

MEHFOUD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Parent/Student Handbook 2020-2021

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MEHFOUD ELEMENTARY

Mission Statement

The Mehfoud Elementary School faculty and staff believe in the value of each individual child. It is our mission to provide educational experiences designed to be age appropriate, as well as individually appropriate, through an integrated-literature based instructional approach. The staff and community work together to provide a warm, loving and nurturing environment, which promotes continued lifelong learning.

Belief Statements

We believe that

- all children can learn
- all children deserve respect
- all children deserve a safe, positive and appropriate learning environment
- teaching and learning is a shared responsibility between home, school and community
- diversity among ourselves should be valued and celebrated
- young children learn differently through direct experiences with their environment
- lifelong learning is essential for continuous growth

Dear Mehfoud Families,

Welcome! The teachers and staff join me in our commitment to provide experiences that will ensure your child's days at Mehfoud will be filled with success and achievement.

The handbook is designed to serve as a source of information for parents and students regarding Henrico County's Community Code of Conduct as well as the administrative policies here at Mehfoud. These policies have been established to ensure a safe, efficient, and organized school environment. Please read and discuss this booklet with your child and refer to it as needed.

We want your child to learn and grow academically, socially and emotionally. It is our desire that they develop quality character, become creative and critical thinkers, learn to communicate and collaborate with others and grow as global citizens. Mehfoud Pandas make a difference in their world! We encourage you to become familiar with the school and volunteer as often as you are able. I look forward to working with each of you.

Sincerely,
Carey Fellows
Principal

ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL – DAILY SCHEDULE -

Children should not arrive at school before 7:30 a.m. since there is no supervision available until that time. School begins at 8a.m. Office hours are from 7:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

- 8:00 a.m. - School begins; students are tardy past this time
- 1:00 p.m. - First dismissal – Car riders and day care vans
- 1:10 p.m. - First load bus riders
- 1:20 p.m. - Second load bus riders

ATTENDANCE/DISMISSAL

State law mandates, and the Henrico County Community Code of Conduct requires, that children attend school every day on time. Parents are advised to plan their vacations during the winter holiday break, spring break, and during summer vacation. Any requests to take a child from school during a normally scheduled school day should be rare and must be submitted in writing to the principal for approval. If the absence is not approved, it is considered an unexcused absence. When a child accumulates excessive unexcused absences, the school social worker will be notified to investigate.

The County's intervention plan for excessive unexcused absences will be followed:

Upon 5 unexcused absences:

School social worker will have direct contact with parent and child.
An Attendance Compliance Plan will be developed.

Upon 6 unexcused absences:

School conference must be held within 10 days and no later than 15 days of the 6th unexcused absence.

Upon 7 unexcused absences:

School social worker must file a petition against student and/or parent.

Children who arrive after 8 a.m. are late and need a tardy pass. Children must report to the office for tardy passes before going to class. A parent must accompany the child to the office to document the reason for tardiness. **Arriving on time is crucial in order for your child to have a positive start to the school day. Arriving after 8:00 disrupts instruction for whole class. A pattern of tardies will be discussed with the parent or guardian.**

Each child is required to bring a **written** note stating the reason for his absence on the day he returns to school. Excessive absences can affect a child's academic progress. Students who develop an attendance/tardiness problem will be referred to the office for further investigation. The school social worker will be asked to intervene if necessary.

We are required to notify the home of every child who is absent every day. **Current phone contact information is imperative at all times.** It would be most helpful to the office and clinic staff if parents would call the school office before 8:30 a.m. to report an absence (795-7020.) We also can accept a note in advance stating that children will be out of school for medical appointments or other excused reasons.

When a child is ill, he/she should not be in school. At times, it is necessary for us to call and have a parent pick up a sick child. We only call when our nurse deems this is necessary. Please help us by picking up your sick or injured child as soon as possible.

