Vanstory Hills Elementary School

400 Foxhall Road
Fayetteville, North Carolina 28303
Phone: 910-483-0809

Rebecca McAlister
Principal

Angelena Owens
Assistant Principal

Dear Vanstory Families,

As the principal of Vanstory Hills Elementary School, it is a privilege to welcome you to the upcoming school year. We look forward to embarking on this journey together, providing your children with rich opportunities for educational, personal, and developmental growth.

We firmly believe that strong relationships are the cornerstone of a successful school experience. Our team is dedicated to cultivating a safe, inclusive environment where students, families, and staff closely collaborate. Nurturing these positive connections helps us drive academic excellence and support student well-being. We are excited to partner with you to ensure every child feels valued, respected, and motivated to reach their full potential.

Thank you for your ongoing support and trust in our school. We look forward to a fantastic year ahead filled with unforgettable memories and great achievements!

Warm regards,

Rebecca McAlister, Principal

Please note: This handbook is a living document and is subject to updates throughout the academic year. Families will be notified promptly of any policy adjustments.

Daily Schedule
7:45 Campus doors open for student arrival
8:15 Tardy bell rings, morning instruction officially begins
2:55 Student dismissal

Operational Hours
Office Hours 7:30-3:30
Staff Hours 7:40-3:10

School Colors
Blue, White & Red

School Mascot
Bulldogs

School Motto
“Wag More, Bark Less”

VISION

At VanStory Hills Elementary School, our vision is to instill resilence, dedication, respect and compassion to all students as they navigate through their educational journey.

MISSION

Every day at VanStory Hills Elementary School, we are on a mission to be safe, give our best effort, learn and teach to build our futures together.

ABSENCE FOR VALID EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Students may receive a lawful absence for temporary, outside-of-school educational opportunities. Parents must seek approval by submitting a written request to the principal at least five days prior to the absence. You can get this form from your child's teacher; it must outline the length of the trip, the purpose, and the educational objectives. The principal retains final approval authority. We ask that traditional family vacations be kept to scheduled school vacation periods. Military families with questions regarding trip-related absences should connect with the principal for guidance on attendance coding.

ACCIDENTS AT SCHOOL

If your child experiences a minor injury at school, a supervising staff member will provide immediate care and call you directly. An official incident report will also be completed for school records. As a parent, you will always make the final decision regarding whether your child requires outside medical attention. However, if we are unable to reach you or your designated emergency contacts, a school administrator will make necessary medical decisions on your behalf to ensure your child's safety. Please note that our school nurse is on campus **one day per week**; on all other days, trained staff members handle minor injuries and first aid.

ADDRESS VERIFICATION AND PHONE NUMBERS

Your child's safety is our top priority, which is why having your correct contact details is so important. Please ensure the school has your current address and active phone numbers (including cell and work numbers). We also ask that you list a nearby family member or neighbor as an emergency contact so we have a backup option if you are temporarily unreachable.If you move or change phone numbers, please let us know right away. In rare or urgent situations where we cannot reach you by phone, please be aware that our school social worker or principal will make a visit to your home to ensure we connect.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT SECTION 504:

Section 504: Rehabilitation Act of 1973

No otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination from any program or activity of the school. Qualified disabled students are entitled to a free appropriate 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 such grievances. If still unresolved, grievances may then be appealed to the district ADA/Section 504 Coordinator.

ATTENDANCE, TARDY POLICIES and PROCEDURES

Regular attendance is compulsory according to North Carolina law. Parents will be contacted if a student is absent for more than three days. Cumberland County Board of Education Policy states that "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 his/her designee." Also, "no student shall be permitted to leave school early under any conditions without a parent's or guardian's written authorization and permission of the principal or his/her designee." In view of the above policy, VanStory Hills Elementary School will observe the following check-in/check-out procedures: Students must be in attendance a minimum of three (3) hours and twenty (20) minutes each full school day in order to be counted present (11:35 am). For early release days, students must be in attendance two (2) hours and twenty (20) minutes (10:35 am). To receive the maximum benefit from classroom and instructional participation, it is important that a child report to school each day. When your child must be absent from school, a parent/guardian should provide the school with a written explanation concerning the absence upon returning to school or it will be coded an unlawful absence. Students who live outside of VanStory Hills' attendance area and are on voluntary assignment will be recommended to transfer to his/her attendance area school if he/she is checked out early or is tardy excessively.

