

*HAHIRA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL*

2018-2019

STUDENT/PARENT  
HANDBOOK

*HES*

*HELPING EVERYONE SUCCEED*

Dear Parents and Students,

We welcome you to Hahira Elementary School and hope that the 2018-19 school year is filled with an abundance of quality opportunities to learn and grow together. Hahira Elementary School is an integral part of the Hahira community and a leading educational institution in this area.

Hahira Elementary serves approximately 825 students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through Fifth grade. We have high expectations for all of our students and hope that you will join us in expecting academic success and appropriate behavior as our students work to become exemplary citizens for tomorrow's world. As principals, we are committed to continuing the successes here at HES.

This handbook outlines some of the guidelines and procedures that are especially important in the safe and orderly operation of our school. Our desire is to help parents become aware of any procedures that have changed over the past year or are new to the school.

We wish you and your family a safe and successful school year!

Sincerely,

Iris A. Mathis  
Principal

Neil Wilkes  
Asst. Principal

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## Attendance

The tardy bell rings promptly at 8:00 A.M. There are no checkouts after 2:30 P.M. Any student arriving to the classroom after 8:00 AM will be *tardy*. Leaving school at any time prior to 2:45 P.M. will be considered an *early dismissal*. A child will be considered absent if he/she arrives after or leaves prior to 11:30 AM. A written note must be received *no later than 3 days* after a child has been tardy, checked out early, or absent. For doctor's visits, please send the doctor's excuse. Failure to do so results in an unexcused absence. Spoken conversation must be accompanied by a written note in order to be counted as excused. HES recognizes only the lawful excuses listed on page 23 of the LCSS Handbook. Be sure to read the system attendance policy in the *Lowndes County Schools Student Parent Handbook*.

## Volunteers/Chaperones

All volunteers/chaperones must be certified and obtain background checks through LCS. The counselor is in charge of overseeing this procedure. The procedure for becoming certified to serve as a volunteer/chaperone includes:

1. Watch the DOE Mandated Reporter Video which is linked on the LCS website.  
<http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/Pages/Safe-and-Drug-Free-Schools.aspx>
2. Consent to a local background check (LCS completes this for free). Human Resources will notify the principal if there is a known issue identified on the background check.
3. Volunteers/chaperones will sign a sheet stating they have watched the video and understand the school protocol/law.
4. Volunteers/chaperones may be asked to show a photo id each time they serve as a volunteer.
5. The selection of field trip chaperones is at the sole discretion of the classroom teacher. Chaperones are chosen by the teachers based on specific needs and qualifications (ex. Medical, familiarity with students, special student needs, etc.) Chaperones and volunteers are expected to follow all Lowndes County Schools and Hahira Elementary School guidelines including the Lowndes County Schools dress code and code of conduct.(Refer to LCSS Handbook, pp. 6-19, 25-26) Parents will NOT be considered as a chaperone if their child was denied participation based on poor conduct grades. Remember - chaperones will be responsible for supervising students.

## Events

### Special Events:

Many school events are open to parents. Please check with the teacher to make sure the event is set up to include visitors. Events that are open to parents often do not include siblings. Be sure to check with the teacher and follow his/her guidelines. Events for the students must ensure the safety and security of all students and maximize learning for students.

### Valentine's Day cards and Party invitations:

If you wish to distribute cards/invitations at school, you must send one for every child in the class. This policy helps to reduce hurt feelings between the students. If you do not have one for each child in the classroom, do not send them to school for distribution.

Reminder!! No balloons or flowers may be delivered to the school for Valentine's Day. This is a system regulation for all Lowndes County schools.

## Field Trips

Due to system budget restrictions, the number of field trips are limited. Trips within our community and to nearby points of interest are scheduled by classroom teachers during the school year and are a very important part of your child's education. HES has specific guidelines in place to ensure every child gets the most from these unique experiences.

