

appomattox primary school

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2025-2026



EVERY RAIDER, EVERY DAY

APPOMATTOX PRIMARY SCHOOL

Allison Maxwell, Principal

Kristen Stafford, Assistant Principal

A Note to Our APS Families

Dear Parents,

We are thrilled to welcome both returning and new families to Appomattox Primary School. We hope your summer was enjoyable and you and your children are ready to begin another busy school year.

Our teachers and staff are outstanding, but we cannot accomplish anything without your help, and most of all, your support. We encourage your participation in the classroom, programs, and PTO activities and expect that you will volunteer at APS.

Please take some time to go over our APS Parent/Student Handbook as a family. With your support, we will provide all students with a safe and positive learning environment where they are challenged and engaged in becoming higher-level thinkers.

We know that it's going to be a great year, as we work side by side with one goal in common-to help each and every child at Appomattox Primary School.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Appomattox Primary School is committed to providing the highest quality education for all children and beginning the process of developing the children of Appomattox into educated, responsible, independent citizens. We are dedicated to creating a climate where all students' physical, emotional, social, and cognitive growth is fostered in a nurturing and productive learning environment. We are proud of being instrumental in motivating students in becoming passionate about education and ones who embrace the philosophy of the ACPS theme of, "Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow." A school system with a passion for excellence promotes quality instruction, maximizes the potential for all learners, and provides a safe learning environment.

Each student will gain an experience of learning through hands-on activities, interactive engagement, participation, and collaboration.

We further believe the success of students at APS is a responsibility shared by dedicated staff, students, families, and members of the community. APS recognizes and nourishes the unique gifts and talents that each individual brings to our APS family. We recognize parents as the primary educators and with our combined efforts we will help children reach their fullest potential, "mind, body, and soul." Our goal is to support and achieve academic excellence.

ASSEMBLIES

A variety of educational assemblies have been planned for students. Assemblies serve to enrich the educational experiences of the children. Special attention to etiquette and good citizenship is expected of all students.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance Procedures

Regular school attendance is crucial for academic success. When students attend school consistently, they benefit from the full range of educational opportunities, develop important social skills, and build habits that will serve them well in their future endeavors. Research consistently shows that students who attend school regularly are more likely to graduate, achieve higher academic outcomes, and show improved outcomes for life after high school.

Understanding Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10% or more of school days in a year, which equates to 18 days out of our 180-day school year. It is important to note that chronic absenteeism includes all absences, whether they are excused or unexcused. Simply put, a missed day is a missed day. Our attendance team will be working with families to support students who are at risk of reaching the 10% or more of days missed. In addition, if a child does exceed the 10% or more of days missed, we will be working with the student to recover missed time during the school day through an Attendance Recovery Program.

In addition to addressing absenteeism, we will also be placing a new emphasis on tardies and early dismissal. Tardies to school and early dismissal from school will be monitored closely and if a student misses 10 or more hours of school due to tardies and/or early dismissal, they will also participate in our Attendance Recovery Program.

Attendance Recovery Program

For students who have been assigned to this program through attendance meetings with our Family Support Specialist and School Counselor, one of our staff will work with the student on academic skills in an effort to mitigate learning loss due to time missed from school.

ACPS Attendance Procedures for ACPS Board Policy JED and JED-R Student Absences/ Excuses/Dismissal

Appomattox County Public Schools (ACPS) believes that school attendance is directly related to academic achievement and to the development of good habits that are important in the work world. Optimum student attendance is a cooperative effort, and ACPS expects parents and students to take active roles in accepting that responsibility.

Each principal shall ensure that teachers are accountable for checking and documenting attendance daily/by block; communicating and documenting contact with a student's parents, school counselor, and administrator if poor attendance is affecting the student's performance; and accurately verifying regular attendance reports. Reasonable efforts to notify a parent or guardian should be made when a student has an unexcused absence.

Compulsory school attendance is required by the Code of Virginia § 22.1-254. The Code states that every parent or guardian having control or charge of any student five to 18 years old shall be responsible for such student's regular punctual attendance at school. School attendance is the responsibility of the students and their parent(s) or guardian. At the elementary level, attendance shall be documented daily, and in the secondary schools attendance shall be documented each class block.

Student Attendance Policy

- Student attendance is a cooperative effort; schools shall involve parents and students in accepting responsibility for regular attendance.
- Each parent or guardian of a child within the compulsory school attendance age shall be responsible for the child's regular and punctual attendance at a school as required by law.
- Students shall attend school on a regular and punctual basis unless otherwise excused in accordance with school board regulation.
- Students shall attend school for a full day unless excused by the principal or principal's designee.
- Students leaving school early for any reason must check out of the main office.

