

Dear Parents,

Welcome to a new year of growing and learning at Bennett C. Russell Elementary School! The school administration and staff are committed to the academic success and safety of each student who enters our doors. We will be happy to schedule an appointment to discuss possible concerns. Continue to monitor our school website (https://bre.santarosaschools.org/o/bre) and Facebook (Cardinal Connection) for updates.

We look forward to being a part of your child's education and helping each student at Russell Elementary achieve his or her full potential. We want our parents to know they are an important part of their child's education, and we welcome them as partners in learning. We want our students to feel safe, loved, challenged, and respected when they come to school. At the same time, we expect students to come to school on time, be ready to learn, and treat others with kindness and respect. We hope all stakeholders will search for positive solutions to problems while remembering to stay focused on student learning and student success. We want this to be a wonderful year for your child. We know that home and school partnership is key to the success of all students.

We have implemented B.E.S.T. Florida State Standards to prepare our students for middle and high school, college, career, and citizenship. Parents may view the Florida State Assessment (FSA) website at: http://www.fsassessments.org/ .

Thank you for being an important part of our Russell Elementary family. Together we will continue to help our students SOAR toward academic excellence.

Moving forward together to meet the needs of our students!

Mr. Daniel Baxley, Principal

Mrs. Jamie Cain, Assistant Principal

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION FOR PARENTS!

Safety at Bennett Russell Elementary is our top priority! There are a variety of safety procedures that come into play at our school. Our students will participate in safety drills throughout the year. Given the number of students in our school building, listening, and following directions are extremely important. Students will learn the sound of the fire alarm and learn which exits to use from various locations in the building. Our school has lockdown procedures, and our students will learn in advance what will happen and how they should behave if there is a lockdown. In the event of an actual lockdown emergency at our school, parents are to follow the procedures listed below. If you have any questions or concerns about any of this information, contact the school to speak with an administrator.

- *The Santa Rosa County Emergency Management Office has a detailed copy of our emergency plan and our safety procedures.*

- *In the event of an actual lockdown, please* **DO NOT** *come to the school to pick up your children. For the safety of all, no one will be allowed to enter or leave the building. All parents should meet at one of the following locations:*

  - **Primary Location: You will be notified of the location once we evacuate.**
  - **Alternate Location: You will be notified of the location once we evacuate.**

- *We will use* **Rooms** *call-out system, our school website, and Facebook to provide updates when available. It is imperative to keep your phone number current to receive messages from* **Rooms**. *The updates must be made by school personnel in FOCUS so if you have a change, please call so that we can make the update, and have your child's student ID number when you call.*

It is very important for parents/guardians to keep all contact information updated!

❖ *In the event you arrive at school during a safety drill, a sign will be posted at the front entrance. Please wait outside away from the building, in the parking lot until the all-clear to enter the building has been made.*

School Public Accountability Report (SPAR)

The administration and staff at Bennett C. Russell Elementary are very proud of the fact that we are a high-performing school. The teachers and staff work hard to meet the needs of all students. If you would like additional information about the School Public Accountability Report, you may request a copy of this report from our school office, or you can access the information on the websites below:

http://edudata.fldoe.fldoe.org/index.html

http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org/default.asp

http://www.santarosa.k12.fl.us/schools/bre/

Student Code of Conduct

The Student Code of Conduct can be located on the Santa Rosa District Schools website. Go to the "Resources & Services" tab at the top of the page. In the drop down, click on Parents. Scroll down until you see "Code of Student Conduct" on the district web site. This is where you will find the digital version of the Student Code of Conduct. All students will be tested after reviewing the Student Code of Conduct. New students who enroll throughout the school year will complete the Code of Conduct Test within three days of their start date. Each student will be tested two times per year (one time per semester).

Santa Rosa County Family Guide

The latest SRC Family Guide will be available in the fall of 2026. This guide is an excellent academic resource and provides information about community support services. You will find an electronic copy of this guide on the Santa Rosa School District website. Click on Resources & Services, on the drop-down screen, click on parents, on the drop-down screen, click on Family Guide. If you would like to have a physical copy, contact the school office at 850-983-7000.

Important Phone Numbers

County Office	*850-983-5150*	*School Office*	*850-983-7000*
School Fax	*850-983-7007*	*Food Service Office*	*850-983-5150 ext. 7119*
Transportation:		*Community School / After School Care*	
Pace	*850-936-6004 ext., 7100*	*Main Office*	*850-983-5650*
Milton	*850-400-7400*	*School Campus Office*	*850-910-2208*
Santa Rosa Health Department	*850-983-5200*		

Santa Rosa County School's Parent / Student Portal

First- fifth grade parents can access their children's grades and attendance through this portal. Kindergarten students parents can access their children's grades and attendance but will not be able to see the standards. Contact your child's teacher with questions. Parents or guardians can access this portal through the Santa Rosa School Board website at www.santarosa.k12.fl.us. Simply click on the "Students" heading and then click on the "Parent/Student Portal." You will need the following information to log on; student ID# and parent portal pin #.

Russell Elementary is a Positive Behavioral Intervention Support Program School

We are proud at Russell to have a schoolwide positive behavior program. Our students and staff "SOAR" each day as they follow our school expectations.

SCHOOLWIDE EXPECTATIONS

SOAR

SOAR represents our schoolwide expectations that we encourage all students to demonstrate daily.

S- *Show Kindness and Respect.*

O- *Only Do YOUR Best.*

A- *Attendance is Important.*

R- *Responsibility is the Rest.*

We focus on encouraging appropriate behaviors by rewarding students both daily and monthly. Students can earn Cardinal Cash each day by exhibiting the SOAR expectations. At the end of every month, all students with Cardinal Cash can participate in our monthly Cash-in (ex: hat day, Jingle Bell Run, PE Palooza). Each class also has 2 Golden Ticket winners for the month. These students get an additional reward on Cash-in day (ex: popcorn, snow cone).

The PBIS program offers different levels of behavioral support for our students. Social skills groups are available at different times during the school year (using the SS GRIN curriculum). These groups focus on student relationships and teach appropriate behaviors which encourage student success in the classroom. The Check-in/Check-out Program is another behavioral support used to build relationships between administration/guidance and students. This program encourages success in the classroom by rewarding students for meeting their daily behavioral goals.