Virtual Attendance Policy:

Attendance The Code of Virginia requires compulsory attendance for students in grades K-12. Attendance will be taken in the virtual environment. In accordance with the Virginia Department of Education's guidance for tracking student attendance in a variety of settings, including a virtual/distance format, meaningful interaction and contact between the student and teacher is imperative for student success in the learning process. Therefore, students will be counted present if they fulfill the definition of meaningful interaction and/or contact as defined below. For each course, teachers will make clear to students their expectations for attendance in the virtual setting as well as expectations for assignment completion and deadlines. When a student is unable to attend class or meet an assignment deadline, parents or guardians should notify the teacher(s), the school counselor, and/or the school.

Definitions:

- **Meaningful Interaction:** Any task or interaction that promotes positive student engagement and learning that can be electronically documented to represent a student's attendance and participation.
- **Meaningful Contact:** Any two-way interaction between a student and teacher/staff member that allows feedback or input on successes and challenges and can be electronically documented to promote student engagement. This contact can be done during school hours or after school hours.

Examples of "meaningful contact" include student conferencing with the teacher, participation in email with the teacher, class webinars, and class discussion boards.

- **Student Attendance:** Students will be counted as present if they fulfill the requirements for meaningful interaction and/or contact.
- **Student Absence:** Students will be counted absent if they do not fulfill the requirements for meaningful interaction and/or contact.

Excused Absence:

- Parent documentation of illness or other principal approved absence
- Current attendance policy applies
- 10 days for illness before a doctor's note
- 10 days for vacation

Unexcused Absence:

- No communication from the parent

Please notify the school when a move is anticipated. If you should move from the school district/zone, your child(ren) must be withdrawn and registered at the school within your new school zone. Please notify the office in writing several days in advance, as transfer forms must be completed for the student to take to the new school.

Dismissal prior to 1:00pm requires that the parent come to the office and sign the early dismissal log. Early dismissal for planned, specific reasons such as medical appointments would be excused. If at all possible, parents should send a written note informing the school of early dismissal. Office personnel will call children to the office. Students will not be dismissed early for pickup by childcare centers. **Students need to stay in school until the end of the school day. Teachers are giving instruction right up until 2:00. Picking your child up early except for the occasional appointment is disruptive to the learning environment. Frequent early dismissals will be reported and a conference/call with the principal will take place. If you plan to pick your child up daily, please wait for them to be dismissed at 1:00.**

Parents need to provide written permission for their children to leave school with other adults or family members. Persons picking up children should be prepared to show picture identification and should already be on the "authorized pick up list." **Written information is required whenever there is a change in the normal dismissal plan for your child. Without a written note, the school will dismiss your child using his/her "usual" plan. Telephone requests for changes in dismissal cannot be honored except in cases of extreme emergency.**

Children may not leave the grounds during school hours for any reason without permission from the administrator. We are responsible for all children, thus knowing where they are while under our supervision is imperative.

Making up Work

When a child is absent from school all necessary work will be completed when the child returns to school. Each teacher will determine what needs to be completed and when it is due. Parents may call the office to request make up work. However, the call must be made by 9:30 a.m. in order for the work to be picked up that same day. The work will be available in the office at 2:45 p.m.

BEHAVIOR

Essential to an instructional program is an atmosphere that is orderly and safe. In order to ensure a learning environment in which your child can make the greatest progress, discipline must be maintained. The school and parents working together can accomplish this desirable goal.

The Henrico County Community Code of Conduct addresses important issues. Each school year this document is reviewed thoroughly with students by the classroom teacher and an administrator and distributed to parents. Parents and students should discuss the Code of Conduct at home, sign and date the last page, and return this page to the child's teacher. It will be filed in the student's cumulative record. Parents should maintain the Code of Conduct booklet at home for reference.

