

W.A. BESS PARENT-STUDENT REFERENCE GUIDE

4340 Beaty Road - (704) 866-6075

<https://www.gaston.k12.nc.us/bess>



ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL SCHEDULE

7:05 a.m.	Building Opens to Students
7:05-7:20 a.m.	Breakfast Served
7:30 a.m.	Instruction Begins/Tardy Bell
2:15 p.m.	Bus and Day Care Riders Dismissed
2:30 p.m.	Carpools and Car Riders Dismissed

ARRIVAL

Supervision of students by W.A. Bess staff begins with the ringing of a morning bell at 7:05 a.m. Students must **not** be dropped off without parent supervision before the bell rings at 7:05 a.m. Upon arrival on the school campus, students report to their classroom or to the cafeteria for breakfast which is served between 7:05-7:20 am. With administrative approval, cars delivering students with special needs may use the bus circle or crosswalk for morning drop-off. Parents of Kindergarten students, carpools, and fast pass owners may use the bus circle to drop their children off in the morning. Car tags must be on display of the vehicles utilizing the bus circle during arrival. During morning arrival, students should be unbuckled and ready to exit the car with school supplies as soon as it comes to a complete stop and they do not need to wait for a teacher to open the door to exit the vehicle.

DISMISSAL

First load bus riders are dismissed at 2:15 p.m. followed by those students riding in daycare vans, carpools, and private cars. School staff provide supervision at the front of the building until 2:45 p.m. at which time all riders should be picked up. At the scheduled time, students will be supervised at their areas of loading. All bus, day care, carpool and Kindergarten students will be dismissed from the circular drive. This is the service driveway for school buses and is not open to general traffic. Parents transporting 3 or more students may request a carpool sign and can utilize the bus circle for their carpool. Parents/guardians picking up less than 3 students will follow the parking lot pattern and will display a card in the front windshield listing the first and last names of the child(ren) being picked up. For safety reasons, cars without a card will need to park and the parent/guardian will need to sign out their child(ren) in the office.

CAR RIDER TRAFFIC PATTERN



TARDIES

Students are tardy after 7:30 a.m. Parents must accompany their child to the office to sign in if arriving after 7:30 am. Students will be coded as tardy and will then report to their class.

EARLY CHECKOUT

If a student is signed out before 11:00 a.m., the day counts as an absence. No child is permitted to leave school without parental permission. Parent(s) **MUST** use a photo ID with our computer system and must be on the student's approved pick-up list in PowerSchool before a child can be dismissed. **We ask that early checkouts be done before 1:45 pm.**

Who Can Help You?

Principal	Laura B. Clark, lbclark@gaston.k12.nc.us
Assistant Principal	Charlotte Friday, chfriday@gaston.k12.nc.us
School Counselor	Renea Walker, rjwalker@gaston.k12.nc.us
Social Worker	Angela Ferguson, acferguson@gaston.k12.nc.us
Nurse	Maddie Leon, mleon@gaston.k12.nc.us
Data Manager	Kelli Hogston, krhogston@gaston.k12.nc.us
Receptionist	Kelsey Palmer, kppalmer@gaston.k12.nc.us
Cafeteria Manager	Phyllis Davis, pldavis@gaston.k12.nc.us

DEPARTURE/TRANSPORTATION CHANGES

Please refrain from checking your children out early when possible. We request there be no checkouts after 1:45. This is a very busy time when teachers are ending the day, making sure assignments are understood, etc. **ALL TRANSPORTATION CHANGES MUST BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER. FOR SAFETY REASONS, WE ARE UNABLE TO RECEIVE THESE CHANGES OVER THE PHONE.**

BUS RIDERS

If you need to make a change with bus ridership, please contact our front office. Remember that riding the bus is a privilege and students can be removed from the bus for not following expectations. Riders must be outside at the assigned bus stop each morning at least 10 minutes prior to the assigned pickup time. Buses will not wait or blow the horn for students.

CAR RIDERS

All car rider tags should be on display. Students will be directed to the car by staff. If you need a car tag or a replacement, please stop by the office.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Inclement weather days are determined by Gaston County Schools. Make-up days for inclement weather are noted on the GCS Calendar.

School Website



Facebook



GCS District Calendar 2024-2025

ABSENCES

Only 12 absences, excused and unexcused, are permitted each year in accordance to GCS Board Policy. All absences are coded unexcused until a note is brought to school. Notes are expected to be brought within three days of the child returning to school. *Excused absences include personal illness/medical appointment, death in the family, family court, doctor appointment, and religious holidays.* The school social worker will make contact with families of students demonstrating difficulty with tardies and absences and letters are sent home after students have missed 3,6, and 10 unexcused days. In compliance with the NC Attendance Law, parents can become involved with truancy court at 10 unexcused absences.

BEHAVIOR

Students are expected to follow the GCS Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct can be found on the Gaston County School website and all students receive a copy of the Code of Conduct at the start of school. We also utilize PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention & Supports). School-wide expectations are taught to students that align to our PAWS initiative.