Classroom teachers also have classroom expectations and a class system that offers other incentives while also explaining consequences for inappropriate behavior. Although we maintain a very positive atmosphere, inappropriate behavior is not tolerated. We work with students that need extra support in this area, but we do not allow students to disrupt or distract from their own learning or the learning of others. We will work closely with our parents to make sure we are helping our students learn appropriate behavior so everyone can enjoy our school.

Accelerated Reader Program

Accelerated Reader (AR) is a program that helps motivate and encourages a love of reading. AR is coordinated through our Media Center in conjunction with teacher-directed goal setting. This program identifies the reading level of each child and guides students in selecting books that are at their reading levels. Points are awarded based on the accuracy of a student's answers to computer-based quizzes. Incentives for points and meeting goals are included in the program. Students will be encouraged to access MyON (app used to access online books) through Rapid Identity.

Arrival Procedures

Parents/guardians who take their children to school are required to drop them off at the front of the school between 7:45 and 8:15. Your child must stay with you until the bell rings. **Our tardy bell rings at 8:15. Students should be in their classrooms when the bell rings, or they are considered tardy for school.**

The drop-off area is along the front sidewalk of the school, with a one lane unloading area. Drivers should come to a complete stop, place their car in park, wait for a signal from the school employee on duty, and then let the student get out of the car and enter the building. Please make sure your child is ready to exit your car as soon as you pull up. **To ensure student safety, have your child exit on the passenger side of the car, which is on the side with the school's sidewalk and entrance.** *Parents* **may not** *drop off their children in any area except the car rider line. Due to traffic in front of the school, parents are welcome to park in a parking space in the parking lot and escort their child* **all the way to the front door** *to make sure he/she arrives safely. Parents* **may not park outside the parking lot area** *to drop off their child, and* **children may not walk alone from the parking lot** *to the school entrance.* **For safety reasons, passenger vehicles are not allowed to use the bus ramp area to drop off students.** *Once students enter the building, they will not be allowed to leave without the parent/guardian. Staff will ensure all students safely report to class.*

The school and the school district have policies for all walkers. Families who choose to have their child walk to school will need to contact administration for further details (850-983-7000).

When a student arrives after 8:15 am, the parent/guardian should accompany the student into the building. The parent must sign the child in as tardy.

Attendance & Truancy

Good school attendance is a major contributing factor to academic success in school. It is vitally important that children miss as little school time as possible. Good attendance includes not only being present but also being on time and staying for the entire school day.

Perfect Attendance, Tardies & Early Check-Outs

Excellent attendance is vital to the success of any student in school. Our school offers a "Perfect Attendance" award to students who have missed 0 days of school during the school year. The following is the criteria which must be met for a student to receive a "Perfect Attendance" award:

- *The student must be in attendance in class each school day at least 75% of the day—which equates to 4.5 hours total of the school day—for his/her attendance that day to count toward the perfect attendance award.*
- *A student may have excused (see 4.5061 below) late-to-school check-ins or early check-outs and still be eligible for the "Perfect Attendance" award (if he/she is in attendance at least 75% of those days). Three (3) unexcused late check-ins and/or early check-outs are equal to the student receiving one (1) unexcused absence according to the Code of Student Conduct.*
- **4.506 Late to School Check-In or Early Check-Outs**
  Students arriving after a school's designated start time are considered late to school and will receive a "Late to School Check-In" coding. Students checking out of school prior to the end of the school's designated dismissal time will receive and "Early Check-Out" coding.
  "Late to School Check-ins" and "Early Check-outs" will be identified as unexcused or excused. Three (3) unexcused "Late to School Check-ins" and/or "Early Check-outs" will equate to the student receiving one (1) unexcused absence. Section 1003.02, F.S., "authorizes district school boards to establish policies that allow accumulated unexcused tardies, regardless of when they occur during the school day, and early departures from school to be recorded as unexcused absences."
- **4.5061 Unexcused/Excused "Late to School Check-ins/Early Check-outs"**
  UNEXCUSED: *Missing the bus, oversleeping, skipping school, excessive illness without a doctor's verification, repeated late check-ins/early check-outs.*
  EXCUSED: *Personal illness, doctor/dentist appointment, special event pre-approved by school administration, other unavoidable events (with principal's approval).*

All absences are unexcused unless proper written notification is received within 3 days upon the pupil's return to school (School Board Policy). The school shall determine if the absence is excused or unexcused. Absences of three (3) or more consecutive days may require a doctor's note to excuse.

Excused Absences

Absences are "Excused" for the pupil's illness, serious illness or death of an immediate family member, medical or dental appointments (doctor's note required), religious holidays, court dates, special emergencies, or pre-arranged absences approved by the principal or designee. The school must receive a note explaining the reason for the absence within 3 days upon the pupil's return to school. Requests for pre-arranged absences must be made **5 days before** *the date of absence, should be made in writing, and must be approved by the administration. Any work sent with a student during a pre-excused absence is due upon the student's return to school. Absences during testing week: Absences other than for illness or emergency during testing week will be unexcused.* **Vacations are not excused during Florida Department of Education's state assessments testing week(s).**

Unexcused Absences

Absences for shopping trips, vacations, pleasure trips, or other avoidable absences which have not been pre-approved shall be marked "Unexcused." Any other absences will be marked "Unexcused" if a note has not been received within 3 days of the student's return to school.

Excessive Absences

The principal may require doctor's notes documenting an illness or injury for a child who has missed 9 or more days of school. Should such documentation not be provided, the absence will be considered **"Unexcused**.*"*

Missing 10 days of school, either excused or unexcused, is considered excessive, and parents may be contacted for a truancy conference to discuss strategies to prevent future absences. **The principal has the authority to retain any child who has been absent from school 20 or more days. The absences may be excused, unexcused, or a combination of both.**

Truancy Procedures for Unexcused or Excessive Absences:

The following are reasons for referral to the School Counselor and Principal for the development of a Truancy Plan:

- *Student with 5 unexcused absences within a 30-calendar day period*
- *Student with 10 unexcused absences within a 90-calendar day period*
- *Students with a total of 15 or more absences (excused or unexcused)*

Major Considerations in a Truancy Plan

- *The plan is developed in cooperation with the parent/guardian and school, but it can be developed without the participation of the parent/guardian should they choose not to attend.*
- *The plan carries over from school to school in Santa Rosa County and from school year to school year. After showing one (1) full school year of significant improvement in the student's attendance, the plan may be amended to lift certain requirements.*
- *Should a child's attendance not improve upon the development of a Truancy Plan, the parent/guardian could be summoned to appear in court. This could result in court-imposed sanctions and expectations.*

Afternoon car riders

If your child is a car rider in the afternoon, you may not arrive on school campus before 2 pm. This is very important so that the front drive of the school is left open for emergency vehicles and parents/guardians checking students out early for appointments. The SRO will monitor this.

