

ASHLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

Important school information for parents with children
that attend Ashland Elementary School.

Last updated 8/10/17



ANDY JACKS, PRINCIPAL

SHANA ROBINSON, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Welcome!!

We have put together a parent handbook with the most important information you may need during this school year. You can access our parent handbook from the parent section on our webpage. The intent of this handbook is to inform you of some basic school procedures or policies. More information about the school division's regulations and policies are on the website. If any changes are made throughout the year, we will notify you through the school newsletters and then update the handbook online.

I want to thank you in advance for all that you will do this year to ensure that our students are successful, learning to their fullest potential and having an awesome year! We have a wonderful and important job and I am glad that you chose to enroll your child(ren) here at Ashland Elementary. I have been so impressed in the dedication of the staff and community since I have come here. I love being here and I hope you do or will too.

Our focus every year is to continue to strive towards our school vision: safe, kind, hardworking, creative, and fun. This vision is our guiding path for how we want ourselves as well as our students to be. School leadership will focus on this when making decisions and we will also look to observe this practice in ourselves, the staff, and the students during the year.

We can only be truly successful if we work effectively in teams. Henry Ford stated, **"Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."** That is easier said than done and it takes continuous efforts by everyone every year for this to happen. All our decisions about what is best for students will be made in our school teams as well as with PTO and Advisory Council.

As a school we will remember to let our students know that we care for them, that we know they can meet the high expectations we set for them and that we will make sure they are safe and secure each day at school. When students know that we want only the best for them, they will strive to also do their best and make a positive difference. Dr. James Comer stated, **"No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship."** John Maxwell stated, **"No one cares how much we know unless they know we care."**

We know that each of you is an advocate for your child(ren) and want to make sure that they have successful educational careers and then successful and happy lives as adults. Please know that we are here to make those things happen as well. We understand that as Haim Ginott stated, **"Children are like wet cement, whatever falls on them makes an impression."** We know that everything we do has an impact on our students. Please let me know during the year if we can make the experience for your child more supportive or more challenging. We are in this together and we appreciate all of the support you provide!

Sincerely,

Andy Jacks, Principal

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GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

SCHOOL HOURS

- Hours for students are 9:00 am – 3:40 pm for a full day. Half-day hours are 9:00 am – 12:20 pm. On half days lunch is provided for all students, even if their normal lunchtime falls after dismissal time. When the county is on a 2 hour delay, the school day begins at 11:00 am and ends at the normal time.
- Front doors open for students at 8:50 am. There will not be supervision provided by the school before 8:50 am. Students are considered tardy after 9:00 am.
- **OFFICE HOURS:** 8:00 am-4:30 pm

CONTACT INFORMATION

ADDRESS: 15300 Bowmans Folly Drive, Manassas, VA 20112

PHONE NUMBER: 703.583.8774

ATTENDANCE HOTLINE: 703.445.0809

FAX NUMBER: 703.583.9542

Twitter: Search for #AshlandSOAR @Ashland_Tablet @_AshlandES (Student Tweeters)

Facebook: Ashland Elementary School - PWCPS @AshlandSOAR

YouTube: Ashland Elementary School (PWCPS)

ASHLAND VISION, MOTTO, COLORS, MASCOT

ASHLAND VISION: *Kind, Safe, Creative, Hardworking, Fun*

ASHLAND MOTTO: *Together We Soar Higher*

ASHLAND COLORS: Red & Blue

ASHLAND MASCOT: Soaring Falcon

ASHLAND "SOAR": Supportive

Organized

Attentive

Respectful



ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

MORNING WALKERS/BIKERS

Students who live within the walker boundaries are encouraged to walk together with friends to school. We are a Bike to School Community, so children are also encouraged to ride their bikes to school. There are bike racks where students can lock their bikes.