When children fail to observe rules of good conduct, we have a responsibility to deal with that behavior in a firm, fair, and consistent way. Teachers are eager to work with children and parents to achieve good classroom discipline and refer children to the office only in extreme cases. An offense deemed extremely serious may warrant immediate suspension. The same procedure will be followed in dealing with misbehavior on the school bus. When dealing with Code of Conduct infractions, we employ its recommended dispositions.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Students are required to ride their assigned buses. If a child needs to ride another bus for a special reason, a parent must send a note to school so a bus pass may be issued prior to dismissal. Also, if parents need the driver of their assigned bus to drop off the child at a different stop, a written note is required. The Henrico County Community Code of Conduct governs behavior on the school bus. Students are expected to ride the bus to and from school, as well as on any field trips, in a safe and orderly manner. School buses are equipped with electronic video devices to monitor student behavior at any and all times. Riding the bus is a privilege. If a student is unable to follow the rules needed to keep everyone safe, they will lose their privilege to ride the bus. Kindergarten students must be greeted at the bus stop by an adult **with ID that is on their approved pick up list**. They will not be released if this is not followed and the student will be returned to school.

CAFETERIA

Children may buy a school lunch or bring their lunch from home. A monthly menu is provided online. Free and reduced price lunches are available to students who apply and qualify for this program. Applications are mailed to each student's home at the beginning of the school year. If you need a form, please don't hesitate to check with the school office. Breakfast is also served daily in the cafeteria from 7:20 a.m.-7:35 a.m.

All students who bring lunch may purchase a half-pint of whole, skim, or 2% low fat white/chocolate milk. Lunches from home should always contain everything needed for a child to enjoy them – napkin, spoon or fork, straw, etc.

Due to dietary restrictions, possible allergies, and the right of parents to limit their child's snacks, please do not bring extra treats for classes during lunch.

Each student has a cafeteria account. Parents may deposit money in student accounts by sending cash or checks. Please make checks payable to Mehfoud Elementary School and designate the account number on any money/check sent to school. You can also set up an account <https://www.myschoolbucks.com>. You will need your child's student id number. This is the number on their birth certificate. **Parents may send a note to specify that account funds be used for the purchase of lunch only to prohibit money being used for snacks.**

Please ensure that your child has lunch money daily. Our cafeteria follows the Henrico County Public Schools plan to provide lunches to students without money. Up to two lunches will be provided on a loan basis. At that point, only a sandwich and milk will be provided. Please be sure to repay a lunch loan and deposit sufficient funds in your child's account immediately.

We want parents to enjoy lunch with their child/children. **We ask that you meet your student in the**

cafeteria and not go to their classroom. Lining up for lunch is a busy time in a K-2 classroom and the excitement of a parent visit can break up the routine. We have a special guest table where you can enjoy lunch with your child.

Lunchtime is an important part of the daily routine. Students enjoy talking and socializing at this time. However, with so many people eating together, appropriate manners and orderly behavior are a must. Students are expected to respond respectfully to any adult supervising the cafeteria.

Parents should review the following guidelines with children:

- Go through the lunch line quietly.
- Be respectful to cafeteria workers and monitors. Say “please” and “thank you.”
- Get all food, utensils, and snacks when going through the line the first time.
- Raise your hand when someone or something is needed.
- Sit quietly until permission is given to leave.
- Eat your own lunch. This means food should not be given away or traded.
- Borrow money from the cafeteria only for lunch – not snack or dessert.
- Leave table, chairs, and floor clean for the next group.

CAR RIDERS

Car riders may be dropped off and picked up in the circle in front of the main entrance. Please have children safely exit their vehicles **on the curbside only**. Under no circumstances should a student be dropped off or picked up in any other area of the school parking lot or on Buffin Rd. Parents will be asked to display a sign when picking up their child in the afternoon. These signs will be available at our Open House and then through our main office.

CHANGE OF NAME, ADDRESS OR TELEPHONE

If you change your name, address or telephone number, please notify the school immediately. Parents need to come to the office and provide verification of the address change

CLINIC

The clinic is available for student needs throughout the school day. The nurse is certified to provide first aid according to the American Red Cross First Aid Manual.

When a student goes to the clinic due to illness, the nurse will decide if the illness requires parent notification. If a child has a fever or observable signs of illness, the parents will be contacted to take the child home.

