

Chatham Elementary School
245 Chatham Elementary Lane
Chatham, Virginia 24531

Student Handbook
2023-2024

Home of the Lil' Cavs



This handbook belongs to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ **Zip Code** _____

Telephone: _____



WELCOME

Dear Students and Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year of Chatham Elementary School. We are happy to have you as a part of the Chatham Elementary Family. We are anticipating a successful and enjoyable school year for all.

This handbook has been prepared to inform you of the policies, rules, and regulations of our school. Please spend time together reading and becoming familiar with the information here and in the ***Pittsylvania County Schools Elementary Student Handbook***.

The administration, faculty, and staff are dedicated to providing the best educational program possible for our students. We have high expectations for our students in academics and behavior. We need the support and cooperation of each parent/guardian to make Chatham Elementary the best it can be.

Working together, we can make this a successful school year for every student.

Sincerely,

Dr. Wanda Carter, Principal



SCHOOL SPIRIT

Our school colors are red, black, and white.
Our school mascot is the Lil' Cav.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Chatham Elementary School is to provide appropriate opportunities for each student to reach his/her full academic, emotional, physical, and social potential in a safe, secure environment.

VISION STATEMENT

At Chatham Elementary School, all students will learn to their fullest potential. The education of each student will be individualized and developmentally appropriate. National, global and multicultural perspectives will enhance student learning. *Every child will exhibit academic growth through data driven, evidence-based practices.*

STATE TESTING

Each spring beginning in April, all third, fourth, and fifth grade students are administered the Virginia Standards of Learning Tests. The tests assess the student's skills in mathematics, English, social science/history, and science.

Current test scores are available in the school office. Parents can assist students in preparing for these tests by making sure they are in school each day.

Virginia Literacy Partnership/VLP (formerly PALS) screening is done in grades K, 1, 2, and 3 to assess the students' phonological awareness skills.

LOCAL TESTING

MAP Testing is conducted three times a school year. Math, Language Usage, and Reading skills are assessed. Scores obtained are used to measure and compare academic growth, inform instruction, and assess strategy in grades K-1.



SCHOOL HOURS

Bus riders arrive between 7:45 a.m. – 7:55 a.m. daily. A teacher will receive them in the cafeteria. Students who are brought to school by a parent or guardian should plan to arrive between 7:50 and 8:10 a.m. and be unloaded **at the front entrance**. Classes begin at 8:15 a.m. and all students should be in the classroom before 8:15 a.m. All students who arrive after 8:15 a.m. are considered tardy. Breakfast is served from 7:45 a.m. – 8:10 a.m. All students who plan on eating breakfast should arrive by 8:00 a.m. School is dismissed at 2:50 p.m. Parents who provide transportation for their child should plan to pick him/her up between 2:50 and 3:20 p.m. A bell will dismiss students who have private transportation. Please observe the dismissal time in an effort to protect instructional time.



GRADING AND REPORTING

Students receive a report card every nine weeks. Interim progress reports are sent home electronically after 4.5 weeks of each marking period. Paper copies of the report cards and progress reports may be requested.

Marking Period	Progress Report Distribution (Reg. & IEP)	End of Marking Period	Report Cards Distribution 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM
1	Mon., 9.11.23	Thurs., 10.12.23	Mon., 10.16.23
2	Wed., 11.15.23	Wed., 12.20.23	Mon., 1.8.24
3	Thurs., 2.8.24	Tues., 3.12.24	Thurs., 3.14.24
4	Mon., 4.22.24	Wed., 5.22.24	Wed., 5.22.24 (ES & MS) *Wed., 5.29.24 (HS Only) 8:30 AM

Weekly folders are sent home containing student work samples and teacher comments regarding student conduct and/or academic progress. Important notes and information are also conveyed through the weekly folder.

Parents should check with your child daily and also carefully examine the contents of the weekly folder. Folders should be signed and returned promptly.

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice during the school year (**October 19, 2023 and March 7, 2024**); however, a teacher or a parent may request a conference at any time.



HOMEWORK

Homework is a part of the school program and every student is held accountable. Homework is used to reinforce learning and develop responsibility. Students should be able to complete homework assignments with little difficulty.

