Veterans Elementary School Student and Parent Handbook 2026-2027

Students and parents are expected to use this planner daily for communication between home and school. Students will have many opportunities to learn, get involved and make memories in school. Families are responsible for knowing our school rules for a safe learning environment. Take time to read this handbook with your child and sign the agreement together. As a shared responsibility we will teach children good habits, encourage healthy relationships, and foster a positive learning environment where effort is rewarded. We have multiple ways of communicating; be sure your contact information is accurate in the Parent FOCUS Portal to receive automated messages. FOCUS is our student information system and will provide attendance, grades, testing results, bus stops, and contact information. We look forward to a wonderful school year!

Arrival: 7:50-8:25 a.m. Student Learning Day: 8:25-3:15 p.m. Dismissal 3:15-3:45 p.m.

FOCUS Parent Portal Link: https://focus.manateeschools.net/
Facebook: https://facebook.com/VeteransElementaryStarsFL
Instagram: @veteranselementarystars
Website: https://www.manateeschools.net/o/veterans/

Volunteer Requirement: Volunteer Level 1 or Volunteer Level 2 (field trips)
A volunteer level 1 application is required every school year to volunteer on campus.
Complete the online volunteer application by scanning this QR code for the district visitor and volunteer application. Be sure to sign up in advance as approval takes time.

VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS

We value parents' participation. We welcome parents to our school, but we do have safety policies by which we must abide. Parents must have a valid physical form of identification, driver's license, or passport. Please be prepared to give your ID every time you visit the office. When visiting the campus for lunch, volunteering, attending conferences, or events during school hours, please follow the required procedures. Please report to the office and sign in with one of our office staff members. When you arrive, you will press the button and let the office staff know your purpose of visiting campus. If they wave you in, please do not let the person behind you inside, unless the office staff guides you to do so. Per Florida law, all visitors must be verified against the state offender database. Once approved, you will receive a sticker to wear with the approved location of your visit. When you leave, return to the office, submit the sticker to document the visit and time of departure.

Parents can have lunch with their children during the 30-minute designated lunch time. We welcome parents to have lunch with only their children during the designated days offered to families. It is important to know your child's scheduled lunch time. We do not allow friends to join other students and parent lunches, unless both parents are present. Thank you for understanding.

If you plan to volunteer (PTO events, field trips, bookfair, classroom helper), you are required to complete the online volunteer application annually on our district website in August of each year.

SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC)

Serve alongside the Principal to provide consideration and leadership for School Improvement and Parent Involvement.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

PTO is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to support the education of children at Veterans Elementary. The goal is to connect with our school community and to raise money for the benefit of our students and staff.

LEGAL DOCUMENTS

If applicable, provide legal documents in FOCUS Parent Portal and inform the Registrar.

ATTENDANCE/ABSENCE

Students are expected to attend at least 96% of the school year (172/180 days). To report an absence, call the attendance line at 941-338-7300, Option 8. Unreported absences are marked unexcused in FOCUS; parents have one week to submit a physician's note for excused absences. If a student has over nine unexcused absences, parents will receive a letter due to not meeting attendance requirements. Students arriving after 8:25 a.m. must be signed into the office by a parent or guardian and will be given a tardy slip. Late arrivals disrupt learning for everyone. Arrive by 8:20 a.m. All absences and tardies are recorded in FOCUS and reported on the quarterly Report Card. **Choice/Hardship may be revoked for ten or more unexcused absences, tardies, and/or late dismissal pickup.**

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL

School office hours are 7:45 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Student drop off is the car-loading and unloading area in the front of the school. Drop off is between 7:50-8:20 a.m. Staff and Safety patrols are welcoming students daily and assisting kids to class. Please make every effort to have your child at school by the first bell at 8:20 a.m. Upon arrival, students go to their grade level waiting area or 7:50-8:20 breakfast line. Only students enrolled in morning care, and student leaders arrive earlier than 7:50 a.m.

BIKERS, WALKERS

Staff members will welcome students between 7:50-8:20 a.m. Bike riders must walk their bikes while on campus. Our School Guardian and staff monitor arrival/dismissal for safety. Walkers and bike riders need to stay on the sidewalk. If severe weather and lightning is within ten miles of our school, students will be held inside.
Parents are not to drive or park on the perimeter grass to wait for children, this is a safety concern.

CAR RIDERS:

Parents are required to have a Car Tag/PIK MY KID to pick up a child.
If there is no tag, prepare to present an ID to ensure the safety of the child. Stay in your car and follow traffic; staff or student safety patrols will assist your child. All students should be dropped off before the 8:20 a.m. bell. Learning begins at 8:25 a.m. Please pick up students prior to 3:45 p.m. each day. All students and passengers must wear seatbelts. Please do not honk or speed while on campus as this can create unnecessary concern. Parents must be actively aware and stay off cell phones.