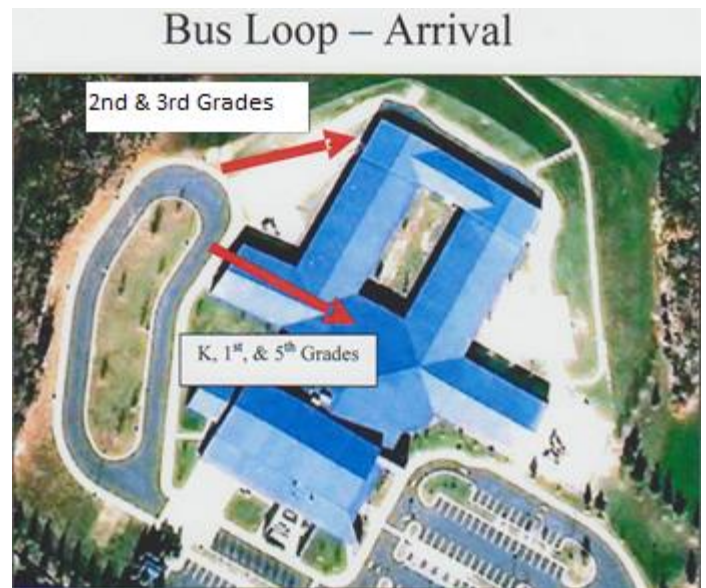
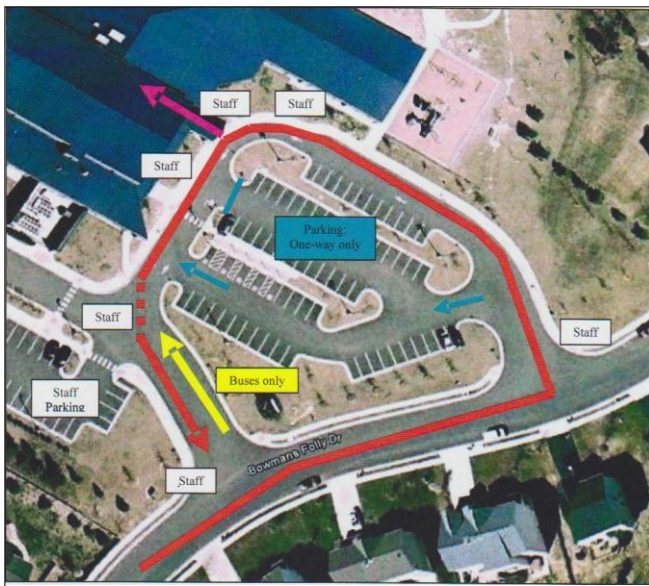
PETS NOT ALLOWED WITH WALKERS OR PARENT PICKUP

Pets are not allowed to be walked or carried with families on school property when dropping off students in the morning before school or picking up students after school. While most pets are safe and friendly, it is not known to school personnel which animals are or are not. The school is responsible for the safety of students and staff while on school property. If you want to walk your dog for these times, you will need to stay off the property and wait for your child there with your pet.

MORNING DROP-OFF (CAR RIDERS)

We have a student drop off area in front of the school. Please keep your car in single file line one-way along the yellow curb. Students being dropped off by their parents in the morning will be helped from their cars starting at about 8:50 am. Our goal is to welcome students safely and quickly into the school so that all students are in the building by 9:00 am. There will be a one-way loop through the front lot so that this goes quickly. Pull into the second entrance as shown in the diagram below. Please do not drive past the school down Bowmans Folly Drive to loop back around. Please take the left directly into school.

If you want to park, you must wait in line until you get into the lot. Please do not leave an unattended car in the drop off lane. Cars parked and unattended along yellow curbs can be towed by police. When parking, please use second and main entrance following the loop. Only buses will be allowed in the first entrance. We have staff members helping to direct traffic at key intersections. Remember that due to the number of students on the buses, the buses will have the right of way at intersections.



BUS DROP-OFF

Students riding the bus will pick up the bus at their designated stops. The lists of bus stops are posted on the PWCS webpage (<https://www.pwcs.edu/>). When they get to school, the students will be dismissed off of the bus and into school supervised by teachers. Students in 2nd and 3rd grades will enter the building through the doors nearest the back hallway (entrance 12). Students in Kindergarten, 1st, 4th, and 5th will enter the building through the doors nearest the 5th grade hallway (entrance 11). Kindergarten students are helped off the bus and walked to their class for the first few weeks of school. Staff is positioned outside their doors along each hallway to help supervise and direct students.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

EARLY DISMISSAL

Instruction continues until students are dismissed at 3:40 (12:20 on half days). Early dismissal is disruptive to teachers, other students, and the staff who are preparing for a quick and safe dismissal. If you need to pick your child up early because of an appointment, please send a note with the student to the teacher and plan on arriving 15 minutes earlier than you need to leave. Please park and report to the office. Please do not leave your car unattended in the pickup line. Once we begin bus dismissal, cars will not be permitted to leave until all students have been dismissed. **Anyone picking up a student from the office must show a photo id and be listed on the student's emergency card.**

We greatly encourage parents to NOT ask for pick-up of students between 3:00 and 3:30 pm. There are many important end-of-the-day wrap-up activities in the classroom and in the office every day. We typically will not dismiss students after 3:00 pm from their classes until dismissal time due to the safety of all students in the classroom during the end of the school day. **Except for emergencies, if you ask for dismissal at the end of the day, the student will be dismissed at 3:30 pm.**

BUS PASSES

Whenever it is necessary for a student to ride a bus other than the one he/she is normally assigned or to ride the same bus, but get off at another stop, parents must send a note to school. Notes must first be signed by the teacher. The teacher will then either give it back to the student to give to the bus driver, or give it to the bus driver themselves.

