

Fifth District Elementary School

Parent/Student Handbook



3725 Mt. Carmel Road
Upperco, MD 21155
443-809-1726

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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 443-809-1726. 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. – 3:45 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 ring the front door **with a parent/guardian to sign in.**

Parents picking up students early from school should call the school office when they arrive (443-809-1726). 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 published once a month, which will keep you informed about important events in the school and community. The newsletter will be emailed to all parents connected through our FOCUS/SchoolMessenger service 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

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

In the event of an emergency closing at Fifth District ONLY, all efforts will be made to alert parents through automated phone calls and emails (only those connected through FOCUS). If schools in **all BCPS close**, students will **follow normal dismissal** procedures. BCPS will again make every effort to contact parents through phone calls/emails and news media. If changes to your dismissal are needed, please contact the school office.

Bus Policies and Procedures

Fifth District Elementary is served by 9 school 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 and copy [Ms. Fiamma](#) and [Mrs. Harris](#) to specify the change.**

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](http://bcps.org) and social media including the BCPS Facebook and Twitter feeds (@BaltCoPS) within seconds of the decision. It is also placed on BCPS-TV.

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.



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 then, 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 from 8:45-9:00am.

Student Pick-Up

If students need to leave early from school, please send a note from home in the morning or email the teacher and copy Mrs. Harris or Ms. Fiamma in the office.

End of Day Student Pick-Up

At the end of the school day (3:45), parents will stay in their vehicles and form a line in the parking lot near the playground area. Your child will be called to the kindergarten hallway and follow staff instructions to meet you. Students are not permitted to walk alone out into the parking lot.

Appropriate Dress Codes

Public schools do not regulate the dress and/or appearance of students unless the dress and/or appearance interferes with any aspect of the educational process. Standards for students dress during the school day and during other school-sponsored activities are detailed in [Board of Education Policy 5520](#) and [Superintendent's Rule 5520](#), Student Dress Code.

Students should wear attire in a manner that supports a healthy and safe learning environment. Students should not wear attire that is disruptive to the school environment, that promotes illegal or harmful activities or could endanger the health and safety of the student or other students.

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

Thanks for your cooperation!

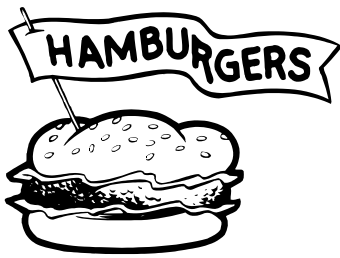
Student Behavior

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. All enrolled students of BCPS will receive breakfast and lunch, **free of charge**, every day! Breakfast will be distributed at the cafeteria or breezeway, as students enter the building. Late arrivals are encouraged to stop by the cafeteria to receive a meal. Lunch includes a variety of fresh and nutritious options, to include a minimum of four entrée choices daily. A minimum of three fresh fruits and three fresh vegetables are offered daily, along with milk, juice and whole-grains.

\$.50 and up - [a la carte pricing](#) subject to change
(ice cream, frozen yogurt, chips, etc.)

A [menu](#) can be on the BCPS website. Our cafeteria provides computerized purchasing accounts for students buying additional food or drink items/snacks. One of the major advantages of this computer system is that students may deposit funds into an account in advance of purchasing.

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.

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 PIN numbers to ensure prompt and efficient service. **Please be sure your child's full name is on checks or envelopes when you send in money.**

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 and forwarded to the cafeteria manager.

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, alto saxophone, trumpet, trombone, euphonium, percussion, violin, viola, cello, and string bass. Students will begin the year in group lessons and progress into rehearsals for 5th grade band and orchestra (depending on their instrument). There will be two concerts a year, one in the winter and one in the spring.

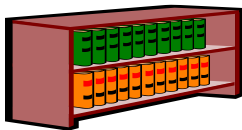
In the beginning of the year your student will bring home a recruitment packet with detailed information including how to rent an instrument, procure the needed supplies, and more about the expectations of the program. Being a member of a band or orchestra is an enriching experience, and many students will remember it as one of the most enjoyable and creative times in their lives.

Please contact Mrs. Russell at crussell4@bcps.org with any questions. I am looking forward to making music with your students!

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. Art is supposed to be messy, so students may want to bring an art smock (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



One of the primary goals at Fifth District is maintaining the health and wellbeing of all students. To help us do so, please review the following guidelines:

- Medications are preferably given at home. However, if you and your physician decide it is necessary for your child to receive a medication during the school day, the "Parent's Request to Administer Medication in School" form must be completed by the physician and signed by you. **Parents must bring the medication to the school in the original box or bottle with a current prescription label on the container. All medications (even over the counter medications such as cortisone creams, eye drops, etc.) require a written physician's order. Students are not to have medications in their possession.**
- Please keep home, work, and emergency phone numbers at school up-to-date for the nurse and front office. If an illness or injury occurs at school, it is essential that we have current contact information.
- Please keep the nurse informed of any changes in your child's health (new medications, new allergies, changes in diet, hearing or vision changes, injuries or illnesses.)

By communicating your child's needs to us, we can ensure a safer and healthier school year. Thank you!



Lost and Found



Please mark all belongings with your child's full name. Lost and found items will be located on a table in the breezeway. 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.**

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: [Volunteer Training/Application](#)

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](#).