Family Handbook
2021-2022

#WE CAN

Don Foskey, Principal
Mark Etzel, Assistant Principal

August 2021
Dear Gilpin Manor Families,

Welcome to the Gilpin Manor Elementary School 2021-2022 school year! We truly value and depend on our partnership with our Gilpin families to promote success for each student. Families play a critical role in the learning process and are our students’ first teachers. We want you to feel welcome and to be involved. The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with an A-Z reference to our school’s policies and procedures. Be sure to keep this handbook to use as a handy reference throughout the school year. We want our students to find Gilpin Manor a great place for laughing, learning, growing, making friends, and achieving rigorous personal goals. Together we can make certain that all children experience success in school. We look forward to a spectacular year together working as a team! #WeCan

Sincerely,

Don Foskey, Principal

Mark Etzel, Assistant Principal
School Hours

Office
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. daily. Answering machine will take all calls after 4:30 p.m.

Teachers and Support Staff
8:15 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.  Monday through Friday

Preschool

Morning Session
8:45 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.  Monday/Tuesday or Thursday/Friday
Doors will be opened for students to enter at 8:45 a.m.

Afternoon Session
12:50 p.m. – 3:35 p.m.  Monday/Tuesday or Thursday/Friday
Doors will be opened for students to enter at 12:50 p.m.

All Other Grades and Programs (Pre-K – Grade 5)
8:45 a.m. – 3:35 p.m.  Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri.
8:45 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.  Wed.
Doors will be opened for students to enter at 8:45 a.m.

Gilpin Manor Elementary School
Vision and Mission Statements

Vision
Our vision, as a community, is to inspire personal and academic growth and prepare all learners to become productive citizens

Mission
Together, We Can:

Welcome diversity
Empower one another

Collaborate with our community
Achieve goals
Nurture integrity

After School Programs

GMES staff and community members offer opportunities for students to attend enrichment activities in the form of after school programs for our students. Most after school programs will run from 3:45 – 5:00 p.m. Students must have written permission to attend after school programs and are required to adhere to school expectations for conduct. Please remember that staff and community members are volunteering their time after school to provide these opportunities; please adhere to the established pick-up times for the bus or school pick-up.
**ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

**REGULAR CAR RIDERS**
The car rider loop will continue to operate in a divided fashion. Students in grades Preschool, Prekindergarten, Kindergarten, and their siblings will be picked up and dropped off in the car loop located on the Main Entrance side of the building. Students in grades 1-5 will be picked up and dropped off in the car loop on the side of the building, entering at the cafeteria. (Please note the entrance for vehicles is the Elkton Public Library entrance.) Parents/Guardians of children in Preschool through Grade 5 choosing to transport their children both to and from school will enter the car rider loop entrance and adhere to all directions given by staff members to ensure safety for all individuals. All students dismissed from the car rider loop must be registered for a car rider pass. This pass must be displayed on the rear view mirror. Due to potential for traffic congestion, it is highly recommended that eligible students ride the bus to and from school. We appreciate your support!

**WALKERS**
Many of our students walk or ride a bike to school. We do have a bike rack on school property; students should bring their own locks. Be sure that your child comes directly to school in the morning and directly home after school. Talk to your children about avoiding strangers and entering automobiles. Urge your child to walk on the sidewalk. Where there is no sidewalk, teach your child to walk on the left side of the road facing oncoming traffic. Talk over the dangers resulting from throwing objects such as stones or snowballs.

**ATTENDANCE**
Good attendance promotes achievement. It is our policy that parents/guardians write a note giving the reason for each absence and submit doctor excuse notes to the front office when a student misses school due to doctor/dentist appointments. We will be monitoring absences very carefully. **Students may not be absent from school more than 17 days during the school year regardless of the reason.**

**BEFORE AND AFTER CARE PROGRAM**
The YMCA provides an on-site before and after school program. This program will run from the first day of school to the last day of school. The YMCA provides staffing for this program, which is open to students in Kindergarten through Fifth Grade. Students may be dropped off as early as 6:30 a.m. and picked up as late as 6:00 p.m. For more details, contact Elizabeth Pumpaly at 410-398-2333 ext.16

**BIRTHDAYS**
Creating a Healthier Classroom: On June 30, 2004, Maryland passed a law requiring every local educational agency participating in a federal child nutrition program to establish a local wellness policy. The entire policy is available on the CCPS BoardDocs website (number EFF-RA). In working to meet the nutrition guidelines (Goal 6) of the Wellness Policy, our teachers are working towards non-food rewards and using non-food/healthy food items for celebrations. Food items for distribution, which must be healthy, must have all ingredients displayed due to many common food allergies. To support this policy, Gilpin Manor Elementary School does not permit families to bring homemade items to school for students or staff members.

