

Buckland Mills Elementary School Parent Handbook

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Every Minute Counts, Every Child Matters, Every Child Succeeds

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<http://bucklandmillses.schools.pwcs.edu/>

WELCOME!

Welcome to Buckland Mills Elementary School, home of the WILDCATS! We know that as we work together, your child's time with us will be a positive and successful experience.

A Arrival Time

School Hours

9:05 AM-3:55 PM School is in session

9:15 AM Tardy bell rings

8:00 AM-4:30 PM Front office hours

Attendance: Under Virginia Law, students are responsible for attending school every day that school is in session. Absences, tardiness, and early dismissals must have documentation. Once a child has accumulated 10 absences, a doctor's note will be required for all subsequent absences. Please call to leave a message if your child will be absent from school and follow up with a doctor's note or written excuse with your student when they return. **You may contact our school office during the day or leave a message after hours at 703-530-1560.**

Please contact the front office to complete a copy of the **Planned Non-Medical Absence Request** form to gain pre-approval from the principal for all planned absences. Approval for the absence will be given based on current attendance. In keeping with division regulation, planned or unexplained absence that extends beyond 14 days will result in automatic withdrawal from school. The parent will be expected to re-enroll the student(s) upon re-entry.

B **Breakfast:** Buckland Mills has a breakfast program open to all students and staff. Breakfast begins at 9:05 AM. If a student is eligible for free or reduced lunch, then they are also eligible for free or reduced breakfast.

Buses: Bus drivers maintain safety and discipline at all times and will communicate student Code of Behavior transgressions to administrators to insure our students maintain our standards of behavior while riding in PWCS vehicles. Riding the school bus is a privilege. For questions regarding bus transportation, please call McCuin Transportation Center at 571-402-3902.

C **Car Riders:** Each family who wishes to provide their own transportation and pick up their student(s) from school in the Car Rider Lane will register and receive two numbered signs. You will need to complete the registration form and show your ID to receive a sign with a designated number.

Code of Behavior and Elementary Handbook: Please carefully read the PWCS Code of Behavior available online from our school web page. These are reviewed with all students in September. It is the family's responsibility to follow all county policies that are outlined in these documents. The signature of the parent and child on the back of the emergency card is our indication that you have read and agree to the Code of Conduct. Please remind your children that any look-alike weapons (as described in the Code of Behavior) brought to school will result in disciplinary action. Please also speak with your child about making verbal or physical threats to other students or staff. Such actions create serious situations and consequences.

Communication: All of our upcoming events and important information can be found on our web site at <http://bucklandmillses.schools.pwcs.edu/>

Phone calls, student led conferences, teacher websites, parent surveys, PTO informational meetings, Principal's Advisory Council meetings, and Back-to-School Nights are just a few of the ways we try to share information with our parents about our educational programs and our students' progress and accomplishments.

D **Dress Code:** Student dress and overall appearance must meet the basic standards of health, safety, cleanliness, and decency. The Prince William County Schools' Code of Behavior has addressed several areas that are considered improper dress in any Prince William County school.

E **Early Dismissal :** If it is absolutely necessary to pick up your student(s) early on occasion, a note should be sent to the teacher so that she can prepare your child in a timely manner and you should come to the front office to sign out your child. Students will only be released to those individuals listed on the emergency card with a photo ID.

Planned early dismissal ends at 3:30 PM. Plan ahead so you can make it to doctor's appointments that you have scheduled in a timely manner. Please minimize early dismissals as much as possible to ensure consistency in instruction and minimizing disruptions to the learning environment for all students.

Emergency Cards: Emergency cards must be accurate and on file for each student. All possible telephone numbers to reach a student's parent/guardian should be included. Please advise the office if there is a change in the information on your child's emergency card any time during the year.

Encore: Every student at Buckland Mills receives Art, Music, Library, Guidance, and Physical Education. Students will also receive Spanish lessons during the week. Your student's teacher will provide a copy of the class schedule. The Encore teachers can be reached by email and welcome your communication.

