

Salem Elementary School
Home of the TIGERS



2026-2027
Student Handbook

1329 Salem Road
Morganton, NC 28655
828-497-5901
www.ses.burke.k12.nc.us

Mission: To provide a safe environment where students can become critical thinkers and life-long learners with self-confidence and the ability to work cooperatively towards a productive life.

Welcome to Salem Elementary!

Dear Salem Tigers and Families,

Welcome to another exciting school year at Salem Elementary! Whether you are joining us for the very first time or returning for another year as a Salem Tiger, we are thrilled to welcome you to our school family.

At Salem, we believe every child has unique talents, limitless potential, and the ability to make a positive difference in our school and community. Every day, our teachers and staff work together to provide a safe, supportive, and engaging environment where students are challenged to grow academically, socially, and emotionally.

Our vision is simple:

Ready to Learn. Ready to Lead. Ready to Roar.

Being **Ready to Learn** means coming to school prepared to do your best, ask questions, and embrace new challenges.

Being **Ready to Lead** means showing kindness, making responsible choices, helping others, and demonstrating integrity in everything you do.

Being **Ready to Roar** means celebrating your accomplishments, showing school pride, and having the confidence to become the very best version of yourself.

This handbook is designed to help students and families understand the routines, expectations, and opportunities that make Salem Elementary such a special place. Inside, you'll find helpful information about our school, along with the shared expectations that help every classroom feel welcoming, safe, and ready for learning.

Our partnership with families is one of our greatest strengths. By working together, communicating openly, and supporting one another, we can provide every child with an exceptional elementary school experience.

Thank you for trusting us with your child each day. We are honored to be part of your family's journey and look forward to a year filled with learning, laughter, growth, and unforgettable memories.

Welcome to Salem Elementary—

where every Tiger is encouraged to be **Ready to Learn, Ready to Lead, and Ready to Roar!**

Sincerely,

Dr. Amber Halliburton
Principal, Salem Elementary School

What It Means to Be a Salem Tiger

Being a Salem Tiger means being part of a school where every student is welcomed, valued, challenged, and encouraged to succeed. Whether you're entering Pre-K, beginning kindergarten, or preparing for fifth grade, you are an important part of our Salem family.

At Salem, we believe every student can learn, grow, and make a positive difference. We celebrate effort, encourage perseverance, and believe that mistakes are opportunities to learn. Every day is a new chance to ask questions, discover something new, help a friend, and become the best version of yourself.

Everything we do is guided by our vision:

Ready to Learn

We come to school prepared, curious, and ready to do our best. We work hard, ask questions, and never stop learning.

Ready to Lead

Leadership begins with everyday choices. We show kindness, make responsible decisions, help others, and set a positive example through our words and actions.

Ready to Roar

We take pride in ourselves, our school, and our accomplishments. We celebrate success, encourage one another, and proudly represent Salem wherever we go.

Being a Salem Tiger means more than attending school—it means being part of a community where everyone belongs. Together, we support one another, celebrate each other's successes, and work every day to make Salem a place where all students can thrive.

Welcome to Salem Elementary. We are proud to have you as part of our Tiger family!

The Tiger Trio

Three Simple Expectations.

Every Student. Every Day. Everywhere.

At Salem Elementary, everything we do is guided by three simple expectations known as the **Tiger Trio**. These expectations help us create a school where everyone feels welcome, respected, safe, and ready to learn.

Whether you're in the classroom, hallway, cafeteria, playground, bus, or at a school event, the Tiger Trio reminds us how Salem Tigers treat others and represent our school.

Be Respectful

"I treat others the way I want to be treated."

- I use kind words and actions.
 - I listen when others are speaking.
 - I follow directions the first time.
 - I respect my classmates, teachers, and visitors.
 - I care for our school and the belongings of others.
-

Be Responsible

"I do the right thing and give my best effort."

- I come to school ready to learn.
 - I complete my work and try my best.
 - I make good choices, even when no one is watching.
 - I take care of my materials.
 - I accept responsibility for my actions.
-

Be Safe

"I help keep myself and others safe."

- I keep my hands, feet, and objects to myself.
 - I walk safely throughout the building.
 - I use equipment and materials correctly.
 - I report unsafe situations to an adult.
 - I help create a school where everyone feels safe.
-

Every Classroom. Every Hallway. Every Day.

The Tiger Trio is more than a list of school rules. It is how we build a caring school community where everyone has the opportunity to learn, grow, and succeed.

When every Salem Tiger chooses to **Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Safe**, our school becomes a place where everyone is...

Ready to Learn. Ready to Lead. Ready to Roar.

Tiger P.R.I.D.E.

Building Character. Growing Leaders.

At Salem Elementary, we believe that strong character is just as important as strong academics. Every day, Salem Tigers work to develop the qualities that help them succeed in school, at home, and in their community.

