

Fifth District Elementary School

Parent/Student Handbook



3725 Mt. Carmel Road
Upperco, MD 21155

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Welcome to Fifth District Elementary School!



A Message from the Administrative Team

Our mission for Fifth District Elementary School is to continue "Reaching All Children Through Instructional Excellence" by maintaining our belief that all students can increase academic performance, develop a strong character based on our core values and beliefs, and become life-long learners. The students, staff, and parents dedicate themselves to supporting:

- the highest quality of instruction for all students
- the equitable distribution of educational opportunities and resources
- a safe and orderly environment that values each individual child

We believe that in order to realize this mission, the home and school must work in partnership. It is in this spirit that we welcome you to a new school year and look forward to working with you this year. Your involvement in your child's education continues to make the difference.

This handbook has been provided especially for you. The purpose of the handbook is to provide important information about our school.

We are committed to keeping the lines of communication open. Please do not hesitate to call us at any time at 410-887-1726. We welcome questions and concerns. It's also nice to hear the good things you might have to say. We look forward to our partnership!

School Hours

9:00 a.m. - 3:35 p.m. School doors will open at 8:45 a.m. Buses will arrive approximately 15 minutes prior to the beginning of the school day. It is important that children arrive in the room before the 9:00 a.m. bell.

Visitors

For the safety of all our students and staff, all doors to our building are locked. Visitors must ring the bell on the front center doors and identify themselves. After identification is made, one of the office personnel will buzz them in. They must report to the office upon entering. **A visitor's pass must be obtained in the office and should be worn at all times.** Anyone who enters through the accessible door will follow the same procedures mentioned above.

All volunteers must also wear a volunteer's badge while working in the school. Anyone without a badge will be approached and asked to return to the office to get one.

Absence/Tardiness/Early Dismissal

When a student is absent for any reason, a note explaining the reason for absence **must** be given to the teacher on the day the student returns to school. If a note is not sent in, the absence must be coded as an unexcused absence. Students arriving after 9:00 a.m. should report to the office **with a parent/guardian to sign in.** Parents picking up students early from school should report to the school office. When there is a planned early pick-up, parents should send a note of explanation to school that morning, with a specified time of pick-up. Students, in turn, will be called to the office upon the parent's arrival.

Attendance Policy: If a student is absent from school, he/she may not attend or participate in after school activities, or concerts. A student arriving after **12:45** is considered absent for half of the school day.

Newsletter

A newsletter will be sent home once a month, which will keep you informed about important events in the school and community. The newsletter will be emailed to all parents and posted on our school website. Hard copies are sent home upon request.

Home/School Communication Folder

Every child at Fifth District will receive a "Dragon folder" to be used as home/school communication tool. This folder is to go home every night and be returned by students on the next school day. Items such as bulletins, information from teachers, and homework will go home nightly in the folders. Parents are asked to review the folder, pull out appropriate materials, and check homework. In turn, parents can use the folder to communicate with teachers, as well as the school office. Please look at your child's folder nightly - you'll find it most effective!

School Records

At the beginning of each school year, parents will be asked to complete an emergency contact sheet in order to update our contact information. It is extremely important that the office be informed of any changes in your telephone numbers, address, and other emergency telephone numbers. We would not want the unfortunate situation of a child becoming ill or getting hurt and school personnel being unable to contact parents because of outdated records.

If you have legal custody of your child, please be aware that custody papers and other related legal documents are **required** to be on file at school.

If your child's last name is changed during the year (possibly by adoption), please provide the school office with court documentation and then we can update your child's records.

Emergency Early Dismissal Plan

At the beginning of each school year, parents will be asked to complete an Emergency Early Dismissal Plan located on the emergency contact sheet. If you provide us with a work or home email address, we will be able to notify you of any emergency closings. This form provides the school with specific instructions about where a child is to go in the event of an emergency early school dismissal. This plan is in effect should Fifth District **ONLY** close, such as in the event of a water or power loss. If a parent chooses to have their child follow normal dismissal procedures and ride the bus home, this choice is limited to the child's own bus route. Some parents indicate that the child is to be picked up from school. If schools in all of BCPS close, students will follow normal dismissal procedures.