1. Practice Self Control
2. Accept Responsibility
3. Work Safely
4. Show Respect

We provide students with the opportunity to learn from and correct behaviors in a timely manner. Students should leave all electronics and toys at home. Cell phones must remain in the student's book bag and turned off while at school.

We encourage parents to actively monitor social media and internet use for their student!

BIRTHDAYS

For student birthdays, we announce birthdays on the announcements and give students a special treat. Birthday invitations should be passed out at home or to ALL students in the class. We do not allow for deliveries to students of items such as flowers, balloons, or food delivery services.

CAFETERIA AND SCHOOL NUTRITION

W.A. Bess is 1 of 45 schools in GCS that qualify for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program which offers **universal free breakfast and lunch** for all students **and** do not have to fill out an application for [free or reduced-price meals](#). This is an exciting benefit and School Nutrition is hopeful that many families will take advantage of this opportunity. If a child would like to purchase any items that are not part of the school meal, such as snacks and ice cream, they will need money in their meal account or cash in order to do so. Cash, checks, and money orders are acceptable forms of payment in school cafeterias. Parents wishing to pay by credit or debit card must set up an account on the [LINQ Connect portal](#) (formerly called Family Titan Portal). Adults do not receive free meals under the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program: lunch cost for staff and visitors is \$4.00

Holiday Meals: (Adult Holiday Meal Price \$5.00)

- Tuesday, November 19, 2024
 - K, 1st, and 3rd grade parents are invited to the holiday meal.
- Tuesday, December 10, 2024
 - 2nd, 4th, and 5th grade parents are invited to the holiday meal.

COMMUNICATION

We communicate with families through our Parent Link phone system, email, school website, and social media. To stay connected, please be sure that we have your proper contact information if you have any changes take place. We also must have current contact information in the event your child becomes ill or injured at school.

CUSTODY

Parents that have custody complications are asked to send a copy of all court documents so that we may comply with any judgment. **Only court documents with a judge's order determine child custody.** We can only honor what paperwork we are provided with at the school. We will only discuss a child's educational matters with those who have legal custody or those deemed permissible by the legal guardian. If issues arise related to domestic issues, local law enforcement will be called to remove parties from the school campus.

DRESS CODE

Students are expected to maintain an appearance that is neither distracting or disruptive to the learning environment.

- *Athletic shoes need to be worn on PE days for safety.
- *Hats, bandanas, sunglasses, hoodies, or other headgear is not permitted in the building.
- *Clothing should not have indecent language or pictures
- *Student clothing should cover undergarments.

MEDICATION

Written authorization from the student's doctor is required to administer **all** medication. Forms are available by contacting the school nurse.

SAFETY

As a part of our safety plan, we conduct various safety drills and random metal detection on a regular basis. The drills are practiced so that students and staff will know how to respond in the event of an emergency.

SCHOOL PICTURES

Fall Picture Day - Wednesday, October 2, 2024
Fall makeup pictures - Thursday, November 7, 2024
Holiday pictures - Thursday, November 7, 2024
Class Group pictures - Wednesday, January 29, 2025
Spring pictures - Wednesday, March 5, 2025
Yearbook pre-orders will be available in January 2025 and end March 31, 2025.

STANDARDS BASED LEARNING

Elementary schools across Gaston County will continue to focus on implementing standards-based learning and grading practices in all K-5 classrooms this school year. Knowing where students are in their progress toward meeting standards-based learning objectives is crucial for planning and delivering classroom instruction. Standards-based assessments give teachers more information about each student's progress in meeting the level of proficiency required by each academic standard.

TECHNOLOGY

All students will be issued a Chromebook to use for educational purposes. More information will be provided in the Chromebook User Agreement.

VISITORS

All visitors to our school must check-in through the main office with a valid driver's license to scan into our visitor system. We ask visitors keep bags in their vehicle while visiting our school and to dress appropriately, i.e. no bed clothes, shoes required, and undergarments covered. For safety reasons pertaining to identification needs, visitors are asked to remove sunglasses, hoodies, hats and other headgear upon entering the building and until leaving campus. In addition, visitors are subject to metal detection and random bag searches. Any unauthorized visitors will be asked to leave immediately.

VOLUNTEERS

Per Policy 5010, parents wishing to assist in the classroom and/or field trips **MUST** complete a Volunteer Application through the district office which includes a criminal background check. Once completed, this lasts throughout your child's years at Bess and does not have to be completed annually; however, you will need to reactivate your volunteer status each school year on the GCS website.

***PLEASE NOTE: Any changes in policy and procedures that may occur after this handbook has been printed will be communicated by the school.**



FULL PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK

MISSION, VISION, AND BELIEFS

W. A. Bess Elementary School's vision is to equip students for academic success needed for a strong foundation in becoming lifelong learners who contribute to their community. The school's mission is to create a nurturing and learning environment. Leading the school in realizing its vision and in accomplishing its mission are beliefs that include providing equitable academic opportunities for all W.A. Bess students and in teaching and modeling positive character traits.