

Buckland Mills Elementary School Parent Handbook

Principal: **Minaxi Odedra** odedramx@pwcs.edu
Assistant Principal: **Elizabeth Harrison** harriser1@pwcs.edu
Assistant Principal: **Nathaniel Hoffa** HoffaNE@pwcs.edu



Every Minute Counts, Every Child Matters, Every Child Succeeds

10511 Wharfdale Place
Gainesville, VA 20155
Phone 703.530.1560

<https://bucklandmillses.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.

Arrival Time

School Hours

9:10 AM-4:00 PM	School is in session
9:20 AM	Final arrival bell rings
8:00 AM-4:30 PM	Front office hours

Attendance: Under Virginia Law, students must attend school every day that school is in session. Absences, tardiness, and early dismissals must have documentation. Absences require parent notification via email, phone call, or note in ParentVue. Absences that exceed 9 days require a doctor's note, to be recorded as excused absences. It is a parent's responsibility to notify the school within 5 school days of an absence otherwise the absence will be automatically changed to an unexcused truancy. Please call to leave a message if your child will be absent from school. If your child is absent for more than 3 days due to sickness a doctor's note will need to be provided to our office once your child returns. Family trips will not be excused. **With the updated attendance regulation, principals no longer have the discretion to excuse planned absences.** In keeping with division regulation, planned or unexplained absence that extends beyond 14 days will result in automatic withdrawal from school. The parents will be expected to re-enroll the student(s) upon re-entry. If you would like more information about attendance in PWCS then please reference regulation 724-1. If your child accumulates 5 unexcused absences an initial attendance meeting will be required. Any additional unexcused absences will result in more attendance meetings with administration and the attendance officer. Additionally, your child will be placed on an attendance plan.

Birthdays: Birthday celebrations are not possible due to the instructional time that is lost. Instead, we encourage parents to send nonfood related treats to school such as pencils, stickers or fidget toys to celebrate their child's birthday with the class. Nonfood items also allow students who have dietary restrictions to be included in the celebrations.

Breakfast: Buckland Mills has a breakfast program open to all students and staff. Breakfast begins at 9:10 AM. If a student is eligible for free or reduced lunch, then they are also eligible for free or reduced breakfast. Information about pricing and free or reduced meal applications can be found using this [link](#). **Please note that if you have previously applied and received free or reduced meals, then you must still reapply every year, otherwise your child's account will be charged.**

Buses: Bus drivers always maintain safety and discipline and will communicate student Code of Behavior transgressions to administrators to ensure our students maintain our standards of behavior while riding in PWCS vehicles. Riding the school bus is a privilege. Transportation related questions can be submitted using this [link](#)

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 come into the school office to complete a registration form and show your ID to receive the signs. The number given to you should be displayed clearly in your windshield for our staff to see.

Code of Behavior: Please carefully read the PWCS Code of Behavior using this [link](#). These are reviewed with all students at the beginning of the year. It is the parent's responsibility to follow all county policies that are outlined in these documents. 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 inappropriate language, making verbal or physical threats to other students or staff. Such actions create serious situations and consequences.

Communication: You will receive the Buckland Beat, the weekly parent newsletter from the principal. This newsletter will contain information about our school including upcoming events. Teachers send a weekly newsletter with class specific information and information about what students will be learning. Additional information about our school can be found on our web site at <https://bucklandmillses.pwcs.edu/>

Dress Code: Student dress and overall appearance must meet the basic standards of health, safety, cleanliness, and decency.

Early Dismissal: If it is 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 information with a photo ID.

Planned early dismissal ends at 3:30 PM. Plan 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 minimize disruptions to the learning environment for all students.

Emergency Information: Emergency Information must be accurate and in [ParentVue](#) 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 your child's emergency information at any time during the year.

Encore: Every student at Buckland Mills receives Art, Music, and Physical Education. Students will also receive Spanish lessons and have opportunities to exchange books in the library. Your student's teacher will provide a copy of the class schedule. The Encore teachers can be reached by email and welcome your communication.

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.

Gifted & Talented: START (K-3 grades) and SIGNET (4-5 grades) are Prince William County's programs for identified gifted students. Please contact our Gifted teacher Ms. Linehan at linehac@pwcs.edu if you would like more information about these programs.

Guidance: Our school counselors help 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 school counselors, Ms. Brown: BrownBM@PWCS.EDU or Ms. Fletcher: FletchM@PWCS.EDU for more information or to share concerns about your child.

Grading: In keeping with PWCS Regulation 661-1, classroom teachers will update student grades, on a weekly basis in [ParentVUE](#). Please contact your child's teacher if you would like to review progress.

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.

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.

Join Us! Join in on the fun by becoming a member of the PTO, attending school events, or volunteering! We always need volunteers for PTO events, book fairs, and field trips. Please use this [link](#) to obtain more information about the PTO.

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 kindergarten student. It is crucial for the person picking up a kindergarten student to have photo identification especially since we sometimes have substitute bus drivers.

Lunch Accounts and Meals: Students may buy breakfast and lunch daily. For your convenience, you may pre-pay online to your child's lunch account by going to <https://www.myschoolbucks.com/ver2/getmain?requestAction=home>

Media Center: All children visit our school's library for library skill classes, book swaps, and research. Mrs. Hinkle, our librarian, will host 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 Ms. Chimenz at chimeng@pwcs.edu if you have any concerns or questions.

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO): The PTO is a non-profit organization whose primary purpose is to promote the welfare of children through educational means. Please look for PTO information including PTO meetings dates/times on our school website Join us!

Parking & Traffic Parking is very limited during special events and especially during dismissal. If you need to park and come into the building, please do not park along the yellow "No Parking Zone" curbs. Also, personal vehicles should never drive to the back-bus loop. If you use our car rider line, please follow directions of staff and the crossing guard, do not speed, let students enter/exit on the right hand side of vehicles.

School Advisory Council: Our School Advisory Council (SAC) generates community input through elected parent members and teachers. We look at our school's continuous improvement plan in achieving Division and school goals outlined in the annual Continuous Improvement Plan. Representatives and community members, consisting of parents and teachers. Please reference the Buckland Beat, parent newsletter for dates/times of SAC meetings.

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 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 create agreements for behavior and work so that we have a positive learning environment. 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: 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 evening concerts for families. Ms. Fessner: FessneCJ@pwcs.edu is our strings teacher.

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

Tardies: The final bell rings at 9:20 AM, and children should be in their classrooms before it rings. Students who arrive after the final 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 badge that must be always worn. Your photo identification will be returned to you when you sign out and return your visitor badge.

Website: Our web address is <https://bucklandmillses.pwcs.edu/> Our school website is regularly updated with important information to keep all our BMES families 'in the know!'

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