Non-food rewards promote a healthier school environment by encouraging healthy eating habits. Food becomes a primary motivator for students when they are given soda, cupcakes, candy, and other sweets as a reward for good behavior, academic achievement, or as part of a celebration (for example – birthdays). Because these foods have little nutritional value, using them as rewards/celebrations contribute to poor eating habits (encourages over consumption of “empty calorie” foods and increases the preference for sweets). Our staff members are moving toward non-food reward ideas such as:
We all love to celebrate accomplishments and special days. Our challenge is to design healthy celebrations. We ask that you and your child take the challenge with us. The next time you are planning a celebration (birthday, etc.), work with your child and your child’s teacher to design an activity or event that will promote a healthy response and lifestyle. If your child is interested in sharing items with their classmates, you may want to think about:

- Donating a read-aloud book for the class in your child’s name
- Sharing photos of their life
- Creating a craft item
- Donating a game (either a board game for rainy day recess or a physical game – jump ropes, soft Frisbees).

Research clearly demonstrates that healthy children learn better. To provide the best possible learning environment for our children, we must provide an environment that supports healthy behaviors. When appropriate to bring in food or drink, such items must be store purchased, unopened, and have an ingredients label. We ask that we work as partners in this endeavor – for our children’s sake.

**Buses**

Private contractors and the school system furnish the buses for our children according to the rules and regulations as set up by the Maryland State Department of Education. Children who live a mile or less from school are considered “Walkers.” Exceptions to the one-mile requirement are made in a situation where dangerous walking conditions exist. Walkers may not use the bus for transportation. **Bus riders must always go home by bus unless the school has a written note from the parent or guardian to the contrary.** *Communication by telephone may take place to confirm this change in transportation.*

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

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

**PLEASE NOTE:** If a student continues to violate bus regulations, bus-riding privileges may be suspended for an indefinite period of time. A student serving a bus suspension may not ride any bus during their suspension time. The school is not responsible for student conduct at the bus stop. Parents/Guardians are strongly encouraged to make arrangements for adult supervision to ensure that students are safe at all times. For additional information, please refer to the “Parent Guide for Pupil Transportation.”

**Business Partnership with UHCC & CCSEFCU**

Gilpin Manor is fortunate to have two business partnerships. Our partnerships with Union Hospital and Cecil County School Employee Federal Credit Union include several initiatives focused on our students and community. Our business partners provide resources for our students to support many of our school initiatives.
CAFETERIA

We are pleased to share that Gilpin Manor Elementary provides **free breakfast & free lunch for ALL students**, regardless of economic status. This opportunity is part of the Maryland Meals for Achievement Breakfast Program and the Community Eligibility Provision provided by the US Department of Agriculture. The Maryland Meals for Achievement Classroom Breakfast Program allows us to offer breakfast to every student in homeroom each morning free of charge. The Community Eligibility Provision allows us to offer a nutritious lunch to every student in the cafeteria. All families are encouraged to complete the Free and Reduced Meal Application form. It can be located at: https://www.myschoolapps.com/Application

Some of the benefits experienced by students who have participated in these programs are: improved grades and attendance, a decrease in behavior problems, and a decrease in visits to the school nurse. In order for your child to receive breakfast, he/she must arrive at school on time. A monthly menu of lunches is printed and sent home with the children.

COMMUNICATION

We seek to communicate openly and regularly with families. A weekly update will be sent every Sunday morning. Staff members will communicate regularly, including positive notes home, information about school events and field trips, and details about transportation. Also, don’t forget to check our Facebook page and school website!

COUNSELING SERVICES

We have a full-time counselor on staff at our school. Services will include classroom guidance, small group counseling, individual counseling, consultation, and parent education. This objective-based program will focus on enhancing self-esteem, facilitating academic growth and development, exploring career education, and developing interpersonal skills. Our program offers preventive and crisis intervention to all students. Feel free to contact our counselor any time. She is an outstanding resource to our school and families. Gilpin Manor is also in partnership with Upper Bay Counseling Services, Key Point Counseling Services, and the Children’s Guild, in which counseling can occur during the school day.