DISMISSAL ORDER

Dismissal will begin at 3:40 pm. At 3:40 pm, quick announcements will be made and the students will be dismissed in the following order:

1. Walkers, Parent Pickup, Car Riders
2. SACC (School Age Child Care) & other after-school activities
3. Buses (by grade level, two grade levels at a time)

DISMISSAL TAG

All students will have a tag placed on their back pack on the first day of school. This tag will identify how the student gets home at dismissal: car rider, bus rider, walker, parent pickup, or SACC. The bus number or car rider number for that student will also be written on the tag. In some cases, students may have 2 back to back tags in one holder. Please leave the tag on the back pack for the entire school year.

AFTERNOON WALKERS

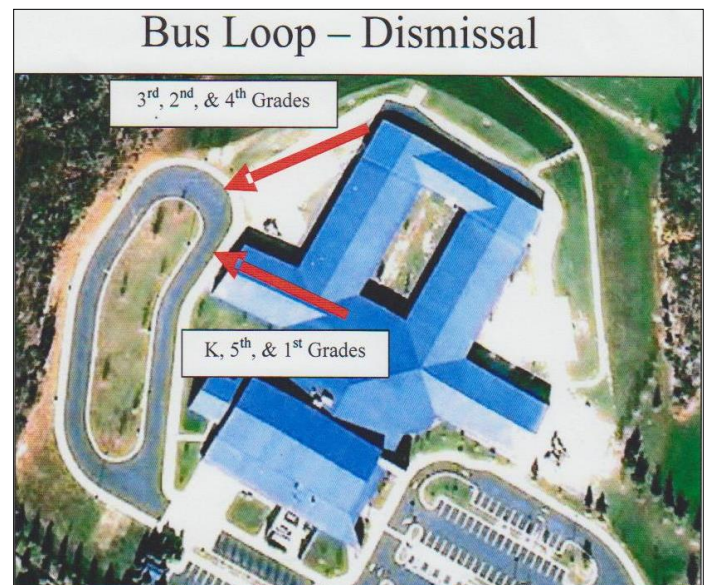
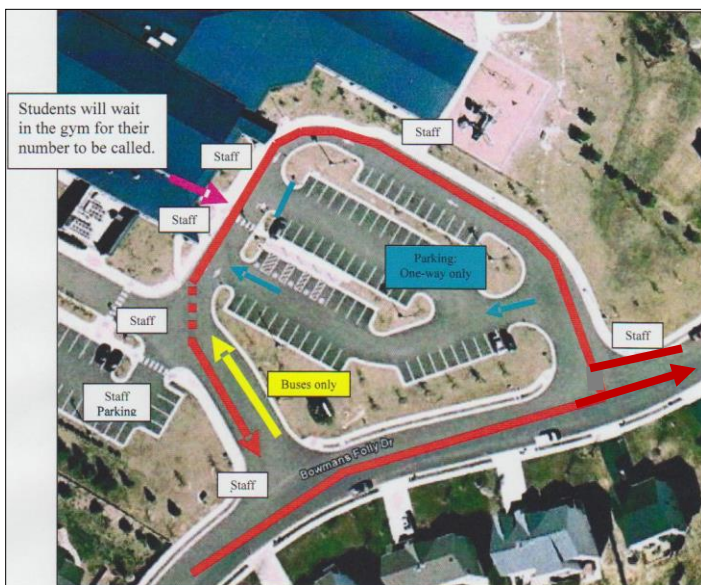
We need permission for students that will walk home from school on a daily basis. Only students that live in the designated walker areas (closest to school) will be allowed to be walkers. Teachers will give students a specific walker card that the student will give to a staff member at the front door. The staff member will take the card from the student as they are dismissed. The only students that will be allowed to leave the front door by themselves will be these walkers. The office has a permission form that you will need to fill out if you give permission for your child(ren) to walk home. The PWCS Transportation Department has a list of students who are allowed to be walkers based on distance from the school.

PARENT PICK-UP (PARENTS SIGNING-OUT STUDENTS FROM THE OFFICE)

Parent pick-up is for parents that want to come into school and sign their child(ren) out. They will need their ID every day to do this. Parents will be given a card with a specific number on it that explains how many students the parent has signed out. The parent will wait for their child(ren) in the main office area or in the front hallway. Once the parent and student are together, they will exit the front doors and give the card to the staff member located there. This is to ensure that students are going home with the correct parents. We will not allow students to leave with other parents unless we have permission from the student's parents in advance. When you are parking for this, please follow the one-way loop to get to the parking lot in front.

