



Gold Hill Elementary School
Student Handbook
2016-2017

Mission

Gold Hill Elementary School in partnership with its students, parents, community, and the Fort Mill School District will put children first by committing to create an environment that nurtures academics, responsibility, and leadership.

Vision

Our vision for GHES is to provide a safe, positive and nurturing learning environment where all students are encouraged to achieve their academic and personal goals. We value a collaborative community as we prepare our students to become leaders in an ever-changing global society.

Beliefs

- Learning is a lifelong process that promotes an improved quality of life
- The learning environment is enhanced by positive relationships and mutual respect among all members.
- Creativity and excellence are fostered in a challenging environment and promote higher levels of achievement through differentiation with instruction.
- We believe in collective responsibility where leadership is shared and everyone assumes personal responsibility for student learning
- We believe that children who begin each day as healthy individuals can learn more and learn better. While a healthy staff can facilitate learning while promoting wellness

School day: 7:45 – 2:30

Arrival- **Students should arrive at school between 7:10 a.m. and 7:40 a.m. each day.** Adult supervision will begin at 7:10 each morning. Car riders are to be dropped off and picked up at the designated areas in front of the school cafeteria or in the middle school drive.

Dismissal– **There will be no dismissal between 2:00 - 2:30 p.m.** as this is a busy time. If you plan to pick up your child from school, please follow the designated pick-up procedures, as there will be lots of traffic, both cars and buses, around the school at that time. Pick-up procedures are discussed later in the handbook.

Changes in your student's afternoon transportation **must be in writing** to the homeroom teacher. For your child's safety, **phone changes can no longer be accepted.**

Early Dismissal- the parent, guardian, or an adult acting with the consent of the parent or guardian, must come to the office before 2:00 and sign out the student on the computer, which will show the date, time and reason the student is dismissed.

Visiting the School

We are proud of our school and invite you to visit us. To ensure our students' safety and to allow for uninterrupted instructional time, all visitors are required to report to the office upon arriving. In the office you will be given a visitor's badge to wear during your visit; all visitors must wear a badge at all times.

Please **do not** bring pre-school children with you when you come to observe or volunteer because they are often difficult to control and don't understand the need to remain quiet. Also, no school-age child, relative or friend may visit in your child's class.

Important Note About Custody

If you are separated or divorced, we need to have a copy of your custody papers on file. If at any time you feel that a problem of abduction may occur, we need to have knowledge of this in the school office.

Conferences

Conferences are valuable and desirable for the benefit of the students. Review the district school calendar for dates designated for scheduling formal conferences. Parents are encouraged to call for an appointment at other times as well. Teachers often request a conference to discuss a student's concern before it becomes major. Conferences are normally scheduled after school but may also be arranged before school and at planning times. We do not schedule conferences during the school day (except at planning time) as it takes the teacher away from his/her students. Parents may call the school office (548-8250) or send a note to set up an appointment. Telephone calls are often good means of having an informal conference; you may also expect to have your child's teacher communicate with you to update you on your child's work.

Transportation

Car Riders:

AM- children are to be unloaded from 7:10-7:40 in the front of the building near the cafeteria area. 3rd – 5th graders may also be unloaded in the middle school drive until 7:40 each morning.

If a parent needs to park in front of the school to visit the office, volunteer, etc. they should **not** park in the spaces nearest to the school, next to the flag poles. Instead, drive around the car loop and park in the spaces on the other side of the loop. This is for the safety of students and adults, as well as the efficiency of the car line.

Safety regulations require separate car and bus entrances; consequently, the bus lane is closed to all cars in the morning and in the afternoon. Additionally, parents should **not** unload children in the teacher parking lot in the mornings.

PM- Kindergarten-2nd grade students will be picked up in front of the school near the cafeteria. 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade car riders will be picked up at the middle school drive. If you have multiple children at GHES, their pickup location will be with the youngest child. For example, if your daughter is in 1st grade and your son is in 4th grade, both children would be picked up from the K-2 car line area.

For afternoon pickup, we use a numbered car tag system. Each family will receive two identification number tags so that you can have a tag for multiple vehicles. Please put your child's car rider tag in the window of your vehicle; this will help speed the loading process. **If you do not have a car tag, you will have to park and go inside the office to sign out your child.**

For safety reasons, students will not be allowed to cross lines of traffic to waiting cars. Therefore, please do not park across from the loading area to get your child. All cars should stay in **one line** of traffic; we will load your child as quickly as possible. **Please do not park and leave your car unattended along the curb in front of the building in the morning or afternoon.** If you need to come into the building, please park in the visitor spots.

