

VALDESE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HOME OF THE TIGERS



2026-2027 STUDENT HANDBOOK

Mrs. Courtney Hull, Principal

Mrs. Savannah Cole, Assistant Principal

Mission Statement

Valdese Elementary School strives to provide students with a safe, positive, and challenging learning environment in which students become productive and confident lifelong learners.

Vision Statement

Valdese Elementary School will prepare students to live a productive life while becoming responsible citizens both locally and globally.

The mission of Burke County Public Schools is to educate diverse learners, nurture their potential, and empower them to be competitive, successful, and productive citizens.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Time	Schedule
7:30	Building opens for student arrival
7:30-7:55	Breakfast is served
7:45	First bell rings
7:55	Tardy bell rings; classes begin
2:35	Students are dismissed
3:15	All car riders must be picked up by this time. Please remember teachers often attend staff development, faculty meetings, and conferences immediately after school.

DISMISSAL AND ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

1. Car riders may be dropped off at 7:30 a.m. Please stay in the car rider lane to drop off students. Staff will be on duty.
2. Pre-K parents must park in the bus parking lot and walk their child to the building. All other parents are expected to drop their student off using the car rider line. Pre-K parents should pick up their child using the bus parking lot, entering the PK classrooms from the side doors.
3. Please provide proof of a medical appointment in order to check students out of school after 2:00 p.m. The entire school day is very important to your child's success.
4. For health and safety reasons, pets are not allowed on school grounds.
5. When arriving on campus for afternoon car dismissal, please remain in your vehicle. Students will be dismissed in a safe and orderly manner.

STUDENT RELEASE POLICY

Student safety is always our first priority. If anyone other than a parent/guardian will be picking your child up at any time during the school day, their name must be on file in the school office or written permission must be in the child's planner that day. We will not accept pick-up or dismissal changes over the phone. Please expect to show proper identification.

For your child's safety, the teacher will not release a child until the data manager notifies the teacher that the child has been properly signed out. Please do not go to the classroom prior to coming to the office; a visitor pass is required. All emergencies will be handled through the main office. Students are not allowed to call from the classroom.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND EARLY DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

If school must close during the day due to inclement weather, please make sure that your child knows what to do and where to go. This information should be included on your child's enrollment form. Please alert the office and your child's teacher if your phone number or address changes during the school year.

If school is dismissed for an emergency during the school day, the BCPS website, ClassDojo, BCPS Facebook page, Twitter, and/or our School Reach message system will pass this information along as soon as it becomes available. Please ensure that your current contact information is on file at the school.

YES WELCOMES VISITORS

We welcome parents and families to visit our school. We ask that visitors observe our school's visitation policy listed below to ensure student safety.

All parents/visitors must come to the office, check in, and receive a visitor's pass. Wearing a pass identifies you as an authorized visitor. Please enter through the front doors of the school at all times. This procedure will help ensure the safety and well-being of our students at all times. Our staff members are encouraged to greet visitors and offer

help and assistance. If no visitor pass is visible, visitors should expect a staff member to assist and direct them immediately to the office area.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at school is not only expected but also required by school board policy and the North Carolina Public School Compulsory Attendance Law.

Parent letters will be sent home at 3, 6, 8, and 10 absences. Please send a note with your child after every absence. Without a written excuse, students will be marked truant. A note, however, does not necessarily excuse a child's absence. Excusable absences from the principal and/or attendance counselor include the following:

- Illness of a student
- Death in the immediate family
- Quarantine
- Court or administrative proceedings
- Medical or dental appointments; documentation from a doctor is required
- Family trips are not counted as excused absences; however, we would greatly appreciate knowing of an extended absence in advance.

After 6 unexcused absences, a parent conference is held with the attendance counselor. After 8 unexcused absences, medical documentation is required. After 10 unexcused absences, the attendance counselor may file a petition in juvenile court.

Students who have excused absences should make arrangements to make up their work within three days after returning to school.

TARDIES

Students need to be at school on time and ready to learn each day. A student is tardy after the 7:55 a.m. bell rings if they are not in their classroom. Students must be present for three hours of a school day to be counted present for that day. Parents must sign their child in and out when the child is picked up or dropped off during the school day. Students who are tardy are responsible for making up any missed work.

SCHOOL CAFETERIA

Our school provides breakfast to all students and provides a free daily lunch program. All parents are welcome to eat lunch with their child. Incentive snacks like ice cream, chips, and/or cookies may be purchased from the cafeteria for an additional cost. You can add money to your child's lunch account using the online payment link: www.lunchprepay.com.

CHILDCARE

Valdeese has an on-site childcare program that provides before- and after-school childcare. All childcare is coordinated through the YMCA.

CHANGES IN STUDENT INFORMATION

It is very important that parents inform the school office of any change of address, contact information, or place of employment. In the event of an emergency or other situation that may arise, we will need to notify parents or guardians as quickly as possible.

Students not living in the Valdeese School district must complete a transfer form and have permission from the school principal and superintendent in order to attend our school. Transfer students must continue to meet attendance and discipline guidelines. Failure to do so could result in revocation of the transfer.

