

Camden County Schools



Student / Parent Handbook

Important Notice:

Please check the school website for the most current version of the student handbook.

Mrs. Sykora Cobb, Principal

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Purpose of the Student/Parent Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint the students, families, and teachers of St. Marys Elementary School with its programs, services, and policies. Through an understanding of the regulations that keep the school functioning efficiently and an awareness of opportunities offered at St. Marys Elementary for growth and development, a clear understanding will be established among the school administration, staff, families, and students.

AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Only those students involved in after-school activities will be allowed to remain on the school campus. A child who is not involved in the activity may **not** remain at the school to wait for a brother, sister, or friend.

ARRIVAL

- Students should not arrive before 8:00 am. (There is no one on duty to supervise unattended students who are dropped off prior to 8:00 am., so please **do not drop off** prior to 8:00 am)
- Free breakfast is served from 8:00 am – 8:25 am daily
- All students report to cafeteria or other assigned location (including the classroom) when arriving on campus.
- No one is permitted in a teacher's classroom prior to 8:00 am without prior approval by the teacher and administration.
- Instructional day begins at 8:30 am. **Students should be in class “ready to learn” at that time.**
- Students are tardy if they are **not in class** by 8:30 am.

Note: Student drop off takes place in the drop-off lane in front of the school. Students enter through the cafeteria doors. A map for student drop off/pickup is available in the front office. Please do **NOT** drop off in any other location.

BEVERAGES AT SCHOOL

Students may drink water during class with teacher approval. Water brought from home should be in a **clear container**.

BICYCLES/SCOOTERS

Students are permitted to ride bicycles or scooters to school. These items should be secured in the bike racks. Students must walk at all times on school property.

CAFETERIA

- Students should follow lunchroom rules/procedures.
- Sharing of food is not allowed, due to student allergies.
- Parent visitors for lunch may check students out to leave campus for lunch and then return or enjoy lunch in the school courtyard with the student. Students will not be able to bring other students with them during this time.
- Parents/visitors may only eat with **their** child at lunch and must be on their PowerSchool contacts.
- Breakfast with parents/visitors is only reserved for special events in the morning.

CALENDAR

SMES keeps a very detailed school calendar on the school web site that highlights school activities, field trips, assemblies, testing, holidays, and professional learning activities for staff members. Please check the calendar frequently to stay abreast of our busy schedule. The calendar is available on the school's website and on the school's Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/SMESSharks>

COMMUNICATION

- Communication in a variety of forms including telephone, email blasts, conferences, folders/student agenda are utilized to keep parents informed.
- Expect a conference during the first nine weeks of school.
- Families may request a conference at any time with their child's teacher.
- SMES staff will return an email within 24 hours, unless it is before a weekend or holiday, which should follow a 48 hour response. Please allow additional time for certain circumstances.
- **Infinite Campus** is an excellent tool to stay current with your child's progress. Please see teacher or office staff for assistance with setting it up.
- Make-up work may be provided upon request. A 24-hour timeline for preparation for receipt/pick-up in the front office is given.

DISCIPLINE

St. Marys Elementary School has adopted PBIS (Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports) which is a framework of defining school-wide expectations for students. PBIS supports the success of ALL students by teaching students school expectations through lessons modeling examples and non-examples.

Expectations

F: Follow Directions

I: In Control

N: Neat and Safe

S: Show respect

Consequences:

1. Verbal Warning
2. Parent Contact/Parent Conference
3. Teacher/Student(s) Conference
4. Classroom Time Out
5. Non-Academic Loss of Privilege (loss of recess, silent lunch)
6. Counselor
7. MTSS Intervention
8. Extended Time Out/ISS and/or OSS (out of school suspension)
9. Parent Conference

The following offenses are of such a severe nature that they cannot be tolerated at all and will result in an **IOR** (Immediate Office Referral):

- ***Fighting***
- ***Weapons***
- ***Drugs***
- ***Severe Disruption of Instruction***

- ***Bullying will not be tolerated and will be dealt with through a variety of age appropriate interventions including (but not limited to) counseling or disciplinary action as appropriate under the circumstances.***

