Margaret Willis Elementary

Student Handbook 2026-2027

"Where lifelong learning begins!"

1412 Belvedere Avenue
Fayetteville, North Carolina 28305
Phone: (910) 484-9064
Fax: (910) 484-9065

Ms. Amanda Hefner, Principal

Dr. Laura Fields, Assistant Principal

Please note that this handbook is a living document and is subject to change based on the needs of the school or the discretion of the school administration or school improvement team.

Our Vision

Our vision at Margaret Willis Elementary is to provide a safe, loving, and supportive environment for all students and to prepare them for success in the 21st Century.

ROAR

We believe in Respect, Order & Safety, Positive Attitude, and Responsibility.

Our Mission

We believe that all children can learn in a safe, loving, and caring environment by providing students with an education of high expectations. In collaboration with our parents and community, we can make this happen.

Our students say it best:

At Margaret Willis we are safe, kind, we learn…and we have fun.

Dear Margaret Willis Families,

Welcome to the 2026–2027 school year at Margaret Willis Elementary School!

It is with great excitement that we welcome both returning and new students and families to another incredible year of learning, growth, and success. At Margaret Willis, we believe that every child deserves to feel valued, supported, and inspired to reach their full potential. Together, we will continue building a school community where students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

This year, we are proud to continue and expand our Ron Clark House System, which has become an important part of our school culture. Through our four Houses, students and staff will strengthen relationships, celebrate accomplishments, serve others, and develop leadership skills. Our House System reminds us that we are stronger together and that every member of our school family has a place where they belong.

Our guiding belief remains:

One Roar. Four Houses. One Family. Where We Belong. Lead. Achieve!

These words represent who we are and what we strive to accomplish each day. We want every student to know they belong, every student to discover their leadership potential, and every student to achieve success in their own unique way.

This handbook serves as a resource for families and students and contains important information about school procedures, expectations, programs, and opportunities for involvement. We encourage you to review it together and keep it available throughout the school year.

We know that a strong partnership between home and school is essential to student success. We invite you to stay connected, participate in school events, and work alongside us as we support our students in becoming confident learners and future world changers.

Thank you for entrusting us with your child's education. We are honored to be part of their journey and look forward to an amazing year filled with learning, leadership, and lasting memories.

And as always, remember to Love Your People!

With Tiger Pride,

Ms. Amanda Hefner

Administrative Staff

Amanda Hefner, Principal
Dr. Laura Fields, Assistant Principal
Domini Pierce, Instructional Coach
Courtney Jones, Instructional Coach
Nyasia Nowlin, School Social Worker
Briana Harris, School Counselor
Betty Washington, Bookkeeper
Kiamesha Mitchell, Data Manager
Latisha McCormick, Parent Facilitator/Behavior Interventionist

Staff Directory

Teachers	
Pre-K	Latashra Childs
Kindergarten	Shuanette Gaddy Jamekia Smith Lisa Snow
1st Grade	Pamela Johnson Darcel McArn LeJeune Moses
2nd Grade	Kellee Cameron William Harris Melody Mugari
3rd Grade	Samwel Abongo Kay Ann Bartley VACANT
4th Grade	Marquita Bowen Latrell Gilchrist John Clifton
5th Grade	Tyera Avery Stephanie Burch
ID Mild	Andrea Amador Jenevea Sherlaine Forbes
AIG	Paula Carver (3rd-5th Grade) Sarah Hennessey (K-2nd)
EC Resource	KeAndre Mitchell Quanisha Patrick

Resource Teachers	
Media	Francine Hunt
SEL	Latisha McCormick
Instructional Assistants	
Clinton Brockington Desiree Carter Jacqueline Godbey Iscah James Nadine Townes-Cooper Jeane Wash Joshua Reed Ashley Diggs KeShaun Mays	
Tutors	
Sarah Beasley Mary Blue	
Additional Staff Members	
Jeremy Poe Judy McDaniel Ramon Reyes	

2026 – 2027 CUMBERLAND COUNTY SCHOOLS
TRADITIONAL 10-MONTH CALENDAR

DATES	DAYS	EXPLANATION	TEACHER PLANNING DAYS	REQUIRED ANNUAL LEAVE DAYS	HOLIDAYS
August 12 - 14	Wednesday - Friday	Required Workdays (System-Wide PL 13&14)	3		
August 17 - 21	Monday – Friday	Workdays	5		
August 24	**Monday**	**First Day for Student**			
September 7	Monday	Student/All Staff Holiday			1
September 22	Tuesday	Student Two Hour Early Release/Staff PL			
October 20	Tuesday	Student Two Hour Early Release/Staff PL			
October 23	Friday	End of Grading Period			
October 26	Monday	Student Holiday/Required Workday (System-Wide PL)	1		
November 3	Tuesday	Student Holiday/Workday	1		
November 11	Wednesday	Student/All Staff Holiday			1
November 23	Monday	Student Holiday/All Staff Telework Workday	1		
November 24 – 25	Tuesday – Wednesday	Student Holiday/Required Annual Leave for 10 Month Employees		2	
November 26 - 27	Thursday - Friday	Student/All Staff Holidays			2
December 18	Friday	Student Two Hour Early Release			
December 21	Monday	Student Holiday/All Staff Telework Workday	1		
December 22 – 31	Tuesday - Thursday	Winter Holidays (Student/All Staff) Required Annual Leave/Holidays		5	3
January 1	Friday	Student/All Staff Holiday			1
January 15	Friday	End of Grading Period			
January 18	Monday	Student/All Staff Holiday			1
January 19	Tuesday	Student Holiday/Workday	1		
February 15	Monday	Student Holiday/Required Workday (System-Wide PL)	1		
February 23	Tuesday	Student Two Hour Early Release/Staff PL			
March 9	Tuesday	Student Two Hour Early Release/Staff PL			
March 24	Wednesday	End of Grading Period			
March 25	Thursday	Student Holiday/Workday	1		
March 26	Friday	Student/All Staff Holiday			1
March 29 – April 1	Monday – Thursday	Student Holidays/10 Month Required Annual Leave/11 & 12 Month Optional Annual Leave		4	
April 2	Friday	Student Holiday/All Staff Telework Workday	1		
April 20	Tuesday	Student Two Hour Early Release/Staff PL			
May 28	Friday	**Last Day for Student/Student Two Hour Early Release/End of Grading Period**			
May 31	Monday	All Staff Holiday			1
June 1 - 3	Tuesday - Thursday	Required Workdays (Closeout)	3		
June 4, 7 - 8	Friday, Monday - Tuesday	Workdays	3		
Totals			22	11	11

