

W.A. Bess Elementary School

4340 Beaty Road
Gastonia, NC 28056
Office Phone: (704) 866-6075
www.gaston.k12.nc.us/bess

Laura Clark, Principal
Charlotte Friday, Assistant Principal



Parent-Student Handbook 2024-2025 School Year

School Website



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

Facebook



<https://www.facebook.com/WABessElementary>

Table of Contents

WELCOME FROM THE PRINCIPAL	2
MISSION, VISION, AND BELIEFS.....	3
PHILOSOPHY OF W.A. BESS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.....	3
ACCEPTABLE USE POLICIES – INTERNET AND TECHNOLOGY	3
ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL	3
ASBESTOS	4
ATTENDANCE.....	4
BUS RIDER INFORMATION.....	5
CAFETERIA AND SCHOOL NUTRITION	5
CELL PHONES.....	5
COMMUNICATIONS.....	6
CUSTODY	6
DISCIPLINE.....	6
DRESS CODE	6
FIELD TRIPS	6
FLOWERS/GIFTS/FOOD	7
HOMEWORK.....	7
IMMUNIZATIONS	7
INCLEMENT WEATHER	7
INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPLIES.....	7
INSURANCE PLANS - OPTIONAL	7
LIBRARY BOOKS.....	7
MEDICATIONS.....	7
PARENT CONFERENCES	7
PARENT INVOLVEMENT	7
PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)....	7
PERMISSION TO USE STUDENT PICTURES AND INTERVIEWS	8
REPORT CARDS	8
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM.....	8
SCHOOL PICTURES.....	8
SCHOOL SAFETY	8

SICKNESS.....	8
STANDARDS BASED LEARNING	8
TELEPHONES	9
TESTING	9
TOBACCO/DRUG FREE ENVIRONMENT	9
VISITORS & VOLUNTEERS.....	9
WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENTS.....	9



WELCOME FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear W.A. Bess Families,

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year at W.A. Bess Elementary School! Our students, staff, and parents take great pride in our school. Bess has the distinction of being named a 2022 National Blue-Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education and achieving status as an A+ School by the N.C. Department of Public Instruction. W.A. Bess is a place where staff and families come together to ensure children are cared for, productive, confident, and compassionate. We strive to provide a safe and orderly learning environment and exciting educational program for your child each day.

The purpose of this handbook is to inform you of routine procedures at W.A. Bess Elementary School as well as the policies adopted by the Gaston County Board of Education. Please read this handbook completely and carefully and discuss its content with your child(ren). If further information is needed, please feel free to contact our school at (704) 866-6075, visit the school office, or schedule a meeting.

PLEASE NOTE: Any guidance, instruction, or other changes in policy and procedures that may occur after this handbook has been printed that will impact information contained herein will be communicated by the school using other means of communication.

We look forward to a successful school year!

Sincerely,

Laura B. Clark
Principal

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.

PHILOSOPHY OF W.A. BESS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

At W. A. Bess Elementary School, we believe that each child is unique. We are challenged each day in this creative profession with the opportunity to work with developing young minds, freeing them to mature into their maximum potential in all areas: academically, socially, physically, emotionally, and creatively. To fulfill our philosophy, we have established several objectives:

- To provide a broad range of educational experiences to accommodate individual needs.
- To help all students develop their potential.
- To work together to encourage civic responsibility.
- To encourage and promote interaction among home, school, and community.
- To provide an environment conducive to learning.
- To help each child develop and maintain a positive self-concept.

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICIES – INTERNET AND TECHNOLOGY

GCS has established a student network and internet acceptable use policy agreement. Before students can use networked resources and/or the internet, they and their parents must read and sign this Acceptable Use Policy Agreement. Your child will be provided with a Chromebook for their individual use. Fees will be applied if your child is negligent in the care of their technology.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

The School Day

- 7:05 – Building Opens to Students
- 7:05-7:20 – Breakfast Served
- 7:30 – Instruction Begins/Tardy Bell
- 2:15 – Bus and Day Care Riders Dismissed
- 2:30 – 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 crosswalk or bus circle for **morning drop-off**.