Changes in Address or Contact Numbers

Notify the school office immediately of any changes in your address and/or emergency contact phone numbers. This includes your work number as well as the phone numbers of individuals listed as designees for checkout. **It is vital that the school maintain accurate and up-to-date emergency phone numbers for each child in case a parent needs to be contacted.** *If you change your address, we will need proof of residency. Reminder, safety is our top priority. In the event of an emergency, your contact number will be used to notify you.*

Change of Transportation:

Parents/Guardians are required to provide their child's student ID # before a change of transportation can be made via telephone. Your child's ID # remains the same from year to year. All transportation changes need to be made by submitting a Change of Transportation form (provided in the beginning of the year student packet) or by calling the school by **1:30 P.M.**

Checking Students Out Early

Please be mindful, early check-outs may interfere with your child's learning. We ask that students not be checked out early unless they have medical appointments that cannot be scheduled for after school hours. Should check-out of a child be necessary, all guests requesting to enter the building should be prepared to show a photo I.D. The child will then be called to the front office. ***The latest that you may check out a student is 2:00 pm.*** *If you attend a morning event, and check your child out afterwards, that child is no longer able to be on our school campus. If you need to return for an afternoon event, you will need to leave the child that you checked out with someone.*

Showing a photo ID will be necessary before we can release a student from our care. *Only individuals indicated by the parent/guardian on the written information cards or on legal documents are allowed to pick up a child. Should an emergency arise, and another individual is required to pick up your child, the parent/guardian must notify the front office in advance of this change. You must have student ID# to add someone to pick up your child.*

Before- & After-School Care – Community School

We have both before- and after-school childcare programs at our school. This program is under the direction of the Santa Rosa Community Schools Program. If you have any questions about this program, please call the Community School, 983-5650.

Conferences/Classroom Visits

Communication between home and school is vital for children to realize their full academic potential. **It is also important that we maintain the best environment possible for learning to occur.** *Please follow these guidelines when arranging to meet with your child's teacher:*

- *Arrange conferences in advance by contacting the classroom teacher by sending an email, by using the communication planner/folder, or by private messaging in Rooms. This procedure enables the teacher to be prepared to discuss your child's progress and have important information readily available. Conferences may be virtual or face-to-face and will be scheduled at a time when your child's teacher is not responsible for his/her class. Conferences during the teacher's planning block will only be scheduled upon teacher's availability. Most conferences will take place during special area classes, before or after school. Let the teacher know what specific items or concerns you would like to share or discuss before the conference occurs.*
- *Face-to-face conferences must be scheduled. All guests entering the building should be prepared to show a State issued photo I.D.*
- *Virtual conferences will be scheduled by the teacher using Microsoft TEAMS.*
- *To avoid classroom interruptions, always check in at the front office if you have items to drop off (lunches, clothing, homework). We ask that you leave items with the front office, and we will notify the teacher that items need to be picked up. No interruptions will occur during academic blocks unless there is an emergency.*

Curriculum

Curriculum is key to providing students with proper instruction. Our school maintains and uses state-adopted core curriculum materials in reading, math, science, social studies, and the arts.

Custody of Children

School personnel are bound by state law to release children and all information about the children (report cards, teacher notes, academic records, etc.) to both biological parents when the information is requested. **The only exception to this procedure occurs when the school has a judge signed copy on file of court orders specifying otherwise**.

Students may be released to the legal custodian of the child only. Upon request by a school official, proof of custody must be presented. The custodial parent has the right to register the child and to determine who may pick up the child after school or check the child out **unless we have a specific court order** *that affords the non-custodial parent those rights in certain situations.*

In the absence of court documents, biological parents have equal rights to the child in many circumstances. In the best interest of the child, we ask that parents in dispute please address issues through the court system and work out any custody issues outside of school hours. School is not the place for custody issues to be settled, and we do not want our students to be worried about those types of issues

while they are at school.

Discipline Policy

We know that all students can follow school rules and meet expectations. **It is the responsibility of our school staff to provide a safe and secure environment where all children can learn. Any behavior that causes our learning atmosphere to be disrupted will not be tolerated. Russell Elementary School uses the "Positive Behavior Intervention Support" (PBIS) approach to discipline. PBIS assists schools in increasing academic performance, increasing safety, decreasing problem behaviors, and establishing a positive school culture.**

With the help of PBIS, we want to have an atmosphere of kindness at our school with an emphasis on strong character.

Our students are expected to:

- *Be on time and prepared for school.*
- *Follow directions as they are given.*
- *Be kind to others and to themselves.*
- *Respect and care for the property of others as well as their own.*
- *Ask for help.*
- *Take responsibility for the choices they make.*

It is vital that parents, teachers, and school administration communicate frequently and support one another, especially when there is a discipline concern. The support, suggestions, and kind words from home go far in alleviating behavior problems at school.

Discipline Referrals

On occasion, a child may be sent to see the school principal, assistant principal or dean by the teacher for a disciplinary concern. This will only occur after a teacher has gone through his/her own classroom management system's consequences, but the child chooses to continue to misbehave. Such a visit to the office may result in an "Office Referral." This document is completed by the administration and ***emailed*** *home for a parent's signature. The referral becomes a permanent part of the student's record. The signature does not indicate agreement by the student or parent(s), but simply that the parent is aware that the student has received a discipline referral.*
School bus drivers, cafeteria staff, and/or paraprofessionals have the authority to refer a student for a discipline issue and submit to school administration. Only school administrators and teachers have the authority to conference with students regarding an office discipline referral.

Consequences

There are several consequences for an office referral. The type of consequence is an administrative decision and is based on the offense and the severity or chronic nature of misbehavior.