CAR RIDER AFTERNOON PICK-UP

The Car Rider Program is designed to let parents come through the front lot and pick up their child without having to get out of their cars. Parents will pass the first entrance and enter through the second entrance. If you are in the Car Rider Line, please drive past the school down Bowmans Folly Drive all the way to the intersection of Bowmans Folly and Tinkling Springs. At that intersection, turn around to loop back towards the school. Do not make unsafe u-turns or three-point turns. Do not pull into driveways to turn around. While in line, if a resident is trying to exit their driveway, please give them immediate access to do so. Follow the line towards the school to the front of the building by the side walk. Parents will need to register for this program in school. Then they will receive a tag with a specific number for their child to be placed on the windshield when they pull into the loop. Teachers will use a 2-way radio to communicate with each other. They will call students from the gym based on the number on the car. Then the teachers will help the students into the car on the passenger side only. At Open House, we will have a table ready for Car Rider Program Registration if you want to register. You may also register at any time if you come into the main office.





BUS PICK-UP

Students will be walked out of their classrooms to the bus loop and on to their bus accompanied by their classroom teacher each day. This will also include day care vans. Teachers will ensure that students get on their designated bus. Please help the teachers by letting them know which bus your child should ride. If changes occur in the way the student will be dismissed, please make sure you allow time for the staff to accommodate this change without holding up the buses. Kindergarten students will be labeled with a yellow reflective wristband from the PWCS Transportation Dept. that will be attached to his/her bookbag. This will help make sure that kindergarten students will not be let off the bus unless the designated adult is there at the bus stop.

Whenever it is necessary for a student to ride a bus other than the one he/she is normally assigned or to ride the same bus, but get off at another stop, parents must send a note to school. Notes must first be signed by the teacher. The teacher will then either give it back to the student to give to the bus driver, or give it to the bus driver themselves.

BUS BEHAVIOR

All students riding the bus are expected to understand and adhere to the code of conduct for bus behavior, which is available on the Prince William County Public Schools web page.

TRAFFIC FLOW IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Please be supportive of our neighbors that are patient through our traffic flow every morning and afternoon. Remember that if the residents need to leave, especially in an emergency, we need to accommodate this. Do not park in front of driveways or pull into driveways. Also, do not use driveways to turn around or park. Allow residents to leave the neighborhood area during our arrival and dismissal times. Remember that we do have many students who walk home from school. Thank you for watching out for these walkers while you are waiting to pick up or drop off your child at school.

DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

ATTENDANCE

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to see that their child attends school regularly and on time every day. Every school day is important to the education of your child. Research tells us that the best learning takes place during the interaction between the teacher and child in class. Simply making up the missed work does not begin to take the place of actual class attendance. Students who enter class tardy are disruptive to classroom instruction and can have a challenging time getting into the classroom routine. The same holds true for students who leave early. It is important that students are here for the entire day. We urge you to schedule medical and other appointments so that they do not conflict with class time. If it is necessary for your child(ren) to arrive after regular instruction time begins or to leave school before the regular dismissal time, please send a written note to the teacher indicating your intentions.

We discourage vacations during the school year. However, we know for a variety of reasons they may occur. Please send a note or letter in advance to the teacher and the principal informing the school of your plans. The principal has the responsibility of approving prearranged absences. We realize in the case of a family emergency that this may not be possible. **Teachers are not required to provide assignments in advance.** We would encourage students to read, keep a written journal, and practice math facts while out of school. Students can complete make up assignments when they return.

If your child is absent, please call the attendance hotline number at school 703-445-0809. This is for your child's safety. If you do not contact the school, it will be necessary for the school office to contact you. If we do not hear from you; your child will be marked as unexcused for the day. Students with excused absences are allowed two days for every day of absence to make up work. Students are responsible for making up work when they are absent. As a courtesy to other parents and your child(ren)'s classmates, parents should notify the school nurse or office if their child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease.

These attendance guidelines are in accordance with PWCS Regulation 724-1, which also states the following about prearranged absences: "In order for any prearranged absences to be classified as excused, principals shall be notified in writing within a reasonable amount of time prior to the absence. Parents will be strongly encouraged to schedule family trips during school holidays. Prearranged absences that extend beyond 15 school days will result in the withdrawal of the student from school. In this situation, parents would be required to re-enroll their child. Excessive prearranged absences may result in absences being unexcused."

The same regulation also discusses make-up work: "Due to the varied demand on teachers for make-up work, teacher discretion shall determine the type/amount of work and when students shall make up work for prearranged absences. Teachers shall not be required to provide assignments in advance of an absence; however assignments

requested in advance may be provided at the teacher's discretion. Students shall not be exempt from nine-week tests, semester examinations, or SOL exams."