### Guidelines:

1. Parents will receive a notice of field trips in advance of the scheduled trip date.
2. A donation may be requested to help defray transportation or facility costs, but board policy states that no student will be denied the privilege of field trips due to lack of funds.
3. If a child is cited for severe and/or numerous behavior infractions that might endanger him/her or others, he/she will be subject to denial of field trip privileges.
4. Occasionally, due to pupil/teacher ratio, parents may be needed to serve as chaperones. When this situation occurs, the teacher will contact the parents who are needed. Parents should not just 'show up' so they can be with their child. Field trips are educational experiences and not family outings. Parents who would like to be *considered* as a chaperone should indicate this on the volunteer sheet at the beginning of the school year or write a note to the teacher. Note - This does NOT guarantee that the parent will be asked to serve.
5. Chaperones will be expected to observe all LCSS rules and guidelines included in the LCSS Handbook including:
  - Chaperones are expected to ride the bus with the children.
  - No siblings allowed.
  - Chaperones are prohibited from drinking alcohol or smoking on field trips.
  - Unless otherwise informed, chaperones are expected to take care of their own admission fees.
  - Chaperones are expected to be active participants (they are not on a family outing with their own child but are responsible for a group of children.)
  - The teacher will choose his/her own chaperones and may choose to consider parents that volunteer frequently, assist with special events, and know the students already. Chaperones are chosen by the teachers based on specific needs and qualifications (ex. Medical, familiarity with students, special student needs, etc.) Parents will NOT be considered as a chaperone if their child was denied participation based on poor conduct grades.
  - All chaperones must be certified and obtain background checks through LCS. Please refer to the section on chaperones for the certification procedure.

## Information

Information about our school is disseminated in a variety of ways including:

- ✓ School website, <http://hes.lowndes.k12.ga.us>
- ✓ System website, [www.lowndes.k12.ga.us](http://www.lowndes.k12.ga.us)
- ✓ Friday folders (which are sent home each Friday) may include teacher newsletters, special interest flyers, behavior updates, and academic updates
- ✓ **Parent Portal – Parents should sign up** ..... The Parent Portal and Student Portal will allow access to grades, attendance, etc. Parents who do not have an account will need to visit the Central Enrollment Annex located in the Board of Education building on Norman Drive to receive their setup information. Parents must present **photo ID** to receive an access code. Parents may not pick up an access code for another person, including a spouse. It is important to follow ALL instructions including:
  - Make sure you set your account under your name and not your spouse's name or other guardian.
  - Use your **COMPLETE** email address as your user name. Use the same email address that you use to communicate with your child's school. Failure to enter a **COMPLETE** email address as your user name will result in delays should you experience problems with your Portal account.
  - If you have forgotten your password or have other problems, email [portal@lowndes.k12.ga.us](mailto:portal@lowndes.k12.ga.us) with details. Be sure to include contact information and your user ID.
  - Parents may find the guide located at the following address useful. This guide does not apply to student logins.  
<http://www.lowndes.k12.ga.us/education/components/docmgr/download.php?sectiondetailid=11497&fileitem=9889&catfilter=2688>
- ✓ **Parent Messenger** – Periodic group calls will go out to remind parents of special events and deadlines. Calls also are made automatically to notify parents of school absences or lunchroom charges. These calls are a courtesy to ensure the safety and welfare of our students.
- ✓ **Attendance Letters** – These are sent each time a student reaches certain thresholds such as 3 absences, 5 absences, 5 tardies, etc. These letters are generated at the Central Office level and do NOT reflect whether the absence is excused/unexcused.
- ✓ System guidelines and policies are found in the LCS Student and Parent Handbook which is given to each student at registration or open house. The handbook can also be found on the LCS website.
- ✓ Hahira Elementary rules and procedures are outlined in the HES Handbook sent out at the beginning of school and on the HES website.
- ✓ **ONE LOWNDES** is a magazine highlighting the Lowndes County School System and each school within the system. It is published once a year.
- ✓ Calendars are found on the school and system websites. Friday folders include classroom calendars of activities.
- ✓ **HES Buzz Newsletter** is published weekly by the principal and is on the HES website. It highlights weekly events in a newspaper format.