BUSES:

Register To Ride: FOCUS PARENT PORTAL **https://www.manateeschools.net/**
Bus Transportation Department Contact (941) 782-1287.
A student may only ride the bus if the student has been registered and assigned a bus. Students will be issued a student ID and are required to present the ID for attendance and entry to the bus daily. Students will be welcomed each morning. All Kindergarten and ESE students must be received by a parent at the afternoon bus stop. Drivers will not let children off the bus unless there is an adult at the bus stop. Students will be brought back to the school if no one is at the stop. Bus transportation is a service provided by the School District of Manatee County. Students are to be respectful to others and wait on the sidewalk while waiting for the bus. There are cameras on the bus monitoring for safety. Parents can track students when students scan their ID when entering and exiting the bus.
Register to Ride: **Students who live two miles or more from school are eligible to ride a bus.**

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

All changes in dismissal are to be sent in through PIK MY KID before 2:30 p.m. each day. Parents should not rely on Dojo messaging or teacher email for dismissal changes; teachers do not have a chance to check those online platforms while teaching. Please remember if the person picking up your child is not included in PIK MY KID, they will need to present identification to car rider staff and must be on the student pick up list in FOCUS to take your child. Students can only leave campus with those identified for pickup in FOCUS or with parent permission. Due to safety and campus operations, we do not dismiss students from the office between 2:30-3:15 p.m.. After school appointments, please arrive before 2:30 p.m. at the office to pick up and have your ID ready.

BACKPACKS

Please review your child's backpack daily for classwork, their student folder, or planner to ensure timely communication from the school. According to district policy, students are permitted to carry cell phones for safety during travel to and from home; however, all cell phones must remain powered off and stored while on campus. Each student is provided with a laptop at school, so personal devices from home are unnecessary. Regularly check your child's backpack for communication materials and items relevant to school safety. Students are prohibited from bringing toys resembling weapons or any items associated with weapons to school. Inappropriate items brought onto campus will result in disciplinary action. Backpacks should be reset each day, and only educational materials should be allowed at school. Please do not allow any trade cards, toys, fidgets, and non-related school items in backpacks. The school is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or borrowed items.

BEHAVIOR

The teachers and staff at Veterans Elementary focus on school-wide expectations. Our students learn qualities such as cooperation and effective conflict resolution. We have positive incentives and know it is important for students to accept responsibility for their own actions. This approach teaches children strategies to use when faced with choices regarding their personal behavior. We believe each student should respect others. Veterans Elementary staff established procedures for the classroom and common areas. Our experience has shown these procedures are necessary to establish a successful and safe learning environment. Veterans Elementary is a community of learners, creating a positive school for students to learn, set goals, and succeed. When a student is displaying expectations, we notice and appreciate their effort.

BEHAVIOR CONSEQUENCES

Children are learning how to be kind, respectful, and look for adults to trust and teach them to make the right decision. It is our responsibility to hold children to the highest standards for both academic and behavior choices. Children will be given reminders daily about their choices. When a student presents an interruption, his/her teacher counsels them individually and will document the student choice on a Behavior Notice as a form of communication to the parent. If the student exhibits a lack of cooperation or the behavior is determined to be dangerous or interfering with the opportunities of others, further disciplinary action will take place and parent communication between administration will occur. Our school community deserves a safe and secure campus. There is zero tolerance for threats of violence. We expect parental support by signing you are aware of the situation and will discuss how the student earned the Behavior Notice. If behavior continues, a discipline referral is entered into FOCUS and is a permanent record requiring parent communication with administration. We appreciate your support and remember we are a team to help our children make healthy choices.

CAFE

Breakfast and Lunch are served daily. Students must be on campus by 8:15 a.m. to have time to eat breakfast served between 7:50-8:20 a.m. each morning. Lunch requires payment. Get the SchoolCafe APP! Those approved for the Free & Reduced Meal Program are free or charged at a reduced price. The SchoolCafe APP provides all meal information in one convenient place. Create your child's account using your student's ID number which you may obtain from FOCUS, make payments, or apply for free/reduced price lunch benefits.
Visit: https://www.schoolcafe.com/ManateeCountySchools

CELEBRATIONS/BIRTHDAYS

Student birthdays are announced each morning, including weekends and holidays. Before bringing treats, review the district wellness policy, check for allergies, and note that teachers may only serve birthday treats after lunch, ideally in the last hour. The Wellness Policy helps keep students safe.
Nutritious snacks provided to classrooms by families must be purchased. Please be sure items are sealed and in unopened packages. We have students with allergies. Ingredients, on packages, are required.

GRADES

Progress for your child requires communication and understanding between the teacher and parent. Teachers offer to meet with all parents to discuss academic and developmental progress. Quarterly, students receive a Report Card to inform the parents of academic progress. Report Cards publish on the FOCUS Parent Portal/FOCUS APP.