Parents using a carpool sign may use the bus circle in the morning.

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

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.**

Dismissal

First load bus riders are dismissed at 2:15 p.m. followed by those students riding in day care and private cars and carpool students. School staff provide supervision at the front of the building until 2:45 p.m. at which time all riders should be picked up. Should you ever arrive late, please come into the front office with a photo ID to sign out your child.

At the scheduled time, students will be supervised at their areas of loading. All bus, day care, Kindergarten and carpool 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.

Parents and guardians, we ask for your patience daily during arrival and dismissal times while following the directions of school staff and driving carefully and paying attention to children as they exit and enter cars and to school staff as they monitor and assist them.

- To keep this process efficient every school day parents must **remain in their cars** and use our traffic plan to drop off and pick up their child to keep the line moving and staying in a single file.
- During morning arrival, students should be dropped off along the sidewalk area as soon as the car in front comes to a complete stop. To avoid car accidents, the car lines must be kept moving together and stopping together. If parents choose their own place to stop suddenly in line that is currently moving to drop off their child in a preferred location on the sidewalk, rear end accidents will occur. 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.

- For safety reasons, we ask parents to not pass cars during morning drop off and to wait patiently for the students in the cars in front of yours to unload.
- We ask parents to please do not park in the teacher lot to drop off or pick up your child.
- All faculty and staff are focused on the safety arrival and dismissal of students in the car rider and bus rider lines, along with assisting students to and from their classroom. If you need to speak to a teacher or administrator, we ask that you send an email or call the office and to not use arrival and dismissal times to address your concerns. The party you need to speak with will return your message as soon as possible.
- During arrival and dismissal times we ask for all drivers to be conscious of the crosswalk which is used to assist those entering and exiting the building from the parking lot safely and to follow the directions of the crosswalk monitor.

Please inform grandparents and others picking up your child of these procedures as well. This will keep the traffic pattern moving and conforms to our safety procedures.

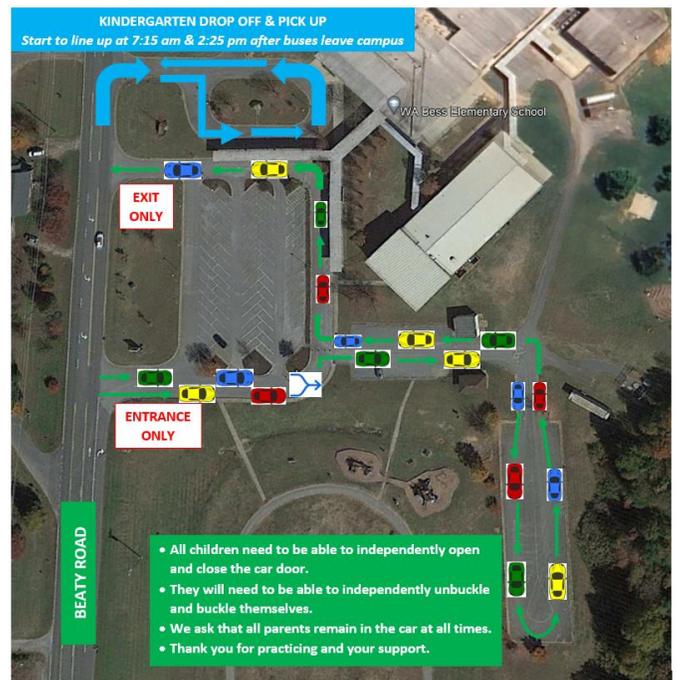
During dismissal, 1st – 5th grade car riders will be waiting on the front benches. Students will remain behind the yellow line on the walkway until the car is at the curb and **stopped**. Pull forward as far as possible to allow more cars into the area. Your child will walk to you, so please do not stop when you see them. Carpool parents will receive a number for their group of students to utilize the bus circle during dismissal. Carpool students will be called after buses and daycare vans are loaded.