- ✓ HES Facebook page: <https://m.facebook.com/hahiraelementary>
- ✓ Note\* Cellphones, electronic devices, and watch phones brought by students are discouraged, but if needed for safety reasons, they must be turned off and out of sight during the school day. If students fail to comply, the devices will be taken up and can only be returned to a parent. (Refer to P. 26 of the LCSS Handbook for additional guidance.)

## Lunchroom

Food from restaurants and carbonated drinks are PROHIBITED in the cafeteria during the lunch period. Parents with these items that want to eat with their child, must do so on the art patio.(Refer to LCSS Handbook p. 45)

Parents may come *occasionally* to have lunch with their child as long as it does not interfere with the regular traffic flow in the lunchroom. Parents may only eat with THEIR OWN child. Other children (neighbors, relatives, friends) will not be allowed to join them. Parents eating with their child must sit at the guest table on the right as you enter the lunchroom. When students are eating with their parents, they must still observe the entrance and exit times for their class. At ALL times, students must observe the rules of the lunchroom and follow the direction of the lunchroom monitors! If the number of parents exceeds the parent tables' seating, it may become necessary to offer alternative areas outside. Remember, the main purpose of the lunchroom is for student lunches.

Failure to follow the rules may result in loss of guest privileges.

If a child chooses to eat breakfast at school, he/she must arrive prior to 8:00 AM. This does not apply to bus students.

## **Safety and Health**

### **Emergency Information:**

Parents and/or legal guardians are required to give complete emergency information to the school office. The office must be notified immediately in writing when changes in the information occur. It is the responsibility of the parent to keep the office updated on any pick-up restrictions for a student. In custody/divorce/separation issues, it is the parent's responsibility to let the school know of any changes and those changes must be accompanied by a signed legal document from the courts. The school will follow the court documents and will remain neutral in marital issues.

### **School Nurse and Medications:**

Parents must sign a nurse consent form in order for their child to be seen by the school nurse.

No medication should be sent to school by a child, but should be brought by a parent. To contact Mrs. Morris, school nurse, call the main office at (229) 316-8600.

Any medication that needs to be administered while on a field trip should be sent in the original prescription container and will be dispersed according to proper dosage by the school nurse/field trip teacher.

### **Safety Drills:**

Hahira Elementary School practices regular safety drills and inspections. Monthly fire drills and a severe weather drill are conducted and reported to the state. Locally, we conduct a lockdown drill and safety inspections throughout the year. Hahira Elementary has a Safety Plan which covers the incidents mentioned above and additional situations such as bomb threats and intruder threats.

## Transportation

**Procedure:** Cars for morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up will use the secondary entrance to access the loading/unloading zone behind the school.

**Morning:** From 7:30 until 8:00 AM, use the second driveway for unloading. Students cannot exit the vehicle until the car is at the unloading zone and an adult is present on duty. Please have your child open their own door and exit the car. Pre-K students will be escorted by school personnel/safety patrol from car line to their classrooms and/or breakfast. Older students will be supervised by staff members as they make their way to the lunchroom or classroom. Students eating breakfast must arrive before 8:00. Students must be in their classroom when the tardy bell rings at 8:00 AM. The gate to the unloading zone is closed by a police officer at 8:15. We will issue your child a tardy slip from the back circular drive from 8:00—8:15 AM.

Parents cannot park or leave their car unattended on the back campus at any time. All visitors must report to the office (main driveway) for a visitor's badge before entering the school building. In the mornings, parents that need to communicate with the teacher should send a note with the student. If parents need to talk with the teacher, they schedule a conference during the teacher's planning period. Teachers are very busy in the mornings as they prepare for the day and many of them have morning duties. **DO NOT** expect even a short parent conference in the mornings!

**Reminder!!** Students should **NOT** be dropped off at the school prior to 7:30AM each morning! Supervision is not available prior to this time. **DO NOT** drop off children at the corner or at the main entrance—you **MUST** get in the car line for parent drop-off. Walking students should not arrive on the campus prior to 7:45 AM. The doors are not opened for them until 7:45. Parents and visitors are **NOT** allowed to enter the building except through the main entrance. The lobby doors open at 7:45 AM.

