

RISING SUN ELEMENTARY



Parent / Student
Handbook
2007 - 2008

Rising Sun Elementary

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School Handbook - 2007-2008

This handbook is intended to highlight many areas of school life that are controlled by Rising Sun Elementary or School Board policies and to serve as a reference for parents and students.

Hours

School is in session from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday. Morning Pre-Kindergarten attends from 9:00 a.m. to 11:50 a.m. Afternoon Pre-Kindergarten is 12:50 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., with a Wednesday schedule of 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. respectively. Students may report to class as early as 8:45 a.m. Teachers are on duty from 8:15 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

Attendance

The importance of regular attendance cannot be over emphasized. Children should be in school every day that they are physically able. The Cecil County Board of Education attendance policy includes standards for regular attendance and specified penalties that will be applied when students do not meet the standards for regular attendance. Be mindful that a student may not be absent from school in excess of 5 (five) days in any single marking period for absences that are coded **Other Causes**. Any absences, properly certified, that are coded **Lawful Causes** will not count toward the five day limit. Certification by a medical doctor, dentist, or licensed psychologist is needed to code an absence due to illness as a **Lawful Cause** of absence and must be received by the school no later than 3 days after the absence. **Students with absences coded as Other Causes in excess of five days during a single marking period will receive failing grades in their classes.** Also, a student in grades 1-5 must make up all work missed due to an absence within the time frame stated in the grade level grading criteria. Please see the attendance policy for details on academic failure and regaining lost grades.

Students who are absent or tardy are required upon their return to present a note of explanation signed by the parent, giving a specific reason for the absence. While an uncertified illness with a parent note is considered a lawful absence, any absences in excess of five days will require a doctor's note. **These notes must be sent to the school within three school days following the absence or the absence will be permanently coded Unlawful.**

Principal approval for family vacations **will not** be granted during MSA Testing for students in grades 3, 4, or 5.

MSA Testing is scheduled for April 1 through April 10.

Attendance Awards

Students will be rewarded quarterly for perfect and excellent attendance. Perfect attendance means no more than $\frac{1}{2}$ **day** absence. Excellent attendance is no more than **1 day** absent. Students who arrive after 9:05 a.m. more than one time during the marking period are not eligible for a perfect attendance award. Students who are late (after 9:05 a.m.) or are checked out before 3:30 p.m. more than twice during a marking period are not eligible for an excellent attendance award. Student achievement is adversely affected by not being present for the full instructional day.

Policy for Absence and Tardiness for Kindergarten through Grade 5

Late Arrival - Pupils coming to school later than 90 minutes past the opening of school (10:30 a.m.) will be recorded as absent during the forenoon (1/2 day absent).

Early Departure - Pupils leaving school 90 minutes before the end of the school day (2:10 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday and 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday) will be recorded as absent in the afternoon (1/2 day absent).

Tardiness in Forenoon – Students coming to school after the beginning of the school day, but before 10:30 a.m. are to be reported tardy. A parent or adult over 18 years old **must sign in late students**.

Parents are requested to check students out early for emergencies only. All students must be signed out in the office by a parent or adult over 18. Identification may be requested before a child may leave with an authorized person. Students who are repeatedly checked out early may receive lower grades due to missed class work.

Policy for Absence and Tardiness for Pre-Kindergarten

A.M. Session (9:00 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.)

1. Full Day Absence

Pupils coming to school later than 60 minutes following the beginning of the school day (after 10:00 a.m.) will be reported as being absent.

Pupils in attendance who leave the morning session before 10:50 are to be reported as being absent.

2. Tardiness

Pupils coming to school within 60 minutes following the beginning of the school day (before 10:00 a.m.) will be reported as tardy.

P.M. Session (12:50 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.)

1. Full Day Absence

Pupils coming to school later than 60 minutes following the beginning of the school day (after 1:50 p.m.) will be reported as being absent.

Pupils in attendance who leave the afternoon session before 2:40 p.m. are to be reported as being absent.

2. Tardiness

Pupils coming to school within 60 minutes following the beginning of the school day (before 1:50 p.m.) will be reported as tardy.

Wednesday Schedules

Morning Session: 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Afternoon Session: 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Birthdays & Special Occasions

To prevent hidden hurt feelings and to guard against potential food allergies or other health concerns, no cookies, birthday cakes, birthday cupcakes, flowers, or special treats should be brought or sent to the school.

Student Conduct Expectations

Students should be safe and provided with the opportunity to learn in the best environment possible. In addition to our Character Education Program, our staff will be using a research-based program called CHAMPS, a Proactive and Positive Approach to Classroom Management. When problems arise, the classroom teacher will handle the situation quickly and effectively with the least amount of disruption to the classroom instruction. If the problem persists, the teacher will determine the most appropriate consequences to help change the behavior. Possible consequences include:

1. Verbal reprimand
2. Positive Practice (have the student do it the right way)
3. Restitution (restore/repair damage done)
4. After-school detention
5. Parent contact/conference

Unfortunately, there are certain situations when immediate removal of a student to the office is the only safe and appropriate course of action. A violation of drug, alcohol, or weapons policies, fighting and/or violent disruptive behavior may result in suspension from school. A suspension may also be assigned when a student consistently disregards school or classroom behavioral expectations. It is hoped that with the home and school working together, discipline problems can be solved before they become too serious.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Each family receives a Cecil County Public School Calendar at the beginning of the year. Student rights and responsibilities are located in the back of the calendar. Automatic penalties apply to serious infractions of discipline code including verbal threats and possession of weapons, drugs, or any item that presents a threat to student safety.