Inclement Weather Procedures

HEREFORD ZONE - Fifth District Elementary is a Hereford Weather Zone school. In case of inclement weather that would necessitate a delayed opening or early dismissal of school, parents are asked to pay particular attention to radio, TV, and the Baltimore County Public Schools website (bcps.org) for announcements which might indicate information that would **ONLY** pertain to Baltimore County Schools in the Hereford Zone.

1. ALL SCHOOLS CLOSED FOR ENTIRE DAY

In the event of bad weather and very hazardous road conditions throughout the county, all schools may be closed for the entire day. Every effort will be made to have such an announcement made over the radio and television stations, [BCPS website](#) and social media including the BCPS Facebook and Twitter feeds (@BaltCoPS) within seconds of the decision. It is also placed on BCPS-TV, the BCPS Now app, and broadcast on the BCPS telephone “weather line” – 410.887.5555.

2. ALL SCHOOLS – LATE OPENING

Conditions may warrant an announcement that all schools will open one or more hours later than normal. It is possible, due to worsening conditions, that in spite of an announced late opening, the decision will be made later to **close** schools. **If schools open one hour late, breakfast will be served. However, if schools open two hours late, breakfast will NOT be served in order for the cafeteria to prepare for lunch.**

3. EARLY CLOSING OF SCHOOLS

When inclement weather develops throughout the county while pupils are in school, it may be advisable to close all schools early. **IF** this is necessary, **radio, television and above mentioned media feeds will announce** the closing time. **Lunch will be served early to all students.**

4. GENERAL

- a. If no announcement is made, it is to be assumed that schools will open and buses will operate.
- b. On days when schools are closed early, all planned after school and evening use of the school facilities will be cancelled, **with the exception of heat related closings**. Fifth District is air conditioned and therefore, after school activities may be held.
- c. It is extremely important that your children know what to do on those days when school is dismissed early because of snow or some other type of emergency. If all BCPS schools close, students are to follow their normal dismissal procedures. **If Fifth District ONLY is closing due to an emergency, students will follow the procedure marked on their Emergency Contact Forms (ride the bus home or be picked up from the office), which parents completed at the beginning of the year. Please review these plans periodically with your children, and please be sure to notify us of any changes.**
- d. We ask that you make arrangements for the care of your child when school opens late due to bad weather, and that they do not arrive at the school until 15 minutes before the adjusted starting time.
- e. When school is open one or more hours late, all scheduled pre-school activities (play rehearsals, committee meetings, etc.) will be postponed for that same amount of time.

5. **LOCAL TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS**

It is possible that we may have a bus or buses which are unable to operate, or will be very late at your bus stop. In these instances, BCPS will make every effort to cover that route as soon as possible. Conditions may vary widely in different parts of the county and on different roads. **The final decision as to whether a particular bus should travel on particular roads must be left to the good judgment of the bus driver.** The following is a list of roads in the Fifth District area which **drivers may elect to avoid** due to snow or icy conditions: Benson Mill Road (some stops), Falls Road (north of Beckleysville), Foreston Road, Gunpowder Road (some stops), Marshall Mill Road, Masemore Road (hill), Trenton Road, Upper Beckleysville Road, Bush Cabin Court.



BUS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Fifth District Elementary is served by approximately 9 buses. In order to facilitate an orderly and safe dismissal, students must ride home on their assigned buses. **Students will not be allowed to ride home on any bus other than their own.** Whenever a child who normally rides a bus is to be picked up, a note should be sent to school. Students not riding the bus will meet in a designated location in the school. **Whenever your child's transportation routine is altered, due to an emergency, a note must be sent to your child's teacher to specify the change.**

MORNING STUDENT DROP-OFF

Students may not to be dropped off at school until after 8:45 a.m. Teachers may not be in the classrooms to provide supervision until 8:45 a.m., therefore, students cannot be sent to classrooms before 8:45 a.m. (unless specific instructions have been received from the teacher). Teachers are on duty to supervise the outside and inside flow of student traffic at 8:45 a.m.

STUDENT PICK-UP

If students need to leave early from school, they need to bring in a note from home in the morning. Parents **must** report to the office to pick up their child/children. The office staff will call your child's classroom teacher and have your child/children come to the office for pick-up. All parents must sign out their child/children from the office before leaving school.