CODE OF BEHAVIOR CONTENTS

The Code of Behavior is now posted on the PWCS website ([click here for link](#)) and contains PWCS student expectations of behavior and conduct. The Code of Behavior also includes the following items for parents:

- Family Life Education and Curriculum and Opt-out Information
- Parental Notification of K-12 School Counseling Services
- Medication Administration Authorization Form
- Complaint of Bullying Form
- Complaint of Harassment and Discrimination Form
- How to Opt-Out of Student Information/Photo Disclosure
- Scoliosis Fact Sheet

SCHOOL VISITS

Please remember that everyone in the building during school hours needs some type of identification. Each staff member has a PWCS badge that they should be wearing. All parents and visitors that do not work for the school division must sign in, run their ID through our Raptor Security System, and wear the provided sticker label every day. These labels are date and person specific. This is a PWCS regulation and is there to protect the students from unsafe visitors.

Parents are welcome to observe classes at school. Please call the school first and set up a mutually agreeable time with your child's teacher. **Also, because classroom instruction is in progress, please do not have a conference with the teacher during the observation.** Please do not walk your child to class on a daily basis. Our students need to accept the responsibility of getting ready for class. We also invite and encourage parents to volunteer at Ashland. There are many ways in which you can help (please see the section on volunteering).

WAYS TO KEEP THE SCHOOL SAFE & SECURE

- All parents and visitors must report to the school office directly upon entering the school. Prince William County requires that all visitors sign in and leave photo identification with a valid expiration date. Visitors will then be issued a visitor's pass which they must wear the entire time they are in the school.
- Teachers use a "buddy system" for when students move from one part of the school to another.
- Parents should keep their child's emergency information card, on file in the office, up-to-date with valid phone numbers, emergency contact persons, and persons designated to pick them up from school.
- Parents and teachers will teach the students not to become involved with strangers, to accept rides, etc. and to be alert to unusual happenings or "cruising vehicles" in your neighborhood. They will also teach them to report such occurrences to an adult.
- The school should be notified immediately of any potentially serious or unusual situations involving friends or relatives who may try to contact children at school. The school's only interest in knowing this very private type of information is for the protection of our students and staff.
- The school does not allow older siblings in middle or high school to "drop-in" for an unannounced visit. Visitor privileges to older students during regular school hours will not be allowed except through administrative permission.

- Parents should make appointments for conferring with their child's teacher. **"Drop-in" conferences are distracting.**
- The school and school division has multiple emergency/crisis plans to deal with specific safety and emergency issues.
- Students must be signed out in the office and will not be released to anyone other than those listed on the emergency cards, unless prior written authorization is provided.

BRINGING ITEMS TO SCHOOL

Students should not bring toys, games, gaming devices, tablets, comics, trading cards, sports equipment to school unless they have been asked or given permission to do so by their teachers (i.e., show and tell, earned rewards/time). The student will assume responsibility for any item brought to school. **Students should never bring anything that can be seen or used as a weapon to school.**

BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE

The Prince William County School Board has approved electronic devices to be brought and used in school. The use of these devices will be explained further through your child's classroom teacher, but ultimately it should be used to enhance learning and not distract from it. Prince William County's regulations on the acceptable use of technology is also outlined in the Code of Behavior.

HONOR ROLL & SOAR AWARDS

- **SOAR AWARD PURPOSE:** SOAR stands for **S**upportive, **O**rganized, **A**ttentive, and **R**espectful. The SOAR awards are given by teachers to K-2nd students that have shown, through actions, the qualities of our SOAR program. Teachers will write the specific reason for each child on the award. ALL STUDENTS will receive this award once during the school year. The purpose of the award is to provide positive reinforcement for actions that are unique to each student and their personal goals. Parents of students in K-2nd will be notified in advance when their child(ren) will be receiving a SOAR Award and are encouraged to join their child(ren) on the day of their award. Students will receive the award on the morning announcements, one grade level per day, and then meet their parents in the library to have snack.
- **HONOR ROLL PURPOSE:** The Honor Roll and Principal's Honor Roll recognizes 3rd-5th grade students for high academic achievement. The Honor Roll is for students who earn all A's and B's on their quarterly report card. The Principal's Honor Roll is for students who earn all A's on their report card. These grades are based on assessments and other expectations from teachers during the nine weeks. Students must earn an S-, S, or S+ in work effort *and* in conduct (no N's). Students will be recognized for their high academic achievement in school with a certificate (usually included with the report card). While Honor Roll is an academic award, we have an emphasis on the whole child. We acknowledge that high academic marks is easier to accomplish for some students compared to others. We draw the line with N's in behavior to demonstrate to students that it is not ok just to do well academically. There has to be a minimum level of appropriate behavior as well. We expect that our team of parents, teachers, and students to work together to help these behaviors and academics progress. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education." This decision on how Honor Roll is implemented and awarded is a site-based decision and was originally formulated with input from parents and teachers. Any decisions can be reviewed in the future.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

Language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science are the four major areas of study. All students also receive instruction in art, music, physical education, guidance, and library on a rotating basis. Fourth and fifth grade students may elect to take strings. Reading, Special Education, ESOL, and Gifted Education services are also available. Please contact your child's teacher and/or the office for more information on these instructional programs.