Consequences might include the following:

- *Time out in the dean or behavior coach's office.*
- *Loss of privileges (lunch detention, in-school detention, character assignment, loss of fieldtrips or out of school suspension etc.)*
- *Detention - Isolation from other children for the full school day. The student will spend the school day completing his/her work in a designated area of the school, away from other students.*
- *Out of school suspension – The temporary removal of a student from all classes of instruction on public school grounds and all other school-sponsored activities, except as authorized by the principal or the principal's designees, for a period not to exceed ten (10) school days.*
- **Homework assignments given will be due on the day the student returns to school.**
- **Corporal Punishment is not used as a discipline option at Bennett C. Russell Elementary**.

Dress Code

Appropriate student grooming and dress are primarily the responsibility of the student and the parent/guardian. Students are expected to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and neatness prior to coming to school. Students whose personal attire or grooming distract other students and/or teachers from their schoolwork shall be required to make necessary alterations to their attire and/or grooming. If such changes cannot be made at school, the student will be sent home to make the necessary changes. The principal or his/her designee will determine whether a student's attire or personal grooming violates the dress code guidelines (Student Code of Conduct).

No student will be allowed to wear clothing that is sleep wear. *In 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades, we ask that students not wear halter tops, spaghetti string shirts or tank tops. Sleeveless shirts are permitted. Students may not wear clothes that show obscene or offensive language, tobacco, alcohol, or advertisements for such products. For safety reasons, sturdy play shoes or athletic shoes are required for P.E.* **Crocs and slides can only be worn on non-PE days**. *Shoes with wheels or cleats are not permitted.*

Exceptional Student Education (ESE)

We do offer services for students with disabilities. Please contact our school counselor for information. If your child enrolls in our school and has previously been served in an ESE program, please share this information and/or a copy of the child's IEP.

ESOL

We do offer services for students whose first language is not English. Please check with our school counselor if you think your child may qualify for services.

Field Trips

Field trips are an important aspect of the total educational program at Russell Elementary School. For a student to participate in such an adventure, a permission form completed and signed by the parent or guardian must be turned into the teacher. These forms are sent home with the child well in advance of each field trip. Deadlines for money and forms are **strictly followed**. *Parents cannot expect a student to attend when the deadline has passed. We encourage parents to return needed payments and paperwork well before deadlines. This ensures that each student is accounted for, and proper payment is made to each vendor on time. We are now accepting online payments at* **myschoolbucks.com**. *Please note that when paying school fees online, payment must be made directly to each specific event or item; for example, funds cannot be transferred from a student's meal account to pay for a field trip, recorder, lost/damaged book, or any other event or item.*

If there are financial limitations that may prevent payment by the due date for your child's attendance on field trips, please contact the teacher and discuss your needs before the deadline; all measures will be taken to afford your child the opportunity to attend.

Reimbursement of field trip fees will not be given if a student is unable to attend the trip. Bus and venue expenses are determined by the number of students anticipated to be in attendance when planning the outing.

Bennett C. Russell Elementary reserves the right to deny any student the opportunity to participate in a school field trip based on student discipline. In the event a student will not attend a field trip, he/she may be placed in an age-appropriate class for the day, or he/she may work off an assigned detention.

Parents or guardians are welcome to attend field trips to serve as chaperones (as needed and based on the event and must be a School Board approved volunteer (to chaperone or have a Field trip Attendance Form turned in for each field trip to attend with their child). **However, ALL** *children going on field trips are* **required** *to ride the bus to the destination. Once the event has concluded, parents may check their child out through the classroom teacher in charge.*

These basic guidelines are required for a parent/guardian going with a classroom on a field trip:

Parents/guardians attending field trips must complete a **Volunteer Application Form** *(to chaperone) or a Field Trip Attendance Form (just to attend the trip with your child). The Volunteer Application Forms for such approval are available in the school office or from your child's teacher. These forms should be completed at least six weeks prior to the scheduled field trip as they will need to be approved by the School Board.*

Please remember the following guidelines when attending a field trip with your child:

- *Younger (or older) brothers and sisters are not allowed to attend field trips. While the field trip is an enjoyable experience, it is still part of the educational program and is a school-sponsored event for specific classes or grade levels.*
- *The use of tobacco products is not allowed on school premises or at any school function, including a field trip. This rule is in accordance with the policies of the Santa Rosa School Board. Please dress appropriately when representing our school. We recommend parents dress in compliance with school district dress code policies when on trips or when visiting our campus.*

Health Care Plans

A Health Care Plan (HCP) is developed for a student who has a health condition requiring a medical intervention or plan of action. If a

student becomes ill while at school, the Health Care Plan provides the school with the following:

- *Necessary medical information about the child*
- *Identification of the child's health needs such as medication required during the school day*
- *Creation of solutions to potential health problems that may occur in a school environment*
- *Development of plans for emergency medical situations*
- *Provides a safe environment that helps the child learn*

If a student's condition is life threatening, the parent/guardian should notify the school immediately to implement a Health Care Plan prior to the student's enrollment or attendance. If a student is diagnosed with a condition during the school year, the parent/guardian should alert the teacher or contact the school counselor.

504 Plans

Federal Law allows for the modification of a child's educational environment should the child exhibit a special need. Parents/guardians who have concerns and who want their child's eligibility to be determined for a 504 Plan should contact the school counselor. The counselor will collect data and schedule an eligibility determination meeting for the 504 committee team members (teachers, administrator, parents/guardians, and other professionals as needed). The 504 Committee will consider any physical or mental impairments and whether those impairments substantially impact on a major life activity—including the major life activity of learning when evaluating the child's eligibility for a 504 Plan. If the 504 Committee determines the student is eligible for a 504 Plan, the next step is for the 504 Committee to determine whether an accommodation plan is required. If an accommodation plan is necessary, the 504 Committee will determine what accommodations will best support the student. **504 Plans always require a formal evaluation process.**

Food Service Program

Our cafeteria is operated in conjunction with the Federal Government's Subsidy Program which requires us to serve a Type A lunch daily. This means your child gets one third of the daily food requirements when he/she eats a school lunch. Lunch includes a choice of entrées, up to 2 side offerings, and a choice of milk. Encourage your child to participate, get a tray, and try a variety of foods!