Schedule of CCS Required Teacher Workdays: August 12, August 13, August 14, October 26, February 15, June 1, June 2, June 3

Additional Teacher Workdays: August 17, August 18, August 19, August 20, August 21, November 3, November 23, December 21, January 19, March 25, April 2, June 4, June 7, June 8

MWES Learning Schedule

7:30-8:00 am- Breakfast (Students should not arrive at school before 7:30 a.m. Supervision of students is not available until 7:30 a.m.)

7:30 am-First Bell

8:00 am- Warning Bell

8:05 am- Tardy Bell

2:35 pm- Dismissal time for K-2 students

2:40 pm- Dismissal time for 3-5 students

Parent/Teacher Conferences

November 2-6, 2026
February 16-19, 2027

Please utilize the Ron Clark House App/Class Dojo to message your child's teacher if you need to schedule additional conferences. We are available after 3:00 p.m. daily to speak with you. Please remember that we are instructing from 8:00 a.m. until 2:40 p.m., and can't take calls during instructional time.
Our school phone number is 910-484-9064.

Visitors/Volunteers

We encourage Margaret Willis' Parents/Guardians to visit our campus frequently and to help with classroom activities. Our parents and community supporters play a vital role at Margaret Willis Elementary School through volunteering. Whether working individually with a student or assisting with classroom tasks, thousands of volunteer hours are needed to maximize the learning opportunities for children. Please volunteer and share a little bit of your time if you can. Contact the school and ask to speak to Ms. Jade Jordan, our parent facilitator for more details.

All volunteers must complete a Cumberland County Schools' background check before volunteering in any school, to include participating in events such as Field Day or attending Field Trips. These forms are available at https://www.ccsvolunteers.com/

Entry Procedures

To ensure the safety of our students and staff, visitors are required to sign in at the office and wear a "Visitor" badge. Please ring the buzzer to the left of the front door, and we will "buzz" you in!

Important Note: We value your input and want you to be involved with your child's education, but please remember that we protect our instructional time. If you need to talk with your child's teacher, please call and schedule an appointment before or after school. Please don't hold conferences when dropping off or picking up your child. Thank you for helping us with this!

Admission Requirements

The initial entry point into the public school system shall be at the Kindergarten level. If the principal of a school finds as fact subsequent to initial entry that a child, by reason of maturity, can be more appropriately served in the first grade rather than in kindergarten, the principal may act under G.S. §115C-288 to implement this educational decision without regard to chronological age. The principal of any public school may require the parent or guardian of any child presented for admission for the first time to that school to furnish a certified copy of the child's birth certificate, which shall be furnished by the register of deeds of the county having on file the record of the birth of the child, or other satisfactory evidence of date of birth".

The following documents are necessary for enrollment into Margaret Willis Elementary:

- Proof of residence. A copy of your deed or lease, or a current utility bill in your name.
- Your child's last report card from the previous school.
- A certified copy of your child's birth certificate.
- Immunization records.
- Guardianship/custody papers regarding your child (if necessary)
- Photo I.D. of parent/guardian

**If enrolling a student after the school year has begun, a transfer form from the child's previous school is required.
**Please list all home, work, and emergency contact phone numbers on the verification form. We will need these in the case of an emergency situation regarding your child.

Effective for students entering school for the first time during the 2015-2016 school year, and in accordance with N.C.G.S. §115C-364,
(a) "A child who is presented for enrollment at any time during the first 120 days of a school year is entitled to initial entry into the public school if:

1) The child reaches or reached the age of 5 on or before August 31 of that school year; or
2) The child did not reach the age of 5 on or before August 31 of that school year, but has been attending school during that school year in another state in accordance with the laws or rules of that state before the child moved to and became a resident of North Carolina.

(b) A child who is presented for enrollment at any time after the first 120 days of a school year is eligible for initial entry into the public schools if

1) The child reached the age of 5 on or before August 31 of that school year; or

2) The child did not reach the age of 5 on or before August 31 of that school year, but has been attending school during that school year in another state in accordance with the laws or rules of that state before the child moved to and became a resident of North Carolina.

Immunizations

In accordance with state law, parents enrolling kindergarten students MUST present proof of immunization to school personnel. Within 30 days of the first day of school, all students entering school for the first time shall have completed or have started the course of immunizations for each of the following:

• 5 doses of Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (whooping cough). A booster dose must be given on or after the fourth birthday and BEFORE enrolling in school (K-1) for the first time.

• 4 doses of Polio vaccine. A booster dose must be given on or after the fourth birthday and BEFORE enrolling in school (K-1) for the first time.

• 2 doses of MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)-LIVE VACCINE. The first dose must be given on or after the first birthday, and the second dose must be given BEFORE enrolling in school (K-1) for the first time. There should be at least a 28-day interval between doses.