After establishing the mode of transportation, a student will use to go home (e.g. bus rider, car rider, day care van, etc.), no change will be allowed without a **WRITTEN REQUEST** from the parent with a telephone number for contact and confirmation. Changes to this established plan will not be accepted after **1:45 pm**. Thank you for not contacting our office staff near dismissal with changes to your child's plan.

ASBESTOS

Each year the federal government requires school principals to notify parents of the presence of friable asbestos in their buildings. I am pleased to report that there is no friable asbestos present in any W.A. Bess building.

W.A. BESS CAR RIDER TRAFFIC PATTERN



ATTENDANCE

It is the responsibility of parents to see that their children attend school as stated under Article 20, Section 115-378 of the Public School Laws of North Carolina. The Gaston County School Board requires that students be in attendance for 94% of each year. Only 12 absences, including excused and unexcused, are permitted each school year in order for a student to be promoted. A student who accumulates 13 or more absences may go before the school's promotion/retention committee or the principal decides on promotion/retention. A student must be in attendance at school for 3 ½ hours to be counted present for the day.

Children may receive excused absences for the following: death in immediate family, court proceedings, religious observances, personal illness, school-sponsored trips, medical appointments, quarantine and special cases handled by the principal. Following any absence, a student is required to present written documentation stating the reason for the absence that includes the child's full name. Written documentation must be presented within (3) school days after the student returns to school.

Extended absences for vacations or trips will be recorded as unexcused. If your family is taking a trip that can be deemed educational in nature, you can file paperwork with the office prior to the absence to verify if any days missed due to the trip are marked as excused.

A written notification from the social worker will be sent to parents/guardians when a student accumulates excessive absences.

BUS RIDER INFORMATION

Students who live in the W.A. Bess attendance area are allowed to ride the bus. Parents sign a bus permission slip at the beginning of the year that outlines the rules students must follow.

Students are assigned to buses. No changes can be made without prior approval of the principal or assistant principal. All bus rules apply to **each** W.A. Bess bus rider. These rules are to be followed while waiting at the bus stop, on the bus, getting off the bus and continue until each student has safely reached school and home. Video-streamed security cameras allow the administration and driver to monitor student behavior on the bus.

Students who choose to ignore the bus driver's directions are endangering the safety of themselves and others. Those students will be suspended from the bus and may possibly lose the privilege of riding if the behavior continues. A student's privilege of riding the bus may be revoked on the first violation if the act is extreme. If students are suspended from riding the bus, then it is the parent's responsibility to provide prompt transportation to and from school.

If your child's mode of transportation is going to change, then you **must send a note in writing** prior to **1:45 p.m.** Transportation changes will not be accepted over the phone in order to ensure student safety.

CAFETERIA AND SCHOOL NUTRITION

The cafeteria and school nutrition is an important part of the school experience. Breakfast and Lunch are served daily.

In compliance with the Gaston County Schools Department of School Nutrition, ALL foods brought into the school FOR ANY OCCASION must be store bought and meet GCS regulations. Nothing provided to a classroom can be homemade. Food must come from a restaurant or vendor with a sanitation rating.

Parents choosing to visit and dine with their child will be directed to a visitor table in the cafeteria. Parents must sign-in at the front office and wear a visitor badge. Parents may not drop off fast food for their child for the office to deliver.

Cafeteria Meal Prices 2024-20245

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.

Payment Procedure

Gaston County Schools maintains a computer system that accounts for students and their spending in the cafeteria. Check, Cash, or Money Order can be accepted in the school cafeteria to purchase any items that are not part of the school meal, such as snacks and ice cream. Please label all personal checks and money orders with the child's lunch number to ensure proper designation and payment. Parents/Guardians may utilize [LINQ Connect portal](#) to pay with their credit or debit card.

Breakfast Program

All students will be offered breakfast served by the cafeteria only. Outside breakfast options are not acceptable in the school and must be eaten at home. Students will be able to pick up a breakfast meal upon entering the cafeteria from 7:05 am to 7:20 am. Students arriving on a late bus are given the opportunity to eat breakfast upon arrival at school.

