



Ray Childers Elementary School

1183 Cape Hickory Road

Hickory, NC 28601

828-324-1340 or 828-324-1349

2026-2027 STUDENT HANDBOOK

The faculty and staff of Ray Childers Elementary are committed to leading and inspiring students to reach their highest academic potential. We strive to meet the needs of every child to ensure their success in the 21st century. Communication between home and school is essential in this mission, as parents serve as a vital component throughout the school year in the learning process.

This handbook will serve as a very important communication tool. We ask that you take time to read over the procedures outlined in the following pages so that you are familiar with the day-to-day operations and school policies, as well as the expectations we have set for our students.

We look forward to working with you and your children this school year and know that working together we can help all of our students become "Prosperous Pirates"! As always, please call if you ever have questions or concerns.

Karen Goins

Principal

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance will help your child gain the most from the instructional program. Good attendance habits are established early in the formative years and carry throughout one's lifetime.

Parents and guardians are responsible for seeing that their children attend school each day it is in session, according to the **BURKE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD POLICY** and the **COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAW (GS115C-378)**. There is strong evidence of a clear relationship between good attendance and school achievement. Absences from school will be excused for the following reasons **only**:

1. Illness of the student.
2. Religious holidays approved by the school system.
3. Death in the immediate family.
4. Family emergencies.

The school may request a doctor's statement for frequent or lengthy absences (8 unexcused absences) for illness. Unlawful absences will be coded as truant.

When a child returns to school after being absent, the parent or guardian is expected to send a note stating the reason for the absence. If the child will be absent for three days or more, please contact the school.

According to N.C. General Statutes and the Burke County School's attendance policies and laws, we are required to mail a letter home to students when they receive their **3rd, 6th, and 10th unexcused absence**. Any student missing more than 8 days total for the year will require any further absences to be approved by the principal, assistant principal, or a doctor's note.

Parents may pick up homework that a student missed in the front office because of an absence. Please call to verify, in the morning, to arrange pick-up.

Tardies:

We also request your efforts to minimize school tardies. All students who are tardy must report to the office before going to class. **All parents must walk their child(ren) into the building and sign them in if they are tardy.**

Unexcused Tardy(s)

The first bell rings at 7:50am and the tardy bell rings at 7:55 am.

Student Code of Conduct/Discipline Procedures for "Unexcused Tardies".

- 3 Unexcused Tardies = Warning notification given by the teacher by calling (dojo) parents.
- 7 unexcused tardies= Receive a call from counselor
- 8 unexcused tardies= Lunch Detention
- Every third consecutive unexcused Tardy= Lunch Detention
- At Ray Childers Elementary School, we place a very important value on each and every student's academic progress and excellence. Please make every effort to assure your child arrives to school on time. The less disruptions to class, the more time our teachers can spend on important instructional time.

EARLY STUDENT DISMISSALS

If a student leaves before school is dismissed parents **MUST** come to the office to sign them out. If a student leaves school and then returns, **he/she must check back in at the office**. A student must be in

class for three hours to be counted as present for that day. Students with excessive tardies may be required to make up lost instructional time, as arranged by the principal.

We request that you not sign your child out early from school unless it is an emergency. Our instructional day begins at 7:55 AM and ends at 2:40 PM. If your child is tardy or checked out early they are missing valuable teaching time. **For all checkouts after 2:30**, we will ask for medical documentation. If you need to check your child out please have their appointment card with you for verification. We encourage you to schedule your child's doctor and dental appointments around school hours.

Every 9 weeks, during academic excellence, we will recognize our perfect attendance students and our students with no unexcused tardies.

Each name will be entered into a drawing for a prize during academic excellence. These awards are:

- Attendance Survivor
- Punctual Pirate

VISITORS

Visitors are welcome at Ray Childers Elementary School; however, all visitors are required to check in at the office and get a visitor's pass before going to any classroom or the lunchroom. Parents are expected to respect the teacher's duties to provide quality instruction from 7:55 AM until 2:40 PM. All classroom visits are to be pre-arranged by the administrator.

SCHOOL DAY

The school day for students begins at 7:55 AM and ends at 2:40 PM. Students may arrive as early as 7:30. Teachers and assistants will be on duty at that time to supervise the students. If students need to arrive before 7:30 or stay after 2:40, there is a before and after-school daycare program available. Applications for this service are available from the YMCA. Students need to be dropped off in the car rider line and walk to class independently. Staff will be located throughout the building to assist students. Students may not be dropped off in the bus parking lot. Breakfast will be served from 7:30 to 7:55. Anyone dropping off or picking up students should park only in the provided marked spaces.