END OF DAY STUDENT PICK-UP

At the end of the school day, parents must come into the building to sign out and pick up students at the office. Students **are not** permitted to walk alone out to the parking lot. If the buses are in motion, please wait on the steps before continuing to the parking lot.

APPROPRIATE DRESS GUIDELINES

In order to create a more positive and respectful learning environment at Fifth District Elementary School, we have implemented the following Dress Code Guidelines:

1. The length of shorts or a skirt should not be shorter than fist length when you are standing with your arms down at your sides.
2. Muscle shirts and shirts with spaghetti straps may only be worn with a shirt over or under them.
3. Stomachs should not show.
4. Flip flops are **strongly discouraged** for safety reasons. Tennis shoes should be worn during gym class.
5. Make-up and body glitter are not appropriate for elementary age students.

We encourage all parents to support these guidelines in order to assist us in implementing a respectful learning environment.

Thanks for your cooperation!

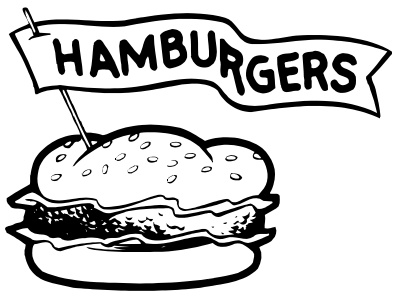
Student Behavior

The primary goal of the Baltimore County Public Schools is to help all students reach their academic potential. In order to attain that goal, it is important for students to assume responsibility for their actions and realize the relationship between their behavior and learning.

The Board of Education's disciplinary code is designed so that all students may understand acceptable and appropriate behavior. These policies are augmented by the administrative rules and regulations explained in the Student Behavior Handbook.

At the beginning of each school year, the school's administrators meet with each class to discuss the Student Behavior Handbook.

Parents are required to fill out the Student Handbook Acknowledgement Form located in the handbook and return it to their child's teacher.



School Lunch Program

[Food Price List](#)

The BCPS's Office of Food and Nutrition will provide a balanced breakfast & hot lunch daily for students. The cost of the items is outlined below:

\$1.40 - Breakfast	\$0.50 and up - a la carte pricing subject to change
\$0.30 - Reduced	(ice cream, frozen yogurt, cookies, etc.)
\$2.90 - Hot Lunch	\$0.60 - Milk
\$0.40 - Reduced	

A menu will be sent home to you monthly. Our cafeteria provides computerized purchasing accounts for students buying lunch items. One of the major advantages of this computer system is that students may deposit funds into an account in advance for the purpose of purchasing meals or additional food items.

A [prepayment deposit form](#) is available for your convenience. Students may make prepayments on the first day of school. Prepayments are collected by the classroom teacher, who will also send home additional prepayment deposit forms upon request.

Additional money may be added to the account at any time. We will continue to accept daily payments at the register, although we encourage and prefer the prepayment method and the daily use of meal cards to ensure prompt and efficient service. **Please be sure your child's full name is on checks or envelopes when you send in money.**

Three digit numbers will be assigned to each student and maintained at school. A computerized statement indicating the balance in your child's account will be sent home periodically.

Parents may also use the *My School Bucks* program to deposit money using a credit card. This program also allows you to follow purchases and payments. Additional information can be found at MySchoolBucks.com.

The Physical Education Program



All students at Fifth District will be provided with and expected to participate in physical education classes. It is important that students be prepared for activities with appropriate attire. Clothing that allows ease of movement and **tennis shoes** are required for class (**no slip-on shoes**). County policy prohibits unprepared students from participation for safety purposes. Parents will be notified of P.E. days so that you may help your child to be prepared for class.

The Vocal Music Program



The vocal music program provides students with the opportunity to enjoy and appreciate a wide variety of music on a regularly scheduled basis. The program consists of: singing (including foreign language songs and games), listening/appreciation, rhythm, playing percussion and melodic instruments, movement/dance, reading, and composing. Some grades will learn to play the recorder, which will require outside practice.



Instrumental Music Program

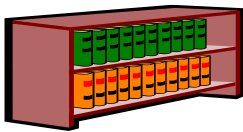
The instrumental music program offers 5th grade students the opportunity to study one of the following instruments: flute, clarinet, oboe, alto and tenor saxophones, trumpet, trombone, euphonium, French horn, tuba, snare drum, violin, viola, cello, and double bass. Lessons are during school hours, once a week on a rotation schedule.