Appomattox County Public Schools Attendance Guidelines

Recognizing that regular attendance is critical to a student's achievement in school, the school division has developed the following guidelines for attendance:

1. All student absences are considered unexcused until appropriate documentation is provided by the parent or guardian. Such documentation should be received by the school **within 5 days of returning to school** stating the reason for the absence.

Appomattox County Public Schools accept documentation from physicians, mental health professionals, and court officials. ACPS also allows a parent or guardian to write (up to 8) notes a year to excuse absences that are otherwise undocumented. However, only 8 days of excused absences will be accepted regardless of the type of documentation. (ex. 5 doctor notes + 3 parent notes = 8) Subsequent absences should be documented but will be considered unexcused unless the documentation comes from a physician, mental health professional, court official, or notice of a religious holiday observance.

Full Day Absences

- a. Excused Absences - The only excuses that shall be deemed excused are:
- i. Participation in a school-sponsored activity or 4-H sponsored event (max. 3 days). Middle and High School students may be excused to participate in a civic event. Documentation from the event sponsor is required.
 - ii. Prearranged absences; to include observance of a religious holiday
 - iii. Verified illness by a parent, guardian (with a parent excuse), or doctor (with a medical excuse)
 - iv. Documented court appearance with legal note from the court for the student
 - v. Funeral attendance for an immediate family; Immediate family is designated as a parent, grandparent, sibling, or other relative living in the same household. An obituary or funeral service program should be provided. Otherwise, a parent note must be submitted. If more than one day is needed, the parent must contact the principal to explain the extenuating circumstance.
 - vi. Suspensions, expulsions - (up to 3 days will be considered excused)
 - vii. Military obligation
 - vi. Extenuating circumstances which are determined by the principal. When extenuating circumstances are approved, the principal will notify the attendance clerk, guidance, and truancy staff.
- b. Unexcused Absences –Excuses not listed above will be deemed unexcused.

2. Make-up Work

- a. It is the responsibility of the AMS and ACHS student to see the teacher on the day he or she returns to school to receive assignments and schedule make-up work. AES and APS parents may wish to assist the student in making arrangements to make up missed assignments.
- b. All work must be completed within 3 school days from the return to school; unless other arrangements have been made between the teacher and the student.
- c. Parents may request assignments when a student is absent. Those assignments are to be available for parents to pick up in the main office before the close of business on the following day.
- d. Students have the opportunity and are encouraged to complete make-up work regardless of the reason for an absence.

3. General Provisions for Daily Attendance Reporting

Each principal shall ensure that teachers are accountable for the following:

- a. Checking and documenting attendance daily at APS and AES (by 9:00 a.m.) and by period at AMS and ACHS.
- b. Communicating and documenting contact with a student's parents, school counselor and administrator if poor attendance is affecting the student's performance.
- c. Accurately verifying regular attendance reports.

4. Attendance Documentation Procedures

- a. Students will submit notes to the homeroom or first period teacher at the start of the school day.
 - i. Principal's designee will:
 - Read the excuse
 - Determine if the excuse is excused or unexcused
 - File the excuse
 - Enter excused/unexcused into the student information system

5. Attendance Monitoring Procedures

It is the school division's goal to support students and their families with attendance issues.

- a. ACPS will contact the parent by letter after the student's third (3rd) unexcused absence.
- b. The principal's designee will provide reports to the principal indicating students with:
 - i. Five (5) or more unexcused absences or ten (10) total absences (any combination of excused or unexcused)
- c. Initial Attendance Review
 - i. With the parent, the designee will:
 - contact the parent/student to determine the cause of the absences.
 - inform the parent/student of the ramifications of poor attendance.
 - work to secure any additional documentation that may support the attendance record (outstanding parent or doctor's notes)
 - ii. With the division, the designee will:
 - review the absence report
 - consult students and parents as necessary to resolve discrepancies in the attendance record.
 - institute compulsory attendance procedures.
- d. Upon Fifth Unexcused Absence without Parental Awareness and Support
 - i. The principal will:
 - notify the attendance officer and compile documentation

- ii. Upon notification by the principal, the attendance officer will:
 - Schedule a school-based meeting with the student and parent to jointly develop a plan to resolve the student's non-attendance. Contacts may include conferences with the parent by phone and/or meetings with the student at the school
 - Refer for the Interdisciplinary Truancy Review Team (ITRT)
 - Compile proper documentation.

e. Upon Additional Unexcused Absences without Parent Awareness and Support

- i. Upon notification by the principal, the school truancy officer will initiate petitions with the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court.
- ii. The truancy officer will assist the principal in compiling the Truancy Petition CHINSUP (Child In Need of Supervision- Truancy) checklist for the school resource officer and court purposes.
- iii. Prior to the court appearance, the truancy officer will coordinate with the principal or designee the preparation and delivery of the *Attendance Case Summary* for inclusion in court action.

f. Additional consequences for excessive absence, tardies and early dismissal may include:

- Reduction of course grades
- Assignment to afterschool recovery time.
- Restricted participation and attendance in extracurricular activities

Early Dismissals and Tardies

Early Dismissal from School: Students are expected to remain in school for all classes. When necessary, students or parents may submit an early dismissal note.