• 3 doses of Hepatitis B vaccine are required for children born on or after July 1, 1994. The third dose shall not be given prior to 24 weeks of age if born on/after November 17, 2001.

• 1 dose of Varicella, given on or after 12 months of age (if born on/after 4/1/01).

• 1-4 doses of Haemophilus Influenzae (HIB). If the first HIB is given on/after 15 months of age, the series is completed. If the third dose is given on/after 12 months of age, a fourth dose is not needed. NOTE: No HIB is given after 5 years of age.

School Delays

Inclement weather may delay the start of school (usually 2 hours). This delay in school is a safety precaution on days when bad weather or road conditions may be dangerous but show signs of improvement. At Margaret Willis Elementary School, a delay in the schedule means that we will begin our day at 10:00 a.m. Students may not be dropped off on those days prior to 9:30 a.m. because there is no adult supervision available. Buses will operate on a two-hour delay, and **no breakfast will be served**.

Early Dismissal

On rare occasions the school will close early when emergencies, such as severe weather conditions, arise. Radio and television stations will broadcast special directions regarding the time of closings. During inclement weather, please listen for school closing information. An emergency form will be sent home at the beginning of the year for you to indicate any changes to your child's mode of transportation during early school closings. If your child rides the bus or carpools, please reinforce your procedures for such an event. **Individual calls to all parents will not be possible during inclement weather, but we will use our Parent link notification**

system to keep you aware. Please make sure that we always have your most current contact information on file.

Family Engagement Opportunities

Parent Shadow Days

Family Nights, Literacy Nights, and Community Events

Supporting House Events & Celebrations

Attending Assemblies

Classroom & Field Trip Volunteers

PBIS/Code of Conduct

Margaret Willis is a PBIS School and the state of North Carolina has recognized us for demonstrating EXCELLENCE in this program. PBIS means Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports.

"In a nutshell," this means that everyone connected to Margaret Willis in any way operates under the same expectations and routines! When children enter our school in Pre-K and Kindergarten, they are taught the same expectations that our 5th-grade students are taught. What this does for our students is that it makes everyone an "expert" on the expectations for behavior and safety at Margaret Willis because the standards don't change from grade to grade or from room to room. Please take a moment to examine the next couple of pages in our handbook. You will find our "behavior matrix" and our ROAR standards. At Margaret Willis, we are the TIGERS, and our goal is to ROAR everywhere we go with Respect, Order and Safety, ROAR stands for Respect, everywhere we go, a positive Attitude, and Responsibility. You will see that our ROAR matrix and our system of routines and expectations align with our Cumberland County Code of Conduct. Please look over the next section of this handbook carefully, as it outlines the expectations for behaviors in our school and on our buses, as well as across the district.

What is ROAR?

The key to ROAR is that everyone all over the building; students, staff, parents, community supporters and visitors, will know what the expectations are in our common areas and that we all communicate the same routines and procedures!

As you can see, our school PBIS model helps our students become responsible for their behavior. The model encourages making good choices and following the outlined routines and procedures. The Margaret Willis Elementary School ROAR expectations align with the Cumberland County Schools expectations. Please encourage your children to ROAR everywhere they go.

TIGERS

	Classroom	Playground	Cafeteria	Bus	Hallway	Bathroom
R **Respect**	Follow directions Value others by not disrupting class	Keep hands and feet to yourself	Use manners Eat only your food	Follow bus drivers directions	Always stay in traveling position	Use the bathroom sink quickly
O **Order & Safety**	Stay in assigned area Use materials as intended	Take turns Follow directions	Use inside voices Use traveling position	Keep all body parts to yourself Keep all body parts in the bus	Walk in a single file line Use stopping points	Use the facility properly Wash hands correctly
A **Attitude**	Use kind actions and words Share with others	Use kind words Share with others	Use kind actions and words	Use kind actions and words	Stay in your place in line	Use kind actions and words
R **Responsibility**	Come to class prepared to learn and work Complete all assignments	Handle equipment properly Return all materials	Follow cafeteria procedures	Stay in your assigned seat	Remain quiet	Clean up after yourself

Ron Clark House System at MWES

At Margaret Willis Elementary, we are proud to be a Ron Clark House System school! Every student and staff member is sorted into one of four dynamic houses, each representing unique values, colors, chants, and traditions. These houses work together to build community, encourage leadership, and strengthen school spirit.

Our Houses:

- Altruismo – The House of Givers (Black)
- Isibindi – The House of Courage (Green)
- Reveur – The House of Dreamers (Blue)
- Sollevare- The House of Uplifting (Yellow)

Throughout the year, students can earn House Points by demonstrating ROAR expectations,

academic growth, kindness, leadership, and participation in school events. Houses celebrate their accomplishments in quarterly rallies and compete for the ultimate honor—House of the Year!

Our theme this year is more than just words—it's a way of life at Margaret Willis.

One Roar – We share a common set of expectations, the ROAR Way:

- Respect
- Order and Safety
- Positive Attitude
- Responsibility

Four Houses – Each student belongs to a House that lifts them up, encourages them to lead, and builds unity across classrooms.

One Family – We stand together. We learn together. We grow together. Our school is a place where every child is seen, known, and valued.

Together, we roar louder. Together, we shine brighter.

Whether you're cheering for your house or lifting another up, one thing remains true: One Roar. Four Houses. One Family.

Bus Information

School buses are a means of transportation provided by the State of North Carolina. Students who ride buses are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly manner. Riding the bus is a privilege, not a right. Unfortunately, students misbehaving on the bus will lose their bus riding privileges. Students shall be subject to discipline, suspensions, and expulsion for violating rules/regulations set forth in our school rules and also those guidelines outlined in the CCS Code of Conduct. Students who misbehave on the school bus may be suspended from riding the bus an indefinite period of time.