BUS RIDERS

Maintained in accordance with North Carolina General Statute § 115C-244, our transportation system relies on cooperation to keep every child safe. To ensure smooth operations, students may only ride the specific bus they have been assigned; we are unfortunately unable to alter routes for daycare or babysitting schedules. While on board, students must follow the driver's directions. Misbehavior that compromises safety will result in a suspension of bus privileges, as outlined in the CCS Code of Conduct. Please help us keep routes running smoothly by having your child ready at their designated stop. Drivers are not permitted to make front-door stops, honk, or wait for students who are not at the stop. We will use the first ten days of school to finalize our exact arrival times.We highly encourage families to download and register for the **Here Comes the Bus** app to track real-time bus locations. If a bus is running late or facing mechanical issues, we will reach out immediately via Class Dojo or a phone call. Thank you for your patience and caution at our bus stops!

RULES

1. Walk to and from the bus.
2. Stay seated.
3. Use a quiet voice.
4. Take all of your items with you.
5. Raise your hand to let the driver know if someone is hurt or upset.
6. Keep items in your bookbag.
7. Keep feet and hands where they belong.
8. Use kind words.
9. No cell phone use.
   REMINDER: Riding the bus is a privilege. Please reinforce these expectations and consequences with your child. Failure to follow the rules will result in a bus suspension.

CONSEQUENCES

1. Verbal Warning from your driver/conference
2. Written Warning & conference with Mrs. Owens, AP
3. 1st Offense: Up to 1 day suspension
4. 2nd Offense: Up to 3 day bus suspension
5. 3rd Offense: Up to 5 day bus suspension
6. 4th Offense: Extended long term suspension. Your bus privilege may be revoked for the rest of the school year.

**Physical altercation is an automatic bus suspension.

CAFETERIA

We are pleased to share that VanStory Hills is a **Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)** school through CCS Child Nutrition Services! This wonderful program means that every single student can enjoy breakfast and lunch at school for free every day, with no application required. If your child prefers to purchase extra snacks or items, those are available on an a la carte basis (adult meals are also charged a la carte). For students with specific medical dietary restrictions, we are happy to provide alternative meal trays once a *Medical Statement for Students with Special Nutritional Needs* is filed with our cafeteria team. If your child packs a lunch from home, please note that we are unable to refrigerate or reheat it. However, you are always welcome to come have lunch with your child or bring them a special meal—fast food is perfectly fine! We love seeing our families in the cafeteria.

CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONICS

We recognize that cell phones are important tools for keeping families connected after school hours. To maintain a focused learning environment, however, cell phones and other electronic devices (such as tablets and smartwatches) are not permitted to be used or visible on campus or on the school bus during the day.If a device is seen or used during school hours, staff will safely hold it (confiscate it) until a parent can come pick it up. Please keep in mind that, per the CCS Code of Conduct, the school cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage to electronics brought onto campus. We appreciate your partnership in keeping our school day distraction-free!

CHECK IN AND CHECK OUT PROCEDURES

Please schedule appointments after school hours whenever possible. When a student arrives late or leaves early, parents must sign them in or out at the office with the date, time, and reason. Anyone picking up a student must present proper identification and be listed on the student's authorized card.The instructional day concludes at 2:55 p.m. To minimize end-of-day interruptions and preserve vital instructional time, **no student check-outs are allowed after 2:30 p.m.** Regular attendance is critical to academic success. If a student builds a pattern of consistent tardiness or absences, a meeting with the principal or social worker will be required. Furthermore, students living outside the VanStory attendance zone who face excessive late arrivals or early check-outs will be recommended for transfer back to their neighborhood school.

CLUBS

VanStory has a number of school clubs: Student Council, Chorus, and Battle of the Books Club. These clubs meet before or after school. We encourage participation in our clubs; however, we cannot provide transportation for students. Parents are encouraged to drop off or pick up their child promptly at the designated time. Club sponsors are responsible for supervising students until they are picked up.

CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS

To prevent hurt feelings, we ask that personal party invitations not be distributed at school unless every student in the class is included. If your child is hosting a private party for a select group of classmates, please distribute those invitations outside of school hours. Cumberland County policy strictly prohibits home-baked goods from being served at school functions. To comply with this safety regulation, please provide store-bought, individually wrapped items only for any classroom celebrations.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES (Policy 4230)

To prevent and control the spread of illness within our school community, VanStory Hills follows strict health protocols:

- **Symptom Identification & Isolation:** If a student exhibits symptoms of a communicable disease—including a fever of 100.4°C (100.4°F) or higher, vomiting, or diarrhea—school staff will immediately isolate the child and contact parents to arrange for them to be picked up.
- **Supervision:** A child experiencing these symptoms may not remain at school unless the school is absolutely unable to reach a parent, guardian, or emergency contact.
- **Transportation:** For health and safety reasons, sick children are strictly prohibited from riding the school bus home.
- **Return-to-School Guidelines:**
    - **Fever, Vomiting, or Diarrhea:** Unless otherwise directed by health authorities, students must remain home until they have been completely **symptom-free for 24 hours** without the use of symptom-masking medication.
    - **Undiagnosed Rashes:** Students with an undiagnosed rash must stay home until the rash completely clears or a physician provides written medical clearance to return to school.

DRESS CODE

VanStory Hills encourages students to take pride in their personal appearance. Regular school days include active physical play, so students should dress daily for comfort, safety, and a focused learning environment.

- **Coverage & Fit:** Tops must fully cover the midriff. Spaghetti straps and sheer tops are not permitted. Pants must be worn at the waist (no sagging); belts should be used if necessary. Jeans with holes above the knee must have fabric underneath.
- **Length:** Shorts, skirts, and dresses (including dress slits) must be an appropriate, respectful length.
- **Headwear:** Hats, bandanas, sun visors, and sunglasses are not allowed inside the building unless required for a documented medical condition or religious doctrine. Hoods on sweatshirts or jackets must be taken down when indoors.
- **Graphics & Messaging:** Clothing may not display profanity or any imagery/text that is offensive or suggestive regarding race, sex, or religion.
- **Footwear:** Because students participate in outdoor physical activity and recess every day, **tennis shoes/sneakers are the best and safest option**. Laced shoes must remain tied. Flip-flops and slides are strongly discouraged for safety reasons.
- **Enforcement:** Students who do not meet the dress code guidelines will be asked to borrow appropriate clothing from our school's clothes closet or call a parent to bring a change of clothes.

A Note for Visitors and Volunteers: To model a respectful environment for our students, we ask that all parents and visitors follow these same standards when volunteering or visiting campus. Please use good judgment and refrain from wearing revealing apparel or clothing with inappropriate phrases.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy 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 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 or the student is limited and generally requires prior consent by the parents of the student. Copies of this 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 school personnel to comply with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act may be made, in writing, to: FERPA Office, Federal Building No 10, and 600 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202.

FIELD TRIPS

Teachers may arrange educational field trips throughout the school year to complement our curriculum. All field trips are planned in accordance with CCS Policy IFCB-R.

- **Required Permission:** Students must have signed, written permission on file to attend a field trip. Please note that school administration cannot accept permission over the phone under any circumstances.
- **Trip Details and Deadlines:** Prior to the trip, your child's teacher will send home comprehensive information regarding plans, costs, and transportation. Please return all permission forms and payments promptly. Total costs are calculated based on the exact number of participating students and chaperones.
- **Alternative Arrangements:** If you choose not to have your child participate, they are still expected to attend school. An alternative instructional plan will be provided for them on campus that day.
- **Chaperones & Guests:** On occasion, parents are invited to assist with student supervision. The required number of chaperones will depend entirely on the specific trip. To ensure adequate supervision, siblings and other family members are not permitted to join educational trips.
- **Student Expectations:** Students are expected to demonstrate excellent behavior and adhere to all school rules while representing VanStory Hills in the community.

HEAD LICE

In accordance with Board of Education policy, students found to have evidence of head lice or nits will be sent home from school immediately. To manage and control the spread of head lice safely and discreetly, VanStory Hills follows these procedures**:** A student may be identified for evaluation via a parent notification, teacher referral, or routine classroom screening. Designated school staff will conduct a private examination. If live lice or nits are detected, the student will be discreetly guided to the main office. The school will immediately contact a parent or guardian to pick up the child. Treatment information and educational materials will be sent home with the student. Staff will conduct a comprehensive screening of the student's entire classroom, as well as any siblings attending the school. A general notification letter will only be sent home to all families in a classroom if more than one student in that specific class is found to have head lice or nits. Before a student can be readmitted to their classroom, the parent must present proof of an approved treatment. School personnel will re-examine the student prior to their return to class, and a mandatory follow-up check will be conducted ten days later to ensure they remain clear.