Our school cafeteria has received the Gold Award of Distinction from the US Department of Agriculture and the Healthier US School Challenge. Our school met certain guidelines through serving good quality foods, providing nutrition education, and physical education/activity.

While students are allowed to bring lunch from home, please do not send foods that require refrigeration or microwave warming. **It is suggested that students be able to independently open all packaging in a lunch brought from home to limit the extra handling from multiple people**. *Please do not send* **SODA OR JUICE** *for your child to drink during lunch.*

Online meal applications are located on the School District's website or on our school's website. **The meal application benefits our school with federal funding. The link for the meal application is www.myschoolapps.com/Application .** *You may also request an application form at any time during the school year. Applications must be filled out completely before being processed. Applications must be submitted each new school year. The federal government provides funding to schools each year for approved meal application status. Currently our school is at 65% free/reduced lunches. This eligibility status allows all our students to benefit from many aspects of Federal Title I Programs (i.e., tutoring, technology, hiring additional staff, purchasing additional learning materials, etc.) You may go to the school's website or visit our district's homepage to view additional information about Federal Title I Programs.*

MEAL	REGULAR PRICE	REDUCED PRICE	FREE
Breakfast	*$1.25*	*$.30*	*Free*
Lunch	*$2.80*	*$.40*	*Free*
Lunch (Adult)	*$5.00*	*N/A*	*N/A*

Breakfast

Breakfast is served from 7:45 – 8:10 daily. This year, 26-27, our school qualifies for universal free breakfast. Anyone who comes to breakfast is served at no charge. **Only** *those students arriving on a* **late bus** *(after 8:15) are served breakfast outside of this time frame.*

Eating Meals with Your Child

Parents are welcome to eat lunch with their child at school, but there will be no visitors allowed at breakfast. We encourage visitors to purchase a school lunch. There are tables designated for visitors to sit with their child, and these tables are located along the walls. Visitors may eat with their own child only (not classmates) and only at the designated tables. Please contact school administration if you have any concerns regarding these policies.

Grading Scale

The Santa Rosa County School District assigns grades based on the following scale:

Kindergarten

M*: Mastered Proficiency*
D*: Developing Proficiency*
B*: Below Proficiency*
Blank*: Not introduced/not assessed at this time*

Additional information will be provided to parents at a scheduled parent/teacher meeting during the first nine weeks of school.

1st through 5th Grade

A = 90 - 100
B = 80 - 89
C = 70 - 79
D = 60 - 69
F = 0 - 59
I = Incomplete

Art, music, and physical education classes are assigned grades of E (Excellent), S (Satisfactory), N (Needs Improvement), U (Unsatisfactory), or I (Incomplete).

School Counselor

Russell Elementary School strives to provide a quality educational program for every child, endeavoring to meet academic, physical, and social/emotional needs in a professional manner. Our counseling staff is a vital part of our total program. Our counselors serve the needs of our students, parents, and staff.

Our School Counselor helps parents by providing tips on how to handle discipline and emotional concerns with their child. The School Counselor also coordinates student testing needs throughout the school year. This includes Standardized Assessments, Progress Monitoring through STAR testing, and screenings (IQ, Reading and Math achievement, ADD/ADHD). Another major role of the School Counselor is to coordinate the Response to Intervention/MTSS Team. This team works with parents and teachers to ensure that our students are receiving the appropriate interventions and support to be successful in the classroom. The team meets bi-monthly (with teachers) to discuss student needs and to monitor student progress.

Student performance data is used to evaluate the success of instruction and interventions. The team works together to adjust strategies or to try new interventions.

When interventions are unsuccessful, or when the team sees a need for additional support, an ESE referral is considered. Once a referral is submitted, it is the responsibility of the eligibility team to determine if a student meets the eligibility requirements to receive ESE services. Parents may contact our School Counselor at any time to obtain information and have their questions answered.

Our school has a Military CYB-MFLC, Child and Youth Behavioral Military and Family Life Counselor. Military CYB-MFLCs are licensed counselors specializing in child and youth behavioral issues. They are available at no cost to assist children, youth, parents, family members, and staff of child and youth programs. They are available to provide short-term, non-medical counseling support to our military families. Services are private and confidential except for child abuse/neglect, domestic abuse and other duty-to-warn situations.

The Santa Rosa RISE (Resiliency Increasing Skills and Education) Program is available for K-5 students who are facing multiple risk factors including school behavior and academic problems, family problems at home, and personal and social problems. Counseling is

provided by a CDAC counselor utilizing the Botvin Life Skills Training and S.S. Grin curriculum.

Head lice

We are very proud of the cleanliness of our school. Consequently, we do everything we can to prevent the spread of head lice. Our "no nit" policy is strictly enforced for the benefit of your child. Children sent home because of head lice or nits must return to school free of head lice and nits within 2 days of their dismissal. Students must be cleared to return to their classroom by our health technician who will check their hair in the clinic. Absences beyond these 2 days are unexcused. Please make every effort to remove lice or nits the **same day the child is sent home so that the child can be cleared the next day to return to school. We will follow school cleaning procedures if there is a concern for the spread of lice. Siblings of a child found with lice will automatically be checked.**

Ill or Injured Children

Students who become ill or injured at school will be sent to our school clinic. An assessment of the child's well-being will be made, and the parent/guardian will be contacted if necessary. Please keep all contact phone numbers current. Please advise the school of any chronic or special health concerns your child may have. Should your child get sick the night before school, please exercise caution before sending him/her to class in the morning. He/she should be fever-free without medication for at least 24 hours before coming back to school.

School Board policy requires that any student with a contagious concern (such as pink eye, scabies, or head lice) be removed from contact with all other children immediately. It is also required that the parent/guardian return the child to school only after treatment and clearance is provided by a doctor or the school's clinic. ***Please note attendance policy****.*

Clinic

Students at school who are found to have a fever or who exhibit signs of illness will be sent to a "sick area" of the school clinic, and parents will be contacted. Students should be fever-free without medication for at least 24 hours before coming back to school. Students will be rescreened upon their return.