The school principal and assistant principal have authority to suspend pupils from riding the bus for the following infractions:

- Delaying the bus schedule.
- Fighting, smoking, using profanity or refusing to obey instructions of school authorities or a bus driver while riding a school bus.
- Tampering with a school bus.
- Refusing to meet the bus at designated stops.
- Unauthorized leaving of the bus when enroute to school or returning home.
- Playing, throwing trash, paper or other objects while the bus is in operation.
- Failing to observe established safety rules and regulations.
- Possessing or using electronic devices.

- Any other infraction that may jeopardize the safety of all concerned

Misconduct on the school bus could endanger the safety of other pupils. Each student is expected to do his/her part in making our buses safe. Because of space limitations, no student will be able to ride the school bus to which they are not assigned by their residence address. 1st Incident – Write-Up from bus driver to Administration; Consequences may include a warning or bus suspension, depending on the severity of the infraction.

2nd Incident – 2 day bus suspension

3rd Incident – 3-5 day bus suspension

4th Incident – 10 day bus suspension

5th Incident – Suspension from riding the bus for the remainder of the year, as determined by administration

In cases where the violation is severe, i.e. weapons, drugs, assault, fighting, uncontrollable behavior, etc., immediate suspension will occur. Fighting will result in an automatic 3-day suspension from the bus. A student may be suspended from the bus for the rest of the year if behavior warrants such action.

Any activity that creates a distraction on the bus, and causes the driver to have to take their attention from the road may result in suspension from the bus!

Bus transportation is provided to all students who attend Margaret Willis Elementary School and live in the Margaret Willis attendance district. Students must ride the bus they are assigned, based upon their enrollment address.

Procedures and routines have been developed to keep students safe on the bus at all times. We urge you to take some time and go over these rules with your children.

It is important to note that NC state law does prohibit parents from riding or boarding the buses. If you need to talk with your child's driver, please call the school at 910-484-9064, and we will schedule a conference.

If at any time, your child is not going to follow standard bus dismissal procedures, please send a note to the teacher. **Please note: to ensure student safety, we can't take requests for transportation changes over the phone. All changes for transportation must be written.**

Bus Schedule

Bus schedules are often adjusted as our school population changes. We will inform parents, in writing, of major changes in routes and time alterations. Students are assigned to a bus based upon their residential address, and will not be allowed to ride another bus. Questions and/or concerns about bus routes, late pick up or drop off should be directed to the Assistant Principal. In the event of a bus delay, you will be notified through the PARENTLINK system

and/or the Ron Clark House App/Class Dojo. Please make sure we always have your most current contact information.

Bus Safety

Walking to the Bus Stop

- Always walk on the sidewalk to the bus stop, never run.
- If there is no sidewalk, walk on the left facing traffic.
- Go to the bus stop about 10 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. While at the bus stop, wait quietly in a safe place well away from the road. Do not run and play while waiting.

Getting On and Off the Bus

- Enter the bus in line with younger students in front.
- Hold the handrail while going up and down the stairs
- When entering the bus, go directly to a seat.
- Remain seated and face forward during the entire ride.

Riding the bus

- Always speak quietly on the bus so the driver will not be distracted. Always be silent when a bus comes to a railroad crossing so the driver can hear if a train is coming
- Never throw things on the bus or out the windows. Keep the aisles clear at all times. Feet should be directly in front of you on the floor and book bags should be kept on your lap.
- Never play with the emergency exits. Large instruments or sports equipment should not block the aisle or emergency exits. If there is an emergency, listen to the driver and follow instructions.
- Hands should be kept to yourself at all times while riding on the bus. Fighting and "picking" on others creates a dangerous bus ride.

Exiting the bus

- If you leave something on the bus, never return to the bus to get it. The driver may not see you returning to the bus. Always make sure you have the driver's attention.
- Make sure drawstrings and other loose objects are secure before getting off the bus to prevent getting caught on the handrail or the door.
- Always cross the street in front of the bus. Never go behind the bus. If you drop something near the bus, tell the bus driver before you attempt to pick it up, so they will know where you are.
- Never speak to strangers at the bus stop and never get into the car with a stranger. Always go straight home and tell your parents if a stranger tries to talk to you or pick you up.

Checkout Procedures

Cumberland County Board of Education Policy states, "No staff member shall excuse any pupil from school or class prior to the end of the school day or class, or into any person's custody, without the direct prior approval and knowledge of the principal or designees."

Students being checked out in the afternoon must be signed out through the office before 2:00 p.m. Only in an extreme emergency will students be allowed to check out between 2:00 p.m. to 2:40 p.m. This change will ease the heavy flow of traffic in front of the school and allow the classroom teachers an uninterrupted period of time to close out the day and give final instructions for homework, projects, etc. Students will be released ONLY to the persons listed on the Student's Checkout Form. Those persons must report to the office and sign a checkout sheet. No child will be released unless the adult checking out the student shows identification. There will be absolutely no exceptions. Please discuss with your child the importance of following their individual routine transportation method to and from school each day. Please limit transportation changes so as not to confuse the student and teacher.

In the event of early dismissals, parents must first sign students out in the Main Office.

Please note: to ensure student safety, we can't take requests for transportation changes over the phone. All changes for transportation must be written.

Attendance

"In accordance with G.S. 115C-378, every parent, guardian, or other person in North Carolina having charge or control of a student between the ages of 7 and 16 years shall cause such student to attend school continuously for a period equal to the time which the public school to which the student is assigned is in session. Every parent, guardian, or other person in North Carolina having charge or control of a child under age seven who is enrolled in a public school in grades Kindergarten through two shall also cause such child to attend school continuously for a period equal to the time which the public school to which the child is assigned shall be in session unless the child has withdrawn from that school. No person shall encourage, entice, or counsel any such student to be unlawfully absent from school. The term "school" is defined to embrace all public schools and such non-public schools which have teachers and curricula that are approved by the State Board of Education."