HOMEWORK

Homework is an integral part of the total educational program. It will be assigned to reinforce skills previously taught, in preparation for classroom discussions, or to enhance and build study skills. The teacher will carefully plan homework so that each student will be motivated to complete the assignments. Just as students have different learning styles and ability levels, the length of time needed to complete the assignments varies with the ability and skill level of the student. Some homework assignments may be graded and recorded as grades based upon the discretion of the teacher. Approximate homework times for each grade are as follows: 2nd=30 minutes, 3rd=40 minutes, 4th=50 minutes and 5th=60 minutes.

IMMUNIZATIONS

North Carolina General Statute # 130A-1569 (a) requires the parent or guardian to furnish proof of the following immunizations:

- (5) DTP/DTaP (If a booster dose of DTP/DTaP is given on or after the child's 4th birthday then dose #5 is not required.)
- (4) Polio (If the 3rd dose is given on or after the 4th birthday then dose #4 is not required.)
- (2) MMR (1st dose must be on or after the 1st birthday.) 2nd dose is when they begin school.
- (3) Hepatitis-B
- (1) Varicella (On or after 12 months)

The immunization record and North Carolina Health Assessment must be received at school by the 30th calendar day after the student enrolls. After the 30th day, state law mandates that we dismiss your child from school for any out of compliance students. A copy will be kept on file in your child's record.

INSURANCE

Students will bring home information about accident insurance in their "first day of school" packets. Applications should not be returned to the school but should be mailed directly to the company. Questions that may arise during the year should be directed to the company and not to the school.

MEDICATION

School personnel will not administer prescribed medication without a completed *Physician's School Medication Form* on file. All medication administration occurs solely in the front office under strict logging protocols. For short-term prescriptions lasting 10 days or less, administration from the original prescription bottle is permitted only if the label is complete and a physical physician's note is provided. Staff are unauthorized to administer medications for minor illnesses (e.g., colds, headaches); these must be administered directly by a parent on campus. Under no circumstances may a student or bus driver transport medication. Parents are required to deliver the medication directly to the front office, conduct a physical count with staff, and officially sign it into school custody. At the conclusion of the academic year, parents must audit and sign out all remaining medication. Any expired medication or refills left on campus after the final school day will be immediately destroyed per health regulations.

MORNING DROP OFF/AFTERNOON DISMISSAL

Student arrival occurs between 7:45 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. For the safety of our student body, **no drop-offs are permitted before 7:45 a.m.** Parents must utilize the designated car line or school bus transportation. Walking students into the building is not permitted. Drivers must remain inside their vehicles until the morning bell rings and follow all staff traffic directions. Dropping students off on Foxhall Road is a serious safety violation and is strictly prohibited.

If a student is not on campus by 8:15 a.m., they are legally tardy. In this event, a parent or guardian must park, enter the front office, and officially check the student in. To maintain building security, visitors are restricted to the front office and may not enter hallways or classrooms during the arrival windows.

Afternoon Dismissal Procedures

(Bus Riders)

Our afternoon bus routines are carefully timed to get your children home safely and efficiently! Our buses aim to be fully loaded and rolling off campus by 3:05 p.m. From there, they stop at Alma Easom Elementary to pick up students before starting their neighborhood routes.

The best way to ensure a seamless drop-off is to arrive at your child's bus stop **10 minutes before** your scheduled time and wait there until the bus arrives. We also highly encourage all families to download the **Here Comes the Bus** app, which is a fantastic tool for tracking your child's bus in real time!

(Walkers)

If you live close to VanStory Hills, your child may be eligible to be considered a walker! All walker arrangements are coordinated and approved by our principal. If you would like your child to walk to or from school, please reach out to Ms. McAlister to finalize the details. One of the perks of being a walker family is that you do not have to wait in the morning car line to drop off your child. However, to keep our arrival running smoothly and safely for everyone, please remember that you are not permitted to park in the staff lot and walk your child to the front of the school. Thank you for your cooperation!