LOST AND FOUND

Articles lost by students are kept in the lost and found table in the main hallway towards the auxiliary gym where they can be claimed by students or parents. Periodically, articles will be displayed for identification purposes. Articles not claimed after a reasonable length of time will be donated to a charitable organization.

LUNCH AND BREAKFAST

Elementary student lunch prices are listed on our website and will include either a "hot" lunch, sunbutter, chef salad lunch, or yogurt lunch. One lunch choice is always a no meat or vegan choice. Students serve themselves one fruit choice and two vegetable choices. Every day, there is a "make your own" salad choice also. A la carte items are also available. Lunch tickets can be purchased for any number of days. Remember that checks should always include the name of your child as well as the teacher's name. Breakfast, milk prices, and adult meal prices are listed on our website. Menus will be sent home monthly. Our cafeteria manager, Karen Schrader is available for questions or concerns throughout the year at (703) 590-0739. For those interested, the cafeteria will again provide parents with web access to their child's lunch card information. Parents can log-in to myschoolbucks.com to prepay their child's account.

It is particularly important that students eat a wholesome meal at lunch. Nutritious lunches are available every day in the cafeteria. Students can purchase a complete lunch or a la carte items. Students who forget to bring lunch money can charge their lunch with the cashier. Parents should send payment the next school day. Any student with unpaid charge slips will receive notification from the cafeteria. Checks should be made payable to Prince William County Food Service.

Families who need assistance with lunch and/or breakfast can receive this help through the Free or Reduced Lunch Program. Reduced lunch and breakfast costs are listed on our website. Families are reminded that paperwork must be completed every school year. Forms are available online and in our office. This information is kept confidential. Please call the office, guidance counselor, cafeteria manager, or administration for more information or questions.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information about School Food & Nutrition Services on the PWCS website.

DRESS CODE

All students are expected to dress appropriately, both for the academic environment and the weather, and maintain a reasonable appearance. The Prince William County Schools' Code of Behavior has addressed several areas that are considered improper dress in any Prince William County School. **Students are required to dress modestly and meet the standards of health, safety, cleanliness and decency.** Their attire shall not be disruptive to the learning environment.

Students must wear shoes (no slippers, flip flops, or slide-in flops). If sandals or clogs are worn, they should have a strap around the heel. We encourage children to wear sneakers or rubber soled shoes since they will be going outside for P.E. and recess. Parents will be contacted if students are in violation. Additional information is contained in the Code of Behavior.

HOMework

The purpose of homework is to provide drill or practice of an idea already presented by a teacher. Homework may consist of activities or projects, which enrich, enhance, and extend a school experience, provide real-life application of a subject being studied, and/or develop an appreciation of a community resource. Homework will be incorporated as an integral part of the instructional program. The instructional objectives of homework and the weighting of homework in determining grades will be communicated to students and parents. All students should read or be read to at least 15-20 minutes a night depending on grade level requirements. Teachers are not required to provide assignments in advance for students going on vacation. Students work very hard throughout the school day and it is equally important that they enjoy recreational activities and family time after school. Therefore, there are guidelines, stated in Regulation 663-1, that limit the amount of nightly homework for students. The following times are the maximum recommended time for nightly homework, which also includes reading: Kindergarten (10-20 minutes), 1st & 2nd Grades (10-20 minutes), and 3rd – 5th Grades (30-50 minutes).

TEXTBOOKS AND LIBRARY BOOKS

Students and parents are responsible for all books issued to them by their teachers or borrowed from the library. Parents will be asked to make restitution for all damaged or lost books.