These five character traits make up **Tiger P.R.I.D.E.**

 TIGER P.R.I.D.E. <i>in Action</i>  LIVING OUR CHARACTER EVERY DAY Common examples of how Salem Tigers demonstrate character throughout the school day.										
CHARACTER TRAITS	 ARRIVAL & TIGER TIME	 CLASSROOM	 HALLWAYS & TRANSITIONS	 CAFETERIA	 RESTROOMS	 PLAYGROUND	 SPECIALS	 ASSEMBLIES	 BUS	 DISMISSAL
 PREPARED <i>I am ready for success.</i>	Arrive on time, ready to learn, and start the day the right way.	Bring needed materials, be seated, and focus on learning.	Walk on the right, face forward, and transition quickly and quietly.	Know your lunch choice and carry your tray safely and carefully.	Use the restroom quickly and wash your hands.	Be ready to play and follow expectations for safe and fun play.	Bring what you need and be ready to participate.	Arrive quietly, focus your attention, and be ready to learn.	Be seated, face forward, and keep your area clean.	Know your plan, gather your things, and exit safely.
 RESPECTFUL <i>I treat others with kindness and care.</i>	Greet others with kindness and use appropriate language.	Listen actively, use kind words, and encourage others.	Respect personal space and the belongings of others.	Use polite words, say "please" and "thank you," and follow adult directions.	Respect others' privacy and keep the restroom clean.	Include others, use kind words, and play fairly.	Listen to instructions and respect others' ideas and materials.	Show appreciation and respect for speakers and peers.	Use appropriate voice level and respect the driver and others.	Be patient and respectful while waiting for your ride.
 INTEGRITY <i>I do the right thing, even when no one is watching.</i>	Do what is right without being asked and follow expectations.	Complete your own work and make responsible choices.	Follow expectations without reminders or shortcuts.	Make healthy choices and clean up after yourself.	Follow restroom procedures even when no adults are present.	Follow rules, report problems, and keep everyone safe.	Use equipment and materials as intended and take care of them.	Stay engaged and follow expectations the entire time.	Stay in your seat, keep hands to yourself, and follow rules.	Follow your plan and leave the building the right way.
 DETERMINED <i>I give my best and don't give up.</i>	Start the day with a positive attitude and stay focused.	Stay engaged, ask questions, and keep trying even when it's hard.	Move with purpose and keep the line moving without distractions.	Stay seated, follow directions, and finish what you start.	Take care of what you need to do and return quickly.	Try new things, solve problems, and keep playing fairly.	Participate fully and do your best in every activity.	Persevere through long programs and stay focused.	Follow directions and remain seated until dismissed.	Stay focused on your plan and leave without distractions.
 EXCELLENCE <i>I represent Salem with pride.</i>	Set a positive tone for the day and represent Salem with pride.	Take pride in your learning and help others succeed.	Be a leader by example and help keep our school safe and welcoming.	Demonstrate great manners and show appreciation to those who serve you.	Leave the restroom better than you found it.	Encourage others, include everyone, and represent Salem with pride.	Do your best work and show respect for our school community.	Represent Salem with respect and pride in every way.	Be a positive example for others on the bus.	End the day the right way and represent Salem with pride.
 EVERY CLASSROOM  EVERY SETTING  EVERY DAY   <i>Ready to Learn.</i>  <i>Ready to Lead.</i>  <i>Ready to Roar.</i> 										

Character Matters

Tiger P.R.I.D.E. is more than an acronym—it is the way Salem Tigers learn, lead, and grow. These character traits help us become thoughtful learners, caring friends, responsible citizens, and future leaders.

Every day is a new opportunity to show **Tiger P.R.I.D.E.**

Character is built one choice at a time. Every day, every Salem Tiger has the opportunity to show Tiger P.R.I.D.E. and help make our school stronger.



SALEM **STUDENT PLEDGE**

I am a Salem Tiger.

**I will be respectful,
responsible, and safe.**

**I will come ready to learn,
make good choices,
show kindness,
and always do my best.**

**I am ready to learn,
ready to lead,
and ready to roar.**



Student Expectations

Salem Elementary follows the Burke County Public Schools Student Code of Conduct and all applicable Board of Education policies. The Salem Standard gives students clear, consistent expectations for every classroom and school setting.

The Salem Standard

- **Our Vision:** Ready to Learn. Ready to Lead. Ready to Roar.
- **Our Expectations:** Be Respectful. Be Responsible. Be Safe.
- **Our Character:** Prepared. Respectful. Integrity. Determined. Excellence.
- **Our Systems:** Tiger P.R.I.D.E. Matrix, Voice Levels, Tiger Line, Hand Signals, and other schoolwide routines.

These expectations apply in classrooms, hallways, restrooms, the cafeteria, playgrounds, buses, field trips, school events, and all school-sponsored activities.