**Afternoon:** Starting at 2:30 PM, the car pick-up line may begin at the second driveway entrance. We require all parents to remain in their cars at all times to make the afternoon pick-up process faster. A school-issued sign is required on the windshield for all student pick-ups. Parents without a sign will have to go to the front office and sign the child out there. Remember - the sign must be present on early dismissal days and the last day of school, also! Again, car riders will be dismissed beginning at 2:45 PM at the car rider location on the back of the campus. All students must be off campus by 3:00 PM. At no time can a car be parked or left unattended on the back campus. Lowndes County buses do not drop off elementary students unless an adult is present. (For more bus transportation details, refer to LCSS Handbook pp. 51-55)

### **Changes in Transportation:**

For safety purposes, changes in a child's transportation cannot be accepted

over the telephone. Any changes in transportation must be submitted in writing to your child's teacher. Changes cannot be made via e-mail because the teacher might not check e-mail during the day, or in the case of subs, they would not receive the message. In an extreme emergency, signed faxes will be accepted prior to 1:00 PM.

## Visitors

All parents/visitors must use the main entrance, park in a regular parking space, and enter the front of the school through the main door. Please do not park on the curb. On days when large groups of parents are expected (ex. Field Day), overflow parking will be allowed on the grassy area in front of the school. On those occasions, DO NOT block exit access for others!

Visitors, regardless of time of day, will need to stop by the front office for a visitor's pass to ensure the safety of children as well as others. Staff members have been instructed to approach any adult not wearing a visitor's pass and ask them to report to the office. This will enable staff to know that the visitor is a part of the school family.

Classroom visits must be arranged with the teacher in advance. If a visit has been arranged, the visitor must sign in at the office and the staff will follow Lowndes County Schools visitor protocol. (Refer to LCSS Handbook pp. 42-43)

Special events such as Field Day and Honor's Day are open to parents and visitors, while some events are not due to space or safety considerations. Certain events are open to parents, but not to younger siblings, so please read the event information and follow the rules accordingly. Example - The Spelling Bee allows parents of participants to observe, but younger siblings are not welcome as they can keep the judges from hearing the participants spell. Above all, remember that special events are for the students, not the adults.

In the event that a parent is inside the building when school is dismissed and would like to take their child home with them, there are some specific guidelines to ensure that the proper person is taking the child from our campus. Please leave your child in the classroom and walk to the front office. At the front office, a staff member will use the intercom to notify the teacher to release the child to the office. We have a large number of students who have non-traditional families and students who have restrictions on who may pick them up from school. By following these procedures, you are helping us to ensure the safety of all students.

Parents that would like to take one sibling from their classroom to view another sibling's event (such as Honor's Day) must check the student out of school at the beginning of the event and check them back in after the event to return to their classroom.

**Parents/Guardians: Please indicate your preference below, acknowledge receiving and reading the handbook, sign, and return to your child's teacher.**

Dear Parents,

Throughout the school year, Hahira Elementary School teachers use videos to address instructional standards. They may read stories/novels that have been adapted into movies. Often they like for students to view the movie and complete a compare and contrast lesson between the book and movie. The novel and movie both focus on the educational standards of our students. Videos are also implemented in many other ways. Below are just a few examples.

- Build background knowledge
- Identify character's point of view or the author's reason for writing
- Identify basic similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic

An example of a PG movie that is instructionally used is *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*. This movie is implemented in weather units that some grade levels teach. Since PG stands for parental guidance, we are asking for your permission so that your child may view PG movies throughout this school year. To ensure that movies are appropriate, please know that movies will ALWAYS be previewed by the teacher before they are shown. **Please return the completed portion of this letter indicating whether your child may or may not view PG movies.**

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Child's Name

\_\_\_\_ Yes, my child may view PG movies this year.

\_\_\_\_ No, my child may not view PG movies this year.

\_\_\_\_ I have received and read the HES Handbook and understand the school policies and guidelines.

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Parent or Guardian's signature