DISMISSAL

- SMES dismissal is at 3:25 PM. We will dismiss beginning with car riders, followed by bus riders, and then walkers/bike riders. This order is to ensure the safety of ALL students; please observe the following dismissal procedure:
- **Buses:** All students riding buses will be dismissed from the bus drop-off/pick up area in back of the school. For safety reasons, parents are not allowed in this area for any reason during dismissal. In case of an emergency, please go to the front office.
- **Cars:** Students riding in cars must be picked up in the drop-off/pickup lane in front of the school. Vehicles will line up along **Osborne Street and Dillingham Street**. All parents picking up will need to get a free hanging tag from the front office so we will be able to call your child. Remember that according to city ordinance, golf carts must abide by the same rules as other motorized vehicles.
- **Walkers/Bike Riders:** Walkers and bike riders will be taken to the crosswalk at the intersection of Osborne and Church streets to be crossed with the assistance of the St. Marys Elementary Staff. As walkers, students do not receive staff supervision once they leave campus. Students who walk home will be dismissed unless there is lightning and/or thunder or other hazardous weather conditions. Rain in the absence of lightning/thunder is **not** considered a hazardous weather condition.

It is very important that the teacher and the front office know how your child regularly gets home. Should this change, a phone call should be made to the front office by 2:30 or a written note sent in your child's folder. Teachers will not receive transportation changes throughout the instructional school day.

PLEASE send specific, written information/instructions in a form of a note to your child's teacher or call the office staff if your child's dismissal routine is to be changed in any way by 2:00 PM each day. This applies to bus transportation as well as parent pick-up. **Students must bring a note from home** in order to obtain a bus pass allowing him/her to ride the bus home if this is not a usual dismissal procedure. Students will not be released to anyone without specific written directions from a parent or guardian. **Teachers will not receive transportation changes throughout the day. It is always best to keep transportation home consistent.**

EARLY DISMISSAL

When it becomes necessary for a student to be dismissed during the school day, the parent or guardian must enter the office to sign his/her child out. Students will not be released to anyone other than the custodial parents or guardian without specific authorization. The school **MUST** be notified in writing of any special circumstances. A picture ID is required each time a child is checked out.

Students will not be dismissed from school after 3:00. If you have a doctor's appointment for your child after school, please arrange for dismissal before 3:00 p.m.

FIELD TRIPS

- During field trips, students are counted as present at school and must use the approved transportation to/from the field trip.
- The school may limit the number of chaperones attending because of space limitations.

- Parents acting as chaperones must provide their own transportation and may not transport students.
- Chaperones may not bring siblings or other children during the field trip.
- Parents may not sign out their own child at the end of the field trip unless it is approved by the principal. The student will return to the school and parents may sign-out the student in the front office.
- Please note that refunds for field trip costs cannot be provided to a student who cannot attend on the day of the trip, the payment has been paid to the vendor or after the trip is concluded.
- Volunteers must complete the volunteer training and background check 2 weeks before attending the field trip.

FOOD AT SCHOOL

The health and safety of all students are of the utmost importance in all Camden County schools. During the school day, **no homemade food items** will be allowed to be brought on campus to be distributed to students. Parents may bring in food items purchased in a store provided that they are packaged and an ingredients label is available. Parents must make arrangements with the child's teacher at least one school day prior to bringing in snacks or food items for a class. Parents must check with their child's teacher for a list of snacks appropriate for that particular classroom. The seal cannot be broken on any packaging. Parents and teachers will be provided with a list of "Healthy School Celebration" options and suggestions for celebrations that include options other than food. Please ensure when bringing in items, there are enough for the entire class or they won't be distributed.

ITEMS NOT ALLOWED AT SCHOOL

St. Marys Elementary is a two-story building, please do not buy rolling book bags for students. These present a safety hazard on stairs. **Students are not allowed to bring toy weapons, video game players, cameras, music players, cards, or any other toys to school.** Students may not bring chewing gum to school. **Cell phones provided by parents for their children are not to be used during school hours and should remain in a backpack turned off at all times at school (on school grounds), on a bus, and on fieldtrips. Watches with cellular service should not be used during school hours.** Items that are taken away from students must be claimed by the parent by the discretion of the principal. Unclaimed items will be discarded or donated to charity.

LOST AND FOUND

The school will keep items turned in to Lost and Found for as long as possible, but we cannot indefinitely store clothing and other items. We endeavor to return any items that have a child's name on them, so please **make sure you put your child's name on all coats, jackets, lunch boxes, etc.** Please check Lost and Found frequently if you suspect your child has left something behind. Unclaimed items are generally donated to a local charitable organization at the end of each nine-week grading period.