Dietary Restrictions and Needs

Students who have special diet/nutrition needs must have a completed Diet Order form signed by a recognized medical authority on file at the School Nutrition Office. All special diet orders must be resubmitted each school year. Diet order forms may be obtained from the School Nutrition Office, cafeteria manager, school nurse, or GCS School Nutrition website. The parent of any student with special diet requirements will be notified by School Nutrition regarding the effective date of the order.

Cafeteria Competitive Sales Compliance

School cafeterias are subsidized by the Federal Government; therefore, we must comply with all Federal and State guidelines related to the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs.

CELL PHONES

If a student must bring a cell phone to school, it must be off and out of sight in a bookbag during the instructional day and while a student is riding on a school bus. Any student that has their cell phone turned on and out will have the device confiscated and turned into the office for pick-up by a parent.

COMMUNICATIONS

Effective communications are essential to the successful operation of a school. We use the ParentLink phone system which is used to deliver phone messages and emails for general reminders, upcoming events, and special announcements. It is important that we have your correct phone number and email address in the system so you can receive these phone calls. Please update the school of any changes throughout the school year.

We maintain our school website and Facebook to share information with families and the community. The addresses for these sites can be found on the front cover of this handbook.

Teachers are expected to maintain communications with parents concerning their child's progress and classroom activities.

Please make sure you take advantage of these additional communication resources:

- Channel 21 on cable television
- GCS Website www.gaston.k12.nc.us

CUSTODY

Court Orders granting custody to one parent must be filed in the school office. Only court documents with a judge's order determine child custody. Please send a copy of any including the most recent court documents concerning custody issues so that we may enforce any judgment. Please be mindful that our school is about our children, learning, and providing a safe environment. Domestic issues will not be settled on our campus. If necessary, police will be contacted and parties removed from campus by local law enforcement.

DISCIPLINE

W.A. Bess Elementary implements Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS). This school wide program helps parents and school staff to maintain a safe and supportive learning environment, promotes positive life skills, and reduces negative behaviors so that all children can succeed in school. PBIS addresses both individual behavior and environmental factors and focuses on skill building rather than punishment. Check out our school website or check with your child's teacher for more information.

Please read and discuss the GASTON COUNTY STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT with your children. We will not tolerate unsafe behavior which causes a disruption to the learning process. Students are to respect other students' and staff members' property, privacy, and storage area. Students are not allowed to bring personal items, such as toys, sport/trading cards, video games, candy, gum, etc. to school.

The administration reserves the right to handle discipline issues according to GCS policy including consequences such as lunch detention and in/out of school suspension.

DRESS CODE

Students should come dressed each day according to the GASTON COUNTY STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT. A student's appearance should not be distracting to other students nor disruptive to the educational environment. Students are to dress appropriately for school. We follow the GCS dress code as written below. Students should not wear clothing or other articles of personal appearance which:

- Depict profanity, obscenity or violence
- Promote use of tobacco, drugs or alcohol
- May create a threat to health or safety of others
- Are associated with intimidation or violence
- May cause disruption during the instructional day

Some dress code reminders:

- No provocative or obscene clothing, or clothing that symbolizes gangs or gang related activity.
- All undergarments should be covered and not exposed.
- Students may not wear hats, hoodies on their heads, and/or sunglasses inside.
- Shoes must be worn at all times.
- When wearing shorts and holding your hands straight down by your side, fingertips must touch the bottom edge of the hem. Rips in any clothing will follow this fingertip rule as well.

Please make sure your child has proper shoes for recess and PE. Tennis shoes are required for all physical activities. Without proper shoes, your child may be asked to sit out during these activities to ensure safety.

Administration may require a student to change his/her dress or appearance for failure to comply with the dress code any time of the day.