CONFERENCES

A parent may schedule a conference with a teacher by appointment. If you would like to schedule a conference with a teacher, please send a note with your child in his or her planner. Your child's teacher will make every effort to schedule a time that is convenient for both of you.

HEALTH CARE

Fever

If a child has a fever of 100.0 degrees or higher, parents will be notified and asked to pick their child up promptly. The child should remain at home until fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medicines such as Tylenol or Motrin.

Nausea, Vomiting, and Diarrhea

Parents will be notified and asked to pick their child up from school promptly if their student has vomiting or diarrhea. Students should remain at home until they have been vomit- and diarrhea-free for 24 hours.

Medication

No medicine, prescription or over-the-counter, will be administered to students at school without the proper medication form completed. Forms are available in the office and online (BCPS website).

MEDICINE TO BE GIVEN AT SCHOOL MUST BE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL IN THE ORIGINAL CONTAINER. For safety reasons, children are not allowed to carry medicine in their clothing, book bags, or lunch boxes. Please contact your school nurse or refer to the Medication Policy on the BCPS website for more information.

Head Lice

Any evidence of nits and/or live bugs in a child's hair will result in parent notification. The student will need to be treated with proper lice shampoo and have the nits removed at home. The child will need to be checked by school staff when they return to school and cleared before going to class. Please contact the school or refer to the Lice Policy on the BCPS website for more information.

STUDENT DRESS REQUIREMENTS

Halter tops, midriff tops, strapless or spaghetti-strap tops, short shorts, miniskirts, slashed/cut-up clothing, "sagging" pants, clothing with tobacco or alcohol logos, and clothing with offensive language or ethnic slurs are not allowed at Valdese. Any questionable items of clothing will be left to the principal's discretion.

Please label your child's coat, jacket, sweater, or other items of clothing that may be removed during the school day.

FIELD TRIPS

A Burke County Public Schools volunteer form must be approved before the volunteer can be a chaperone. Volunteer forms must be filled out 30 days prior to the field trip and must be renewed every three years.

1. Parents are asked to take their personal vehicle on field trips.
2. All students are required to ride the bus when traveling to all field trip destinations but may ride home with their parents or legal guardian. Parents will not be permitted to transport another child unless that child's parent is also in the vehicle.
3. Only children enrolled in the class participating in the field trip will be permitted to attend. Other siblings or children not enrolled in school at Valdese will not be permitted to go on school field trips.
4. If you volunteer to be a chaperone, you must be willing to help supervise a group of children during the entire duration of the trip.
5. Chaperones will be required to pay their own way and turn in their money by the set due date.

Failure to abide by these rules could result in forfeiture of your ability to attend field trips.

SPECIAL TREATS

All special treats must be purchased from a licensed facility with a list of the ingredients provided on the label, as stated in BCPS School Board Policy.

TAKE HOME TUESDAY

Good communication between home and school is important to maintain a positive relationship to support students. Graded student work, important updates, monthly calendars, and newsletters will be sent home in your child's Take Home Tuesday folder. Please take time to review the materials in the folder weekly.

SCHOOL RULES

Valdese 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
- Weapons or items that resemble or could be used as a weapon.

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 themselves.

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 the 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 them up. VES 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 frequency of the offense in accordance with the Burke County Public Schools Code of Conduct.

BUS SAFETY

Students shall not engage in any type of behavior that interferes with the safe and efficient operation of the school bus and/or the safety of persons riding the bus. Bus transportation is a privilege and should be treated as such. All students are required to remain on their assigned bus during the entire bus trip, with the exception of changing buses to continue their route or in an emergency situation.

- Food, gum, and candy are not to be eaten on the school bus at any time.
- Children are to remain seated at all times while the bus is in motion.
- Horseplay and fighting are strictly prohibited.
- Children will sit facing the front of the bus at all times.
- Students may talk quietly to the person or persons in the same seat with them.
- Yelling, loud talking, or profanity will not be tolerated.
- Students should not run to or from the bus at any time.
- The bus is equipped with cameras, and footage will be reviewed if problems arise.

Student safety on the bus is always our first priority. Students need to comply with driver expectations and bus rules in order to stay safe.

Non-compliance with bus safety rules will result in the following actions, depending on severity as determined by the principal:

1. The first offense will result in a verbal and written warning (unless the offense is severe).
2. The second offense will result in bus-riding privileges being revoked for a period of up to 5 days.
3. The third offense will result in bus-riding privileges being revoked for a period of up to 10 days.
4. After the fourth offense, bus-riding privileges may be revoked for the rest of the school year.

ACADEMICS

The mission of Valdese Elementary School is to provide a safe, dynamic, and challenging learning environment through fostering relationships and developing a lifelong love of learning that empowers all learners to serve the local and global community.

We look forward to a strong partnership between home and school to provide your child a superior education.

GRADING SCALE

Parents can access all student grades through our Infinite Campus Parent Portal. Please contact the school to receive access to this program.

Grade	Range
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
E	Below 60

HARASSMENT AND BULLYING

Harassment and bullying behavior includes any pattern of gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or threatening communication that:

- 1) places a student in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or
- 2) creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits.

Harassment and bullying are not allowed or tolerated in the school environment.

BCPS Board Policy #1720/4021/7230