FUNDRAISING

The school engages in a number of fundraising activities throughout the school year. Funds raised by students for clubs and after-school activities will be used for those activities. Monies raised by school-wide fund-raisers will be used for legitimate purposes that directly benefit the education of the students at SMES, including (but not limited to) student motivational incentives,

teacher and student materials, teacher and student recognition, and professional enhancement opportunities.

PARTIES/INVITATIONS

- Class celebrations are limited to the teacher's discretion. They will not include student birthday celebrations.
- Birthday parties are prohibited at school. This includes bringing in presents and "goody bags" for students.
- Parents may bring individual store-bought birthday cupcakes for the class as a snack. Please ensure when bringing in items, there are enough for the entire class, or they will not be distributed.
- Refrain from bringing cake and/or ice cream for your child's birthday.
- **Unless there is an invitation for every child in the class, all boys or all girls; birthday party invitations may not be given out at school.** The school is not responsible for conflicting birthday events.
- In the fall, parents should not send items that depict Halloween images such as witches, ghosts, skeletons, monsters, etc. Traditional fall "harvest" type items are permitted.
- Deliveries for students (flowers, plants, balloons, or gifts, etc.) delivered to the school at any time of year, including birthdays and Valentine's Day will not be accepted.

P.E. EXCUSES

If students are sick and cannot participate in Physical Education, parents and/or the school nurse can send a one-day written excuse. Beyond one day, parents must bring a medical excuse. If the child is excused from PE class, he or she may not participate in recess and/or field trips on the same day that involve outdoor activities or potentially long walking periods.

PTO

The purpose of PTO is to develop a positive working relationship between the home and the school. Parents are encouraged to become involved with the many programs and activities that are organized by the PTO, including the fall festival, fund-raising events, volunteers, and other events that become available.

UNDERAGE CHILDREN AT SMES

The instructional day is of the highest importance. Parents may not bring children to the classroom during instruction, class parties, field day, etc. Parents are welcome to bring children under the age of 18 who are not enrolled at SMES under the following conditions:

- During the first week of school, walking a child to class in the morning before 8:30 AM.
- Attending a parent conference before or after the school day.
- Eating lunch with SMES children in the cafeteria.
- School assemblies in the cafeteria and/or gym during the school day, space permitting.
- All school functions outside the school day, including PTO meetings, festivals, curriculum fairs, etc.
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VOLUNTEERS

We encourage parents to volunteer and appreciate your support in making our school a success. For the safety of our students, all volunteers are required to complete a mandated training program and a Camden County Schools background check before assisting with classroom activities, field trips, or events like Field Day. Once you have cleared these steps,

your name will be shared with the teaching staff. To get started, please contact the front office or your child's teacher. **Please note that volunteers must remain in their assigned locations and are not permitted to visit other classrooms or unauthorized areas of the building.**

DRESS CODE

- Clothing length - shorts/dresses should be mid-way down the thigh.
- Shirts with straps such as tank tops must have straps that are at least two fingers wide.
- Pants/shorts should be worn at the waist.
- Midriff area should be appropriately covered.
- Graphic t-shirts displaying negative insignias, disturbing messages, or frightening images and symbols are not permitted.
- Hats may only be worn in the building on approved hat days.

Please remember - In the event that a student's clothing is determined to be inappropriate or a distraction, parents will be contacted to bring a change of clothing. Thank you for your support!

CLUBS/ACTIVITIES

Connections Club: Their mission is to support military-connected children by educating, advocating, and collaborating to resolve challenges related to the military lifestyle, such as frequent moves, deployment, and academic transitions. (Contact: Shelby Norton; snorton@camden.k12.ga.us)

Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA): Their mission is to lead every coach and athlete into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and His church. (Contact: Thomas Herron; therron@camden.k12.ga.us)

K-Kids (Kiwanis): Their mission is to build character, improve communities, and gain leadership skills through service. (Contact: Cathleen Peterson; cpeterson@camden.k12.ga.us)

Safety Patrol: Their mission is to provide a safer environment for students while fostering leadership, responsibility, and civic duty. (Contact: Laura Koch; lkoch@camden.k12.ga.us)

Singing Sharks: Singing Sharks is an after-school choral program at St. Marys Elementary School that provides students with opportunities for competitive singing and community engagement. Admission to the program is by audition, and selected students develop their musical skills through consistent practice and meaningful performance experiences. (Contact: Brandilyn Kessler; bkessler@camden.k12.ga.us)

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

PLEASE CHECK THE SCHOOL WEBSITE FOR THE MOST CURRENT VERSION OF THE STUDENT HANDBOOK