Bus Riders:

Riding the bus is a privilege extended to students, and good behavior is required at all times. To ensure a safe environment on each bus, the school fully supports the driver in maintaining safe bus habits. Anyone who violates these safety standards will be subject to disciplinary action by school officials; when necessary, bus transportation will be denied. The State law makes the school bus driver responsible for the conduct of the passengers while riding in the bus under his control. The driver will report to the school authorities any offenses committed by the students on the bus. When a student is reported for an infraction of the bus rules, the school administrator will investigate the incident and take necessary disciplinary action. A copy of the incident report will be mailed to the parents. When a student is suspended from riding a bus, he/she cannot ride another bus during the suspension period.

Students are assigned to buses at the beginning of the year, and any variation must be approved by the Director of Transportation. If your child needs to ride a different bus home than the one that picks him/her up, then a special request must be made to the district Director of Transportation. Students will be allowed to ride a different bus only as room allows. Forms for making these requests are available in the school office.

Attendance

An absence for any reason other than illness, religious holidays, or death in the immediate family is considered to be an unlawful absence. **Under the “No Child Left Behind Act” and The South Carolina Attendance policy, we are mandated to code children truant in the computer system who have a total of five (5) unexcused absences during the school year.** Please keep this in mind as you are considering taking trips, etc. during the school year. Whenever possible, try to get a medical excuse when your child is out.

Students are required to bring a written excuse for all absences and tardies. The excuse needs to briefly explain the reason for the absence or tardy and be signed by the parent with the dates listed. Excuses are required to be kept on file at school.

Medication and First Aid

The Fort Mill School District wants to ensure the safety and well-being of your child while in our care at school on a daily basis. **If your child gets sick at school, we must have emergency phone numbers to call,** so please make sure you always have current phone numbers on file at the school.

In addition, **the nurse and/or designee cannot dispense any medications, (both non-prescription (over-the-counter) and prescription medications) from the health room without a healthcare provider’s order for that specific child.**

If your child needs to take any medication at school, you must supply the medication in the original container with all directions and names visible. A signed medication consent form or written doctor’s order for each medication must be on file in the school health room and signed by your child’s healthcare provider. Copies of the medication consent form may be obtained from the school nurse. If a prescription medicine is currently being given at school and needed while your child is on a **field trip,** the parent/guardian must bring and supply the medicine to school by the day of the field trip. It must be in the original, marked container. Additional labeled bottles may be obtained from your pharmacy. No ziploc bags will be accepted.

School Fees

Students will be furnished basic textbooks for free. However, a fee of \$25.00 will be charged to all grades K - 5 students to cover such items as copy paper, construction paper, drawing paper, art supplies, etc. These fees should be paid during registration.

Birthday parties

Invitations to birthday parties will not be given out in the classroom unless **all** children are invited to the party.

PTA

Gold Hill has an active and vital PTA for grades K - 5. We encourage all parents to belong to and participate in the PTA. Gold Hill's PTA deals with many issues that concern the betterment of your child's education. Fundraisers sponsored by the PTA will help to provide resources for improving our school program. The PTA will continue its efforts on improving the safety, aesthetics, and utility of the campus. Please lend your support by becoming a member and supporting the fundraisers and activities planned by the PTA.

Discipline

In order for students to have a positive school experience, an atmosphere of good behavior must be maintained. We expect our children to properly behave. While each child is responsible for his or her own behavior, we encourage parental support of the school rules.

In the event that a student is sent to the office for a discipline referral, a copy of that referral will be shared with parents. Depending upon the nature of the problem, some possible consequences for inappropriate actions include parent conferences, denial of privileges, isolation, and suspension. In each incident, the consequences will be as appropriate for the infraction as possible.

Student actions that materially disrupt classwork, involve substantial disorder, or invade the rights of others could be a basis for out of school suspension or expulsion. Examples of these student actions or major offenses are: theft, fighting, possession of weapons, damage to school property, assault of school personnel, defiance of school authority, profanity, obscene literature, and distribution of unauthorized materials, possession of drugs, alcohol. No blackmail, threats, intimidation, student disorder, and possession of fireworks are allowed.