Be Respectful

Students are expected to:

- Use kind, appropriate words and actions.
- Listen when others are speaking.
- Follow adult directions promptly and respond respectfully.
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to themselves.
- Respect the personal space, belongings, and differences of others.
- Use the assigned voice level for each setting.
- Avoid name-calling, teasing, bullying, threats, profanity, and inappropriate language.
- Allow others to learn without unnecessary interruptions.

Be Responsible

Students are expected to:

- Come prepared and ready to learn.
- Participate, use learning time wisely, and give their best effort.
- Follow classroom routines and the Tiger P.R.I.D.E. Matrix.
- Take care of school property, technology, buses, and the belongings of others.
- Clean up after themselves and help care for shared spaces.
- Use BCPS technology and approved digital resources appropriately.
- Accept feedback, correct mistakes, and make better choices.
- Tell a trusted adult when someone needs help or when a concern arises.

Intentional damage to school property, technology, buses, or another person's belongings may result in restitution.

Be Safe

Students are expected to:

- Walk calmly inside the building and in designated areas.
- Follow the Tiger Line and other movement procedures.
- Avoid running, pushing, grabbing, play fighting, horseplay, and inappropriate touching.
- Use school spaces, materials, and equipment as intended.
- Follow safety procedures during arrival, dismissal, transportation, drills, and emergencies.
- Remain in assigned areas unless given permission to leave.
- Report unsafe situations to an adult immediately.

Personal Items

Toys, games, trading cards, personal electronics, jewelry, money, and other valuable items should remain at home unless a teacher or administrator gives permission.

Students may not buy, sell, trade, share, or give away personal items or money without permission. The school cannot guarantee the security of personal belongings brought to campus.

Technology and Personal Devices

Only BCPS-issued devices should be brought for school use. Students must follow the BCPS Acceptable Use Policy and all teacher directions when using technology.

- Headphones must be plug-in only. Wireless headphones are not permitted.
- Cell phones may be brought when necessary but must remain turned off and stored in the student's backpack throughout the school day and while riding the bus.
- Smartwatches may not be used to send messages, make calls, take pictures, record, or access apps during school hours.
- Students may not use another student's device or account.

DRESS CODE EXPECTATIONS

Students should wear clothing that is comfortable, school-appropriate, and safe for learning and play. Families are asked to help students choose clothing that provides appropriate coverage and allows them to participate safely throughout the school day.

These Salem guidelines help explain **BCPS Board Policy 4316, Student Dress Code**. They are not all-inclusive. The BCPS Student Code of Conduct and Board policy remain the official requirements.

Ready for the School Day

Students should:

- Wear a shirt or top with pants, shorts, a skirt, a dress, or an equivalent garment.

- Wear clothing that is opaque and covers the chest, stomach, back, undergarments, and private areas.
- Wear shorts, skirts, and dresses that reach approximately mid-thigh when standing and continue to provide appropriate coverage during normal movement.
- Wear shoes appropriate for classroom activities, recess, and the weather.
- Wear tennis shoes on PE days for safe participation.

Baseball-style caps may be worn at Salem. Hoodies are permitted, but hoods must remain lowered inside the building.

Not Appropriate for School

Students should not wear or bring:

- Pajamas, pajama pants, sleepwear, bedroom shoes, or slippers
- Spaghetti-strap, strapless, halter, backless, or cropped tops that do not provide appropriate coverage
- See-through clothing without appropriate clothing underneath
- Clothing that exposes undergarments or private areas
- Clothing or accessories displaying profanity, hate speech, sexual content, violence, gang-related references, or images promoting alcohol, tobacco, vaping products, drugs, or illegal activity
- Clothing, footwear, jewelry, or accessories that create a safety concern
- Blankets
- Sunglasses inside the building unless needed for a documented medical reason
- Headwear that covers the face, prevents identification, or creates a safety concern

School-approved spirit days and special events may include exceptions announced in advance.

Addressing Dress Code Concerns

Dress code concerns will be handled privately and respectfully. Students will be allowed to adjust or change clothing, and families will be contacted when needed. Repeated concerns or refusal to comply will be addressed according to the BCPS Student Code of Conduct. Contact the principal or school nurse about needed accommodations.

Teaching and Reinforcing Expectations

Student behavior is taught in the same way as academic skills. Staff will model, practice, reinforce, and reteach expectations throughout the year. When expectations are not met, responses will consider the student's age, the behavior, previous interventions, school procedures, Board policy, and the BCPS Student Code of Conduct.

Every setting. Every student. Every day.

Ready to Learn. Ready to Lead. Ready to Roar.

Arrival, Dismissal & Transportation

A smooth start and a safe trip home help every student have a successful day. Thank you for following Salem's procedures and helping us keep arrival and dismissal safe, welcoming, and organized.

School Hours

- Students may begin arriving at **7:30 a.m.**
- Breakfast is served from **7:30–7:55 a.m.**
- The first bell rings at **7:50 a.m.**
- The tardy bell rings and instruction begins at **7:55 a.m.**
- Pre-K dismissal begins at **2:35 p.m.**
- Kindergarten–Grade 5 dismissal begins at **2:45 p.m.**

Students should not be dropped off before 7:30 a.m. Staff supervision is not available before that time.