- Requests to leave early shall be submitted to the main office no later than *9:00 A.M. for approval
- No student will be allowed to leave school early without an approved note or a parent present to pick up the student.
- Parent must sign the student out in the office

Tardies to School: Students are expected to be at school on time. 10 (Ten) tardies are considered excessive. Families can expect the following consequences for excessive tardies and/or early dismissals.

- Parent notification and conferences to make improvement plans
- Loss of extracurricular access to watch and to participate
- Loss of parking privileges
- Lunch detentions

Based on ACPS Board Policy Last Revised:

April 26, 2018

ILLNESS AT SCHOOL

Should your child become ill at school, it is important that we have your telephone number at home and at work. If you do not have a telephone, provide the names of two other persons to contact in case of an emergency. Needed also are the name, address, and telephone number of your sitter should he/she not keep the child in your home. *Student medications must be brought to school in the original container by a parent and checked in by the school nurse or designee.* If the school nurse contacts you to pick your student up from school, you will need to pick them up with-in 1 hour. If your child has diarrhea, fever, or vomiting they need to stay at home 24 hours, after the symptoms subside. If sent home by the school nurse for these concerns, the absence the next day will be considered "excused."

LICE

A student is confirmed to have head lice infestation when the school nurse identifies live lice on the student's head, and/or nits are found within 1/4 inch of the base of the hair shafts (scalp). The student must receive treatment for head lice, and, upon return to school, the parent is asked to provide documentation of treatment by bringing in the box top of the treatment provided.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Buses begin arriving at 7:55 a.m. A child will be considered tardy if not in their classroom when the 8:15 a.m. bell rings. Assigned staff members are on car duty from 7:50 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. Students who do not ride the school bus should not arrive prior to 7:50 a.m. because we have no supervision for them before that time.

***** Right Turn Only Sign*****

Due to the volume of traffic during school arrival (7:45-8:30) and departure times (2:45 – 3:30), you can ONLY turn Right on Ferguson Street.

ADDRESS and PHONE NUMBER CHANGES

A Residency Validation form and reasonable proof of residing in our school district are required anytime there is a move or change of address. It is very important, for emergency and administrative reasons, that every student maintains an up-to-date address and contact record at the school office. Please notify the school in writing whenever you have a change of address or phone number during the school year. *If you move during the school year, you must provide a new proof of residency to the front office. We will not be able to update Power School until we have received that information.*

TRANSPORTATION CHANGES

Bus bells begin dismissing at 3:10. We are unable to "hold" students until you arrive. If you have not sent a change in writing, your child will be transported based on the last note we have on file and/or his/her regular bus. We ask that you send in changes via the student or fax (352-8074) us a note by 12:00 p.m. If you choose to fax a note, please follow up with a phone call to ensure our receipt of the fax. We cannot guarantee receipt of changes if after 12:00 p.m. and/or not followed up with a phone call.

NOTE: NO BUS CHANGES WILL BE MADE OVER THE PHONE FOR SECURITY/SAFETY REASONS

Notes sent with students concerning bus changes must include:

1. Name of child and teacher
2. Name and 911 address of person and place they are going
3. Signature of parent or legal guardian
4. Phone number of a person to be contacted if more information is needed on change.
5. All notes should be written only by a parent/legal guardian

The student should give this note to his/her teacher upon arrival at school.

BUILDING INDEPENDENCE IN YOUR CHILD

Over the last few years, with visitor restrictions, we have found that our students have had successful first-day transitions when we have asked that parents drop them off in our car rider line. It is best to say "Goodbye and have a great day!" as they exit the car and our staff will take FANTASTIC care of them as they enter the building. This will help your child know that you have put your trust in the teacher and the school to take good care of him/her, while also bringing about a feeling of self-confidence. This procedure is in line with the other schools in our division which also do not allow parents to escort their children into the building upon arrival.

CAR RIDERS– A.M.

Parents who transport students daily should do so between 7:50 a.m.–8:15 a.m.