SCHOOL PHOTO POLICY

According to current PWCS policies and regulations, photographs and video images of any student engaged in school activities may be produced and used in any school division program, publication or exhibit, if deemed appropriate by school division personnel. Photos and images may also be authorized for use by outside organizations such as the news media and scholarship providers so long as this is in the best interest of the students, the school and the school division and complies with other regulation guidelines. Any parent wishing to avoid use of their children's photos by external organizations may fill out and submit an opt-out form. These forms along with the complete regulation (790-4) can be found online.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are arranged by the grade level team in order to provide a supplemental instructional lesson that aligns with the county and state curriculum. Please follow the grade level team's directions for these field trips. All students must travel to and from the location with the group and teachers. Parents are not allowed to sign-out their child from the field trip location. Parents should also be an assigned chaperone if they are to be on the field trip. Parents should not just show up at the field trip location. This is primarily due to the importance of a clear line of supervision and for the safety of the students.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

MEDICATION

1. It is the intent of the Prince William County School System to assist parent(s)/guardian(s) by giving needed medication to students so that the student may maintain school attendance when parents are unable to come in.
2. It is the parent(s)/guardian(s) responsibility to provide the following for prescription or non-prescription medication:
 - a. Medication Authorization form must be filled out for all prescription and over the counter medications. Prescription medications require a physician's signature and both types of medication require a parent/guardian's signature.

- b. Medication shall be in the original container. Prescription medications must have the pharmacy label attached.
3. Parents need to bring the medication to the office themselves. Students are not allowed to bring medication in.
4. Students are not allowed to keep medication in their possession while at school. However, students may keep in their possession certain medication such as prescription inhaler for Asthma or EPIPEN for Life threatening allergies. Parents must make this request known to the school nurse .The school nurse will provide the appropriate forms for the doctor to fill out.

OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

Please help your children remember their coats, gloves, hats, etc. when they come to school. We monitor the temperature and wind chill outside to decide whether students can go outside for recess or PE. According to PWCS regulations, we need to be careful with temperatures under 32°. Therefore, classes will go outside if the wind chill is 32° or above and stay inside if it is 31° or below. We will use the wind chill for our zip code on WeatherBug.com. This norm is based on PWCS guidelines.

FOOD IN SCHOOL

Please remember that there are several reasons why we need to be careful about what food is brought into school from home or the store. Many students have very serious allergies to specific ingredients. Also, we should be mindful of instilling good habits of nutrition in our students at a young age. Consider fruits and vegetables be brought instead of candy, cupcakes, or cookies. Also consider non-food items like pencils to use instead of food for celebrations in school. Please check with the teacher as to what items can or cannot be brought into the classrooms. We greatly appreciate your support in keeping students safe and healthy! [See PWCS Regulation 275-1 \(Wellness Plan\) for more information.](#)

CLASSROOM/GRADE LEVEL HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

There sometimes is a fine line between holiday celebrations that are productive versus ones that are a distraction to our school mission. We believe that celebrations are a great tool to make sure that students feel connected to each other and the school. Students should feel that school is a place for excitement and fun, not just a place where they are “forced” to come every day. We do need to monitor these so that they meet the school division’s expectations. [PWCS Regulation 602.11-1](#) explains these holiday activity expectations. We also provided a copy of this regulation to all of the staff here at Ashland. Below is an excerpt that specifically pertains to the upcoming holiday celebrations. Decisions about specific items, allowed food, duration, etc. will be discussed through Advisory Council, PTO, and as a staff in order to make sure we hear input from everyone.

“The appropriateness and suitability of any holiday activity depends on its purpose and context. **Teachers and principals should seek activities that are instructionally relevant**, have **been thoughtfully chosen**, and are representative of the pluralism of our country. Therefore, teachers and principals throughout Prince William County Public Schools must:

1. Determine how holiday activities will further the education and enrichment of students.
2. Determine which holiday activities can best help them meet their educational goals.
3. Determine how holiday activities can be of cultural, historical, and religious significance without presenting a distorted picture of the faiths or beliefs of a religion.
4. Determine how students and staff who do not wish to participate in specific holiday activities due to their religious beliefs can be accommodated.”

ILLNESS AND INJURY

Children may become ill or get injured at school. Whenever this happens, the school will contact the parent. All parents must provide the school with the name and telephone number of a person who can be contacted in cases of emergencies. It is very important that parents update emergency numbers as changes of the contact person occur.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Please be sure you have made your children aware of what to do if schools are closed, open late, or close early. Parents should be particularly clear in their instructions regarding what to do if schools close early.

WAYS TO SUPPORT THE SCHOOL

MY COKE REWARDS

Ashland Elementary is registered to accept points that will go towards supplies for our classrooms. Below is the link to enter codes from Coke products. This was recommended by a parent and is another way we can support our school. <http://www.mycokerewards.com/schoolsLanding.do>

BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION

If you have any clipped Box Tops that you would like to share with Ashland Elementary, please bring them in! All points received from these Box Tops will go towards products that will help the students in the classroom.