Morning Arrival

Students should be dropped off through their designated car-rider line. Please do not drop students off in a parking lot or the bus area. Staff members are stationed throughout campus to welcome students and help them reach the correct location.

Breakfast

- Pre-K students go to the cafeteria with their class and eat there.
- Bus riders and all fourth- and fifth-grade students pick up breakfast in the main building.
- Kindergarten through third-grade car riders pick up breakfast in the cafeteria.
- Students in kindergarten through fifth grade eat breakfast in their classrooms.
- On rainy days, all students pick up breakfast in the cafeteria.

Students arriving after 7:50 a.m. are considered tardy. A parent or guardian must accompany the student into the building and sign them in through the front office before the student reports to class.

Parents and guardians are welcome to walk their children to class during the first week of school. Beginning with the second week, all visitors entering instructional areas must check in through the front office and receive a visitor badge.

Families bringing snacks for a classroom may place them on the Snack Cart in the lower parking lot during morning arrival. School staff will deliver the snacks to the appropriate classroom. Food items may also be dropped off at the front office throughout the school day.

Car Riders

Salem uses school-issued car hangers to help dismissal move safely and efficiently. Each family receives four car hangers at the beginning of the school year.

Please display your Salem car hanger where it can be easily seen during afternoon dismissal. Families needing an additional or replacement hanger may contact the front office.

If a car hanger is not displayed, the driver will be asked to park and show photo identification before the student is released. We appreciate your patience with this additional safety step.

During afternoon pick-up, families should remain in their vehicles and follow the directions of school staff. Students may only be picked up through the appropriate car-rider line.

Choosing the Correct Car Line

Lower Car Line

The lower car line serves:

- Pre-K
- Kindergarten
- First grade
- Families with a child in Pre-K through first grade and older siblings attending Salem

Only Pre-K families may park and walk to retrieve their child. A Salem car hanger must be presented before the child is released.

Upper Car Line

The upper car line serves students in grades 2–5 who do not have a younger sibling in Pre-K, kindergarten, or first grade.

With the exception of Pre-K families, parents and guardians should remain in their vehicles and should not park and walk to the dismissal areas.

Transportation Changes

We understand that a student's afternoon transportation may occasionally need to change. To help us make sure every child gets home safely, all changes must be received by **2:00 p.m.**

A parent or legal guardian may request a transportation change by:

- Visiting the front office in person; or
- Sending a ClassDojo message to **Mrs. Patrick or Mrs. Smith.**

Parents and guardians should also send the student's classroom teacher the same information through ClassDojo. However, the message must be sent to Mrs. Patrick or Mrs. Smith so the change can be added to the school's official transportation-change form. If the office does not receive and verify a transportation change, the student will follow their regular transportation plan.

Students may not request or report their own transportation changes. Bus drivers may not approve changes to a student's transportation or bus stop.

If a student will ride home with another student on a school bus, the school must receive permission from the parents or legal guardians of both students.

For students beginning bus transportation, office staff will communicate with the Burke County Bus Garage and provide the family with available route and stop information.

Student Release

Students will only be released to a parent, legal guardian, or authorized adult listed in the student's records. Families are responsible for notifying the school of changes to

authorized contacts or custody arrangements and providing any applicable legal documentation.

Photo identification may be required before a student is released.

Adults should not go directly to a classroom or dismissal area to retrieve a student. Students leaving school early must be signed out through the main office and will meet the authorized adult in the secure entry area, or airlock, inside the main building.

Early Checkouts

Students leaving before regular dismissal must be signed out through the front office by a parent, legal guardian, or other authorized adult.

Students will be called from class after the adult arrives and completes the checkout process. For everyone's safety, students cannot be released directly from classrooms, hallways, the cafeteria, playground, specials, parking lots, or car lines.

Checkouts after **2:00 p.m.** should be limited to emergencies or verified medical appointments. This helps protect instructional time and allows staff to prepare for a safe and orderly dismissal.

Late Pick-Up

Students who remain at school after dismissal will be taken to the designated late pick-up area in the main building. Parents or guardians arriving after **3:00 p.m.** must enter the building and sign their child out through the front office.

Bus Transportation

Students who live within Salem Elementary's attendance area may be eligible to ride a school bus. Riding the bus is a privilege, and students are expected to follow all safety rules and the directions of the bus driver.

Parents and guardians should allow a **10-minute window before and after the scheduled stop time** to account for traffic, delays, or necessary route adjustments.

A parent, guardian, or other responsible adult should be present at the bus stop to receive the student.

Entering and Exiting the Bus

Students are expected to:

- Wait in a safe location away from the roadway.
- Wait until the bus has stopped completely and the stop arm is extended.
- Watch for the driver's signal before approaching or crossing in front of the bus.
- Enter the bus calmly and go directly to their assigned seat.
- Remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop.
- Exit only when directed by the bus driver.