HEALTH INFORMATION

The school clinic is staffed by a Health Aide from the School District of Manatee County. The goal of school health services and your school health staff is to provide care for your child(ren) in the event of illness or injury while at school. Health staff will assess and recognize signs and symptoms of acute illness, potential contagious conditions, and injuries that need first aid or medical care. The health staff may administer medications prescribed by your doctor and for which you have signed permission on a complete medication authorization form. Policies and procedures jointly approved by the health department and school district are used to provide care safely and uniformly to students in school.

Health History: Maintain accurate medical information with the clinic and teacher for the best care of your child.

An authorization medication form is required for medication to be administered to students at school.

LIBRARY/MEDIA

Our library is a wonderful resource for our students. Every K-5 child visits the library weekly. Students will check out books if they have their student ID card with them. Students are accountable for any books that become damaged or go missing. These charges will stay on record. Students can view books checked out and fines by using My SDMC SSO Destiny Tile App. Please help your children take care of these cherished resources. Students are invited each year to join the Florida Reading Challenge by reading books from the Sunshine State Young Readers list, which are available in school and community libraries.

LOST & FOUND

Personal items such as jackets, water bottles and lunchboxes should be labeled with your child's name. The unidentifiable items found will be placed in the lost & found. After staff display the lost and found for weeks on the stage and in class dojo for parents to claim, we will donate unclaimed items.

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MANATEE COUNTY CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

Parents have the primary responsibility for the conduct of their child(ren). It is imperative for each parent/guardian to read the code of conduct carefully and discuss with their child the consequences of choices. The *School District of Manatee County Code of Student Conduct* is available on the website: **https://www.manateeschools.net**

STUDENT IDENTIFICATION CARD

Each student has their picture taken and is issued two identification cards. For students in kindergarten and first grade, it is required that one ID card remain attached to their backpack throughout the entire school year. ID cards play a crucial role in daily school routines. They are required for entry and exit of the school bus and verify dietary restrictions and facilitate lunch charges in the café. ID's are necessary for checking out and returning library books. If a student misplaces or is unable to locate their ID card, parents will be required to pay $3.00.

UNIFORMS

Students are to wear uniform shirts Monday-Thursday. Any student who wears clothing considered inappropriate or without a uniform shirt will be given a reminder to wear our school uniform shirt. If necessary, parents will be called and request the student to change into a uniform shirt. Students need to wear closed toe shoes daily. (no sandals, strongly discourage the use of crocs) All shirts must have sleeves, all clothing must be school appropriate with no inappropriate pictures or statements. Shorts need to be appropriate and at/beyond fingertip length. If students wear leggings or fitted shorts, the shirt needs to be long enough to cover the bottom, and the shorts need to be longer than the hoodie or shirt length. We ask students to not have unnatural colored hair unless they choose to color it for a spirit day. If you wear a non-Veterans hoodie, we request it be a zip up hoodie. This allows the uniform to be visible when wearing the zip up.

Students are to comply with the ***School District of Manatee County Code of Student Conduct.***

Veterans Elementary Student/Parent Agreement

Student: _____ Teacher: _____ Teacher Extension:_____

Student ID: _____ Student Password: _____

Students can access learning at home. Visit website: www.launchpad.classlink.com/manateeschools

We are focused on building lifelong learners with strong character and grit. Please help encourage the following.

If you're thankful, show it.
If someone needs help, give it.
If you're confused, ask questions.
If you want others to know you understand something, show your work.
If you're wrong or hurt someone, take responsibility, and acknowledge it. Be honest.
If you show up every day, put forth effort, learning will happen.

At Veterans Elementary we provide curriculum and technology for every student. Each student is provided with a computer for learning, and each student has a number assigned to the student for us to track the usage and care of the instructional materials and technology for the school year.

As a Veterans Elementary student, I agree to use school resources for learning purposes in all environments, including the classroom, special areas, after school clubs and testing rooms.

I will…

- Take care of the instructional materials, including books, headphones, computers, and all components.
- Be a responsible learner and stay on the page or learning site defined by my teacher.
- Keep computer settings and not change without teacher approval.
- Only use district online apps on my SDMC SSO account.
- Will not mishandle the computers: breaking or damaging with ill intent.
- Will not push/pull on the laptop screen, it is fragile.
- Use Schoology for learning purposes only.
- Walk when picking up or returning the instructional resources, including walking with laptop closed.

I understand that if I fail to follow the rules of our school resources, and the use of technology, I will accept the consequences. In the event of damage, loss, or theft, the student/parent/guardian will be responsible for the cost of repair or replacement. This policy ensures we can continue to provide high-quality materials and technology to all students. Students will be required to maintain all classwork and homework when loss of privileges is earned.

The consequences are:
1. First Offense: Behavior Notice and loss of technology.
2. Second Offense: Discipline Referral and extended loss of instructional technology.
3. Third Offense: Discipline Referral, suspension, extended loss of technology privileges, restitution.

Thank you for reading, knowing our expectations and acknowledging we want our students to succeed.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Teacher Initials: _____ Date: _____