DONATIONS TO SCHOOL

PWCS Regulation 423-1 describes the procedures for donations to the school division. This includes any permanent gift and/or any expendable gift (exceeding \$500 in value). Most donations/gifts to the classroom for pencils, tissues, etc. are very much appreciated and do not need to be documented through this type of regulation. This describes more of the larger gifts or permanent gifts to the school. Typically these may be something like computers, outdoor equipment, or large monetary donations. If you are interested in providing these large types of gifts, please let your child's teacher know and please let Andy Jacks, Principal, and/or R.J. Lucciotti, Assistant Principal know as well. We want to be sure that you know how much we appreciate the gifts and all that you do to support our school!!

WAYS TO BE INVOLVED

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meetings are held most months during the school year at 4:15 pm in the school library. The meeting schedule, along with staff and parent members for current school year are listed on our webpage. Please join the council if you would like to share concerns or learn more about progress towards school goals. The council reviews decisions made about the budget and monitors progress made in the school plan.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

Meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday *or* Thursday of most months during the school year at 7:00 pm in the school library. More PTO information is posted on our webpage. Joining the PTO is a great way to support our students and staff throughout the year. Any help is always appreciated!

VOLUNTEERS

We are very blessed here at Ashland to have so many volunteers to help with our students and staff. Please make sure to sign-in when you enter the building and remember that volunteering means to help in the volunteer room or for specific tasks that the teacher has requested. If you sign-in to volunteer, please go where you have stated when signing-in. We have a large teacher/volunteer workroom with many supplies. Your help is greatly appreciated!

CLUBS AND STUDENT GROUPS

Ashland also has many before and after school clubs, student groups, and events. Please ask your child's teacher or contact the school or PTO if you would like more information. These groups and events will be posted in the newsletters and online.

COMMUNICATION

NEWSLETTERS

School administration will send monthly newsletters via email to parents. If you wish to receive printed copies due to a lack of internet access, please let the office know so that we can accommodate this request.

CONTACTING TEACHERS

Many teachers use email as a main point of contact throughout the year. Please keep in mind that teachers are busy with instruction throughout the day and will have limited time during the day to check email. If there is something urgent, please call the office for them to send a message to the teacher.

WEBSITE

All teachers will have updated information on their class web pages for parents during the year. There are also many other pages on our web site providing general information for parents. Each staff member also has a video introducing themselves.

CONCERNS FOR SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES

There are additional services provided to students during the school day such as Special Education, Gifted, ESOL, etc. Each of these services requires specific eligibility procedures. If you feel that your child is not progressing like he/she should or needs further enrichment, please contact the teacher first. If you feel that we should look at more than just the classroom instruction, please contact school administration. We fully understand and appreciate that a parent is a child's number one advocate and we are glad that you are involved. We also want to make sure each child is getting the services that he/she needs.

CONCERNS FROM PARENTS ABOUT THE CLASSROOM AND/OR TEACHER

During the year, parents may have questions or concerns about things happening in the classroom. **It is important that parents contact the teacher first.** Teachers have the right to address these concerns directly and our goal is that they work with parents to come to a positive solution that is in the best interest of ALL of the children in the classroom.

PARENT REQUEST TO MOVE STUDENT TO ANOTHER CLASS

At Ashland, we take great care when forming classes. We consider many different variables when creating each class of students. This means your child might not be placed in a class with the same teacher that his/her older sibling had or with his/her best friend. We believe all our teachers are excellent and that your child will have an outstanding year as they learn to adjust to different teaching styles and classroom environments. We also feel that moving students from one classroom to another is not always in the best interest of the student being moved, the classroom he/she is moving from, or the classroom he/she is moving to. For these reasons, we tend not to move students very often and look at any requests to move a student very carefully and in a precise manner. If you feel that a change in teacher is absolutely necessary you must meet and discuss all of your concerns with the teacher first. We have seen that most concerns are resolved in this manner. If you still feel strongly about a change, a formal and written request to the principal is needed. The principal will make the final decision regarding new class assignments and new teachers.

REPORT CARDS AND INTERIMS

Interim reports are sent home every 4 1/2 weeks in between report cards. Report cards are sent home every nine weeks. Every school in PWCS sends them home on the same dates.

AUTODIALER

The Prince William County Schools uses a computerized system to send home emails and phone calls to parents throughout the year ("auto-dials" many phones at once). Sometimes these come directly from central office and sometimes they will be sent from Ashland. Please keep in mind that some of the information that comes from school is sensitive in nature. We will try to be mindful of how many messages we send and when we send them. Please help monitor which messages are appropriate for your child to see or hear versus which messages are for adults only to see or hear. Also, please make sure your email and phone numbers are up to date in our system.

PARENT PORTAL REGISTRATION

Parents can access student information by registering for the Parent Portal. Parents and students will be able to view student grades and attendance. Parents will also be able to edit contact information. [Click here to go to the PWCS website to register for Parent Portal.](#)

Information in this parent handbook is subject to change if the policies and regulations of the school division or Ashland Elementary change throughout the year.