Bus Expectations

While riding the bus, students are expected to:

- Remain seated, facing forward, in their assigned seat throughout the ride.
- Follow the bus driver's directions the first time they are given.
- Use a low voice and school-appropriate language.
- Keep hands, feet, objects, and personal belongings to themselves.

- Treat the driver, other students, and bus property respectfully.
- Keep food, gum, and candy put away.
- Keep computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices put away.
- Avoid horseplay, fighting, or any behavior that could distract the driver.
- Keep the aisle and emergency exits clear.

Bus Behavior Concerns

When a student does not follow bus expectations, the school will communicate with the family and take steps to restore safe behavior. Consequences may include:

- A conference with the student
- Parent or guardian contact
- A seat change
- A bus behavior plan
- Temporary or long-term suspension from bus transportation

The following consequences may be assigned for repeated or serious bus-rule violations:

- **First offense:** Conference with the student, parent or guardian contact, and up to three school days of bus suspension
- **Second offense:** Up to five school days of bus suspension
- **Third offense:** Up to ten school days of bus suspension
- **Subsequent offenses:** Suspension from bus transportation for the remainder of the school year

The severity of the behavior may result in a higher-level consequence. Students who deliberately damage a school bus may also be held responsible for repair or replacement costs.

Before- and After-School Care

Before- and after-school care is available through the YMCA. Families may contact the school office for additional information.

School Closings and Early Dismissals

When school is closed, delayed, or dismissed early because of weather or another emergency, information may be shared through:

- ClassDojo
- Salem Elementary's Facebook page
- The district's school messaging system by telephone or text
- The Burke County Public Schools website and social media accounts
- Local news outlets

Families should keep their contact information current and review their transportation plans with their children before an unexpected early dismissal occurs.

Thank you for helping every Salem student arrive safely, begin the day ready to learn, and return home safely each afternoon.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Burke County Public Schools monitors weather conditions in consultation with local law enforcement and the Highway Patrol. Decisions about delays, closings, or early dismissals are generally made between 5:00 and 5:30 a.m.

Announcements will be shared through:

- The BCPS website and social media accounts
- Salem Elementary's ClassDojo and Facebook page
- Local television and radio stations

If BCPS has not announced a schedule change, schools will operate on a regular schedule. Families should keep their contact information current and have a plan for unexpected early dismissals.

The BCPS–YMCA Before and After School Program follows district weather decisions. If school is canceled, YMCA programs are also canceled. After-school activities and events will be considered individually and communicated to families.

ATTENDANCE

Regular, on-time attendance helps students remain **Ready to Learn**. Attendance is required for students ages 7–16 and for younger students once enrolled. Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that students attend and remain at school each day.

Arriving Late or Leaving Early

Instruction begins at **7:55 a.m.** Students arriving after 7:55 must be signed in by a parent or guardian. Students leaving early must be signed out by a parent, guardian, or authorized adult. Attendance is based on instructional time missed, so students should attend before or after appointments whenever possible.

Reporting an Absence

Documentation must be submitted to the office or homeroom teacher within three school days. Families may submit a written parent note, a ClassDojo message to the homeroom teacher, or official medical or dental documentation. Absences remain unexcused until documentation is received.

Common excused absences include illness; medical, dental, or mental health appointments; court proceedings; and a death in the immediate family. Family vacations and family or organizational trips are unexcused.

Attendance Notifications

BCPS provides support and sends notifications as absences accumulate:

- **3 unexcused absences:** The family receives written notification.
- **6 unexcused absences:** The student is referred to the Attendance Intervention Team and the BCPS Attendance Engagement Coordinator. The family may be asked to attend a meeting and sign an Attendance Improvement Agreement.
- **8 total absences:** Official medical documentation is required for future absences.
- **10 unexcused absences:** The case may be referred to the District Attorney or juvenile court authorities under North Carolina's Compulsory Attendance Law.

Parents may submit handwritten notes for up to eight qualifying absences. Students who accumulated 15 or more absences during the previous school year may be required to provide medical documentation for all absences during 2026–2027 and may not use handwritten parent notes.

Makeup Work

Students may make up work missed because of an excused absence, short-term suspension, or approved school activity. Teachers will provide the assignments and an appropriate completion timeline.

Related Board Policy: 4400, Attendance

TEACHER/PARENT COMMUNICATION

Strong communication between home and school helps students remain **Ready to Learn, Ready to Lead, and Ready to Roar**. Families are encouraged to stay informed, communicate with teachers, attend school events, and support learning at home.

ClassDojo

All parents and guardians should join their child's ClassDojo class. Teachers use ClassDojo for classroom updates, announcements, reminders, and individual messages. Families may also message the principal, school nurse, and school social worker. ClassDojo should not be used for emergencies; please call the school office when immediate assistance is needed.