A.M. CAR RIDERS:

Parents who wish to drop their students off at the car rider canopy in the mornings, should proceed around the car rider loop and wait for instructions from the school personnel on duty. Parents should not let their students out of the vehicle until asked to do so by a staff member. For safety reasons, never leave students unattended before doors open. We also ask that if at all possible, you place your APS child on the PASSENGER SIDE of your vehicle for drop-off and pick-up - our car rider staff stays on the sidewalk for safety reasons - if you have an infant on the passenger side, if possible...could you have your kiddo pop into the front passenger seat for our staff to assist them in getting out or in the car.

CAR RIDERS– P.M.

P.M. CAR RIDERS:

We will do staggered dismissal times again this year, to decrease the traffic back up on Ferguson Street. If you wish to drive through the car rider loop and have your student placed in your car, please indicate this through a car rider note and receive your car rider sign. Please display this sign in the front windshield to assist the car rider duty personnel. Beginning around 3:00 p.m., students will be dismissed to the car rider holding area – staff members will begin loading students into vehicles at 3:10 p.m. While this process takes longer during the first week or two of school, generally all car riders have been loaded into their vehicles within 15-20 minutes of dismissal time. The personnel on duty will direct students to designated pick-up zones. Please do not call for your student to come to your car, but watch for direction from the personnel on duty. Students will load and unload from the vehicle's passenger side ONLY – students will not be allowed to walk between cars to load/unload. Parents should remain in vehicles, allow school personnel to load their student(s), and should not pass any vehicle loading or unloading children unless directed by a staff member. Please pull off from the car rider line and park in the grass if you are stopping to get out of the vehicle and buckle your child.

The times for pick-up are as follows:

A-E 3:10 PM

F-J 3:15 PM

K-P 3:20 PM

Q-Z 3:25 PM

(If you have more than one child that may have different last names, choose the younger child's pick-up time.)

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING “NO-NOS”

Do not enter the Bus Loop (located at the front of the building) between 7:50 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

This is the school bus loading/unloading zone.

Do not drop off your child(ren) on Ferguson Street.

Do not drop off your child(ren) in the parking lot.

Do not get out and leave your child(ren) at the office door before 7:50 a.m.

We know mornings and afternoons can be stressful trying to get everyone where they need to be on time, so please help us to keep everyone safe by following these safety guidelines.

TOBACCO-FREE SCHOOL FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

Smoking, chewing, or any other use of any tobacco products including cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, snuff, and chewing tobacco by staff, students, and visitors are prohibited on school property. This also includes electronic cigarettes, vapes, and jules.

Appomattox County School Board File: JFCH

TARDIES/ EARLY DISMISSALS

When students arrive late or are needed for early dismissals, parents are requested to sign the student in/out in the office. The office will then notify the teacher. When students are being picked up early, parents will need to wait in the main office for their child(ren). This practice will minimize the number of instructional interruptions. For students with excessive tardies or early dismissal, they may be required to participate in the recovery program.

LUNCH VISITORS

You are able to eat with your child during their lunch period. In order to eat lunch with a student, you must present your ID and be on their PowerSchool account. We ask that the first 4 weeks of school that there are no lunch visitors in order for the student's to get into a routine. If school is on a delay or early release, we are not able to accommodate visitors. On these days, students eat in classrooms, and space is very limited.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL FORMS

Emergency medical forms must be filled out in Enrollment. No medications will be administered to a student without a parent's permission. Phone numbers, addresses, and emergency contact information must be kept up to date in the case an emergency were to arise. Please send updated contact information to the office.

DAILY SCHEDULE

7:50 – 8:15 Student arrival/breakfast

8:15 Tardy bell rings & instruction begins

3:10 Dismissal

DISCIPLINE

It is the policy of Appomattox County School Board to maintain a learning environment for all its students which provides for fair and equitable treatment, including freedom from racial and sexual harassment.

Realizing that self-discipline is the best, we wish to help students understand what kind of behavior patterns are the most desirable. Each student will learn to take responsibility for his/her own actions.

Guidelines the teacher will follow include:

1. Establish rules of behavior consistent with the school philosophy and a corresponding set of consequences based on relevance to the student's age level. Students will:
 - a. Be kind
 - b. Be safe
 - c.. Be thinking
2. Conference with the student to teach the acceptance of the responsibility for his/her disruptive actions.
3. Contact parents if the student continues to present undesirable behavior.
4. Schedule and hold a conference with parent and child.
5. The last step in the plan will involve the principal, teacher, parents, and child, making a decision regarding the procedure to follow to assure conformance with the behavior standards established by Appomattox County School Board.
6. Fighting or repeated infractions of school rules; may result in suspension.
 - a. In-School Suspension - student is assigned to another classroom for the day. Privileges are restricted.
 - b. Out-School Suspension – a student is unable to attend school for a given period of time.
7. Other acts leading to suspension include the following:
 - a. A student shall not use or have in his/her possession or on his/her person any pistol, shotgun, rifle, dirk, bowie knife, switchblade, knife, razor, slingshot, brass or metal knuckles, blackjacks, explosives, other dangerous articles, or any look-alike weapons. Any weapon possessed in violation of this policy shall be forfeited to the Commonwealth. The provisions of this section shall not apply to persons who carry such a weapon as part of the curriculum or other programs sponsored by the school or any organization permitted by the school to use its premises.