Internet Access

Our use of the Internet is vital in meeting the varied needs of our children. Each student using the Internet must have an Internet Access Agreement signed by their parent/guardian on file at school. This form is valid for one year and must be signed each year. Any changes must be made in writing by the parent/guardian. In our endeavor to promote Internet safety, Russell Elementary School would like to make you aware of some Internet safety tips provided by the School District. These tips can be found using the following link: https://sites.santarosa.k12.fl.us/discipline/CyberSafetyFreqAskedQuestions.pdf

Make-Up Work

It is the responsibility of the child to complete all missed assignments when he/she has been absent.

- *Upon his/her return to school, the student is allowed 3 days to complete and turn in all missed assignments. The teacher may grant an extension of time to be determined based on the length of the absence and the amount of makeup work.*
- *Tests announced prior to the absence may be given on the student's first day back to class.*
- *Assignments given prior to a pre-arranged absence are due the first day the child returns to class.*
- *Assignments given to a child suspended out-of-school are due the first day the child returns to class.*

Lost and Found

All lost and found items will be placed in a plastic bin at the end of Bennett C. Russell Boulevard (the cafeteria hallway near the east exit doors). This location will provide an opportunity for all students and parents to have easy access when searching for lost items. On the last Friday of each month, all unclaimed items will be sent to Goodwill. Lost glasses are kept in the front office.

Mandatory 3rd Grade Retention

The state of Florida adopted legislation that calls for mandatory retention for 3rd graders scoring a Level 1 on the FSA or less than 50% on the STAR assessment. Contact your child's teacher or administration for more details regarding this state law.

Media Center

We take an enormous amount of pride in our school's Media Center and the work of our Media Specialist. The Media Center is a key location used to encourage students with the love of reading and learning. All students are given opportunities to go to the Media Center as frequently as appropriate.

For the first few weeks of school, the Media Specialist will train students in how to access online books through digital programs. Through these programs, students will be able to access hundreds of online books to enjoy.

Students are allowed to check out two books at a time for one week. Students assume responsibility for a book upon checking it out. If lost or damaged in any way, the book must be paid for before another book can be checked out. We are now accepting online payments at **myschoolbucks.com**.

Medication

Russell Elementary School has a well-equipped health clinic staffed with a Certified Health Technician for the emergency needs of our children in pre-k through the 5th grade.

All medication used by our children must be delivered to the school by the parent/guardian in its original container. A "Dispersion of Medication Form" must be completed for each. This procedure applies to prescription and over-the-counter medicines such as cough drops, Tylenol, Benadryl, etc. Prescription medicines MUST have the child's name, doctor, name of medication, dosage, directions, and expiration date on the bottle or box. No student is allowed to have any medications (including over the counter) in their possession while at school, on a school bus, or at a school function. The only exceptions to this rule are Epi-pens, insulin pens, or asthma inhalers. Epi-Pens, insulin pens, or asthma inhalers will be permitted to be carried by the student with parental permission **and** *a physician's signature on the "Dispersion of Medication Form." The parent/guardian of a student with diabetes should contact the school to update the student's Health Care Plan for Insulin Dependent Diabetes Form.*

Any child discovered to be in possession of prescription medication could face serious consequences that may include out-of-school suspension or expulsion. Please refer to the Code of Student Conduct for further information, guidelines, and consequences related to student possession of medication.

Party / Birthday Invitations and Party food

To avoid hurt feelings and possible disruption to the learning environment, it is our policy not to allow students to hand out party or any other invitations at school unless the student is planning to give one to every student in the class. **Any foods or snacks sent to school for students must be individually pre-packaged / store bought unopened items to include ingredient list.** *You must pre-arrange with the teacher before bringing food or snacks to celebrate birthdays. Following this process allows the school the opportunity to monitor food given to students with health conditions.*

Pets/Animals

Caution is taken in allowing any animal on campus. All requests must be cleared through the office. No animals, dead or alive, are allowed on a school bus. Reptiles, turtles, and birds are not allowed.

Physical Education

It is a FL state requirement that all students are expected to participate in physical education classes. Only those children who provide a parent's note will be excluded from this requirement for 1 week. Children who need to miss more than one week of PE will be required to provide a doctor's note. The doctor's note will need to have a from this date, to end on this date. Please remember that students must wear tennis shoes on PE days (no Crocs, slides, sandals, etc.).

Report Cards & Midterm Reports

Students in all grades receive a report card every nine weeks. These report cards and midterm reports will be posted in the FOCUS Parent Portal.

Kindergarten parents/guardians are required to come in for a conference with their child's teacher to receive their child's **first report card**. *The teacher will contact the parent/guardian to arrange this conference. Students in first-fifth grade will not receive a paper copy of their report card or midterm report. Parents must log in to the FOCUS Parent Portal to view a published report card. It is the parent's responsibility to log in to the Parent Portal to access their child's grades. If a student has an IEP, the student will receive a paper copy of his/her progress report.*

1st-5th Grades REPORT CARDS in FOCUS
October 23, January 15, April 2, and May 25

1st - 5th Grades MID-TERM GRADE REPORTS
September 9, November 12, February 5, and April 22

Mid-Term Grade Reports are posted for grades 1st-5th at the 4½ week mark in each grading period. These reports are as important as the report card in communicating to parents how their child is succeeding academically. Please contact your child's teacher **immediately** *if you have any questions or concerns about your child's grades.*

Safety at School

Safety at Bennett Russell Elementary is our top priority! There are a variety of safety procedures that come into play at our school. Our students will participate in safety drills throughout the year. Given the number of students in our school building, listening and following directions are extremely important. Students will learn the sound of the fire alarm, and they will learn which exits to use from various locations in the building. Our school has lockdown procedures, and our students will learn in advance what will happen and how they should behave in a lockdown. In the event of an actual lockdown emergency at our school, parents are to follow the procedure listed below:
In the event of an actual lockdown, please do not come to the school to pick up your children. For the safety of all, no one will be allowed to enter or leave the building. All parents should meet at one of the following locations:

- *Primary Location:* **You will be notified of the location once we evacuate**
- *Alternate Location:* **You will be notified of the location once we evacuate**

We will use the Apps Rooms call-out system, our school website, and Facebook to provide updates when available. It is imperative to keep your phone number current to receive messages from Apps Rooms. The updates must be made in the Parent Portal through FOCUS and to do this you must contact the front office.