Bullying

Every child has the right to study, participate in class, and work in a safe environment. Bullying behavior such as name calling, intimidation, threats, physical altercations, and relational aggression toward classmates, volunteers, school staff members, or visitors will not be tolerated. Bullying is a **PATTERN** of intentional aggressive behavior. It can take the form of physical or verbal harassment, (including messages and postings via cell phones and the internet) and involves an imbalance of power. This behavior will be addressed through disciplinary action at the discretion of the school administrator, as per FMSD Board Policy JICFAA.

Communication Devices

A student may possess a cell phone in school as long as the device remains off and is not visible during the school day, including school bus rides to and from school.

A student in possession of a cell phone in conflict with this policy will have the device confiscated and will be subject to discipline as provided under the district's code of student conduct.

The student's parent/guardian may pick up the confiscated device from the school.

Clothing

School is a child's "place of business", and we expect children to come to school with this attitude. Children should come dressed ready to work. We also expect adults coming into our building to respect this feeling and assist us by setting a good example. Any clothing causing a distraction at school is discouraged. A change of clothing may be required if clothing is not felt to be appropriate for school. The School Board policy concerning clothing requires:

1. Clothing should not be so immodest or indecent to the school setting as to be disrupting to the education process.
2. Proper shoes must be worn at all times (no cleats, no wheels).
3. Obscene slogans or pictures on clothing will not be allowed.
4. Hats are not to be worn in school buildings.
5. Students in grades K-5 may wear shorts.

Breakfast, Lunch, and Snacks

Nutritious breakfasts and lunches are available at school every day. Students are required to eat lunch in the cafeteria, either purchasing lunch or bringing lunch from home. Extra milk is also available for purchase. Students are discouraged from bringing canned/carbonated drinks to the lunchroom and encouraged to drink milk unless a note is brought from home. Menus are sent home and available online.

Students may pay for breakfast and lunch **daily, weekly, or monthly**. However, we strongly encourage parents to pay on a weekly or even monthly basis. Occasionally parents wish to have a meal at school with their child. Meals may be purchased in the cafeteria as you go through the line; please send a note to your child's teacher on the day you plan to come.

Those who desire free or reduced price lunches and breakfasts must fill out forms and return them to the school office immediately.

Money

If you send money or a note with your child:

1. Put it in a sealed envelope.
2. Write the child's **first and last name, phone number and teacher's name** on the outside of the envelope with a note inside telling for what purpose the money is to be used.

Checks- checks written to pay for your child's lunch, insurance, pictures, or lost or damaged books should be made payable to Gold Hill Elementary School. Please note your **child's first and last name on the check, plus phone number** so that we can credit the child with payment. Full name and full address must be on the check.

Field trips- nature walks and field trips bring valuable experiences beyond the school atmosphere. Field trips are centered around units of study and feature different activities for different grades. This ensures that students have a wide range of experiences at the ages which would be most appropriate. Parents are asked to sign permission forms for their child's participation; **no child will be allowed to**

go on a field trip unless this form is signed. Volunteers are needed as chaperones on many of these excursions.

Homework Policy

Homework should be specific reinforcement activities; no new skills or material should be introduced as a part of homework.

Written homework should be such that it can be completed with a minimum of parental help. Homework will also consist of teachers sending home class work to encourage parental involvement and support. Homework assignments should be such that they can be completed within a reasonable length of time, taking into consideration the age and ability level of the child. A good rule of thumb for this is approximately ten minutes per grade level per day. For example a 3rd grader may expect to have about 30 minutes of homework per evening while a 2nd grader should expect about 20 minutes.

Written homework assignments will be checked by teachers with pre-established consequences for non-completion.

Homework Suggestions:

1. Designate a homework spot and time and be available to assist if help is needed.
2. Encourage your child to write down assignments, and check on a daily basis to see what homework is due.
3. When assistance is needed, talk your child through the problem or question until he/she can find the solution.
4. Help your child check his homework and discuss specific problem areas.
5. Be observant for signs of problems. If homework becomes too challenging, meet with your child's teacher.
6. Help your child balance household responsibilities, play, and study.
7. Review with your child the class work that your child's teacher sends home.

Policy For Student Work During Extended Absences

While we realize the educational value that can be gained from extended trips, these also have an educational cost as the child will be missing extended instruction. In the event that a child will be absent from school for an extended period due to a trip or other activity not related to illness, the following policy will apply.

