report it to a teacher, counselor, or the school principal immediately.
- Reports can be made confidentially.
- Every concern is taken seriously and will be addressed appropriately.

🗓️ Stay Informed

Check the House App Feed or our school Facebook page for important dates such as:

- Early release days
- School holidays
- Report card dates
- Events and programs

📢 *Dates may change or new events may be added throughout the year!*

To stay updated:

- Visit our school website and facebook page regularly
- Check the marquee/sign at the front of the school
- Read your classroom newsletter and the monthly school newsletter
- Listen for Alert Now phone calls and remind texts through KINVO

📞 If your phone number changes during the school year, please let the office know as soon as possible so you don't miss any important messages.

Annual Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Notice

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. They are:

(1) The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the District receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected; of the procedures for obtaining copies; and arrange for some one to be present to interpret the records if requested.

(2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask Cherokee County School District to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the District decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the District will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

(3) The right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the District as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the District has contracted to perform a special task (such as attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. The district may disclose without your consent information it has designated as "directory information". Directory information includes name, photograph, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, dates of attendance, degree and awards received. Directory information may be released by the district in a variety of ways including print media and electronically to the district or school website. If you do not wish the above information to be disclosed as directory information about your child, you must inform the principal of your child's school in writing within 15 days of receipt of this notice. **If you do not inform the principal that you object to the release of any or all information designated as "directory information", we will be free to release or use directory information on your child as appropriate.** Upon request, the District discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled and provides transcripts to schools of higher education.

(4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is: **Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-4605**

Grassy Pond Elementary School
Parent/Guardian Acknowledgment Form
2026–2027 Student Handbook

Dear Parents/Guardians,

At Grassy Pond Elementary School, we believe that clear communication and shared understanding between school and home are essential to student success. Our Student Handbook outlines important information regarding school policies, procedures, and expectations that help ensure a safe and productive learning environment for all students.

We ask that you please review the handbook with your child. It is important that both you and your child are familiar with the contents so we can work together to support a positive and consistent school experience.

Go to https://gpe.cherokee1.org/o/gpe and click the "Parent Information" tab to view the 2026–2027 Student Handbook.

After reviewing the handbook, please sign and return the bottom portion of this form to your child's teacher.

Thank you for your continued partnership in supporting your child's education.

Sincerely,

Tessie Bridges
Principal
Grassy Pond Elementary School

****Please look on the back of this paper for our Title 1 Parent-Student Compact information.**

Please sign the front and back stating you have read and understood the handbook and parent-student compact. *Return this form to your child's teacher and your child will earn 1 house point!*

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the Grassy Pond Elementary School Student Handbook for the 2026–2027 school year. I understand the policies and procedures outlined within and have discussed them with my child.

Student Name: _____ **Grade:** _____

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____