No medicine shall be given to pupils by school personnel except as herein provided. Parents are advised to give medications at home and on a schedule other than during school hours, if possible. If it is necessary that a medication be given during school hours, the procedures set forth in this regulation shall be followed.

Prescription Medications: A prescribed medication request form must be completed and returned to the school clinic prior to the school clinic dispensing prescribed medication to a student if the medicine is to be given for more than 10 days. The form is to be filled out and signed by both the parent/guardian and the physician. For medications that are to be given for a 10 day or less period, a signed note from a parent and the original prescription bottle is needed.

Non-Prescription: Clinic attendants and school nurses are allowed to administer non-prescription medications to students at the request of the parent. However, an Over-the-Counter Medication Request Form must be completed and signed by the parent prior to the school administering the medication to the student. This medicine must be in a new unopened bottle. Students may not bring cough drops to school. These are considered non-prescription medication and must be administered in the clinic with the proper forms completed by the parent.

Please remember to pick-up the unused portion of the medication. Only parents may transport medication to and from school.

CONFERENCES

**Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, teachers will offer office hours to host parent-*

teacher conferences virtually.

It is important that parents and teachers stay in close communication. Parents are encouraged to send a note to the classroom teacher to request a conference or phone call. **Since a teacher's time during the school day must be devoted to all children, we request that parents not "drop in" or "stop by" the classroom during the instructional day, which begins at 7:20 a.m. and ends when all students have been dismissed.** We encourage parents to visit and volunteer in the classrooms, but this should be prearranged with the teacher so it is not disruptive to the learning environment.

CURRICULUM

Our curriculum is based on the Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools and the Essentials of the Curriculum for Henrico County Public Schools. This curriculum is available on the HCPS website.

<http://henricoschools.us/elementary-schools/elementary-curriculum>

DRESS CODE

While most students dress appropriately and safely for school, the School Board and school staff rely on students and parents to exercise judgment in promoting modesty, decency, and a sense of decorum so as not to disrupt the learning environment. School climate has a direct influence on student achievement, and the manner in which students dress is a significant factor in school climate.

This dress code will assist parents and students as they make decisions regarding daily attire that contribute to an appropriate, safe, and secure learning environment for all students. Students must dress modestly and in a manner that neither distracts from nor substantially disrupts the learning environment. In support of the Community Code of Conduct Dress Code, a student's appearance that is disruptive, distracting, or hazardous is prohibited.

The administration of each elementary, middle and high school has the authority to notify students and parents of modifications to the dress code for spirit days and other school celebrations, as particular items pose a disruption, or as other circumstances warrant.

Students may not wear the following items unless otherwise stated:

1. Hoods, hats, or head coverings of any kind inside school buildings during regular school hours, unless required for religious or medical reasons.
2. The following items worn on school grounds during regular school hours: bandanas, do-rags, headscarves, hair picks, wave caps, large combs, brushes, and rollers.
3. Sunglasses inside the school building unless prescribed by a physician.
4. Dresses, skirts, shorts, athletic shorts, and other similar clothing that are shorter than four inches above the knee even when worn with leggings or tights.
5. Messages on clothing, chains, jewelry and personal belongings that pertain to drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sex, gangs, vulgarity or that could reasonably cause a substantial disruption to the learning environment.
6. Spiked jewelry, chains, and items that could cause student injury.
7. Beachwear (which includes bathing suits and trunks) and sleepwear.
8. Clothing that reveals undergarments.
9. Cut-off jeans and cut-off sweat pants or torn, ripped, or slashed clothing that reveals undergarments or body parts excluded by other parts of this code.
10. Bedroom slippers or shoes with wheels also known as "wheelies."
11. Clothing that reveals the midriff while sitting or standing.
12. Clothing that is excessively tight or skimpy, including biker pants and clothing with plunging necklines.
13. Clothing that is see-through, revealing, or resembles undergarments.
14. Tube tops, halter-tops, halter-top dresses, strapless dresses or tops or dresses with spaghetti straps (female tops must be at least two inches wide at the shoulder).