This policy applies to all students at all times on any school property, including buses. It does not apply to sanctioned uniforms/costumes approved by school personnel.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are important and are used to introduce, enrich, or culminate the academic unit of study. Definite purposes will dictate where, what kind, and how many trips are taken. Planning and preparation precede all field trips, and parents are informed and must give written permission prior to their child's participation. **All students must ride on the bus to the field trip.** Bus transportation to and from field trips is for students and staff only. Once payment is received for a child to attend a field trip, it is non-refundable.

Parents who are invited on a field trip are considered chaperones and are responsible for several students. Unfortunately, younger or older siblings are ineligible to go on field trips with their brother or sister. Remember that all chaperones are required to complete the Gaston County Schools' Volunteer application and process for approval prior to any trip and/or classroom assistance. Applications must be reactivated each school year.

FLOWERS/GIFTS/FOOD

To minimize disruptions, we ask that you not have flowers/balloons/gifts or food delivered to your child at school. Students are not allowed to chew gum and eat candy while on campus and while riding approved GCS transportation vehicles unless during a teacher approved special event.

HOMEWORK

Homework is important because it develops responsibility and an opportunity to practice and/or extend material introduced or taught in class. The amount/kind of assigned homework is determined by the grade level and the ability of the individual student to perform the assigned task. The school will attempt to use good judgment in homework by assigning enough of the right kind to make it worthwhile and for the students to proudly complete.

IMMUNIZATIONS

State law requires that all children have the proper immunizations before they enter the public schools. Immunizations are audited by the nurse. Students who have incomplete records are sent home until the parent satisfies the requirements of the law.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

If at any time during the school year weather warnings necessitate closing school, the decision will be released on the following:

- Local radio and television stations
- Education Channel 21 on cable television
- Gaston County Schools website
- Parent Link phone/email messages/social media

If school is in session and it becomes necessary to close, the above media will be used. Please take time to discuss with your child what your wishes are should school be dismissed during the day for bad weather. Each child's teacher needs to know as well. **Be sure we have the email address or phone number with which you choose to receive the Parent Link messages from administration.** In case of unexpected weather, please do not call the school. Our phones must be kept open for emergencies.

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPLIES

Most instructional materials are furnished by the school. Please consult our school website for the most current supply

list. Some teachers request additional grade-level relevant supplies to supplement the curriculum and these lists are located under your child's grade on our website. To protect our floors, rolling bookbags are not allowed unless accompanied by a medical note approved by the principal and school nurse.

INSURANCE PLANS - OPTIONAL

School accident insurance is provided for those who chose to purchase a policy. Information is available from the school office.

LIBRARY BOOKS

Students are encouraged to learn to use the school library for gathering information and selecting books for leisure reading. In so doing, students learn that books must be checked out properly, cared for, and returned on time. If a student loses or damages a book, they are expected to pay for the book.

MEDICATIONS

In accordance with Policy 6130, classroom teachers are not permitted to give students any type of ongoing internal medication without a completed Authorization of Medication Form with our School Nurse. Medication must be in an updated prescription bottle with the label stating the child's name, dosage, and instructions.

We do realize that on occasion physicians prescribe medication to be taken during school hours on a short-term basis. If this situation occurs, you are requested to contact the school nurse.

PARENT CONFERENCES

A conference between parents and teachers is the most beneficial and useful way to stay informed of progress being made by your child. Parents can schedule conferences with their child's teacher when they want to discuss their child's educational, emotional, and social development. The GCS Calendar does have allocated days on the school calendar for parent-teacher conferences. Whenever a conference is scheduled, we request the courtesy of a telephone call if you are prevented from attending. When parents desire a conference, please telephone, email, or send a note with your child to schedule a convenient time for all.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

All parents are encouraged to take an active role in the education of their children and be involved in all school functions. Parents are welcome to volunteer time and services and request conferences to communicate concerns.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

W.A. Bess Elementary School invites you to become an active member of our P.T.O. as we anticipate another

successful year of parental involvement. Your participation facilitates a sense of community between the parents and teachers with a focus on student success. Parent support is evidenced by serving on the committee and attending scheduled meetings.