Take-Home Tuesday

Students bring home completed work and important information each Tuesday. Families should review these materials and follow grade-level directions about which items should be kept at home or returned to school.

School Newsletters

A digital school newsletter is sent through Smore each Sunday afternoon. It includes schoolwide announcements, upcoming events, important reminders, and links to each grade level's monthly newsletter.

School Events and Updates

Information is shared through ClassDojo, the Salem Elementary Facebook page, the school website, and schoolwide newsletters. Families should check these sources regularly.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parents and guardians may request a conference at any time by sending the teacher a ClassDojo message or written note or by calling the school. Teachers will also request conferences when additional communication or support is needed.

Phone Calls

To protect instructional time, calls to teachers are sent to voicemail or recorded for follow-up. Teachers return calls during planning time or after school. For urgent matters, please contact the school office.

Infinite Campus Parent Portal

The Infinite Campus Parent Portal allows families to review grades, attendance, schedules, and student information. It is also used to complete required annual registration updates. Families can obtain an activation code and create an account using the [BCPS Parent Portal Self-Service instructions](#). The school office can provide assistance when needed.

Changes in Student Information

Notify the school office immediately when an address, telephone number, workplace, emergency contact, or custody information changes. Current information is essential for routine communication and emergencies.

Related Board Policy: 1310/4002, Parental Involvement

Visitors and Volunteers

Salem Elementary welcomes families and community members as partners in student learning. To protect instructional time and maintain a safe school, all visitors and volunteers must follow the procedures below.

Visiting Salem

All parents, guardians, guests, volunteers, vendors, and community members must:

- Enter through the main entrance and report directly to the office.
- Sign in, state the purpose of the visit, and receive approval before entering other areas.
- Wear a visitor or volunteer badge where it can be easily seen.
- Remain in the approved area of the school.
- Follow staff directions and all school safety procedures.
- Return to the office to sign out before leaving.

Visitors may not go directly to classrooms, the cafeteria, playgrounds, or other areas without office approval. Conferences, classroom visits, and observations should be arranged in advance to protect instructional time.

All Salem employees are required to wear identification badges. Staff members will direct anyone without visible identification to the office. Please notify a staff member immediately if you see an unidentified adult in the building.

Protecting Student Privacy

Visitors and volunteers may learn or observe private information about students while on campus. Student behavior, academic performance, medical needs, family information, and other personal information must remain confidential.

Visitors and volunteers may not photograph, record, or post information about students other than their own child without school authorization.

Volunteering at Salem

Volunteers provide valuable support to students, staff, and school programs. Opportunities are coordinated by the school based on current needs.

Before volunteering, adults must complete the screening and training required by BCPS for their level of student contact. Volunteers must:

- Sign in and wear a volunteer badge during every visit.
- Work under the direction and supervision of a staff member.

- Remain in the assigned area and complete only approved tasks.
- Maintain student and staff confidentiality.
- Use appropriate language and behavior.
- Refer behavior concerns to a staff member rather than disciplining students.
- Follow all school, district, and safety expectations.

Volunteer approval does not guarantee a particular assignment or access to every school activity. The principal may limit or discontinue volunteer participation when necessary to protect students, preserve confidentiality, or support school operations.

Service Animals

Only trained service animals are permitted on campus. Emotional-support animals and pets are not permitted.

Related Board Policies: 5015, School Volunteers; 5020, Visitors to the Schools; and 4202/5029/7272, Service Animals in Schools

School Meals and Cafeteria Guidelines

Breakfast and lunch are free for all BCPS students. Students eat lunch in the cafeteria with their class. Extras such as chips, cookies, and ice cream may be purchased at à la carte prices. Adult meals cost \$3.00 per entrée and \$0.75 per side.

Breakfast

Breakfast is served from **7:30–7:50 a.m.** Breakfast is not served on three-hour delay days.

- Pre-K students go to the cafeteria with their class and eat breakfast there.
- Students in grades K–3 pick up breakfast in the cafeteria and eat in their classrooms.
- Fourth- and fifth-grade bus riders pick up breakfast in the main building and eat in their classrooms.
- On rainy days, all students pick up breakfast in the cafeteria.

Salem Cafeteria Expectations

The Tiger Trio applies in the cafeteria. Students are expected to be respectful, responsible, and safe by:

- Knowing their lunch choice and carrying trays carefully.
- Using polite words and thanking cafeteria staff.
- Remaining seated unless given permission to move.
- Using **Voice Level 1**.
- Cleaning their area and disposing of trash.
- Following directions and being ready to transition with their class.

Menus and Payments

Monthly menus are available through [BCPS Nutrislice](#). Money for extras may be sent to school as cash or a check or added online through [LINQ Connect](#).

Adult Lunch Visitors

Adult lunch visitors may begin joining students for lunch during the **second week of school**. Visitors must sign in at the office, wear a visitor badge, and sit at the designated parent tables.

Adults may sit only with students for whom they are the legal guardian or are listed as an emergency contact. Students return to their class when lunch ends.