(Car Riders)

Our afternoon dismissal transition begins at approximately 2:55 p.m. To ensure the safety of all students and a smooth traffic flow, a school representative will walk along the vehicle line to record student names. Names are grouped into tens within a master document, and students are called by their group number and escorted directly to their vehicles. **Under no circumstances are drivers permitted to cut in line.** To help this process run safely and efficiently, parents must adhere to the following protocols:

1. **Line-Up Time and Route:** Please do not get in line prior to 2:30 p.m. The car line begins in the front campus semi-circle, winding down Foxhall Road to Westchester Drive, and then onto S. Edgewater Drive. It is best practice to enter the line from S. Edgewater Drive; drivers will not be permitted to turn directly down Foxhall Drive to join the line.
2. **Car Tags:** At Open House, you will receive a dashboard tag featuring your child's name. Please display this clearly on your front windshield every afternoon so staff can quickly log your arrival. Keep this tag in your vehicle for the entire school year, as rotating staff members assist with dismissal.
3. **Remain in Your Vehicle:** For student safety, drivers must remain in their cars at all times. Do not park on Foxhall Road to walk up and retrieve your child. Walking up disrupts the workflow, and doing so means your child will not be released until the entire car line is cleared.
4. **Exercise Patience:** Please expect delays during the first few weeks of school as our new students adjust to the routine. While it initially takes time, the process typically finishes within 15 minutes and moves much faster as the school year progresses.
5. **Neighborhood Courtesy:** Please show respect to our local residents by ensuring you do not block neighborhood driveways while waiting in line.

6. **Early Check-Out Deadline:** As a reminder, there are absolutely no student check-outs permitted after 2:30 p.m.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Cumberland County School System inclusive of VanStory Hills Elementary School not to discriminate on the basis of race, ethnic origin, sex or handicap in its educational programs, activities, or employment policies as required by Title IX of 1972 Educational Amendments and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

We have an active PTA and encourage each parent to join and participate. This organization is an essential part of the total school program. Your support is needed and will be appreciated. The PTA officers for the school year are:

2026-2027 Executive Board:

President - Ande White
Co-Vice President - Yeni Warr
Co-Vice President- Maggie Stahmer
Treasurer - Melissa Parker
Secretary - Hallie Bartlett
Business Booster - Ashley Hill
Hospitality - Emma Bentham

PARENT/ TEACHER CONFERENCES & PHONE CALLS

1st Semester-October
2nd Semester- February

We strongly encourage open communication and look forward to partnering with you throughout the school year. To protect vital instructional time and minimize classroom disruptions, please adhere to the following communication guidelines:

- **Classroom Phone Calls:** Inbound phone calls will not be transferred directly to a teacher's classroom during the school day. Instead, your call will be routed to their voicemail system. Urgent emergencies are exceptions to this rule and will be handled immediately by front office administration.
- **Scheduling Conferences:** You are welcome to request a conference with your child's teacher or the principal at any time. To schedule an appointment, please call the main office at 483-0809. Conferences must be arranged in advance so they do not interfere with teaching hours.
- **Class Dojo:** VanStory Hills utilizes Class Dojo for school-to-home messaging. Please note that teachers are focused on instruction during the school day and are not expected to read or respond to digital messages until after dismissal.

PARKING ON CAMPUS

We appreciate your help in keeping our campus safe and being great neighbors to our surrounding community! When parking at VanStory Hills, please remember to keep our loading zones completely clear. There are always plenty of parking spaces available for you in the staff parking lot.

We also ask that you use extra care when parking on the streets near our school. Please be mindful not to block any residential driveways on Foxhall Road or the surrounding streets so our neighbors can come and go safely. Thank you for your cooperation!

PARENTS CAN HELP!!

- **Communicate daily** with your child about their school day.
- **Provide time for relaxation** and rest after dismissal.
- **Partner with the teacher** to find targeted ways you can help at home.
- **Verify both sides of school conflicts** by checking in with staff for the full picture.
- **Volunteer on campus** whenever your schedule allows to support our classrooms.

PARENT CONCERNS

We believe that open communication and a strong partnership between home and school are vital to student success. If you have a question or concern regarding your child, please follow these steps to ensure a swift and productive resolution:

1. **Initial Step (Teacher Level):** Classroom-specific concerns should always be expressed directly to your child's teacher first.
2. **Administrative Support:** General school-wide concerns or questions may be directed to an administrator. If you contact administration regarding a specific classroom issue, the administrator will expect that you have discussed the matter with the teacher first.
3. **Collaborative Resolution:** If a classroom issue remains unresolved after speaking with the teacher, school administration will gladly arrange and facilitate a joint conference with you and the teacher to help find a solution together.

PARENT RIGHT TO KNOW STATEMENT

As required by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), 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 and/or teacher assistant
- professional development opportunities for teachers and assistants to ensure highly qualified personnel
- opportunities for parent involvement and input
- the district improvement plan
- the district parent involvement policy
- the district report card and the school report card

Please contact our school and we will be glad to provide you with this information upon request.