Supervision

Students are allowed on campus beginning at 7:45 each morning; there is no student supervision after 2:50 p.m. Students are under supervision throughout the day from 7:45–2:50. Please remind your child that he/she is never to leave an area without the knowledge and permission of the supervising adult. A School Resource Officer is on campus daily. The SRO is involved with our students and encourages safety habits, both in and out of school.

Special Area Classes

As part of our total educational program, every child in our school participates daily in a special area class. Special area classes include Art, Music, Physical Education. Our goal is to develop an appreciation for the contents of the course and to develop each child to his or her fullest potential in that area.

Student Electronic Devices/Mobile Devices Possession

A student may bring a mobile device to school. The mobile device must be **off** *during school hours so that noises from the device will not disrupt the instructional environment. Parents who need to reach their child (or vice versa) should communicate via the front office if an emergency arises. Failure to follow instructions from the school official in charge may result in a discipline referral. Continued use of a mobile device after being instructed by a school official not to do so may result in disciplinary action outlined by Santa Rosa County's Code of Conduct.*

Student Planners

Students in grades 3-5 are provided with a student planner and are required to use it. Students in grades KG-2 are provided with a communication folder. Teachers will instruct the children on proper use. This planner/communication folder is a vital part of good home/school communication. **Please check your** *child's planner/communication folder* **daily** *so that you will be aware of homework assignments, upcoming tests, and notes from the teacher.*

Testing

Standardized testing is utilized in all grades. Beginning with the 2026-27school year, the Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) will assess students in grades K-5 in English Language Arts (ELA) and grades K-5 in Mathematics. FAST is a progress monitoring assessment based on the Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards and will be administered as a computer-

based assessment three times per year. Scores are taken seriously and drive the intensity of instruction, the implementation of support services, and the professional development of our staff. When a student is having difficulty in class and test scores indicate concerns, it takes the effort of the school and the parents to work to improve student performance.

We will celebrate our success and work to improve areas of need. It is mandatory that students in 3rd grade who score a level 1 on the ELA FAST will be retained per state law. It is critical that testing be taken very seriously. However, we work hard to decrease student test anxiety by focusing on motivation and teaching students to do their best. Test preparation also helps students feel confident about their abilities.

Further information will be provided throughout the year regarding assessments and our school grade. Students with disabilities have some additional guidelines regarding assessment. Please contact the school for information.

Textbooks

Textbooks are loaned to our students by the School District. Children are responsible for the care of their textbooks. Should a child abuse or misplace a textbook, a fee will be assessed for the book's replacement. The child is loaned another textbook when all such debts are paid in full. We are now accepting online payments at **myschoolbucks.com**.

Title I

Russell Elementary is a full Title I school, meaning additional support and services are in place to better serve the needs of our students. We qualify as a Title I school because our free/reduced lunch counts are over 64%. This identification is a big advantage to our school because we receive this additional federal support to help meet student needs. These services and supports have included things such as UWF students serving as tutors, funding for an Academic Intervention Specialist and a Title I Paraprofessional, purchases of materials and classroom curriculum, leveled readers, stipends for before- and after-school tutoring, and computer software and hardware. Title I places emphasis on targeting students with academic needs and focuses resources where they can most benefit students.

Title I also support parent training and education. We continue to look for ways we can help meet parents' needs and keep parents informed about the curriculum and education of our students. We encourage you to share your ideas with us so that our school can partner with you. We also encourage you to check with our School Counselor to see what parent literature and parenting books are available to check out.

Title I - The Parents' Right to Know

Parents of each student attending a Title I school may request, and the district will provide information regarding the following in a timely manner:

- *The professional qualifications of their child's classroom teachers and*
- *If applicable, the qualifications of the paraprofessionals that are providing services in their child's classroom.*

Contact the Principal to make this request.

Title I - Parent Resource

Parents are welcome to visit the Parent Resource Center to check out academic materials that can provide opportunities to expand on school learning at home. Parents may also obtain information on services provided to families in Santa Rosa County.

Online computer access is available for Bennett C. Russell's parents. Anyone accessing the school computer is bound by the Santa Rosa County School Board Acceptable Use Policy Agreement for Non-Employees. Check in with the receptionist at the front desk for a Policy Agreement which requires a signature, and you will get a logon password to access the computer.

The computer is available for purposes such as the following:

- *Parent involvement Links*
- *Searches for educational information*
- *Pre-pay student meals at* **www.myschoolbucks.com**
- *Complete the Free/Reduced Lunch Application*
- *Online job search information*

Toys/Games

School is not a place for children to bring toys or games. Unless a teacher specifically requests toys or games brought to school for a special occasion, they must remain at home. Students should understand that toys and games brought to school **with teacher**

permission *should not become a problem on the bus nor be seen outside the classroom. Teachers may take up toys and games and request that the parents come pick them up.*

To keep our school as safe as possible and to avoid distractions in the learning environment, children are **not** *allowed to bring the following to school: knives, slingshots, firecrackers, toy guns, weapons of any kind, any type of ammunition (used or unused), marbles, trading cards of any type, beepers, CD players, electronic games or devices (including iPods), bats, or balls. Refer to the Code of Student Conduct for further information. Russell Elementary cannot be held responsible for any stolen or broken items.*

Transfer and School Choice Requests

There are times when a parent may need his/her child to attend a Santa Rosa school other than the school of his/her residential zone. The district has a policy by which a parent may request a transfer to another school, and if approved, the parent will be responsible for transporting his/her child to that school. Forms can be acquired from the school or at **https://sites.santarosa.k12.fl.us/SchoolChoice/default.htm/**. *The parent will need to attach a statement to the transfer form stating the reason for the transfer request. It is not always possible to approve all requests as the school must first serve those who reside within the school's attendance zone. At times, consideration may be given if space is available at the requested grade level. If a request for a transfer is approved for elementary school, it is only approved for the years the student will be in elementary school. The procedure to follow for a school transfer is outlined in the school board policy 5.20 Pupil Assignment.*