Students will be given an assignment sheet for the classwork that will be completed in class during the time that the child will be absent. The completion of these assignments is the responsibility of the child and the parent; they need not be returned. Should assignment sheets not be available for the entire period of the trip, the student is responsible for getting them upon his/her return in order to cover the material missed. Because of the additional burden that would be placed on teachers, no graded work done or tests taken by the class while the student is absent will be made up. Therefore, the student will have fewer grades at the end of the grading period. Additionally, after the student returns he/she will be responsible for the material covered in class while absent.

It is our hope that the material missed during the absence will be reviewed at a later time; however, seeing that work missed is completed or reviewed will be the responsibility of the parent and child.

Volunteers

Parent volunteers are welcome and needed at GHES. Your assistance can help us improve the overall quality of our school program. You may choose to assist in one or more of the following areas: classroom teacher's assistant, clerical assistant, reading to children, having children read to you, tutoring, or other special projects. Fort Mill School District requires all District school volunteers, chaperones and coaches to meet certain requirements before they may begin working with students in our schools. All volunteers, chaperones and coaches must undergo a background check and complete the Volunteer/Chaperone Information Sheet. Volunteer Coaches and employees are required to have a TB test. Chaperones must complete the Chaperone Responsibility form. The District Office will send each school an updated, confidential list weekly of approved persons. Please go to your school office to pick up a Chaperone Responsibility form and a Background Check form to begin the process should you wish to volunteer in the classroom, on a field trip, etc. This must be completed and returned to us with an approval stamp from the District before you can begin working or volunteering in your child's classroom.

Promotion and Retention

Promotion or retention will be determined according to district policy and shall be the cooperative recommendation of the teacher, principal, and the parent. Final decisions will be the responsibility of the principal. A pupil shall be promoted to the next level of work if his educational, physical, social, and emotional growth is satisfactory. He/she shall not be promoted if he has not made adequate progress and it is generally agreed that he will benefit by retention in the same grade for another year.

Report Cards

Report cards will be sent home the end of each nine weeks for grades 2-5 and each 12 weeks for grades K-1. Parent/teacher conferences will be held at the end of the first nine weeks. Student grades can be accessed anytime via the parent portal for grades 2 – 5. The link is found on our school webpage. The report card should be signed by a parent and returned the following day.

Inclement Weather

When necessary, the Fort Mill School District will delay starting school or dismiss early due to inclement weather. The District uses the AlertNow calling system to call parents to share information about changes, delays, and cancellations with school schedules. Please be sure that we have current, correct contact information and that your child knows beforehand what to do in case of early school closing.

TV and radio announcements refer to Ft. Mill School District 4, not York County schools (please do not call the schools!).

Parent Communication

A school-wide parent communication email will be shared each week. It is designed to keep parents informed of happenings at school and upcoming school and PTA events. It is also aimed at informing parents about special awards and honors received by the students and staff. Often, hints are provided that may help parents assist their children with academic activities.

Textbooks and Library Books

Textbooks are provided by the state, and the school is accountable to the state for them. Students are responsible for all textbooks and library books issued to them during the school year. All lost or

damaged books must be paid for. At the end of the school year students will be charged for damages beyond normal wear. Monies collected for lost books are designated for replacement costs. If a lost book is later found, the money paid will be refunded. Library books are school property, and students will be charged if books are damaged or lost.

Lost and Found

Items found at school are placed in the "Lost and Found". About twice per year we take items not claimed to the Fort Mill Care Center. We strongly encourage you to have your child's name on clothes, lunch boxes, notebooks, etc.

School Improvement Council

An organization (SIC) composed of teachers, parents, administrators and citizens elected or appointed by the principal. This team works together to assist the principal to determine present and future needs of our school.

Risk Assessments

The safety and security of all students is of the utmost importance to our faculty and staff. Should a concern arise about a student being a danger to him/herself or others, district protocols for conducting a risk assessment (suicide and/or threat) will be followed to the extent appropriate. These assessments may include interviews with students and staff, a review of student records, and consultation with district mental health staff local law enforcement, or other community agencies that help support our schools and students. If as part of its assessment and response, the District determines there is an articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of a student or other individuals, it may disclose personally identifiable information from education records to any person whose knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.