Absences

In order to be counted as "present" for the school day, a student must be present at least until 11:05 a.m. Students who are checked out of school before that time will be counted absent. Students arriving after that time are welcome to stay in class, but will not be counted present for the school day.

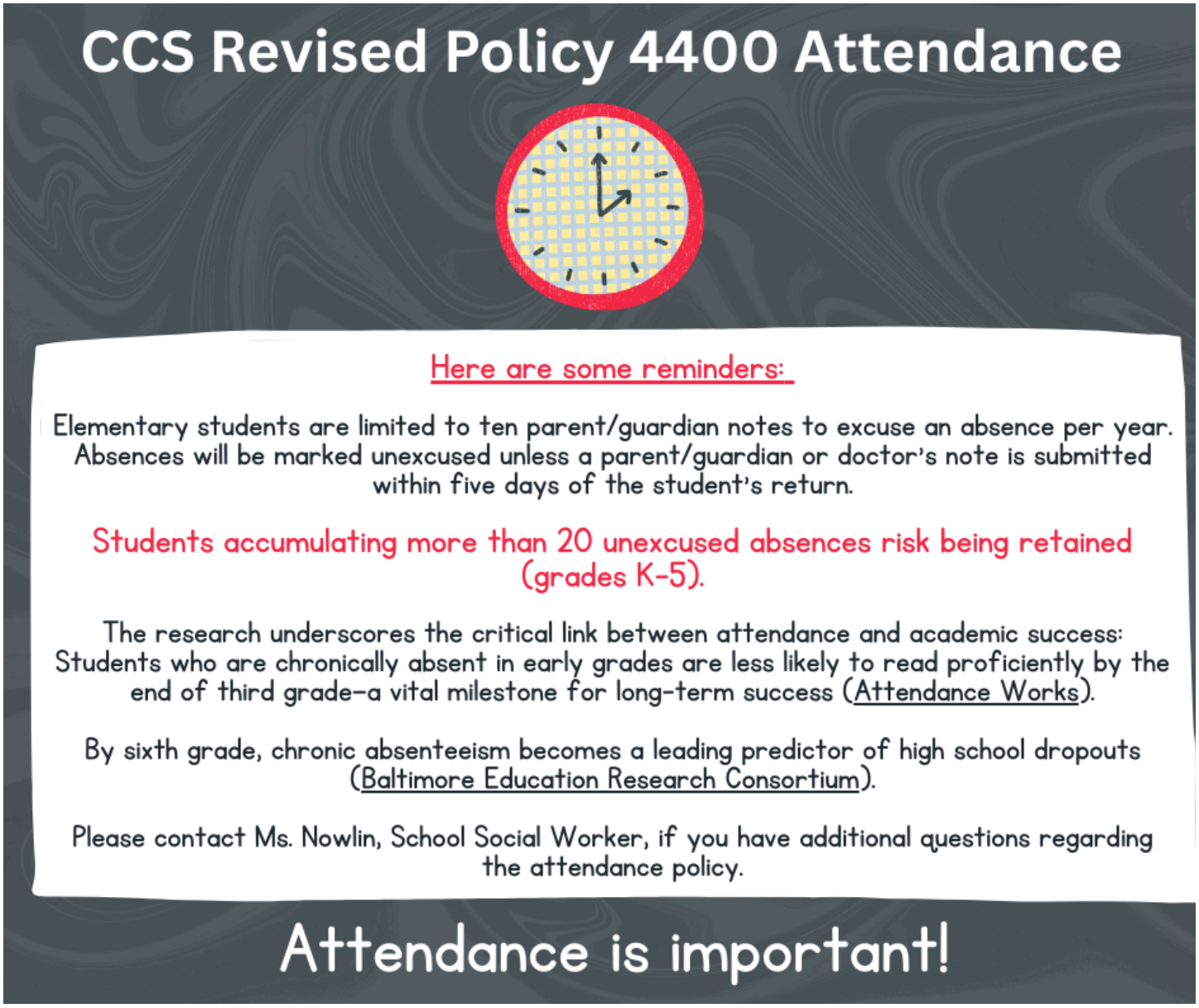
The following are considered "reasons for lawful or excused absence:"

- Illness or Injury
- Quarantine
- Death in the IMMEDIATE FAMILY

- Medical or Dental Appointments (with a note from doctor/dentist)
- Court/Administrative Proceedings
- Religious Observances
- Educational Opportunities

****Students who are absent must present a written note on the day they return to school with a reason for the absence.****

Student report cards will indicate attendance records. Parents will be notified by letter when three unexcused absences are recorded. Parents will be contacted by a social worker after six unexcused absences are recorded.



Tardies

If your child walks to school (only with special permission from the principal), or is a parent or daycare pick-up/drop-off student, please arrive no later than 7:45 a.m.

Students arriving at school after the 8:00 a.m. bell are to report to the office and must be signed in by a parent/guardian in the front office. The general policy for these tardies is that they are unexcused and may affect one's grades. The repeated occurrence of tardies will be reported to the social worker.

Ten (10) unexcused absences in one school year could result in prosecution of the parent under the state's truancy law. Before an absence or tardy will be excused, we must have a SIGNED STATEMENT by the PARENT/GUARDIAN stating the date and reason of the absence. This excuse must be sent to the child's teacher on the day the student returns to school. Students with approved excused absences will be allowed to make up work. Time and assignments for makeup work are at the discretion of the regular classroom teacher. Notify the teacher ahead of time, when possible, of absences.