Each student is expected to read or be read to for 20 minutes nightly. There are many websites that will provide academic skill review, such as the following:

- <http://www.pbskid.org>
- <http://www.starfall.com>
- <http://studyisland.com>
- <http://www.SOL.pass.org>
- Dance Mat typing <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing/or>
- Type E-Chi: <http://e-learningforkids.org/>
- <http://www.doe/virginia/gov/testing/sol/releasedtest/index.shtml>

MAKE-UP WORK

Any work missed due to a student's absence shall be made up after the first day of returning to the classroom. A student who is absent will have one day to turn in make-up work. If a student misses two or more days, he/she will have the same number of days to make up his/her work as the days missed, unless the absenteeism comes at the end of the marking period, then the teacher and the principal will decide the best course to pursue. All missed work must be made up within the report period.

If your child is absent less than two (2) days, please do not call the school for make-up work. Your child will get his/her make-up work the day he/she returns to school. If your child is going to be absent more than two days, you may call and request work. However, you may not pick up work before 3:30 p.m. This will give the teacher time to get the child's work without interrupting the regular teaching day.

WEATHER-RELATED SCHOOL SCHEDULE

When snow or icy conditions are expected, please check our website (www.pcs.k12.va.us), listen to the radio, or watch the television news for information as to whether school will be closed, operate on a delayed schedule, or dismiss early.

Please have a plan in place that your child is familiar with in the event of a change in schedule.



EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Emergency information on each student is kept on file in the office. It is the responsibility of each parent/guardian to keep this information up to date. Changes in address, telephone number, doctor, or employment, etc. should be given to the school as soon as it becomes available.



STUDENT HEALTH

The medical care of the student is the responsibility of the parent. The school is limited in the treatment of children who are ill or injured. Students cannot be in school with a temperature of 100 or above, and should be temperature free for 24 hours before returning to school.

Students who are ill should not be sent to school. If a child is vomiting or has a fever, he/she should not come to school.

Contagious diseases such as ringworm, pink eye, and scabies require treatment from a doctor before the child is allowed back to school. If your child tests positive for **COVID**, please contact the school immediately.

First aid is provided to children injured at school and the parent is contacted. Please remember to update your telephone numbers so you may be contacted in the event of an emergency.



The school nurse is available from 8:15 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Monday through Friday. Prescription medication is administered by the school nurse when a copy of the doctor's order is provided and a permission form is completed by the parent. Over-the-counter medication can be administered when the parent provides a written note. Any medication must be in its original container. **All medication must be brought to school by the parent. Students are not to bring medication to school.**

Since 2006, Section 32.1-46 of the Code of Virginia requires that all fifth graders receive a booster dose of T-dap vaccine prior to entering the sixth grade.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are a part of the educational process. Students are expected to follow the rules and regulations of the class and school while on a trip. All trips require written parental permission. Permission slips must be signed and returned promptly by the parent/guardian.



LATE ARRIVALS

Tardiness interrupts the educational process for the child and all other students in his/her class. Excessive tardiness is not tolerated. **Students who arrive at school late (after 8:15 a.m.) must be accompanied to the office by a parent to be checked in.**

EARLY DEPARTURE

Early departures disrupt the learning process and are discouraged. Should it become necessary to pick up your child before the school day ends, a note from the parent/guardian is requested. The child will be called to the office when the parent arrives and the parent must sign the child out at that time. A photo ID may be required of the parent/guardian to prove identity before the child is allowed to check out. **Children who are being picked up early must be checked out before 2:30 p.m.** Everyone arriving after 2:30 must go through the car rider line. Please write your child's name, the teacher's name, and the date on the note and please inform anyone picking your child up of this procedure.

CHANGE IN TRANSPORTATION/DESTINATION

No child is allowed to alter his/her normal departure without a note or phone call from the parent/guardian. Due to safety and custody concerns, **telephone calls cannot be accepted after 2:15** to make transportation changes. For the safety of the children and to ensure each child gets home correctly, we will ask that you make all arrangements before your child leaves home and only call to change transportation plans in the case of emergencies.

APPROVAL from the principal is required to ride a different bus or to get off at a different stop. **A note is required** to ride home with a person other than the individual that normally picks up the child.