Food Allergies and Dietary Needs

Please share any food allergies or special dietary needs with the school nurse. To help us provide safe and appropriate meal accommodations, families must submit a doctor's note describing the student's dietary needs.

Meals from Home

Students may bring lunch from home. School staff cannot heat student meals, so all food should be packed ready to eat.

Classroom Treats

Classroom treats may be sent for birthdays or approved activities at the teacher's request. Families must contact the teacher before sending food.

Treats must be commercially prepared by a licensed facility, unopened in the original container, and clearly labeled with ingredients. Homemade food may not be distributed to students. Store-bought cupcakes are permitted and will be given to students at the end of lunch.

Beverages and Water Bottles

Soft drinks and energy drinks are not permitted at school. Students may bring a water bottle filled with water only. Bottles must close completely with a screw-on or flip-top lid. Tumblers with exposed or pop-up straws, sliding lids, or partially open tops—including Stanley-style tumblers—are not permitted.

Related Board Policy: 6200, Goals of School Nutrition Services

Student Health and Wellness

Healthy students are ready to learn. Families and staff work together to keep every Salem Tiger safe, healthy, and prepared for a successful school day.

Health Information & Requirements

Please notify your child's teacher, the school office, or the school nurse about allergies, medical conditions, dietary or activity restrictions, emergency care plans, or medications needed at school. Provider documentation may be required so appropriate plans and supports can be arranged.

Students must have current immunization records. Students entering a North Carolina public school for the first time must also submit a health assessment completed within the 12 months before enrollment. Required records must be provided within 30 calendar days of the student's first day of attendance.

Kindergarten families must provide documentation within 180 days of the start of the school year showing that the child received a vision screening or comprehensive eye examination within the previous 12 months. A qualifying health assessment may meet this requirement. ([Board Policy 4110](#))

When Your Child Is Sick

Please keep your child home when they have:

- A fever of 100°F or higher
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- A severe headache
- Red, watery eyes with yellow or green drainage
- An unexplained rash
- Symptoms of a possible contagious illness

Students may return after being fever-free for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication. Students should also remain home until they have been free from vomiting and diarrhea for at least 24 hours.

If your child becomes ill at school, a parent, guardian, or authorized emergency contact will be called. Please arrange for prompt pickup and keep emergency contact information current. ([Board Policy 4230](#))

Head Lice

If live lice or nits are found, the family will be contacted. The student must be treated at home and checked and cleared by school staff before returning to class. Families should

check their children regularly and avoid sharing combs, brushes, hats, and other personal items.

Medication at School

Prescription and over-the-counter medication may be given at school only when medically necessary and when a completed Medication Administration Request Form or Emergency Action Plan is on file.

- The form must be signed by both the parent/guardian and the healthcare provider.
- A new form is required each school year and whenever the medication or dosage changes.
- Medication must be brought to school by an adult in its original, properly labeled container.
- Students may not carry medication in pockets, backpacks, or lunch boxes unless an approved emergency self-carry plan is on file.
- At the elementary level, only approved inhalers or epinephrine may be self-carried after authorization by the physician and school nurse.
- Cough drops, sunscreen, and insect repellent are considered medication and require the appropriate form. Lip balm does not require a form.

Medication is stored securely and administered only by trained staff. Forms are available in the school office and on the [BCPS Medication webpage](#). (Board Policy 6125)

Health Screenings

BCPS provides hearing, vision, and other health screenings at designated grade levels and when concerns arise. Families will be contacted when follow-up is recommended. If you do not want your child to participate in school screenings, please notify the school nurse. ([BCPS Health Screenings](#))

Please contact the school nurse whenever you have questions or concerns about your child's health.

Grading and Report Cards

Families can view available grades and attendance through the **Infinite Campus Parent Portal**. Please contact the school if you need assistance accessing your account (Board Policy 3400).

Pre-K

Pre-K students receive a developmental progress report based on preschool learning goals.

Grades K–2

Reading and math progress is reported using a standards-based scale:

- **4** – Consistently exceeds grade-level expectations
- **3** – Consistently meets grade-level expectations
- **2** – Sometimes meets grade-level expectations
- **1** – Not yet meeting grade-level expectations

Writing, science, social studies, enrichment, and learning and social behaviors may be reported as:

S – Satisfactory **I** – Improving

N – Needs Improvement **U** – Unsatisfactory

Grades 3–5

Core academic subjects use the following grading scale:

A: 90–100 **B:** 80–89 **C:** 70–79

D: 60–69 **F:** Below 60

Enrichment classes, guidance, and conduct may be reported as:

S – Satisfactory **N** – Needs Improvement **U** – Unsatisfactory

Families should review grades and report cards regularly and contact their child's teacher with questions or concerns about progress.

Field Trips

Field trips extend classroom learning through meaningful experiences connected to grade-level content. Planned trips and anticipated costs will be shared with families by the end of the first month of school whenever possible.