15. **High heels or flip-flops at the elementary level are not allowed.** (Elementary students are encouraged to wear athletic shoes or closed toe shoes with a rubber sole and should wear such shoes for Physical Education and recess.).
16. Coats inside the school building during the school day as determined by the administrative staff depending on the school design and administrative ability to provide storage for coats.

EARLY CLOSING

Occasionally, it is necessary for school to close early because of bad weather, electrical outages, or other emergencies. Such closings will be announced on channel 99 and other radio and television stations. **Please do not call the school to find out if we will close early. School telephone lines are needed for emergency instructions from Central Office.**

It is very important that each child knows what to do and where to go if school must close early. An **Emergency Dismissal Form** will be sent home at the beginning of the school year. Parents should complete the form with specific instructions and return it to their child's teacher, since our office staff will not be able to contact all parents for directions in the event of an emergency. Please discuss this plan with your child as appropriate. If you need to change your Emergency Dismissal Plan during the year, please contact your child's teacher.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

As part of our written school crisis plan, a fire drill is conducted during each of the first four weeks of school. Thereafter, fire drills are conducted monthly. In addition, severe weather drills will be held twice annually to prepare children in case of tornado or severe thunderstorm warnings. We will also conduct intruder drills three times a year. These are done in a developmentally appropriate fashion and are not meant to scare, rather prepare the students.

FIELD TRIPS

Due to COVID-19 field trips will take place virtually for the 20-21 school year.

Field trips are a part of the instructional program. They are a learning experience away from school grounds and are chosen as a resource to contribute information and enrich a program of study. Students must have written permission from a parent or legal guardian before leaving the school grounds. Some trips may require a fee to cover the cost of commercial buses or admission to attractions. Chaperones are selected at each teacher's discretion and must have a volunteer form on file two days prior to the trip.

GRADES & REPORTS TO PARENTS

Grades are assigned using the following Henrico County Public Schools guidelines. Report cards are sent home at the end of each nine-week period. Interim progress reports may be sent on an individual basis.

Kindergarten and 1st grade: 4 Point Scale for Academic classes

- 4 – Student's performance exceeds standard/expectation and student consistently produces outstanding work.
- 3- Student's performance meets standard/expectation and student consistently produces quality work.
- 2- Student's performance is approaching standard/expectation and student inconsistently applies learned skills.
- 1- Student's performance is below standard/expectation and student frequently requires re-teaching.

In art, music and physical education, students will earn an S for satisfactory or an N for needs improvement.

Grades 2 : A= 90-100 Excellent
B= 80-89 Very Good
C= 70-79 Satisfactory
D= 65-69 Marginal Progress
F = below 65 Failing

In art, music and physical education, students will earn an S for satisfactory or an N for needs improvement.

HOMEWORK

Parents should expect students to have homework assigned each day with few exceptions during the school week. Homework is meant to reinforce classroom instruction. Parents should expect their children to complete homework independently. However, assistance from parents in the form of explanation, clarification, or review can be valuable. Parental support that requires children to complete all homework is important and expected. Missing and incomplete homework assignments will result in appropriate consequences.

Henrico County Public Schools guidelines for homework:

Kindergarten No specific time allotment

Grades 1 & 2 30 minutes per evening

If homework is a “battle” and is taking longer than this, please talk with your child’s teacher. They can help with strategies to make it a more positive experience.

LIBRARY BOOKS

Our media center supports the curriculum by serving the needs of students, teachers, and staff. Students may check out library books on a daily basis. Henrico County policy states that students are charged \$16.00 for a lost library book.

PARTIES/BIRTHDAYS

Henrico County Public Schools policy states that elementary schools will be allowed one party prior to the winter holiday. The total time for that function is limited to one hour. Money collected for this purpose shall not exceed \$3.00 per student.

If you are planning a private party for your child and plan to invite some of his/her classmates, please do not send invitations to school for distribution.