PERSONAL ITEMS

Jackets, sweaters, and personal belongings have a way of wandering off during a busy school day! You can help us ensure your child's items make it back to them safely by labeling their clothing with their first and last name throughout the school year. Having a name clearly marked on these items is an incredible help to our staff when sorting through the Lost & Found. Thank you for your cooperation!

PICTURES BY STRAWBRIDGE

VanStory Hills partners with Strawbridge Photography to capture student portraits twice during the school year. Sales from these packages directly benefit the students and staff of our school.

Fall Portraits (Prepaid): Fall pictures must be paid for in advance. These portraits are used for the official VanStory Hills Yearbook.

Spring Portraits (Package Sales): Spring portraits are conducted on a "package sale" basis. Every student will have their picture taken, and a sample package will be sent home. Parents can choose to purchase the portraits or return the unpurchased sample package to the school. Group classroom photos are also taken in the spring and must be paid for in advance.

PROMOTION CRITERIA & STANDARDS

Student placement and promotion are designed to support total academic and personal growth. The principal determines grade-level placement by evaluating what is best for each child academically, socially, emotionally, chronologically, and physically.To be promoted to the next grade level, students in grades K–5 are expected to demonstrate at least one year of academic growth for each year of instruction. Teachers must officially certify that a student is achieving on grade level prior to advancement. Promotion decisions for our youngest learners are based on the mastery of grade-level skills, which are measured using:

- **State Assessments:** North Carolina K–2 Literacy and Mathematics assessments mapped to current statewide instructional standards.
- **Teacher Assessments:** Ongoing classroom evaluations and observations.
- **Local & State Measures:** Additional recommended or required district and state assessments.

REWARDING OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

Just as it is important to have consequences for negative behavior it is equally important to reward positive behavior. PBIS is used at VanStory Hills and students will be rewarded with designated activities/items. Positive notes, calls and Dojo messages will also be sent home with the students who have shown improvement in behavior.

RULES OF CONDUCT AT VANSTORY HILLS

Consistent management routines and behavioral guidelines are essential to a thriving school community. They establish the structured environment necessary for high-level academic achievement to take place. We firmly believe that teachers have a fundamental right to teach and all students have an equal right to learn. Our comprehensive school-wide PAWS Matrix outlines specific behavioral expectations for each area of the building. If you have any questions regarding these daily guidelines, please connect directly with your child's teacher. To protect and support this learning environment, VanStory Hills students are expected to practice **P.A.W.S.** every day, across all areas of our campus:

- **P** – **P**ositive attitude and interactions
- **A** – **A**ccountable for personal actions
- **W** – **W**ise choices in decision-making
- **S** – **S**afe behaviors at all times

STANDARD RESPONSE PROTOCOL

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Our school has adopted The "I Love U Guys" Foundation's Standard Response Protocol (SRP). Students and staff will be training, practicing, and drilling the protocol.

COMMON LANGUAGE

The Standard Response Protocol (SRP) is based on an all-hazards approach as opposed to individual scenarios. Like the Incident Command System (ICS), SRP utilizes clear common language while allowing for flexibility in protocol.

The premise is simple - there are five specific actions that can be performed during an incident. When communicating these, the action is labeled with a "Term of Art" and is then followed by a "Directive." Execution of the action is performed by active participants, including students, staff, teachers and first responders. The SRP is based on the following actions: Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate, and Shelter.

HOLD

"In Your Classroom or Area"



Students are trained to:
- Clear the hallways and remain in their area or room until the "All Clear" is announced
- Do business as usual

Adults and staff are trained to:
- Close and lock the door
- Account for students and adults
- Do business as usual

SECURE

"Get Inside. Lock outside doors"



Students are trained to:
- Return to inside of building
- Do business as usual

Adults and staff are trained to:
- Bring everyone indoors
- Lock the outside doors
- Increase situational awareness
- Account for students and adults
- Do business as usual

LOCKDOWN

"Locks, Lights, Out of Sight"



Students are trained to:
- Move away from sight
- Maintain silence
- Do not open the door

Adults and staff are trained to:
- Recover students from hallway if possible
- Lock the classroom door
- Turn out the lights
- Move away from sight
- Maintain silence
- Do not open the door
- Prepare to evade or defend

EVACUATE

"To a Location"



Students are trained to:
- Leave stuff behind if required to
- If possible, bring their phone
- Follow instructions

Adults and staff are trained to:
- Bring roll sheet and Go Bag (unless instructed not to bring anything with them, dependent on reason for evacuation.)
- Lead students to Evacuation location
- Account for students and adults
- Report injuries or problems using Red Card/Green Card method.