F **Forgotten Items:** If you have an item that needs to be delivered to your student, the office staff will get it to your child. If your child forgets their belongings on the playground, it is often delivered to our school Lost & Found. The items left unclaimed will be donated to an area charity at least three times per year.

G **Gifted & Talented:** SIGNET is Prince William County's program for identified gifted students in the 4th and 5th grades. Identified primary children participate in the START program. Please contact our Gifted teacher Mrs. Hardt at hardtae@pwcs.edu if you would like more information about these programs.

Guidance: Our school counselors provide assistance to students through counseling and coordinating classroom guidance. They meet with all students regularly and cover a guidance curriculum that includes social and peer relationship skills, as well as organizational and study skills. You may contact our lead school counselor Mrs. Bauer at bauersa@pwcs.edu for more information or to share concerns about your child.

Grading: In keeping with PWCS Regulation 661-1, the grade a student receives in K-5 shall be based on the same criteria and will be a balance of the child's total performance in each subject area. Please read our school Assessment Policy which is posted on our school web page. Classroom teachers will update student grades on **Parent Portal** weekly. Please contact your child's teacher if you would like to review progress.

H **Homework:** Our teachers follow PWCS Regulation 663-1 regarding all assigned homework. Your child's teacher will provide more detailed information about grade level homework practices.

I **Illness:** If your child becomes ill while at school we will notify you by phone to pick up your child. It is the expectation that students will be picked up in a timely manner.

International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (IBPYP): We are an IBPYP school and ALL students participate in Units of Study which integrate the county learning objectives with global themes. IBPYP transdisciplinary themes are a big part of guiding our discussions in all areas of our curriculum: *Who we are, Where we are in place and time, How we express ourselves, How the world works, How we organize ourselves, and Sharing the planet.* Please refer to our web site to learn more about our program.

J **Join Us!** Join in on the fun by becoming a member of the PTO, attend school events, or volunteer! We always need volunteers for PTO events, book fairs, and field trips.

K **Kindergarten Arrival and Dismissal:** Kindergarteners are given assigned seats in the front of the bus and will only be released to a parent, guardian, babysitter or older sibling at the bus stop. All kindergartners that are not picked up at the bus stop will be brought back to school at the end of the route. Parents will be expected to come to the school to collect their kindergartener when this occurs. Please note that the appropriate person in charge of picking up the kindergartner MUST be AT the bus stop to meet the driver to receive the kindergartner student. Kindergarten back packs are tagged with contact information and color coded tape so that it is immediately evident to all staff and the bus driver that additional protocol should be followed for arrival and dismissal. [For questions regarding bus transportation, please call McCuin Transportation Center at 703-753-6398.](tel:703-753-6398)

L Lunch: Sometimes parents like to join their student for lunch on a special occasion. Parents, please remember that you can only have your child join you at the Parent Café. Our priority is to maintain learning momentum and appropriate supervision for all students, every day!

Lunch Accounts and Meals: Students may buy breakfast, lunch and milk daily. Please see our website for current prices. For your convenience, you may pre-pay with a credit or debit card online that will be credited to your child's lunch account by going to www.mylunchmoney.com. Please call our cafe manager, Ms. Ellen Pendrick, at 571-248-6875 if you have any questions about accounts.

M Math: Teachers will use a blended approach to teach the Virginia Math State Standards of Learning. Information about these standards can be found on the Prince William County website.

Media Center: All children visit our school's library for library skill classes, book swaps, and research. Mrs. Hinkle, our librarian, will host two book fairs during the year.

Medication: If taking medicine at school is necessary, parents must deliver the medicine to school in the prescription container and it must not exceed the expiration date. PWCS policy does not permit students to transport medication to and from school. A PWCS Medical Authorization form, signed by a physician, must be completed for school staff to administer prescription medication. Please contact our nurse Mrs. Miller at millersk1@pwcs.edu if you have any concerns or questions.

N Newsletters: Look for your student's teacher to send out calendars or emails to keep you informed this year. In addition, teachers will maintain a class web page on our school web site. We are trying to 'go green' at BMES, but paper copies can be printed if you need one.