School-Wide Expectations

1. Students are respectful to all adults in the building, on school grounds, and on the buses.
2. Students are respectful to fellow students and their property.
3. Students will refrain from any type of bullying behavior, such as teasing, name calling, and verbal and physical threats, such as “I am going to shoot you”, “I am going to beat you up”, etc.
4. Students are respectful of school property.
5. Students are to obey school rules. (classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, playground)
6. Students are to come to school with the materials required for a successful school day.
7. Students are to come to school dressed appropriately, following the Cecil County Public Schools’ dress code.
8. Items, such as radios, CD players, I-pods, collectible cards, electronic toys, etc., are not permitted in school without teacher permission. Electronic Communication devices such as cell phones, pagers, or walkie-talkies are not permitted at school.

Dress Code

Students usually conduct themselves in a manner similar to the way they dress and groom. They are not allowed to wear clothing that interferes with the learning process or the safety of students. Rising Sun Elementary adheres to the Cecil County Student Dress Policy, which states; “The responsibility for appropriate student dress lies with the student and his/her parent(s) or guardian(s). Clothing that poses a safety or health hazard, interferes with the educational process or advocates unsafe or inappropriate behaviors is prohibited. Health considerations require the wearing of footwear in public buildings. Certain classes may require special dress regulations.

Prohibited clothing and accessories are those that:

- Are not acceptable to the learning environment
- Pose a safety or health hazard
- Interfere with or disrupt the educational process
- Advocate unsafe or inappropriate behavior
- Are vulgar, obscene, revealing, or offensive
- Demean others on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, disability, or other attribute
- Promotes the use of tobacco, drugs, or alcohol

Examples of prohibited clothing are hats, bandanas, sweatbands, hoods, pants that drag on the floor, tube tops, spaghetti straps, single strap shirts, backless shirts or blouses, halter tops, muscle shirts, tank tops, excessively short skirts, shorts or dresses, skin tight or see-through clothes and shorts, pants or skirts that hang below the waist.

Sign In/Sign Out Procedures

All adults are required to wear an ID badge while in the building. School personnel wear picture ID badges. All adults are required to sign in and pick up a visitor, parent, or volunteer badge in the office. Badges must be returned to the office and visitors **must** sign out of the building. All visitors and volunteers must enter and exit through the main entrance.

Crisis Management

Students regularly participate in fire drills, civil defense (weather) drills, and bus evacuation drills to prepare for emergencies. They also participate in secure status and alert status drills. Exit doors are kept closed and locked during the school day except for the Main Entrance. There is a crisis management plan in place.

Emergency Information

Each school year, parents are required to fill out a card on each child, which includes address, telephone numbers, and persons to contact in an emergency. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the office (in writing) of any changes. In an emergency, the school will attempt to notify parents first. In the event parents cannot be reached, the office will notify the persons listed on the information card. Please add your email address to the card.

School Closings

School closing announcements or school delay announcements are broadcast on television, the local radio stations, and on the Cecil County Public Schools web site: www.ccps.org. Each family will also receive a recorded message from our ConnectEd calling system. If schools close early the system will call not only the home telephone, but work telephones and cell numbers that are listed for the student. There is no need to call the school.

It is imperative that every child knows where to go in case of an emergency and in the event of an early closing. Be sure you have a plan and have discussed it with your child.

Field Trips

Occasional field trips in our geographic area are scheduled to provide educational experiences related to our curriculum. These trips are coordinated and supervised by individual classroom teachers. Full payment and a **signed permission slip** are due two weeks prior to the scheduled trip. Payment should always be for the proper amount. We are not able to provide change. Parents are sometimes allowed to accompany the classes as chaperones. A lottery system of interested parents is usually conducted to choose parent chaperones. Because of bus space and cost considerations, not all parents may attend. Arrangements are made for students who cannot attend field trips to remain in school with another class.

Students who are not in school or on a field trip on the designated day are marked absent. Students participating in a field trip must ride the bus to and from the field trip location.

Food Service

Breakfast and lunch are served daily. Parents are encouraged to take advantage of our computerized express lunch program. Parents may send cash or checks to the cafeteria to be deposited into your child's account. All lunch account checks should be made payable to RSES Food & Nutrition and should not include payment for any other school activity. Please include your child's name on the check. We will be utilizing a new "Touch 'n Go" device this year that will use a finger scan to access your child's account. The device examines a few points on the finger and transforms them into a number. The number is stored in the computer and recalled when the student goes through the serving line. The number cannot be turned back into a fingerprint. This new system will eliminate the need for students to remember a pin number and should lower the amount of time students wait in the serving line, giving the students more time to enjoy their lunch.