BUS TRANSPORTATION

Proper behavior is required on the school bus. **Bus transportation is a privilege.** Students who misbehave on the bus may lose their privilege to ride. If a student loses his/her privilege to ride the bus, it is the parents' responsibility to transport the child to school. Parents are also responsible for their child's behavior at the bus stop. Parents are required to sign the **Bus Conduct Code**. **As a reminder, an adult must be visible when students are picked up and left off at the bus stop.**

If a child is suspended off the bus, the parents may appeal the decision to the principal and then to the Superintendent at 434-432-2761.



CAR RIDERS

Parents who bring and pick up their children from school are required to follow our safety procedures. Cars will enter the driveway, veer to the right to the side of the school, and circle through the driveway on the side of the school in an orderly line. **AM** car riders will be unloaded at the front entrance of the school, beginning at 7:50. *In the mornings, if there are mini buses on the side entrance, please stop and do not go around them if their lights are blinking and their stop sign is extended.* **PM** car riders will be loaded at the side entrance of the school near the playground. The teacher on duty will call the child to the car. Parents should not park and come into the building to retrieve the child. Students are picked up on the side of the school only. Because of other responsibilities of the faculty and staff, **we ask that all car riders be picked up between 2:50 and 3:20 p.m. daily.**

ATTENDANCE

As School Board Policy JEB-PC states “A child who will reach his or her fifth birthday on or before September 30 of the school year will be eligible for enrollment in school.”

Students are expected to be in school every day for the full day. Students who are successful in school are those in regular attendance and prepared for their classes daily. The student's attendance record, as well as his academic record, follows him throughout school. Patterns of regular attendance should begin with the entrance into school. We occasionally schedule an attendance activity. Students who have two tardies or less, and no unexcused absences will be invited to attend.

ABSENCES

Elementary and middle schools will consider attendance as one component for promotion and retention. **Excessive absences could result in recommendation for retention.** A note explaining the absence is required within 48 hours after the student returns to school. If we do not receive a note or phone call regarding the absence, the absence will be considered **unexcused**. After a student receives **five unexcused absences**, they will be reported to the truancy team at the School Board Office. Attendance is now counted toward our accreditation. Your child needs to be in school every day, unless absolutely necessary. Early dismissals or excessive tardies will be addressed in written form by the principal. The attendance clerk monitors the attendance of each student. When absent, students are missing valuable instruction.

VISITORS

Parents and guardians are always welcome to visit the school. For the safety of the students and staff, all visitors are required to sign in at the office and receive a visitor's badge. In an effort to protect instructional time and prevent unauthorized persons from entering a classroom, no visitors are allowed to accompany students to class. Classroom visits or observations are only allowed if the request has been made **24 hours** in advance. Parents should never visit a classroom without first contacting the office. Visitors should make sure to close the front door

when entering or leaving the building and should not hold the door open to allow other visitors entrance to the school. All visitors must be “buzzed in” by the office staff.

Parents are strongly encouraged to attend the school programs, special activities, and PTO meetings/programs.

If you would like to have lunch with your child, please call the cafeteria and let them know by 9:15 a.m. Their telephone number is 434-432-0919. Adult lunch prices are \$4.35. We do not have visitors for lunch on early dismissal days or field day. Parents and guardians are welcome to come ***to lunch from September 25, 2023 until March 29, 2024***. After this date, we will be preparing for our SOL testing and parents/guests are not invited to have lunch with our students.

Because of time constraints, guests may not come to lunch on days when we close at 1:00 p.m.

USE OF TELEPHONE

Telephone messages from parents will not be delivered to students except in case of emergency. Students will not be permitted to use the telephone unless there are special circumstances and approval has been given by a faculty or staff member.

PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

Please label all personal items such as lunch boxes, book bags, coats, jackets, etc. so that they are easily claimed if lost.

Students are not permitted to bring radios, tape recorders, or electronic equipment. Toys should not be brought to school unless by permission from the teacher.

The teacher or administrator will confiscate prohibited items and will return them to the parent. The use of electronic devices such as cell phones, IPODs, MP3 players, portable CD players, etc. will not be allowed. Parents will be notified.