SHELTER

"State Hazard and Safety Strategy"



Hazards might include:
- Tornado
- Hazmat
- Earthquake
- Tsunami

Safety Strategies might include:
- Evacuate to shelter area
- Seal the room
- Drop, cover and hold
- Get to high ground

Students are trained in:
- Appropriate Hazards and Safety Strategies

Adults and staff are trained in:
- Appropriate Hazards and Safety Strategies
- Accounting for students and adults
- Report injuries or problems using Red Card/Green Card method.

STANDARD RESPONSE PROTOCOL

PARENT GUIDANCE

In the event of a live incident, parents may have questions about their role.

SECURE

"Get Inside. Lock outside doors"



Secure is called when there is something dangerous outside of the building. Students and staff are brought into the building and the outside doors will be locked. The school might display the Building is Secured poster on entry doors or nearby windows. Inside, it will be business as usual.

SHOULD PARENTS COME TO THE SCHOOL DURING A SECURE EVENT?

Probably not. Every effort is made to conduct classes as normal during a secure event. Additionally, parents may be asked to stay outside during a Secure event.



WHAT IF PARENTS NEED TO PICK UP THEIR STUDENT?

Depending on the situation, it may not be safe to release the student. As the situation evolves, Secure might change to a Monitored Entry and/or Controlled Release.

WILL PARENTS BE NOTIFIED WHEN A SCHOOL GOES INTO SECURE?

When a secure event is brief or the hazard is non-violent, like a wild animal on the playground, there may not be a need to notify parents while the Secure is in place.

With longer or more dangerous events, the school should notify parents that the school has increased their security.

LOCKDOWN

"Locks, Lights, Out of Sight"



A Lockdown is called when there is something dangerous inside of the building. Students and staff are trained to enter or remain in a room that can be locked, and maintain silence.

A Lockdown is only initiated when there is an active threat inside or very close to the building.

SHOULD PARENTS COME TO THE SCHOOL DURING A LOCKDOWN?

The natural inclination for parents is to go to the school during a Lockdown. Understandable, but perhaps problematic. If there is a threat inside the building, law enforcement will be responding. It is unlikely that parents will be granted access to the building or even the campus. If parents are already in the school, they will be instructed to Lockdown as well.

SHOULD PARENTS TEXT THEIR STUDENTS?

The school recognizes the importance of communication between parents and students during a Lockdown event. Parents should be aware though, during the initial period of a Lockdown, it may not be safe for students to text their parents. As the situation resolves, students may be asked to update their parents on a regular basis.

In some cases, students may be evacuated and transported off-site for a student-parent reunification.

WHAT ABOUT UNANNOUNCED DRILLS?



The school may conduct unscheduled drills, however it is highly discouraged to conduct one without announcing that it as a drill. That's called an unannounced drill and can cause undue concern and stress.

Parents should recognize that the school will always inform students that it is a drill during the initial announcement.

It's important to differentiate between a **drill** and an exercise. A drill is used to create the "Muscle Memory" associated with a practiced action. There is no simulation of an event; this is simply performing the action. An exercise simulates an actual event to test the capacity of personnel and equipment.

CAN PARENTS OBSERVE OR PARTICIPATE IN THE DRILLS?

The school welcomes parents who wish to observe or participate in drills.

SCHEDULE DELAYS DUE TO WEATHER

When winter weather or unsafe road conditions cause a two-hour delay, we adjust our morning routine to ensure everyone arrives safely.On these mornings, our drop-off window opens at 9:45 a.m. Please make sure your child is not left at the school before this time, as our staff will not be on duty yet to supervise them. The morning tardy bell will ring at 10:15 a.m. If your child rides a school bus, their morning pickup will also be delayed by exactly two hours. Because of the shortened morning timeline, we will not be able to serve breakfast, so please make sure your child eats before coming to school. Lunch will still be served at its normal time, and our school day will wrap up at our regular afternoon dismissal time.

TEXTBOOKS, LIBRARY and CHROMEBOOKS

Students are issued school property to support their learning and are expected to treat these items with care and respect.