O Opportunities: We provide opportunities for parents to get involved at Buckland Mills Elementary because we believe that having you as a partner will help your child achieve more. Support our staff with positive feedback recognizing their efforts to make each day learning-filled for our Wildcats. Join our PTO and lend a hand to make one of our amazing family events a greater success!

P Parent Teacher Organization (PTO): The PTO is a unified non-profit organization whose primary purpose is to promote the welfare of children through educational means. PTO meetings take place on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 7 PM in our school library. Join us!

Parking & Traffic Congestion: Parking is very limited during special events and especially during dismissal. If you need to park and come in to the building, please do not park along the yellow "No Parking Zone" curbs. Also, personal vehicles should never drive to the back bus loop.

Principal's Advisory Council: Our Principal's Advisory Council (PAC) generates community input through elected parent members and teachers. We look at our school's continuous improvement in achieving Division and school goals outlined in the annual Strategic Plan. Representatives and community members, consisting of parents and teachers, meet on the first Thursday of the month at 4:15 PM in the conference room.

R Response to Intervention: At BMES, we provide tiered differentiation, support, and extensions to support learning success. Our intervention team meets regularly to review student progress and progress data to ensure we are steadily moving towards our academic goals.

S School Photos: Pictures are a vital part of telling the PWCS story. According to current 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 the principal or other School Division designee. Photos and images may also be authorized for use by external entities, such as the news media and scholarship providers, so long as this is in the best interests of students, the school and School Division, and complies with other regulation guidelines. Any parent wishing to avoid use of student photos and images by external organizations may fill out and submit an opt-out form to be given to the Principal at the start of the school year. The form, along with the complete text of the relevant regulation (790-4) may be found online at http://pwcs.edu/Admin/prcs/admin_pdfs/R790-4.pdf.

School Wide Discipline: At BMES, we believe all students and staff should feel safe, comfortable and respected while at school. We are committed to ensuring that students are not being distracted from learning. We work together to create an environment where teachers can teach and students can learn. Our Wildcats work as a classroom team to define quality student behaviors and to create positive learning environments. At Buckland Mills Elementary, all students agree to:

Positively face all challenges

Always show respect

Work hard to achieve our goals

Support each other as we learn

We thank you in advance for your support as we work together to guide students in becoming responsible citizens of our country and our world.

Snacks: Prince William County has a Healthy Communities/Healthy Youth initiative. Please make healthy choices when you prepare snacks for your child to bring to school.

Strings: Strings instruction will be offered to 5th graders at BMES. The many hours of practice and commitment pays off when they have an opportunity to showcase their collective talent at an evening concert for families. Mr. Jeff Ohmart is our strings teacher.

Student Activities: Upper grade students are given the opportunity to participate in: Student Council Association, Safety Patrols, Peer Mediation, Strings, and Chorus. Students will be given information for each of these different opportunities at school. All of our students have an opportunity to participate in Intramural Basketball, Chess Club and Odyssey of the Mind. Parents will receive flyers about upcoming sessions, fees, and application deadlines.

Tardies: The tardy bell rings at 9:15 AM, and children should be in their classrooms before it rings.

Students who arrive after the tardy bell has rung should be accompanied by a parent to sign in at the front office then obtain a Tardy Slip from the secretary in the office. Parents will NOT be allowed to walk their child to class when they are tardy. Students who ride the bus will NEVER be considered tardy.

Visiting School: For the safety and security of our children, **all** visitors and volunteers in the building during school hours must report to the office to sign in. Prince William County Schools require photo identification be left with the secretary. You will be given a visitor's badge that must be visibly worn at all times. Your photo identification will be returned to you when you sign out and return your visitor's badge. (Regulation 501.06-1)

Website: Our web address is <http://bucklandmillses.schools.pwcs.edu>. School closings, delays, and early dismissals that are called by PWCS are on our school web site. Principal Stroud will update the Principal's Page monthly. In addition, our Principal sends an informative phone message with timely reminders to all families at least once a month. Our school website is regularly updated with important information to keep all of our BMES families 'in the know!'

Yearbooks: Yearbook sales are advertised with a flyer sent home in winter or early spring. Yearbooks are handed out to the student(s) who ordered them during the last week of the school year.