Transportation

Riding to and from school on a bus is a privilege. If a child chooses to misbehave on a bus, he or she will lose the privilege and will be suspended from the bus. Any student who repeatedly chooses to disobey the driver will be suspended from the bus. It will then become the responsibility of the parent to provide transportation to and from school daily. Truancy and attendance policies will be followed. Please work with us to ensure your child's bus behavior is appropriate.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to assume the supervision of their child when school is dismissed. Pre-K and K students will not be dropped off without someone present to receive them. We **highly recommend** *that someone be at home to also receive their kindergarten (and 1st – 5th) students. However, please rehearse with your child what to do if you are not home. One suggestion is to ask a neighbor to be a back-up plan if this is an option for you. If you are concerned about the safety of your child and feel someone always needs to be present to receive them (regardless of age), please work with your child's bus driver to develop a plan that best meets your child's needs. Again, bus drivers will not drop off students in Pre-K or kindergarten without a parent present unless otherwise arranged. Please consider it as best practice to always have someone present to receive elementary students (especially kindergarten children).*

**NOTE: District bus policy states that if a child does not ride their bus for 3 days in a row, the driver is not required to make a stop at that house. The parents must notify Transportation to resume pick-up. Transportation can be reached at 850-936-6004 ext. 7100.*

Basic Bus Rules

- *Stay away from the road while waiting for the bus to arrive.*
- *Follow the driver's directions the first time they are given.*
- *No eating or drinking is allowed on a bus without the driver's permission.*
- *Keep hands and objects away from the bus windows.*
- *Always sit quietly, facing the front of the bus. (No talking at all at railroad crossings).*
- *Glass containers, balloons, toys, or animals are not allowed on the bus.*
- *After exiting the bus, obey the driver's directions to cross the street.*

Bus Routes

The School Transportation Department and Student Transportation of America, Inc. (S.T.A.) bus company establish bus routes. Neither the driver nor the school has the authority to make changes to the routes.

Car Rider/Afternoon Pick-Up Procedure

*Do not arrive at the school campus before 2:00 pm to pick up your child. We need to keep the drive at front of the school open for emergency vehicles and parents/guardians checking out their child for appointments. Car riders are dismissed at 2:29 and should be picked up no later than 2:50. A parent who will be picking up a student on a regular basis will need to obtain a "car rider tag," which has an assigned number on it, and place the tag with the number side out on the rear-view mirror. *Car rider tags are issued at the beginning of the year or on an as-needed basis from the front office staff. If your car rider tag is lost or you need more than two, you may request them through the front office.*

Helping your child learn his/her car rider tag number will expedite the car loading process. As a parent in the afternoon car rider line, you will enter one of the designated lanes at the front of the school and **wait in your vehicle***. Your child will be dismissed in the order designated. You will need to remain in your vehicle, and someone will assist your child in your car. Please follow the map you received in your beginning-of-the-year packet to assist with proper line-up and procedures.*

**If a student is only going to be a car rider on rare occasions, the parent will not need a car rider tag for their student, but they must submit a note or call by 1:30 p.m.; be sure to have the 10-digit ID# on the note. Transportation changes made via telephone require the student's ID #. No changes will be made without this number.*

Transportation Changes

- *Changes in your child's afternoon transportation must be made early and well in advance.* **Please send the "Change of Transportation" form** *detailing the change,* **available in the beginning-of-the-year packet and on our website.** *Your child must give it to his/her teacher at the beginning of the school day.*

- *If the form is forgotten, please call the school office (983-7000) by 1:30 p.m. After 1:30, unless it is an emergency, we cannot guarantee that the transportation change will be made. Be prepared to provide student ID #.*

- *Only individuals indicated by the parent/guardian on the student information card are allowed to pick up a child. Should an emergency arise, and another individual is required to pick up your child, you must notify the front office of this change (student ID # will have to be provided).*

Volunteers/Parent Engagement

A key to the success we enjoy as a school is directly attributable to the engagement of our parents. We encourage our parents to join us in partnership to continue to increase student achievement and motivation to learn. Please continue to watch for any updates that may be sent home in school flyers, posted on our school's website or Facebook page, and through call outs.

All volunteers are required to complete a Volunteer Application Form **each** *year. The completed form is submitted to the School Board during the monthly meetings for approval. Volunteering is scheduled through a school personal and is based on needs. Parents are not guaranteed to be able to volunteer in their child's classroom. However, we have a variety of school needs, and we welcome volunteers to support a variety of school functions. Check with the administration if you have questions.*

If you can volunteer and assist us during the school day, siblings are **not** *allowed to come along. Their presence can be a distraction to the children in the classroom and take your attention away from the task at hand. Also, school-age brothers/sisters/relatives (elementary, middle school/high school or home schooled/Online students) are* **not** *allowed to attend special day events that would pull them from their own classes.*

Become a school volunteer	*Join and participate in the Cardinal Booster Club*	*Assist with Accelerated Reader*
Attending parenting workshops	*Schedule regular parent/teacher conferences*	*Communicate with the teacher*
Instill a love of learning in your child	*Read and spend time with your child daily.*	*Provide a place at home for your child to study.*

Water bottles

*If you decide to send your child to school with a water bottle, **the bottle must be clear and made of plastic**.*

Web Site

The internet address for our school web site is: https://bre.santarosaschools.org/o/bre
*Please like our Facebook page, **@Cardinal Connection**, for another method of communication.*

Parents and students are encouraged to use this website for school information. We update the website frequently and want to provide students, parents, and the community with the most up-to-date information.

The following is a list of some of the information provided on our website:

Parent notification of CHOICE options
Notices regarding Parent Family Engagement Plan (parent recommendations for revisions at the Annual Title I Parent Meeting)
Copy of the Parent Family Engagement Plan
Notices of schoolwide parent meetings and agendas
Notices of surveys or other documentation soliciting parent input
Notices of parent engagement activities
Parent/School Compact
Parents' Right to Know Requirement
Link to district resources for parent engagement
Schoolwide parent newsletters
Change of Transportation form
Florida Department of Education link
Parent/Guardian Request for Student Information (form 63-11-54) (Parents use this form to register for email notification)
School Advisory Council meeting schedule, agendas, and approved Meeting Minutes

Withdrawals

To withdraw students from school please follow these steps:

- *The **parent/guardian** should contact the school office at least **2 days** before the student's last day.*
- *Have the city, state, and name of the school your child will be withdrawing too.*
- *Verify that all textbooks, library books, and any school property that your child has borrowed is returned.*
- *Pay any lunch money owed.*
- *Return Car Rider tag, if applicable.*