CRISIS EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT)

Every school in Cecil County has a Crisis Emergency Response Team (CERT) made up of school administrators, teachers, secretaries, a custodian, the school nurse, and support staff. It is the responsibility of this team to develop our Crisis Emergency Response Plan. Although one plan cannot provide for every imaginable emergency, our CERT works with our school system and other county emergency response agencies to provide for the safety and well being of all of our students. Several times throughout the year, we have practice drills to test our plan and revise it as needed. During these drills, your phone calls may go unanswered and you may not have access to the building. Thank you for your understanding as we provide for a safe school environment.

DRESS CODE

“Cecil County Public Schools seek to promote good citizenship, to provide a safe and comfortable environment conducive to learning, and to prepare students for adult professional life.” Certain clothing types and styles are deemed not appropriate as school-day attire and in addition may present an unhealthy situation. It is important for students to wear safe footwear each day (sneakers, closed-toe shoes, etc.).
FIELD TRIPS
Cecil County is in close proximity to many places that offer opportunities to enrich and extend our curriculum. Field trip opportunities will be provided to your students throughout the school year. Prior to field trips, you will receive a permission slip. Sometimes there is a fee to be paid by each child. Written parent/guardian permission is required for all children to go on field trips. If there is a problem because of the fee, please contact the school office. If a child does not have a signed permission slip, he/she has the option to remain at school in another classroom. Children are expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior while attending a school sponsored field trip. We encourage every student to participate in these valuable learning opportunities.

GRADING & REPORTING
The Procedures for Elementary Grading and Reporting (CCPS Regulation IKAE-RA) outline how your student will be graded in all areas on the report card. Please review the updated procedure, which can be found at http://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/cecil/Board.nsf/Public#. Your child’s teacher will be following the Procedures for Elementary Grading and Reporting to evaluate progress throughout the school year. If you would like a hard copy of this procedure, please contact our front office.

HEALTH AND MEDICATION
If your child needs to take medication during the school day, a parent/guardian must bring the medicine in a labeled container to the school office (do not send any medications with your child). Medication must be accompanied by a physician’s authorization form, which can be obtained from the school nurse. Both the parent and the child’s doctor must complete this form. Medicine must be taken in the presence of school officials. No medication (including cough drops and over the counter medications) will be given without doctor’s permission.

Our school nurse provides first aid treatment for cuts and scrapes. Should your child feel ill prior to coming to school, please do not tell him/her to see the nurse when he/she gets to school. Assess your child’s condition to determine whether or not to send him/her to school. Reminder: Children who have been absent due to head lice must be accompanied by a parent upon return to school. The school nurse will then re-examine the child’s head.

HOMEWORK
Homework can provide an opportunity for students to develop self-reliance, self-direction, and practice of newly acquired skills. Homework also helps students establish habits of work that will influence their use of time throughout life.

Classroom learning is enhanced through outside preparation (homework) by students; at times, class work is dependent upon outside preparation.

Homework will reflect the following:
- Homework may include: review, reinforcements, reading in preparation for class discussion, data gathering, analysis and synthesis, preparation of long-term projects and reports, and/or enrichment and exploration through the utilization of resources outside the school.
- Homework may be checked to see that it has fulfilled the purposes for which it was given and may be counted toward the academic grade at the secondary level. Homework will not be counted toward the academic grade in the elementary schools.
- Homework will reflect the developmental level of students and the instructional level of the course.
- Teachers should work collaboratively to balance the distribution of homework throughout the marking period.
- Homework introducing new concepts will not be graded for accuracy.
Homework will not be given over the extended holidays of Thanksgiving, Winter Holiday, and Spring Holiday; homework assignments for weekends and other holidays are at the discretion of the teacher.

**Make-up Work and Retakes**

**MAKE-UP WORK**
Teachers will communicate to students and parents how make-up work will be completed and scored.

- Regardless of the absence code, a minimum of 2 class days will be allowed for each day of absence for the completion of make-up work. During this allotted time, teachers will provide any practice opportunities and scored assignments missed by the students. Practice opportunities can occur at school or home. Scored assignments must be given at school, graded, and entered into the PowerSchool gradebook. There is no academic penalty for scored assignments completed as make-up work, and students will be given full credit for the scores earned.
- If scored assignments are to be given beyond a time teachers deem as too far from the classroom instruction (similar to the idea of not giving a retake beyond 10 school days), these assignments can be exempted.
- If the absence(s) occur at the end of the marking period, a grade of incomplete may be issued.
- Teachers must allow and grade late scored assignments.