STUDENT DRESS

Certain standards of dress are expected in the environment of the school. Students are expected to dress neatly and appropriately. Clothing should be worn properly and be free of holes or tears. Belts should be worn with pants. Shorts and skirts/dresses should be worn at appropriate length. Shorts, skirts and dresses should be no shorter than the fingertips with arms resting naturally by the side. All sleeveless clothing should fit under the arms and not hang loosely. No clothing, including bracelets, should be worn that displays inappropriate language or drawings. No short shorts, halters, spaghetti straps or fish net type clothing should be worn. Shoes should, preferably, cover the entire foot for safety reasons, particularly, when playing in the gym or outside. No flip flop type of footwear is permitted. When a student's dress is considered inappropriate, the principal will contact the parents.

We also ask that parents dress in an appropriate manner when entering the building.



NON-SUFFICIENTLY FUNDED CHECKS

Due to the volume of uncollectible checks that the district receives, the Pittsylvania County School Board has contracted with an outside company for the electronic collection of checks returned for insufficient funds (NSF).

We will gladly accept your checks. When you provide a check as a payment, you authorize us either to use information from the check to make a one-time electronic fund transfer from your account or to process the payment as a check transaction. **By paying by check you are also authorizing the collection of a fee through an electronic fund transfer from your account if your payment is returned unpaid.** This fee can range from \$35.00 to \$50.00 per check and is collected and kept by the outside collection company. Pittsylvania County Schools only receives the face value of the check. Please include the following on your check:

*Full Name *Street Address *Phone Numbers

VOLUNTEERS



Volunteers are a vital part of the educational process. Anyone interested in volunteering should complete the necessary forms for a background check. The forms are at the school. They must be notarized by the school staff. When reporting for duty, volunteers check in and out at the office. Volunteers are asked to exhibit a business-like/professional appearance for tutoring or any activities that directly involve students. **Volunteers should adhere to the PCS Employee/Volunteer Dress Code found at GCAB-PC in the PCS School Board Policy Manual. They may only wear business-like jeans on Fridays.**

Volunteers may start the after the fifth week of school, after a meeting with the principal.

LEVEL 1 Check

You will need to complete the Volunteer Certification Regarding Sex Offender/Child Abuse Status Form only, and have it notarized if you are one of the following: resource speaker, P.T.O.

volunteer (excluding officers), athletic concessions, Science Fair Judge, Spelling Bee announcer, Field Day Chaperones, and lunch dates. Level 1 forms should be completed **two (2)** weeks prior to the event date.

If you are coming to the awards program or having lunch with your child, Level 1 is NOT necessary.



LEVEL II Check

You will need to be fingerprinted if you are one of the following: P.T.O. Officer, Booster Club Officer, tutors, mentors, field trip chaperones, athletic coaches, and library volunteer. Dates, times and locations for these checks will be announced by the School Board Office.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

Character education is a part of the curriculum at Chatham Elementary. Students are taught values through the emphasis of a county-wide **Character Word of the Month Program**. A specific value is taught through direct lessons and modeling. Among the characteristics studied are: honesty, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.



PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION

The PTO is an integral part of the life of the school. Parents can become active participants in providing activities and resources to support the education of our children. The Chatham PTO provides opportunities for parents and teachers to work cooperatively for improved educational programs and facilities for our children. There are four meetings held each year. The dates are noted on the school calendar. Every parent is urged to support and attend meetings.



CAFETERIA RULES

Students are required to:

- *use good manners,
- *talk quietly to persons near them, no yelling,
- *pick up anything dropped on the table or floor,
- *go through the line **only once**,
- *remain seated
- *go through the cafeteria line, even if they bring lunch

If packing their lunch, students should bring nutritious food items. Candy and soft drinks are not allowed at lunch and **guests in the Cafeteria may not bring in food from restaurants.**

SCHOOL MEALS

Once again **Chatham Elementary School** will be participating in USDA's Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), available only to select schools, as part of the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs for the 2023-2024 School Year. This is great news for students attending Chatham Elementary School and their parents. In a CEP school, **all students receive breakfast and lunch at no cost.** No further action is required of you.

All enrolled students of **Chatham Elementary School** will be able to participate without having to pay a fee or submit a meal application.

If you wish to eat lunch with your child, please call the school in the morning to notify the cafeteria. Adult lunch prices are \$4.35. Parents will be invited to breakfast during National School Breakfast week and for other events throughout the year. Parents may not come to lunch on 1:00 p.m. closings or field day because of time and space constraints.