Student birthdays are recognized at school on our morning announcements each day. Children receive a birthday pencil. Due to increased staff and parental interest in helping children develop healthy lifestyles, **only a small cupcake treat (or the equivalent) can be brought in during lunch to celebrate. These should be store bought. Also, please check with your child’s teacher about allergy issues.** We encourage donating a book to our library in your child’s name. Please see the Mrs. Pollard for assistance in making this lasting remembrance. Of course, this suggestion is optional.

PROMOTION GUIDELINES

Promotion guidelines are based on academic progress and achievement level. Teachers will make every effort to insure success for their students. Supplementary reports will be sent to parents of students experiencing difficulty. Teachers will consult with the principal, school counselor, and other school personnel to develop strategies for working with the child. Teachers will confer with parents and offer suggestions for assisting the child in overcoming the difficulties.

Academic performance will be the prime determiner in making a decision as to whether a student should be promoted or retained. Promotion or retention will be based on what will result in the greatest good for the student.

Factors considered for promotion/retention include the student's successful performance on the Virginia Standards of Learning/Essentials of the Curriculum, ability level, attendance in conjunction with classroom performance, chronological age in relation to the normal grade/age group, delayed or advanced physical development, maturity in emotional and social development, and work and study habits.

PTA

You are encouraged to join and actively support our PTA. Meetings normally are held on the third Tuesday of each month. Interesting, informative, and entertaining programs are planned. The Mehfoud Elementary faculty and staff members are extremely proud of the outstanding support received from the PTA. PTA Information can also be accessed through our school's website or through [http:// vesmespta.ptboard.com](http://vesmespta.ptboard.com)

SNACKS

All children will have snack time available sometime during the day. We encourage your child to bring fruit or other healthy snacks. Soft drinks are not allowed for snack or lunchtime.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

A variety of special programs are available to students who meet specific criteria. Parents will be notified when their child qualifies for involvement in these activities.

- ESL (English as a Second Language) is available for students needing supplemental assistance in learning to communicate in English.
- A special education teacher addresses the needs of identified students. Services may be individual, delivered in small groups, or collaborative within the classroom.
- Our interventionist(s) provide(s) program offers remediation in reading and/or mathematics for students who meet stated criteria and are exhibiting weakness in basic skill areas.
- The Second Helping program provides further remediation in basic reading skills for identified students.
- Classroom teachers, an itinerant primary gifted resource teacher, and our general resource teacher identify candidates and provide services for students in grades K-2 who need extension and enrichment. The identification process is ongoing and involves multiple criteria to determine students' needs.

LEVELED READERS/TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks and leveled readers loaned to students should be protected. If textbooks are lost the appropriate charge will be assessed. Textbooks are not often used at the K-2 level.

VOLUNTEERS/VISITORS

Due to COVID-19 there will be limited building opportunities for volunteers. As stated above, all visitors will be screened prior to entering the school. Using the following protocols. [COVID-19 Health Screening for Visitors](#). We encourage our volunteers to look for ways to support our school community virtually or off-campus following CDC guidelines for social distancing.

The PTA and our staff offer many opportunities for parents to be involved in our instructional program. All volunteers will need to fill out a volunteer form 2 days prior to their first visit. This can be found on the school website under Parent Resources. Hard copies are also in our main office.

All visitors, including parents, must report to the office before going to any classrooms or other areas of the building. This is for the safety of all children and staff. Visitors are requested to sign in and pick up a visitor badge to wear while in the building. Please comply with this request. If you are volunteering, please sign in at the office counter.

Parents are asked to drop off forgotten textbooks, lunch money, etc. in the office. These will be forwarded to students in a timely fashion so that instructional time is not lost.

We encourage our parents to volunteer or visit our classrooms, this arrangement should be made ahead of time with the teacher in order to make sure you get the most out of the visit. Classroom observations need to be scheduled with the teacher and should not last more than 45 minutes.

Students may not bring visitors (i.e. friends, cousins, siblings, or out-of-town guests) during the school day. Henrico County Public Schools policy prohibits volunteers from bringing pre-school children during school hours.