**Retakes**

- Retake opportunities for scored assignments may occur. These should reflect an accurate, authentic performance of student understanding and learning.
- Only assignments in content areas receiving letter grades are eligible for retake.
- Assignments can only be retaken once.
- Students will retake the assignment within ten school days after the initial assignment has been graded, entered into PowerSchool Gradebook, and returned to the student.
- Students will retake the assignment at a mutually agreeable time during the school day.
- The higher of the two grades will be recorded in the gradebook. The original score will be added in the Score Inspector section of the gradebook.

**Parent/Guardian Conferences**

Children benefit most when parents/guardians and teachers work together as partners in the educational process. Conferences may be scheduled at any time to discuss a child’s progress. Parents/guardians may always request a conference with teachers.

**Parent-Teacher Association**

The PTA at Gilpin Manor Elementary provides parents and teachers with a way to share their experiences and knowledge about our children. PTA members support public education and work to improve children’s health and safety. The PTA speaks on behalf of the children and supports a positive climate in our school. Membership information will be available on the community resource table in the lobby throughout the school year. Please contact the PTA with any questions at gilpinmanorpta@gmail.com or on Facebook at Gilpin Manor Elementary PTA.

**Photographing/Videotaping**

During the school year, numerous activities/events that take place will be photographed and/or videotaped. Should you wish for your child NOT to be photographed or videotaped, please send a note to the principal and/or complete the appropriate CCPS form.
PICKING UP YOUR CHILD EARLY
If there is a need to pick up your child from school early, a note is required stating the time and the reason. When you come to pick up your child, always report to the school office. Be prepared to show identification. You will need to sign out your child, and sign them back into school if they are returning for the day. Teachers have been instructed not to release students without notification from the office. This is for your child’s protection. Due to technical limitations, children cannot be called to the office after 3:15 p.m. Therefore, we ask that you plan to arrive early if you are planning to pick up your child at dismissal time.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE
We continue to make a concerted effort to be proactive rather than reactive as it relates to student conduct. Through Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Social-Emotional Learning, Restorative Practices, and community building activities, we teach students the behavioral expectations in all settings at school, recognize and celebrate their successes, and provide students with learning opportunities when they are struggling with making appropriate behavioral choices. It is our goal that with the home and school working together, student behavior can be supported and redirected before it impacts student learning. If concerns arise, school staff will determine the best steps to take and interventions to implement for student success. This will, ideally, be done in collaboration with families.

At Gilpin Manor Elementary, we view student misbehavior as a learning opportunity as we must teach students how to behave and react to situations. Our goal is to use positive reinforcing language, reminding language, and redirecting language to support all students in meeting school expectations. By building positive relationships, teaching school expectations and procedures, and using supportive language and practices to reinforce those expectations, we engage in proactive and culturally responsive approaches to student behavioral learning.

Unfortunately, there are certain situations which require reteaching, and possibly, consequences. These consequences will be managed by the teacher, building administrators, or other staff members in collaboration with the student to provide behavior instruction and repair any harm created by the situation. When immediate removal of a student to the office is the only safe and appropriate course of action, it may be taken. 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 rules. Please be sure to review the Students’ Rights and Responsibilities Handbook, which is sent home at the beginning of the school year.

PROHIBITED ITEMS
The articles listed below are NOT PERMITTED in school for reasons of safety, the possibility of loss or theft, and/or the disruption of the school program. Should a student bring an item on the list to school, it will be confiscated and the child’s parent will need to pick it up in the office. Items indicated with “*” may result in disciplinary action or referral to outside agencies (police and fire company).

- Tobacco*/Drugs*
- Alcohol*
- Pepper Spray*
- Guns/Bullets*
- Knives*
- Matches
- Chewing Gum
- Hardball Bats
- Remote Control Cars
- Electronic Games
- Fireworks*

**Per CCPS policies and regulations, students may have cell phones in school, but they must be turned off and in their backpacks.

REASONABLE SEARCH
As allowed by Maryland State Law, the principal or their designee may search a student’s clothing, backpack, or locker if there is reason to suspect that a student has items, which may be illegal, prohibited, or stolen.
REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS
The PowerSchool Parent Portal is a password protected and secure web-based information tool that parents can use to access student attendance, grades, assignment descriptions, school bulletins, and personal messages from the teacher. To gain access to the portal, parents must register in the school’s main office. In addition to PowerSchool, student academic progress is reported to parents 8 times during the school year through mid-term reports and report cards, which are distributed by the school at the midpoint and end of each marking period.