Safety is a primary consideration and as students are learning the social and behavioral skills required for school, parents play an important role as partners in reinforcing academic, social, and behavioral growth in a safe environment. With the understanding that there are consequences for unsafe behaviors, we also take a team approach to problem solve and create interventions and supports to promote appropriate behavior. If a student's behavior is unsafe, a team that includes school counselors, school psychologists, behavioral specialists, parents, and teachers work together to create a plan unique to the student's needs.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

In order to promote an orderly and safe learning environment while preparing students for success in the world of work, dress guidelines have been established. Parents and students are responsible for appropriate school dress. This means that a student's dress, grooming, and appearance, including hairstyle, jewelry, and makeup shall be safe, appropriate, and shall not disrupt or interfere with the educational process. Dress that is disruptive, distracting, revealing, or interferes with the educational process will not be acceptable. Administrators will have the final authority to determine if a student's clothing is appropriate for school, is safe, or whether it will create a climate that is distracting to learning and instruction. Principals, faculty, and staff members will enforce the following dress code:

The Appomattox County Public Schools Dress Code prohibits the wearing of any of the following:

- Clothing or accessories that advertise, glorify, or symbolize any illegal substance, alcohol, drugs, tobacco, cigarettes, vaping, e-cigarettes, or illegal acts,
- Clothing or accessories that contain vulgar, derogatory, violent, or suggestive diagrams, pictures, words or slogans,
- Clothing or accessories with gang insignia or symbols,
- Clothing that exposes cleavage, private parts, the midriff, or undergarments, or that is otherwise sexually provocative, is prohibited. Examples of prohibited clothing include, but are not limited to: sagging or low-cut pants, low-cut necklines that show cleavage, tube tops, halter tops, backless blouses or blouses with only ties in the back, clothing constructed of see-through materials,
- Dresses, skirts, shorts, and skorts shorter than five inches above the knees,
- Slits, splits, cuts, frays, and holes in clothing so that undergarments or bare skin is exposed that is five inches above knees,
- Picks, combs, or brushes in hair,
- Hats, sun visors, and sunglasses (unless prior arrangements are made with the administration for medical or religious reasons),
- Heavy chains worn as jewelry or belts and free-swinging chains. This includes wallet chains exceeding six inches,
- Spiked jewelry, clothing, and accessories including fish hooks,
- One-piece pajamas,
- Blankets, capes and flags.

Note: Shoes must be worn at all times and be appropriate for instructional activities.

All teachers and staff are expected to enforce the dress code policy throughout the day.

Student Dress Code and Special Circumstances:

- Some classroom activities and curriculum may require specific dress guidelines (e.g., physical education). Any such changes will be explained by the teacher and addressed in the course syllabus/parent letter.

- Administrators, coaches, and sponsors may suspend portions of the dress code and allow students to wear other appropriate attire at special activities. Such activities may be related to field days, theme days, field trips, physical education, cheerleading, athletics, and band.

Consequences (One or More May Apply)

- Option to alter the inappropriate dress to meet the ACPS Dress Code with alternate attire or calling parents to bring appropriate attire
- Student conference
- Parent contact
- Referral to school administrator
- Option to offer alternate attire to meet the ACPS Dress Code or call parent to bring appropriate clothing

Repeated willful ACPS Dress Code violations may be subject to further disciplinary action at the administrator's discretion.

Reference: Appomattox County School Board Policy: JFCK

Revised: March 30, 2023

COMMUNICATION WITH TEACHERS

Teachers are always interested in talking to you about your child's progress or about any concerns and/or issues you may wish to share. However, teachers must be with their students from the time they open the door in the morning until all children leave in the afternoon. So what should you do if you need to talk to the teacher?

1. You may call the school and leave a message with the secretary for the teacher to call you. The Teacher will return your call when they are not with their students. Please allow 24 hours for the teacher to respond.
2. You may write the teacher a note or email if you wish to share any information, ask a question, or request a conference. Please allow 24 hours for the teacher to respond.
3. You can also add the Dojo app to your phone and have the ability to stay in contact with your child's teacher.