Band is an enriching experience, and many students will remember it as one of the most enjoyable and creative times in their lives. In order to get the most out of band, one has to spend time outside of class getting to know the instrument better, and it is recommended that each band student practice a minimum of thirty minutes a day. Please encourage your child to practice. In these days of busy schedules for parent and child, your support is indispensable. Let's build a band in which we can take pride, leaving you and your children with many memories of their first years of music.

Art Program



All students at Fifth District Elementary will be provided art instruction. Integrating the art program with the ongoing implementation of the classroom curriculum is important. Parents should provide art smocks for all grade levels. (An oversized shirt, labeled with your child's full name is fine in a gallon size zip-lock bag). Art materials used are non-toxic and water soluble.



Library Media/Technology Program



The Library Media Program ensures that learning activities are integrated into the curriculum, and students become skilled users of information as they access and gather resources. Instruction is also provided to stimulate interest in reading, viewing, and using information and ideas. Here are a few important things to remember with reference to your child and the library program.

- Always try to find a safe place to keep library books at home.
- Remind your children to bring back library books on time.
- Encourage a love of reading at home by reading at home with your child; encourage them to read independently.

By keeping these things in mind, your child will reap the full benefits of the library program, and enjoy a lifelong love of learning.

Notes from the School Nurse



The health and wellbeing of your child are primary concerns while your child is in school. In order to ensure and maintain his/her good health and safety, please take a few minutes to review the following guidelines:

- We attempt to discourage administration of medication in the schools; however, if your physician decides it is necessary for your child to receive a medication during the school day, the approval and specific directions must be provided to the school by the physician. **Parents must bring the medication to the school in the original box or bottle with the current prescription label on the container. All medications (even over the counter medications) require a written physician's order. Students are not to have medications in their possession.**
- Please keep all home, work, and emergency phone numbers at school up-to-date. When children become suddenly ill or injured at school, it is essential that we have current phone numbers.
- Please keep the nurse informed of significant changes in your child's health. For example: changes in diet, daily medication, new allergies, and changes in physical restrictions, vision and/or hearing impairment.

By communicating your child's special health and safety needs to us, we can ensure a safer and healthier school year. Have a healthy year!



Lost and Found



Please mark all belongings with your child's full name. Lost and found items will be located outside the cafeteria area. Please check in the lost and found when you visit school.

Department of Recreation and Parks

The Hereford Recreation Council looks forward to serving both children and adults of Fifth District Elementary. Please look for the *Rec Review*, which will keep you up to date on all the programs offered, as well as acquaint you with those volunteers who head the Recreation Council. Please do not hesitate to call the Recreation Office at 410-887-1938 weekdays between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. for more information.

Volunteers Make a Difference!

At Fifth District, we are committed to increasing the number of volunteers annually.



Volunteering Information

Sign-In

To assure protection under Maryland State Law for comprehensive liability insurance and worker's compensation, **all volunteers are required to complete a mandatory online volunteer training & complete an application/affidavit. Upon entering the school volunteers must sign-in at the office & receive a volunteer/visitor pass.**

It is important that you sign in and record your hours each time you report to your volunteer job.

The Maryland State Department of Education requires that we record the number of volunteer hours in our school, and this information is taken from the computerized sign in. Please also submit to the volunteer coordinator the hours spent at home volunteering.

The school can receive recognition by the county and state for volunteer's efforts based on the total hours accumulated. Individuals will be recognized for their hours.

Field Trip/Volunteer Training

To support the effectiveness of our volunteer program and to ensure the safety of all our students, all volunteers are **required** to complete an annual online training and complete an application/criminal affidavit form **before** they are permitted to volunteer. No parent/guardian etc. will be allowed to participate on any field trip without having this training and paperwork on file **prior** to the trip.

Training link:

Tax Deductions



The IRS allows a number of tax benefits for volunteers. Unreimbursed expenses, made as part of giving services to a school, may be deducted by volunteers. Car mileage, bus and cab fares are deductible. Service hours are **not** deductible.

Parent Reference Getting the help you need!

For issues relating to your child's classroom or school concerns, use the following steps:

1. Contact the teacher/counselor.
2. Contact the principal.

For additional information, please refer to the [Baltimore County Public Schools website](#).