SPECIAL CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS
When families are separated by divorce, there often are restrictions placed upon parties by court custody decrees. If there are any special considerations regarding your child(ren), please provide copies of all court documents to the office immediately after receiving them. Also, if changes have occurred with regard to the documents that have previously been provided to the school office, please let us know as soon as possible. It is the parent’s responsibility to ensure that the school is in possession of the most current documents. It is our legal obligation to obey the most current decrees on file.

STUDENT RECOGNITION CEREMONIES & STUDENT-LED CONFERENCES
It is important to celebrate the accomplishments that our students make throughout the year. Student Recognition Ceremonies and Student-Led Conferences are scheduled after the closing of each marking period to recognize students and to provide the opportunity for students to share their goals and achievement with their family. Dates for the Ceremonies/Conferences will be sent home with report cards, paper notice, and/or via the Principal’s Weekly Update.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND CARE OF PROPERTY
Part of the learning process is to develop individual responsibility. Your child should be responsible for such items as gym sneakers, musical instruments, paper, pencils, money, lunches, library books, and textbooks. If possible, please have your child’s property clearly marked with his/her name, grade level, and teacher’s name.

STUDENT DATA
As part of the Cecil County Public Schools “Safe Schools Initiative," each student is expected to have a completed Emergency Information Form on file by the second week of September. Students who do not turn this worksheet in by this time can be excluded from school until the necessary information is provided. This Worksheet must contain accurate information, including a correct phone number and an emergency phone number that can be used in the event of an accident or illness. If both parents work, arrangements should be made so that your child will have a place to go in the case of an illness or sudden dismissal of school.

It is extremely important that the Personal Data Worksheet be kept up to date. Please notify the school if addresses, home telephone number, work number, emergency number, or any other vital information changes during the year.

TRANSFERS
If you need to withdraw your child during the school year, please notify the school office with as much advance notice as is available. We will provide you with the information you will need to help with a smooth transition.
**TITLE I**
Gilpin Manor Elementary School operates a school-wide Title I program that provides many benefits for all students. The basic principles of Title I state that schools with large concentrations of students that qualify for Free and Reduced Meals will receive supplemental funds to assist in meeting educational goals. Title I funds can be used to improve curriculum, instructional activities, counseling, parental involvement, increase staff and program improvement. Title I funds are utilized to: increase staffing; provide after-school programs for students; provide professional learning experiences for teachers; supplement instructional resources for students; and, provide parent engagement activities throughout the school year.

**VISITORS**
Visitors are always welcome at Gilpin Manor but must report to the office immediately upon entering the building. All visitors must sign-in and wear a visitor’s pass. Teachers have been instructed to stop any adult visitors who are not wearing a visitor’s pass. These individuals will be instructed to report to the main office to sign-in. Absolutely no exceptions will be made to this procedure. This is for the safety of all students. Visits to classrooms are scheduled throughout the year through classroom and/or school-wide events. If a parent/guardian wishes to visit his/her child(ren)’s classroom(s) on a separate occasion, it is best to schedule ahead of time with the teacher and/or an administrator. Such visits may require an administrator to be present. Please contact the office to schedule a visit at least one day prior.

**WEATHER EMERGENCIES**
In the event that school will be canceled, opened late, or closed early because of severe weather conditions, CCPS will contact all families through our School Messenger phone service. You may also listen to the T.V. or radio stations or check www.ccps.org. It is important that you provide your child with a plan on what they are to do on an unexpected early dismissal day.

**WEBSITE**
Visit Gilpin Manor Elementary School's home page at https://www.ccps.org/gmes. The homepage is full of school and classroom news! We hope that you find our homepage both informative and interesting.

**WHO WILL HELP?**
Your child’s teacher… can help if it is a matter concerning your child’s progress, what is being taught, or any other matter directly related to the classroom operation. Call your child’s teacher or send a note or an e-mail to the teacher to arrange for a conference.

The principal/assistant principal of your child’s school… can help you with matters of school-wide operation policy, general school information, or help you solve a problem. The school secretary will direct you to the proper person.

The school system information office… will be happy to answer your questions about the school district or direct you to the right person to assist you on a particular matter. CCPS general information number: 410-996-5400.

**CECIL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS MISSION STATEMENT**
CCPS serves equitably through positive relationships as a safe, collaborative community. We will ensure all learners acquire the knowledge, skills, and qualities to be responsible, caring, and ethical citizens.

We appreciate your partnership in your child(ren)’s education!