Parents are welcome to come to lunch from **September 25, 2023- March 29, 2024.** After this date, we will be preparing for our state SOL tests. We also ask our parents not to come to lunch on field day because of safety issues.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR



A safe and orderly environment ensures that students remain on task and that learning and teaching occur each day. Good citizenship is expected of each student. Students are expected to follow the school rules below:

- *maintain safe behavior at all times,
- *accept responsibility for one's actions and school work,
- *respect one's self, schoolmates, and adults.

In addition to school rules, each teacher has classroom rules the children must follow. Students violating school rules may receive consequences such as: conference with the Principal, parent contact, after-school detention, or out-of-school suspension. Parents will receive copies of the **Pittsylvania County Schools Student Code of Conduct and the Pittsylvania County Schools Elementary Student Conduct.**

STUDENT RECOGNITION



Students are recognized for their academic progress during the school year and at the end of the year for all nine weeks.

Student of the Month:

A student is selected from grades K-5 who has displayed good citizenship, effort, and an overall eagerness to learn, to represent their grade level, as the Student of the Month.

The Grading Period Awards are as follows:

PreK: Perfect Attendance, Citizenship

Kindergarten: Perfect Attendance, Citizenship Super Star

First - Fifth Grades: Super Star, All Star, Perfect Attendance, and Citizenship.

End of the Year Awards include: Perfect Attendance, Citizenship, All Star and Super Star.

The Coach's Award, Wellness-Related Fitness, National Physical Fitness, Presidential Physical Fitness, Music Award, Presidential Academic Achievement Award, Art Award, Math Award, and Principal's Award.

At the beginning of each school year, parents will receive a notice of the specific criteria for achieving each award.

Parents and grandparents are cordially invited to attend the end-of-the-year awards program in the spring.



TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are loaned to students without charge; however, the child is responsible for the care and condition of his/her books. Parents must pay for lost or damaged books.



SCHOOL STORE

The school store operates each morning from **7:50 a.m. to 8:10 a.m.** Students may purchase items such as paper, pencils, pens, erasers, posters, folders, etc.



ICE CREAM

Every student is offered the opportunity to purchase ice cream each day of the school year. Many flavors and varieties of ice cream are sold daily.

Ice Cream costs \$.60 per day (or only \$3.00 for the entire week), and parents are encouraged to purchase ice cream on Monday's for the entire week. This cuts down on the amount of time it takes to account for the ice cream funds for both the teachers and the office staff.

SCHOOL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Office: 434-432-5441

Fax: 434-432-2227

Cafeteria: 434-432-5441 ext.2504

SCHOOL ADDRESS

Chatham Elementary School
245 Chatham Elementary Lane
Chatham, Virginia 24531

WEBSITE

<http://www.pcs.k12.va.us/ces/>

Revised Grading Scale IKH-PC Grading System

Elementary

The grading system provides a method of keeping the parent informed as to the student's progress in school. The following codes shall be used for reporting students' progress at the end of each reporting period:

Kindergarten and
Transitional First Grade:

- S = Is successful in this area
- N = Needs improvement
- U = Unsatisfactory
- + = Skills mastered
- = Skills not mastered

Grade 1: Reading and mathematics will be graded using the following code:

A = Excellent
B = Good
C = Average
D = Experiencing Difficulty
F = Failing

Other subjects will be graded using the following code:

S = Satisfactory
N = Needs improvement
U = Unsatisfactory

Grade 2-5 Language arts (reading, language, writing, and spelling), mathematics, science/health and history/social studies will be graded using the following code:

A = Excellent
B = Good
C = Average
D = Experiencing Difficulty
F = Failing

Handwriting, physical education, art, music, and conduct will be graded using the following code:

S = Satisfactory
N = Needs improvement
U = Unsatisfactory

Teachers in grades 1-5 will use number grades in grade books. Number grades will be used to determine letter grades to be placed on report cards and cumulative records.

Listed below is the numerical scale for determining letter grades in elementary schools:

A = 90 - 100
B = 80 - 89
C = 70 - 79
D = 60 - 69
F = Below 60

At the end of the fourth week of each nine weeks marking period, school-developed interim reports will be sent to the parent of all students in grades K-5.