Participation and Cost

- A signed permission form is required for each trip.
- Salem makes every effort to keep the cost of each field trip at or below \$50 per student.
- No student will be excluded because of economic hardship or disability.
- Families who need financial assistance should contact the teacher or school as early as possible.
- Only administration may determine that a student cannot participate because of an exceptional safety or behavioral concern.
- Field trips are for students enrolled in the participating class. Siblings and other non-enrolled children may not attend.

Transportation

Students must travel to the destination using school-provided transportation. A student may return with their own parent or guardian after being signed out with the teacher. Parents may not transport other students.

Parents and guardians attending a trip should plan to provide their own transportation.

Student Expectations

The Salem Standard applies during field trips. Students are expected to:

- Be respectful, responsible, and safe.
- Follow directions from teachers, chaperones, drivers, and site staff.
- Remain with their assigned group.
- Represent Salem with Tiger P.R.I.D.E.

Chaperones

Parents and guardians interested in chaperoning should contact the classroom teacher. A BCPS volunteer form must be completed and approved at least 30 days before the trip. Approved forms remain valid for three years.

Chaperones must:

- Supervise an assigned group of students for the entire trip.
- Follow teacher directions and the established schedule.
- Maintain student confidentiality.
- Pay any required adult admission fee by the stated deadline.
- Refrain from bringing siblings or other children.
- Follow all school, district, transportation, and field-trip expectations.

Submitting a volunteer form or expressing interest does not guarantee selection as a chaperone. The number of chaperones is based on the needs of the trip. Failure to follow expectations may prevent an adult from serving as a chaperone on future trips.

Related Board Policies: 3320, School Trips; and 5015, School Volunteers

YMCA

The YMCA of Catawba Valley operates before- and after-school programs at Salem Elementary. Students remain on campus under the supervision of YMCA staff.

Hours

The program operates each day that school is in session.

- **Before School:** 6:00–7:30 a.m.
- **After School:** School dismissal–6:00 p.m.

The YMCA also offers School's Out care on selected nonstudent days. Separate registration may be required.

Registration and Rates

Families must register directly with the YMCA before a student may attend. Current rates and program options are available in the [2026 Burke County Program Guide](#).

Financial assistance and subsidy vouchers may be available through the YMCA.

YMCA Communication

For daily program questions or concerns, families should contact the Salem Elementary YMCA staff first.

- **Salem Elementary YMCA:** 828-999-8614
- **Burke County School-Age Programs:** 828-578-6992
- **Regional Programming Director, Rebecca Bolick:** 828-838-3804

For registration, accounts, payments, financial assistance, or subsidy vouchers, contact:

Kristy Meiners, Childcare Business Administrator
828-838-1562

The YMCA operates and supervises this program. Questions about registration, payments, staffing, or program concerns should be directed to YMCA personnel.



BURKE COUNTY
Public Schools

2023-2028
Strategic Plan

Our All-In Promise

People and Relationships First! The BCPS All-in Promise cultivates genuine relationships between students, staff, parents/caregivers, and the community. It recognizes the contributions of all, implements exemplary learning opportunities for all, supports well-being for all, and strengthens all school and community partnerships. We believe all students have a bright future and will make positive contributions to the community throughout their career journeys. While each student's path is unique, it is our responsibility to equip them with the educational tools they need to make their dreams come true. We are committed to all students to continuously improve school experiences by putting people first, offering Academic Opportunities For All (Goal 1), supporting All-around Well-being (Goal 2) and All Schools Connected to the Community (Goal 3).

Goals	Student Objectives	Faculty/Staff Objectives	Parents/Caregivers Objectives
Academic Opportunities for All	- Individual learning - Extracurriculars - Early learning - Post-secondary support - Digital resources	- Recruit - Retain - Support - Develop - Leadership - Personalize PD	- Resources - Engagement
All-around Well-being	- Safe environment - Instructional time - Relationships - Responsibility	- Safety training - Restorative practices - Mental/physical health - Substance abuse awareness/prevention	- Safety protocol resources - Social issue resources
All Schools Connected to the Community	- Student achievement recognitions - Service and workforce opportunities - Mentors	- Internal communication - External communication - Fiscal responsibility	- Parent collaboration - Parents/community engagement - Two-way communication between home and school
Measurables	Indicators for All Academic growth Graduation Rate Attendance Enrollment Retention		



Academic Competitions

26-27 Competition Dates:

- Spelling Bee — Date and location to be announced
- Speech Contest — Date and location to be announced
- Archery Competition — Date and location to be announced
- MathCounts — Friday, February 26, 2027 — NCSSM–Morganton
- Honors Chorus — Date and location to be announced
- Science Fair — Thursday, March 4, 2027 — Old Rock School; awards at 6:00 p.m.
- Battle of the Books — Friday, April 16, 2027 — Western Piedmont Community College
- Robotics Competition — Thursday, April 29, 2027 — Glen Alpine Elementary