Lessons and activities in school are designed to maximize time on task, provide opportunities at the correct level of difficulty, and focus on the state mandated standards. Even though make-up work may be given when students are absent, they are often unable to replace the social and academic learning that takes place inside the classroom. Students with good attendance generally achieve at higher levels than those with poor attendance. Please make sure your child arrives at school on time each day, and remains for the entire school day. Margaret Willis scholars must be in school by 8:00 a.m. each day.

We understand that occasionally students have valid reasons for being tardy and picked up early. However, being frequently late or leaving early on a regular basis, could affect your child's academic success. Frequent interruptions to classrooms for early dismissals and late arrivals are disruptive to lessons.

Grading System

Students in grades 3, 4, and 5, within the Cumberland County School System, adhere to the following scale of Grade Averages. The grades are based on teacher judgment, student performance, and curriculum guidelines.

Grades 3-5	Grades K-2
A = 90-100	4 = Above Grade Level
B = 80-89	3 = On Grade Level
C = 70-79	2 = Below Grade Level
D = 60-69	1 = Well Below Grade Level
F = Below 59	

S = Satisfactory
N = Needs Improvement
U= Unsatisfactory

Promotion and Retention

Promotions should be based on the progress and performance of individual students. Promotion standards are rigorous to provide students with the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to be successful in the next grade. Students who do not meet standards are identified and provided intensive, instructional support. **In accordance with General Statute 115C-288(a), and local board policy, the school principal has the ultimate responsibility for promotion/retention decisions.**

Internet Use

Computer instruction is integrated into the classroom curriculum. Each student is required to have an Internet Use Policy/Permission Form signed by both the parent and student and on file before he/she is granted access to the internet.

Students are given the privilege to use the Internet along with the responsibility of using it properly. Before using the Internet, all students must be trained about appropriate on-line behavior. Such training must cover topics such as cyberbullying and interacting with others on social networking websites and in chat rooms.

In addition, before using school system computers or electronic devices or accessing the school network or Internet, students and employees must provide a signed agreement indicating that they understand and will strictly comply with the requirements of this policy and any other related rules or procedures established by the superintendent or designee. Students also must provide the signature of a parent or guardian.

Failure to adhere to the requirements of this policy will result in disciplinary action, which may include immediate revocation of user privileges. Willful misuses of any school system technological resources may result in disciplinary action and/or criminal prosecution under applicable state and federal law.

Counseling

Our counseling service is designed to assist students in academic, personal, and social development. The Counseling Program may be provided in small group sessions, individual services or whole group instruction. Character Education is a major point of emphasis in this program. Our counselor may consult with parents, administrators, and outside agencies to maximize opportunities and meet the needs of students. We work with many agencies to provide services for our students. Counseling at Margaret Willis Elementary is part of the regular education program. Please don't hesitate to call if we can be of any assistance.

Exceptional Children's Services

In addition to regular classroom instruction, Margaret Willis offers special programs for qualifying students through the Exceptional Children's Program. Students identified by our Student Services Team, and who quality, will receive services by certified staff to promote academic and/or social progress.

Academically/Intellectually Gifted students are also identified and served through a certified consultant and the AIG committee. Parents are involved in all stages of the Exceptional Children's referral, identification, placement and design of services.

Free or Reduced Meal Application

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a provision from the Health, Hunger-Free Kids of 2010 that allows schools and location education agencies (LEAs) to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students. Margaret Willis Elementary school students receive free breakfast and lunch for the 2026-2027 school year. No application is needed.

Textbooks

The North Carolina Standard Course of Study guides the instruction in each regular classroom. Textbooks are a resource used to promote mastery of required state objectives at each grade level. Textbooks are issued at the beginning of each school year. Students are responsible for the care and proper handling of each book.

Student Records

Parents/legal guardians of students who wish to inspect and review the Cumulative records of said students, shall submit a request in writing to the principal of the student's school. When the written for review is received, the principal shall schedule the review. The appointment date should be as early as possible. There is a maximum forth-five (45) day limit used in scheduling a review. A school official competent in interpreting student records shall be present to explain the implications of the records that are examined.

Field Trips

Teachers may plan field trips during the school year to provide enrichment to the State Curriculum taught in the classroom. Field trips are considered a privilege for students. Teachers assume a great deal of responsibility for student safety on these trips. Therefore, students whose conduct may be detrimental to the safety, comfort, and welfare of other students or teachers may be omitted from the trip. This decision is left to the classroom teacher and principal, who will notify the student and parent of the decision prior to the trip. Written parental permission must be obtained before students may attend field trips. **Field trips requiring a fee are non-refundable.**

Cafeteria

Our school cafeteria provides a healthy, nutritious breakfast and lunch every day. The food that we serve follows the guidelines recommended by the USDA. We encourage our students to eat lunch and breakfast in the cafeteria, daily. Lunch includes an entrée, two side dishes, and milk. School lunch and breakfast are free. We try to accommodate special diet needs, so if your child has an allergy or a special restriction, please provide that medical information (from your child's doctor) to our cafeteria manager and your child's homeroom teacher.

If you choose to bring your child a "special" lunch from their favorite restaurant, we ask that you let the teacher know ahead of time so that special seating can be arranged for you and your child during lunch.

Breakfast is served from 7:30-8:05 a.m. in the cafeteria. Our goal is to make sure that every child starts the day with a healthy breakfast!

Lunch is served from 10:40 a.m.-12:45 p.m on a rotating classroom schedule. You can receive additional information about our lunchroom policies from the Cafeteria Manager. The cafeteria manager can be reached at 910-484-9064.

Cafeteria Expectations

Use good manners and stay seated.
Respect others.
Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
Wait your turn in line.
Raise your hand to speak to an adult.
Say, "Please, thank you, and excuse me."
Use an indoor voice.
Eat your own food, and do not ask others for food or money.
Clean up after yourself.
Leave and enter the lunchroom quietly.