County menus are planned around a four-week cycle. Menus will be distributed during the first week of each month. Free and reduced breakfast/lunch service is available to students of qualified families. Applications are sent home the first week of school and are available throughout the year upon request. The information is confidential and will be used only to determine eligibility.

Cost:	Breakfast	\$.80	(reduced - .30)
	Lunch	\$1.60	(reduced- .40)
	Milk	\$.30	

Health/Illness

When a child becomes ill at school or has sustained an injury requiring immediate attention, every attempt will be made to reach a parent or guardian by telephone. Arrangements should be made so a child will have a place to go. It is the parent's responsibility to have a current phone number on file in the office. Notify the office of any health concerns. **If your child has a life-threatening condition, contact us so they can be included in the Emergency Medical Assistance Program. Call for details.**

Students who have a doctor's note excusing them from Physical Education will also not be allowed to participate in directed play.

Medications

Our school nurse administers the county medication policy. Students must have a doctor complete an Administration of Medication form to take any medicine or use any over the counter products at school. This includes over the counter medication, such as Tylenol. However, students may use cough drops, hand cream, or lip balm with a parent note. Medications, including cough drops, hand cream and lip balm, are dispensed from the nurse's office and are to be in their original container. All medications must be brought to school by the parent and given to the Nurse. Students are not permitted to have medication in their possession.

Homework Policy

The purpose of homework is to reinforce and extend learning and is an important part of your child's education. Homework might include reading, discussion, oral practice, quiet study, or written work. Homework develops a sense of self-discipline, personal responsibility, and independent thinking. Parents are encouraged to interact with their child to provide guidance, but homework is the student's responsibility. The RSES PTO generously provides a homework journal to each student in Grades 2-5. Students are required to write their homework in the journal. Parents may be asked to sign the homework journal.

Photographs

We take pictures of the children for the yearbook and for displays of student activities. If you do not want your child's picture taken, please send in a note. Professional pictures are taken in the fall and in the spring, which are available for purchase. Individual pictures for the fall are scheduled for September 14, 2007. The spring individual and group pictures will be scheduled at a later date.

Parent Teacher Organization

Parents and teachers work together for the benefit of their children. The schedule of PTO meetings is shared during the September Orientation Meeting. New this year – our PTO has an email address where you can submit any questions or comments you would like to share with our PTO. The address is: rrisingsunelementary@yahoo.com. We encourage everyone to join, support, and participate in our PTO.

School Store

Typical classroom supplies are available for purchase at the school store during homeroom time (8:45 a.m.-9:00 a.m.) on most days.

Textbooks and Library Books

All books are to be handled carefully. Students and their families will be required to pay for lost or damaged books.

Transportation - Buses

It is our goal for every student to travel safely on the bus. Students are expected to maintain safe and appropriate behavior at all times while riding on the bus. Failure to comply with bus rules and regulations may result in the following consequences at the driver's discretion:

- Verbal Warning
- Written Warning
- Suspension of Bus Riding Privileges

The school bus driver is expected to enforce the regulations of safe student behavior as they board, ride, and depart the bus. Neither the bus driver nor the school can be responsible for student conduct at the bus stop. **Parents are strongly encouraged to make arrangements for adult supervision.**

Please Note: Bus riding privileges may be suspended for an indefinite period of time if a student continues to violate bus regulations. A student serving a bus suspension may not ride **any bus** during their suspension time. The student will need to have alternate transportation to and from school during the suspension. Please refer to the "Parent Guide for Pupil Transportation" for additional information.

Riding a Different Bus

Each student will be assigned to one bus and is not permitted to ride a bus other than the one assigned. Riding a different bus for any early dismissal day and having a different morning and afternoon bus is not an option.

Parent Transportation

The following guidelines are to be observed by all who transport children to school:

1. Parents are encouraged to use the car-rider circle rather than coming into the building. The front parking lot, especially the handicap parking spaces, shall NOT be used for dropping off children.
2. The car-rider circle is for dropping off and picking up students only. Do not park in this area to take care of school business.
3. An adult will monitor students walking into the building. Students may be dropped off between 8:45 a.m. and 9:00 a.m.

4. Do not drop your child off at school after 9:00 a.m. An adult must come into the office for proper sign in. If your child arrives after 9:00 a.m. and is not signed in at the office, the attendance does not get updated and your child is counted as absent instead of tardy.
5. At the end of the day, the car-rider circle is used to dismiss students to parent vehicles. You may set this up with car-rider form for the year, thus avoiding coming into the office each day. We encourage you to utilize the car-rider circle to help expedite our dismissal and to reduce the confusion in the hallways during dismissal.

Volunteers

Volunteers are a valuable part of our school program. We welcome and encourage parent and community volunteers. Our school counselors coordinate our volunteer program. There will be an orientation in the beginning of the school year for anyone interested in volunteering. Please notify the counselors if you would like to participate.