BELL SCHEDULE

Morning Bell Schedule:

7:30 a.m. – Students may be dropped off at school

7:50 a.m. – Bell to Start School

7:55 a.m. – Tardy Bell

Afternoon Bell Schedule:

2:40 p.m. – Dismissal (car and bus)

SCHOOL TRAFFIC

We need your cooperation with traffic patterns at school to ensure that all children are dropped off and picked up safely. We ask that parents load and unload students in the designated area in front of the school. Parking spaces along the front are numbered for drop-off and pickup. Everyone picking up students must have the car tag (provided by the school) before a child will be allowed to leave campus. Please do not park and come and get your child from the car rider area. Staff needs to monitor the adults that are picking up each child to ensure that they are only released to the adults authorized by each parent to pick up their children. The bus loading and unloading areas are closed to all

unauthorized traffic. Please do not exit your car to pick up your child. The bus lot drop-off is for PreK and daycare only.

CAFETERIA

Our school provides a daily breakfast and lunch program. All student and adult prices are subject to change.

Student Breakfast: FREE

Student Lunch: FREE

Adults Lunch is Ala Carte

Below are ways you can add money to your child's account:

- (1) Cash.
- (2) Online payment using Titan Family Portal. If you have problems or have questions not answered on the website, please call 1-844-467-4700. [LINQ Connect](#)
- (3) Check.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Please make every effort to update your contact numbers. We must have a working telephone number for emergency purposes. There are times when an emergency necessitates our having an exact current address and phone number. If any information on your child changes during the school year, you need to notify the school office. Please include an email address on school information forms. Weekly emails/phone calls will be made via SchoolMessenger to keep parents updated on weekly events.

All students living outside the Ray Childers school district **MUST** have an approved transfer form and sign a student transfer contract.

ACCELERATED READING PROGRAM

This is a web-based program where students log onto Renaissance Learning's Website and have access to over 100,000 Quizzes. Students will only be allowed to take quizzes at school. Parents will also be able to log in to the website and monitor their child's progress from home. Teachers will provide this information. Parents may use their child's username and password to view their child's AR progress from home. Parents may also sign up to receive email notifications when their child takes an AR test. Students will be given a quarterly AR goal to help motivate independent reading at home. Teachers will conference with students weekly concerning AR progress. Students who meet their goals will be recognized at our quarterly awards programs.

DRESS CODE

Students should always wear clothing that is suitable for school. No pajamas, spaghetti straps, or halter tops will be allowed. All shorts, skirts, and dresses must come to mid-thigh. Please refer to the Burke County Public School Student Code of Conduct for further information concerning the student dress code. You may be asked to bring clothes for your child throughout the day. If students do not meet the Burke County Board of Education Policy 4316 they will be asked to change clothing or call home for a change of clothes. Multiple offenses could warrant ISS. Please note that our clothing closet is limited and for emergencies only.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

We encourage each parent to be involved in our school. A parent may have a conference with a classroom teacher by contacting his/her child's teacher for an appointment.

- Pre-K & Kindergarten will hold a minimum of three conferences per year.
- Grades 1-3 will hold a minimum of two conferences per year
- 4th and 5th will conduct a minimum of one conference each year.

Teachers are required to have 100% parent attendance at all conference times. If you are unable to attend and would prefer that the teacher meet you at your home, please call us and we can make that arrangement.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

We welcome the opportunity of having parent volunteers in our school. If you are interested in volunteering your time, please notify Kelly Aldridge. All volunteers at Ray Childers are required to have an approved volunteer application on file as mandated by Burke County School Board Policy. Please note that the Central Office must receive this form 30 days prior to the volunteer-related activity in order to process the application on a timely basis. You must sign in and wear a badge to volunteer in the school. This information can be found in the office or on the Burke County website:

[Volunteer Information](#)

STUDENT HEALTH CARE

The following procedures will be used to determine student sickness and parent notification:

1. FEVER- A child having an elevated fever of 100 at school will result in parent notification and will be sent home.
2. RASH- A suspicious rash that could possibly be contagious will result in parent notification.
3. NAUSEA & VOMITING- The parent will be notified and asked to make arrangements to have the child picked up at school.
4. HEAD LICE – Any evidence of lice or nits in a child's hair will result in parent notification and the child will be sent home. Your child must be cleared by the office before being allowed to return to school. The first absence for lice will be excused and all days absent for lice afterward will be unexcused.

State law requires [these vaccinations](#) before a student enters kindergarten and 7th grade.

MEDICATION POLICY

School personnel is prohibited by Board policy from administering **any** type of medication to students without proper authorization from parents and the child's doctor. Parents **MUST** supply the needed information when sending medication to schools. Forms are available in the school office.

SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Our purpose is to keep parents aware and informed of school events, dates, and happenings. Grade level newsletters will be sent home monthly as well with information specific to that grade level.

All forms and calendar events including the school report card, parent involvement policy, Title I plan, and School Improvement plan may be found on the Ray Childers website at

<https://childers.burke.k12.nc.us/> or the Burke County School's website at www.burke.k12.nc.us

FIELD TRIP GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

In an effort to make school field trips as safe and educational as possible, the staff and PTO at Ray Childers Elementary have created a list of guidelines for field trips. Please remember that most all school field trips are educational in nature and not an opportunity for a family trip. Volunteer applications are available online [BCPS website](#) or at the school office.

- All parents attending the trip must be approved volunteers and be willing to chaperone a group of students alone. If you are planning to attend and stay with the group, do not need a volunteer form on file. Volunteer status is good for three years. Please be aware that some trips may not need parent chaperones and others may, but on a limited basis.
- Parents must pay the full price for a field trip. In some cases, adult ticket prices cost more and in an effort to keep student prices as low as possible, chaperones attending the trip will be required to pay the extra cost.
- Students must come to school the morning of the trip and ride the bus to the destination. Otherwise, they will be counted absent and not allowed to participate with the class.
- Students must stay with the teacher or assigned chaperone during the entire trip.
- All students attending the trip must eat with the school. Children can pack their lunch from home but everything including packaging must be disposable.
- No other children (or siblings) may attend the trip regardless of age.
- School dress code for teachers will apply to all parent chaperones attending the trip. Jeans are permitted and shorts must come to mid-thigh. No tank tops or spaghetti strap tops are allowed and no shirts that expose the midriff area are allowed.
- Parents attending the field trip as a chaperone must be signed up by the cut-off date established by the grade level or teacher going on the trip. This is so all tickets and meal arrangements can be made.
- No form of tobacco products is allowed at any time.
- Children are allowed to ride home from the trip with their parents or guardian only. No exceptions.
- Any student riding home with the parent must wait until all students are seated on the bus and accounted for before signing your child out with his/her homeroom teacher.

USE OF SCHOOL MATERIALS

Students should return all school-provided materials (i.e., textbooks, library books, calculators, iPads and/or laptops, etc.) on their last day of attendance each year. It will be necessary to pay for any items that are not returned. Student debts will carry over to the next school year.

CANCELLATIONS DUE TO BAD WEATHER

In the event of extreme weather conditions causing the school to close early, announcements of school cancellations will be broadcast over local radio stations, a phone tree message will be sent, and posted on the Burke County School's website, Facebook Page, and Twitter. You can assist the school by listening to the radio for this information rather than calling the school. There is also a Burke County Public Schools Weather Hotline number **433-8047**. Parents are asked to plan and discuss with their child the course he/she should take if school closes during the day. Parents should inform their child and his/her teacher where the student is to go and his/her mode of transportation. The information must be indicated on the child's registration and emergency form.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

The administration, faculty, and staff believe that acceptable behavior on the part of all students is necessary to achieve the desired goals of optimum educational opportunity. Our goal is to develop mutual respect between home and school with parents, students, and teachers. Discipline is defined as

well-ordered, directed behavior. Responsibilities in the positive development and maintenance of disciplined behavior are shared by parents, guardians, students, teachers, and principals. We hope that all discipline measures used at Ray Childers will be used as a teaching tool to encourage better attitudes and behavior. With a close working relationship between school and home, major discipline problems can be avoided.

Students referred to the office under these circumstances may be given either, as prescribed by the Student Code of Conduct adopted by the Burke County Board of Education:

[BCPS Code Of Conduct](#)

SCHOOL RULES

Racy Chilrs Elementary conforms to the rules and policies set by the Burke County School Board of Education found in the Student Code of Conduct.