Classroom Expectations

Each teacher will post the classroom rules and consequences in the classroom. Parents will be given a Cumberland County Code of Conduct handbook. We ask that you discuss the rules and consequences with your child and encourage him/her to follow the rules at all times.

Expectations Against Bullying

I will not bully others.
I will try to help students who are bullied.
I will include students who are easily left out.
When I know somebody is being bullied, I will tell an adult at school or at home.

Hallway Expectations

Walk at all times and speak quietly.
Move to the right side of the hall.
Keep my hands and feet to yourself.
Respect others' space.

Restroom Expectations

Keep the bathrooms clean and wash your hands.
Use good bathroom manners and speak quietly.
Report any problems to a teacher.

Students must have a hall pass and an assigned buddy to be in the restroom without teacher supervision.

Playground Expectations

Use equipment properly.
Use proper language.
Line up promptly when the whistle blows.
Play safe and in the assigned area.
Share and wait your turn.

<u>*Pushing or fighting will result in an administrative conference.</u>

Dress Code

Children should be encouraged to have pride in good personal appearance at all times. We appeal to you as parents to stress the importance of proper dress. Faculty members will also use their influence to foster proper dress. Sometimes current fashion is at odds with appropriate school dress. At Margaret Willis, we want our focus to be on learning-not what we wear. Often certain styles of clothing distract us from that goal. We require that:

Pants must be worn as designed (no sagging)

Shoes must be tied, and sandals must have a strap around the heel

Shirts must completely cover the midriff

Girls' shorts and shirts must be at least at the fingertip length when arms are down

Straps on sleeveless tops should be at least 2 inches wide. Athletic shirts must have a T-shirt underneath.

No hats, scarves, hoods, bandanas or athletic headgear will be allowed to be worn in the building (unless due to religious practices)

Nothing that can be construed as gang paraphernalia is allowed in the building.

Any clothing item that causes a distraction in the learning environment will be considered inappropriate to wear to school

Remember, we go outside to play almost every day and each child has physical education once a week. Secure footwear is a must for safe participation.

Student Use of Cell Phones

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the appropriate use of cell phones, and other electronic devices by Margaret Willis students. It aims to promote a safe and focused learning environment while ensuring the well-being and development of students.

1. Prohibition of Cell Phone Use:
   a. Elementary school students are strictly prohibited from using cell phones during school hours, including class time, recess, lunch breaks, and other school-related activities, unless explicitly authorized by school staff for educational purposes or in case of emergency.
   b. Cell phones must be turned off or set to silent mode and kept securely in students' bags or designated storage areas during school hours.

2. Responsibility of Parents/Guardians:
   a. Parents/guardians are encouraged to communicate this policy to their child and emphasize the importance of adhering to it.
   b. Students and parents/guardians are solely responsible for the safety and security of their personal devices.

3. Communication Channels:
   a. In case of emergencies or necessary communication between parents/guardians and students during school hours, parents/guardians should contact the school's designated communication channels (e.g., front office, school administration).
   b. The school administration will facilitate necessary communication between parents/guardians and students while maintaining the integrity of the learning environment.

4. Consequences:
   a. School staff, including teachers and administrators, will be responsible for enforcing the cell phone policy and addressing any violations promptly and appropriately.
   b. Consequences for violating the policy may include warnings, temporary confiscation of the cell phone, parental notification, meetings with parents/guardians, or other appropriate disciplinary actions as per the school's code of conduct.

5. Review and Updates:
   a. This policy will be reviewed periodically by the school administration to ensure its effectiveness and alignment with changing technological trends and educational needs.
   b. Any updates or revisions to the policy will be communicated to all stakeholders, including students, parents/guardians, and staff members.

Disclaimer: The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged phones. *The school will not be liable for any financial or personal loss resulting from the use or possession of cell phones on school premises.*

Adherence to this policy will contribute to maintaining a focused and productive learning environment, promoting responsible technology usage, and ensuring the safety and well-being of Margaret Willis students.

Celebrations

At Margaret Willis, we love celebrating our students! While maintaining a focused learning environment, we aim to recognize every child's special moments.

Birthday Guidelines:

- Parents may bring store-bought, individually wrapped treats for their child's birthday.
- Celebrations will take place during lunchtime only.
- Balloons and flowers should remain at home to avoid classroom distractions.
- Invitations to parties held outside of school may not be distributed at school.

Classroom Celebrations:

- Each class may have two parties per year: a winter holiday celebration and an end-of-year celebration.
- All treats brought in must be store-bought and individually packaged.

Let's celebrate safely, joyfully, and together—because every child deserves to feel special!

New policy started in 2024-2025 school year: please be advised that helium balloons are not permitted to be brought into the building by parents/guardians.

Lost and Found

The lost-and-found box is located on the stage. Please check for lost items regularly. Labeling your child's clothing, lunch box, and other belongings can help prevent items from being lost and unidentified. **Lost and Found items will be disposed of after 30 days.**

Medication

In an effort to do all that we can to assure the health and safety of all children, we are seeking your support in the full implementation of Cumberland County Schools policy dealing with medication at school. Medication cannot be given to school unless it is prescribed by a doctor with instructions that it be administered during school hours. The following procedures will be utilized by all schools for the administration of medication by school personnel:

- All medicine including aspirin, cough syrup etc. administered by school personnel at school must have written directions by a physician.
- Parents will fill out a medication form as required by board policy.
- Parents are responsible for transporting to and from all medicines to be administered by school personnel. **Children are not allowed to transport medicine to and from school.**
- Medicine will be counted in the presence of the parent.
- Medication should be in the original container prepared by the pharmacist which included name, dosage, instructions and storage information.