Financial Responsibility: Students and their families are held fully responsible for all issued textbooks, library books, and Chromebooks. Families will be billed for the replacement or repair costs of any lost or damaged items.

Library Check-Out Policies: Students are permitted to check out a maximum of two library books at any given time. Additional books may not be checked out until all previously borrowed, overdue items are successfully returned to the media center.

Device and Book Care: To preserve school materials and prevent accidental damage, food, drinks, candy, gum, and water must be kept completely away from all books and electronic devices.

TOBACCO USE

The use of tobacco products is a health, safety and environmental hazard for students, employees, visitors, volunteers, and school facilities. Teachers, volunteers, and visitors serve as role models for students. Therefore it is our obligation to promote positive role models in schools and promote a healthy learning and working environment, free from unwanted smoke. According to CCS policy we are to provide schools that are smoke-free. Students may not possess, display, or use any tobacco product at any time on school premises, buses or at school events, both indoor and outdoor and both off and on school property. Visitors and volunteers to the school may not at any time use or display tobacco products on school premises. This includes any school sponsored events, both indoor and outdoor, and both off and on school property.

VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERING

Families are always welcome at VanStory Hills Elementary, and we warmly encourage parents to join their children for lunch! To protect the safety of our students, staff, and guests, please adhere to the following campus security protocols:

1. **Check In at the Main Office**
    - All visitors must enter through the Main Office.

- All visitors must pass through the Weapons Detection System (it is best to leave bags/purses in your locked vehicle).
- The main office staff may ask you to pass through the Weapons Detection System a second time if they did not see you pass through the first time or if the system alerted. (A detection wand may also be used if necessary.)

2. **Identification Required**
   - Visitors will be required to present a valid government-issued photo ID.
   - The school will scan a valid ID through Raptor Technology to verify identification before granting access beyond the main office.
3. **Visitor Badge**
   - Approved visitors will receive a visitor badge or pass.
   - The badge must be worn and visible at all times while on campus.
4. **Purpose of Visit**
   - Visitors must state the reason for their visit.
   - Access is limited to authorized areas and approved activities.
5. **Escort Requirements**
   - Visitors may be required to be accompanied by a staff member while on campus.
   - Classroom visits typically require prior approval from school administration.
6. **Sign Out**
   - Visitors must sign out at the office before leaving.
7. **Prohibited Activities**
   - Disruptive behavior, unauthorized photography or recording, and access to restricted areas are generally prohibited.
   - Asking a teacher to meet with you during their instructional/planning time without a previously scheduled conference.
8. **Denial of Access**
   - School administrators reserve the right to deny or revoke visitor access if a visitor poses a safety risk or violates school rules.

Failure to comply with school procedures may result in removal from campus and possible restriction of future visits.

Volunteer and Chaperone Clearance: Cumberland County Schools requires a background check for anyone working directly with students or chaperoning school trips. You must complete the official screening online at the CCS Volunteer Registry. You may only begin volunteering once official clearance is granted. Once cleared, report to the office to sign in and collect a visitor's badge. You will be required to leave your car keys with the front desk as assurance for the badge. Before departing campus, return to the office, sign out, exchange your badge for your keys, and return the badge to staff.

TRANSPORTATION CHANGES

Ensuring your child gets home safely every afternoon is a top priority at VanStory Hills! To help us manage dismissal smoothly and eliminate confusion, we ask families to strictly follow these safety steps when changing a student's normal transportation plan:

- Please always notify your child's teacher in writing or via Class Dojo if they are going home a different way. Because safety requires direct parent confirmation, we are unable to take a student's word for a change. If we do not receive official notice, your child will be sent home using their standard routine.
- If you are using Class Dojo to send a transportation update, please ensure it is sent **prior to 12:30 p.m.** Our teachers are busy teaching and supervising children all afternoon, so we cannot guarantee they will see any digital messages sent after this time. Additionally, we ask that you please refrain from calling the front office to make these requests, as our phone lines must remain open for emergencies during the busy dismissal window. Thank you for partnering with us to keep all our students safe!

WATER BOTTLES

We want to make sure our students stay hydrated and ready to learn throughout the day! Students are welcome to bring a small, plastic water bottle to school to keep with them in the classroom, as well as to take out to lunch and recess.

For safety and campus environment reasons, please remember that metal water bottles are not permitted on campus. We appreciate your help in ensuring your child only brings an approved plastic bottle to school!