Also, teachers will send home weekly newsletters via backpacks and/or email. Please be vigilant about reading what your child is bringing home from school so you will know what is going on in the classroom and at the school. It is a good idea to go through your child's backpack –Daily!!

NEWSLETTERS

A monthly newsletter is sent out digitally each month to inform you of events occurring at APS. Also, the newsletter will be posted on our APS website.

CONFERENCES

Parents are encouraged to contact the child's teacher or call the school to schedule a conference. A parent/teacher conference is an extremely valuable method of monitoring students' progress and discussing strengths and areas that need additional attention. The principal is available for conferences by appointment after contact and/or a conference with the teacher.

SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM

Appomattox County offers a comprehensive guidance and counseling program to all students in grades K-12. The curriculum focuses on skill development in the areas of academic guidance, career guidance, personal/social counseling, and bullying prevention. Curriculum and instructional materials are available for review by parents in each school. After reviewing the program, parents may request that their child be removed from all or part of the personal/social portion by notifying the principal in writing, annually.

REPORT CARDS

Student report cards will be sent home every nine weeks. You can also view your child's grades on the PowerSchool app. If you need help logging in to PowerSchool please contact the front office. Report cards for the 4th nine weeks will be mailed home to the most recent address on file in the office.

PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION

Appomattox Primary School has a history of an active, supportive, and involved PTO. The PTO makes valuable contributions to the total school program. They have shown support by purchasing equipment, providing instructional materials, and sponsoring cultural performances. Please join the PTO! Together we can make a difference.

PTO OFFICERS

PTO Officers for the 2025-2026 school year include:
Adrian Scruggs; Miranda Almond; Amanda Dye; Tricia Bell, Monica Bennett;
Kelly Chavis; Tyler Cooke

SAFETY MEASURES

Preventing emergency or crisis situations is a top priority at APS. In cases of emergencies, plans are in place to mobilize the school staff and community resources to respond quickly and effectively.

Preventive and response steps include the following:

- *All school doors are locked at all times during the day.
- *Visitors are welcome at APS, and they are required to check in at the office, scan driver's license, print a badge, and wear it while at school. Visitors without a visible badge will be asked to visit the office to obtain one.
- *Substitute teachers are given a summary of the Crisis Plan to use in case of emergency.
- *An active school crisis team updates plans regularly to respond to medical and other emergencies.

VISITORS

***** APS staff is dedicated to keeping all students safe. To ensure safety, all visitors must scan a driver's license when entering the building. *****

All visitors (parents, patrons, volunteers, etc.) must sign in at the school office and obtain a visitor's pass. Parents are to schedule conferences in advance at times convenient for both teacher and parents. Conferences will be scheduled at such times that they do not interrupt or interfere with a student's instructional time.

In an effort to maintain a secure and safe learning environment, we ask that parents, guardians, and school guests pre-register for each event that they will be attending in their child's classroom and/or assemblies. Showing your ID will still be necessary to check in for the event on the day of the event.

UNIVERSAL FREE BREAKFAST & LUNCH PROGRAM

Recently, APS received a grant where every student in grades Pre K -2 will be offered FREE breakfast and lunch at school. The Grant allows all students enrolled at APS to be automatically eligible to receive FREE breakfast. Families do not need to submit a free/reduced meal application to be eligible.

Research shows that children who eat a well-balanced breakfast perform better in school. If a parent/guardian has questions, please contact the principal/assistant principal at 434-352-5766.

SCHOOL FOOD SERVICES

To ensure your child's safety while at school, snacks which are provided for the class must be unopened and commercially prepared. These include birthday and special holiday snacks. Thank you in advance for assisting with this safety issue. Also, be mindful of others with peanut allergies in the classroom.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Daily physical education instruction is provided for all students. Participation is mandatory except for health reasons. A dated, written note from a physician explaining the nature of the illness or injury should be presented to the teacher and state specifically the length of time before normal participation can be resumed. Everyday school dress is acceptable for participation; however, for safety reasons, each child must wear rubber-soled, tennis/sneaker type shoes during physical education (no crocs or boots). If a student's footwear is deemed unsafe by the physical education teacher and/or a school administrator, he/she may not be allowed to participate in P.E. that day.

OTHER INFORMATION

In accordance with the Standard for Accrediting Schools in Virginia, fundraising activities that involve primary-age students in the door-to-door solicitation are prohibited.

Plans for emergency situations are printed in the Appomattox Primary School Teacher Handbook and reviewed with students during the first week of school.

A copy of the Appomattox County School Board Policy Manual is available online at the ACPS Website for your review.