- Medicine will be administered to your child by a school personnel designated by the principal.
- Students with severe asthma, with a completed *Physician's Order* form (located in the main office), are permitted to carry their inhalers. **This must be approved and verified by the school nurse**.

Students may not have any medicine with them at school including cough drops, ointments or any over-the-counter medicines.

Illness/Injury

Please do not send your child to school if they are not well. Unfortunately, we do not have personnel or facilities to care for sick children. If a student has a **fever that exceeds 100 degrees, parents will be called**. In order for a student to return to school, the student must be fever free (without the aid of medications) for at least 24 hours. Accurate home and work phone numbers are essential. The principal is authorized to contact emergency personnel to transport students to the hospital for emergency treatment.

Testing

Testing is an important part of our curriculum. Please stay involved with your child's teacher so that you are aware of our district's testing schedules. On the days that we test, it is very important for your child to get a good night's sleep the evening BEFORE the test, and to eat a good breakfast the MORNING OF THE TEST. Being on time is critical so testing can begin on time and without interruption. Please call the school with any questions. We will use the PARENTLINK system to share information. Please make sure we have your most current contact information.

- NC Check Ins are given to students in grades 3, 4 and 5 at various times during the school year. These assessments are made up of questions similar to those on the North Carolina End of Grade Test (EOG).
- North Carolina End of Grade tests are given in Reading and Math to 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students at the end of the school year. 5th grade students also take the Science End of Grade test.
- 3rd grade students will be given the Beginning of Grade Assessment (BOG) at the beginning of 3rd grade.
- K-2 students are also assessed using the mCLASS assessments and math performance assessments.

Title I Expectations

Please be aware that Margaret Wills Elementary is a Title I School-wide School. As part of the program components and the regulations of the No Child Left Behind legislation, we have been asked to ensure that each parent is informed of the following **Parent Right To Know Statement**. As required by **The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001**, Title I Part A, information is available at our school to include but is not limited to the following:

- The School Improvement Plan
- Qualifications of your child's teacher

- Professional development opportunities for teachers and assistants to ensure highly qualified personnel
- Opportunities for parent involvement and input
- The Cumberland County Schools Improvement Plan.
- The Cumberland County Title I Parent Involvement Plan and School Parent Involvement Plan
- Cumberland County System Report Card
- School Report Card

Discrimination Policy

No person shall, on the basis of race, sex, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity operated by the Cumberland County Public School System. If an employee, student, parent or community member believes such exclusion, denial, or subjection has occurred, he/she should contact Margaret Willis Elementary School Administration or the Superintendent's office of the Cumberland County Board of Education.

Section 504: Rehabilitation Act of 1973

No otherwise qualified individual with disabilities… shall solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to, discrimination under any program or activity of the school. Qualified disabled students are entitled to a free appropriate public education. Disabled persons who believe they have been subjected to discrimination on the basis of disability may appeal to the person in the school designated to hear said grievances. If still unresolved, grievances may then be appealed to the school district Section 504 Coordinator:

Natasha Scott
Cumberland County Schools
PO Box 2357
Fayetteville, NC 28302
Phone: 678-2433
E-mail: natashascott@ccc.k12.nc.us

Notice to Parents: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights Act (FERPA) is a federal law that governs the maintenance of student records Under this law, parents of students or students (if they are at least 18 years of age) have both the right to inspect school records kept by the school about the student and the right to correct inaccuracies in the records. Access to the records by persons other than the parents of the students is limited and generally required prior consent by the parents of the student. Copies of the policy may be found in the office of the Superintendent and in the Principal's office of each school within the Cumberland County School System. Complaints about failures of schools to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act be made, in

writing, to FERPA office, Federal Building No. 10, 1600 Independence Ave. SE Washington DC 20202

Annual Section 504/ADA Notice

No otherwise qualified individual with disabilities…shall solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied of, or be subject to, discrimination under any program or activity of the school. Qualified disabled students are entitled to a free appropriate public education. Disabled persons who believe they have been subjected to discrimination on the basis of disability may appeal to the person in the school designated to hear said grievances. If still unresolved, grievances may then be appealed to the school district Section 504 Coordinator. Contact 910-678-2300 for more information.

Title IX

As required by law, the Cumberland County Board of Education and Margaret Willis does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, creed, national origin or handicap.

Grievance Procedures Title IX

Students who believe they have been mistreated because of sex discrimination in public school may appeal to the person designated in each school as the one responsible for hearing said complaints. If after appealing to this designated official the student is dissatisfied, he/she may submit a request in writing to the superintendent for review of the case. The superintendent or his designated representative will arrange a conference with the student and make a decision regarding the grievance. If the decision rendered by the superintendent is unsatisfactory to the student, the student shall within 10 days, give a written notice to the superintendent and request a review by CCS Board of Education. The Board of Education shall render its decision within 30 days of receipt of the grievance.

General Statute 115-34 Appeals to Board of Education and to Superior Court

An appeal shall lie from the decision of all school personnel to the appropriate county or city board of education. In all such appeals it shall be the duty of the board of education to see that a proper notice is given to all parties concerned and that a record of hearing is properly entered in the records of the board conducting the hearing. The board of education may designate hearing panels composed of not less than two members of the board to hear and act upon such appeals in the name and on behalf of the board of education. An appeal shall lie from the decision of a county or city board of education to the superior court of the State in any action of a county or city board of education affecting one's character or right to teach.

For additional educational support, please visit the North Carolina Department of Public School's website, Cumberland County School's website and the MWES website.

http://www.dpi.state.nc.us
http://www.ccs.k12.nc.us
www.mwes.k12.nc.us