1. Possession of the following items is forbidden at school, on school-owned buses, or at any school function and can result in immediate suspension:
 - > Controlled Drugs
 - > Tobacco Products (matches/lighters included)
 - > Alcoholic beverages
 - > Obscene Literature
2. Fighting at school or on the bus is forbidden and is grounds for suspension depending on the severity, provocation, and other mitigating circumstances. This is left to the discretion of the principal. Students must keep hands and feet to self.
3. Harassing and mistreating another child is never appropriate and will not be tolerated. This includes, but may not be limited to name calling, inappropriate or profane language, bullying, sexual harassment, or intimidation.
4. Improper touching of another person is not permitted and may be grounds for suspension.
5. Students are expected to show respect to staff members and other students. Refusing to follow instructions promptly, providing false information, arguing about the appropriateness of their behavior, or refusing to respond to reasonably asked questions is a serious offense and may result in suspension from school.
6. Vandalism or theft of school property or personal property of another person will not be tolerated. Parents may be asked to pay restitution for any such offense.
7. Students are instructed not to sell, buy, barter, trade, give, or dispense goods, money, or services without prior approval from a teacher or the principal.
8. When using technology, students must abide by the BCPS Acceptable Use Policy.
9. Toys and valuable items should be kept at home at all times. We ask that students not bring items to school that can be lost, stolen, disruptive or dangerous. Bats, balls, skateboards, personal electronic devices, handheld electronics and games, valuable jewelry, trading cards or any other item of this nature are not permitted at school unless prior permission is given. These items will be confiscated and a parent will be asked to come to the office to pick it up. RCES is not responsible

for any item lost or stolen at school.

10. Students are expected to obey all safety rules at all times. We expect our students to walk while on school grounds and inside the building unless they are involved in a class activity that requires otherwise. Students should not engage in horseplay or “play” fighting or wrestling at any time.
11. Quiet voices should be used inside the building at all times unless otherwise instructed by a teacher.
12. Chewing gum and candy should not be brought to school unless your child’s teacher gives prior permission.
13. Tennis shoes are required for PE. Please no dress shoes, sandals, flip flops, or Crocs on PE days to ensure the safety of your child.

Consequences will be administered depending on the severity and the frequency of the offense in accordance with the Burke County Public Schools Code of Conduct.

STUDENT CELL PHONE (BCPS Board Policy 4318)

BCPS recognizes that **cellular phones** and other wireless communication devices have become important tools through which parents communicate with their children. However, an unintended consequence of wireless device usage is the lost instructional time resulting from class disruptions. **Cell phones** and other wireless communication devices are permitted on school property but are prohibited from use during instructional hours without permission from teachers and administrators. Such devices shall not be activated, used, displayed, or visible during the instructional day or as otherwise directed by school rules or school personnel. Wireless communication devices include but are not limited to, **cellular phones**, electronic devices with an internet capability, paging devices, two-way radios, and similar devices.

BUS RULES

Riding the bus is a privilege and may be taken away from those who cause disturbances or jeopardize the safety of others. The Burke County School Board has a policy to ensure the safety of all students that ride a bus.

1. Enter the bus quietly.
2. Keep feet on the floor.
3. Keep your hands to yourself.
4. Talk in a low voice and use appropriate language.
5. Remain in their assigned seat at all times.
6. Absolutely no fighting.
7. No food, drink, candy, or gum is allowed on buses.
8. Obey Bus Driver At All Times.

All school rules apply to behavior on the bus AND at bus stops.

Actions taken by Principal for Unsatisfactory Bus Conduct

- 1st Offense – Written Warning
- 2nd Offense – 3 Day Bus Suspension
- 3rd Offense – 5 Day Bus Suspension
- 4th Offense – 10 Day Bus Suspension
- 5th Offense – Bus Suspension for the REMAINDER OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

*If the nature of the student's offense is of a serious nature, (i.e., fighting, vandalism, etc.), the principal may exercise the right to waive a "warning" and proceed immediately to the suspension alternatives.

Ray Childers Elementary Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

The RCES PTO is a great way to get involved in your child's education.

The PTO helps raise funds for the school in order to provide some of / but are not limited to the following needs:

- Technology for each Classroom
- Teacher Appreciation/ National Education Week Luncheons
- P.E. Equipment
- Student Competitions
- Educational Teaching Tools
- Equipment for the Music Department

PTO also assists the school in holding their annual fundraising event called "Pirate Palooza." This is a day of great fun for the kids and the community. The PTO is a great way to become involved in your child's education and make a difference in your community.

Become a proud PIRATE ~ Join PTO

Ray Childers PTO Executive Board

2024-2025

President: Kris Carswell

Vice President:

Secretary: Cassie Peacock

Treasurer:

Pre-K-2 Teacher Rep

3-5 Teacher Rep

Special Areas Rep

The PTO meets each month on the second Tuesday of the month

RAY CHILDERS ELEMENTARY ATHLETIC ORGANIZATION (RCEAO)

Ray Childers Elementary Athletic Organization offers the following sports:

1. Football (Signups in July & August)
2. Cheerleading (Signups in August)
3. Outdoor Soccer (Signups in August)

4. Basketball (Signups in October)
5. Indoor Soccer (Signups in January)
6. Softball (Signups in March)
7. Baseball (Signups in March)

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