In compliance with the Code of Virginia, Appomattox County students' cumulative records, including academic records and discipline reports, accompany students when:

1. The student progresses from one school to another, within a given division or
2. The student transfers to another school division.

STANDARDS OF LEARNING

The Department of Education for the Commonwealth of Virginia requires evaluation documentation for the Standards of Learning Objectives in language arts, mathematics, science, history, and the social sciences. Each child should obtain these minimum skills before advancing to the next level. Parents shall be informed through conferences, written communications, telephone calls, etc., as soon as a teacher observes that a student is having difficulty in an area, and suggestions shall be made to assist in eliminating the difficulty. Parents shall be notified in writing beginning the second semester if there is any chance their child will not successfully master the guidelines for promotion to the next grade level. For your convenience, the objectives for these academic areas have been included in the pockets of this folder, along with A.P.S. language arts and math benchmarks.

PARTIES

Due to confidentiality, we are unable to give out names/addresses for party invitations. It is at the discretion of the individual teacher whether or not party invitations can be dispensed during non-instructional times of the day. To ensure your child's safety at school, snacks which are provided for the class **must be unopened and commercially prepared**. These include birthday and special holiday snacks. When signing out a student from parties, it is an "unexcused early dismissal."

Parents are encouraged to complete party pre-registration forms whenever possible. The front office will send these forms out in advance to allow time for preparation. Additionally, guests may be limited depending on the situation/capacity.

FIRE DRILLS/TORNADO DRILLS/LOCKDOWN DRILLS

Every precaution is taken to ensure the safety of your child during school hours.

1. Fire Drill: Each school holds two (2) fire drills during the first 20 days of the school Session. In addition, there will be an additional two drills throughout the year.
No fire drills are conducted during periods of mandatory testing required by the Board of Education. All students and adults must exit the building and proceed to their designated areas. Students and adults will return to the building following a signal from the principal or designee.
2. Tornado: At least twice during the year a Tornado drill will be conducted. All students and adults proceed to designated hallways, bathrooms, and interior rooms. Students and adults should assume the duck and cover position until the "All Clear" is given by the principal or designee.
3. Lock Down: Each school has a lock-down drill at least twice during the first 20 days of each school session. Each school holds at least two (2) additional lock-down drills during the remainder of the school session. All students and adults will remain quietly within locked rooms until it is determined that the campus has been secured, after which time there will be an "All Clear" announcement from the school office. Lock-down plans and drills are in compliance with the Statewide Fire Prevention Code, VA Code §27-94 et seq.

PROJECTS

Please do not send any projects for "Show and Tell" in glass containers. Toys and animals are to be brought to school only upon the teacher's written request.

FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

FLE objectives are integrated into the current health, safety, or science units at each respective grade level. Curriculum and instructional materials are available for your preview. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the FLE program or wish to request that your child not participate in the various Family Life Education activities, please notify the principal in writing each school year.

PROMOTION/ RETENTION

It is our desire and mission that each student be successful now and in the future. Not every student learns in the same way or at the same rate. Some students may need additional time to master certain skills before being promoted to the next grade level. While it is never an easy decision to retain a student, it is an appropriate decision if the student has not met the grade-level requirements for promotion. Appomattox County School Board Policy indicates that many factors should be considered at the elementary level (K-5) including, but not limited to the following:

- A. Standards of Learning Assessment scores
- B. Progress on the grade-level subject matter with an emphasis on Reading and Mathematics
- C. Academic progress as measured by school assessments
- D. Attendance
- E. Age
- F. Maturity

As indicated above, grade-level subject matter progress is considered when making retention decisions. Those expectations are described both in the Virginia Standards of Learning (a copy was sent home in the orange folder handbook and can be found at <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/>).

If a student is considered for retention, you will be notified by the teacher in January of the current school year. In addition, you will receive a letter from the principal in late January or February. The letter does not mean your child will be retained, but it does mean that retention is a possibility. The teacher(s) will conference with you to discuss strategies to help your child meet grade-level requirements. If necessary grade-level requirements are not achieved by the end of the school year, you will be notified following May assessments. The teacher will inform you through a conference, phone call, and/or written correspondence. Additionally, you will receive a letter from the principal indicating your child will be retained in the current grade level for the next school year.

Please note the following excerpt from Appomattox County Public School Board Policy in regards to final student placement/retention decisions:

File: IKEC PROMOTION/RETENTION

Each student should learn the relevant grade-level subject matter before promotion to the next grade.

Decisions regarding promotion and retention shall be made by the principal in consultation with the parent or guardian, teachers, and other school personnel. Although final authority for the assignment of the student must rest with the principal, it is preferable that an agreement is reached with the parent or guardian that retention is in the best interest of the student.

Performance on the Standards of Learning Assessments shall be used as part of a multiple set of criteria for determining the promotion or retention of students in grades 3, 5, and 8. Specific criteria for promotion/retention shall be set forth in regulations developed by the superintendent. Adopted: August 21, 1998

Legal Refs: 8 VAC, Section 20-131-30, 20-131-40, 22.1-253.13.4 APPOMATTOX COUNTY

GRADING

We believe grades should be an accurate reflection of a student's achievement toward specific learning goals. We know that effective teachers use other incentives and motivators to provide feedback to students unmotivated by grades and to provide analysis of student progress in the interim of grading periods. We believe that the most fundamental purpose for grades and all forms of feedback to students is to encourage student learning and improve individual and collective student achievement.

Expectations:

Teachers are to communicate clear learning goals as they:

- a) Follow approved pacing guides that are fully aligned with the Virginia SOL curriculum or other division-approved curricula.
- b) Develop and follow lesson plans that include clear learning objectives, anticipatory set, and closure.
- c) State and/or display the learning objective each day.

Students are to be provided accurate information about their achievements. This is achieved when teachers:

- a) Design assessments that authentically measure the learning goal(s) of the lesson.

b) Clearly define the specific expectations for mastery of each assignment/activity.

c) Provide prompt and regular feedback on works-in-progress and completed work. d) Provide models for display from student-created work.

The classroom environment should support learning by being positive and supportive. This is evidenced when teachers:

- a) Use active learning opportunities that positively engage the students.
- b) Use positive incentives that encourage student learning and progress towards a goal.
- c) Allow students to have input on their individual achievement/learning goals.
- d) Use grading practices that are not punitive or related to compliance or behavioral expectations.
- e) Provide opportunities for revision and retesting.

HOMework

Homework should be an extension of the classroom learning experience. Homework should be given to:

- a) Practice a skill that is being learned in class to increase speed or accuracy with that skill.
- b) Explore background knowledge or increased information related to a concept or skill.
- c) Extend the learning process beyond the expected learning goal (extra credit)
- d) Individualize learning based on student learning needs, choices, or interests. Expectations: Homework should be an assignment that can be completed independently by the student.
- e) Parental assistance should not be required or expected on homework assignments. Parents should be informed of assignments and encouraged to support their student's completion of homework. Communication about homework assignments and expectations for students and parents is important. Newsletters, weekly folders, student planners, assignment sheets, and homework folders are some examples of how communication might take place.
- f) Teachers should consider all students' access to materials such as poster board, markers, computers, and internet services and may arrange to have those materials available. Teachers should also consider all students' access to assistance on homework assignments.
- g) While research indicates that students should always receive feedback* on homework assignments, teachers must use caution when applying traditional grading practices to a homework assignment. Grading is inappropriate when assistance has been provided, or if the skill has not yet been mastered. (Feedback might include individual or team points, participation points or grades, individual, small group, partner, or large group discussion of homework tasks, etc)

Homework assignments should respect the age and cognitive abilities of the student.

- a) Guidelines for the amount of homework and the coordination of assignments should be specific to the school, grade level, department, or course. Best practice research suggests NO MORE than 10 minutes times the grade level for a TOTAL amount of homework assigned. (ie: a 6th grader would have no more than 60 minutes of homework – all subjects combined) Assignments that require extensive time will be coordinated with other subjects and team members to the best of the teacher's ability.
- b) Guidelines for how homework affects a student's achievement in a curriculum should be consistent with the district and school's grading philosophy, policies, and practices as deemed appropriate by the school leadership and administration. In ACPS, homework will not count for more than 10% of a student's total grade.
- c) Guidelines for make-up work should be consistent among teachers, grade level, department, and/or team.

These guidelines should be fair and communicated at the beginning of the course.

Furthermore, consequences for failure to complete work should also be consistent with other teachers, fair, and communicated at the beginning of the course.

The amount of homework will vary based on the performance level of the students. Most teachers send home a list of homework assignments each Monday. Questions regarding homework should be directed to the classroom teacher. APS encourages parents to engage in a minimum of 20 minutes each night in reading activities with their children.

A Final Note:

Please feel free to call us at 434-352-5766 if you have any issues to discuss. If you have a concern regarding the classroom, the first question we will ask you is, "Have you discussed this matter with your child's teacher?"

That is always the first step! Once you have done that, if you still feel a need to discuss the situation with us, we can all work together to find a solution to your problem.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:

APS office: 434-352-5766

APS fax: 434-352-8074

APS cafe: 434-352-5766 x4418

APS clinic: 434-352-8937

APS counselor: 434-352-0831

Bus Shop: 434-352-7441