The chief objectives of the Bess P.T.O. are the following:

1. To promote the welfare of all children.
2. To promote a closer relationship among parents, teachers, and administration.
3. To provide a secure, enjoyable, and rewarding educational atmosphere.

Bess P.T.O. Board meetings will occur monthly. Families will be informed of meeting dates and times via ParentLink messages by phone and email and the P.T.O. Facebook page.

PERMISSION TO USE STUDENT PICTURES AND INTERVIEWS

During the school year, your child could be photographed while engaged in a school activity. Please complete the appropriate paperwork for your child to be photographed, videotaped, and/or interviewed by system employees or media regarding routine school topics and activities for public information. Sometimes these pictures are included in a local newspaper or shown on our website or Bess social media. Parents will use the Gaston County Schools Photographic/Videotaping Permission Form to indicate if they do or do not give permission for their child's photograph to be used. Parents will use the Gaston County Schools News Media Interview Permission Form to indicate if they do or do not give permission for their child to be interviewed.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued at the end of each grading period on the dates listed below.

- October 17, 2024
- January 9, 2025
- March 20, 2025
- By May 29, 2025 (mailed)

Now that Schoology and Parent Assistant is available to parents, you can see your child's current academic progress at any time. Interim reports are made available. You are encouraged to contact the teacher directly with concerns and/or questions regarding your child's progress.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM

The Bess SIT will meet monthly (check our website for dates and times). A parent representative serves on SIT, but meetings are open to all who wish to attend.

SCHOOL PICTURES

Carolina Photography will make professional pictures of W.A. Bess students throughout the school year.

- 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.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Keeping children safe while at school is one of our main priorities. Elementary schools are mandated to conduct one metal screening each week. Bess will conduct one fire exercise each month and four lockdown exercise per year in an effort to remain vigilant and prepared to handle any crisis situation. Other safety exercises will be performed in order to comply with district and state emergency preparedness guidelines (e.g. tornado exercises).

We believe it is important for our students to know what to do in an emergency situation. Please discuss the purpose of practicing these safety exercises with your child. It is extremely important that parents keep accurate phone numbers on file should we face inclement weather or a crisis situation that would require a parent notification.

SICKNESS

While encouraging school attendance, we discourage attendance at the expense of your child's health or the health of others. A sick child, or one who may have to return home shortly after arriving, should **not be sent to school**. Parents will be contacted to pick up their sick child. When a child becomes ill at school, it is the responsibility of the parents to provide transportation home including children who have a fever, diarrhea, or are vomiting. If both parents work, or if the parents are away from home during the day, it is most important to provide names and telephone numbers of persons to contact in case of an emergency. **No child should be at school without an emergency contact on record.** Please inform the school of home, work, or cell telephone number changes. Students are able to return to school after 24 hours of being fever free and/or experiencing diarrhea and/or vomiting.

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.

TELEPHONES

The school telephone is a business phone to be used primarily for school business. Students are permitted to use the school telephone only if they have a valid reason and *written permission from their teacher*. Please limit messages to be relayed to students to emergency calls. Not having homework, or field trip permission slips does not constitute an emergency. Any ride changes for afternoon dismissal are expected to be submitted in writing by 1:45 pm.

TESTING

Students will participate in testing and progress monitoring throughout the course of the year that is required at the local and state level. The school will communicate dates for state testing as they approach.

TOBACCO/DRUG FREE ENVIRONMENT

Gaston County Schools policy prohibits the use of tobacco products on school grounds: everywhere, by everyone, at all times. This also means that no one can smoke, including but not limited to vaping, in his/her personal vehicle while on school property. No illegal drug use is tolerated at any time and will be reported to the appropriate authorities. Thank you for your cooperation.

VISITORS & VOLUNTEERS

Visitors are welcome at our school. The safety of your child at W.A. Bess Elementary is our number one priority. To ensure knowing who our guests are, we require:

- 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.
- **ALL** parents and visitors enter the school through the front doors by being buzzed in by office staff and report directly to the front office.
- Parents and visitors **MUST** come to the office upon entering the school building and **before going to any area in the building**.
- 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. Once inside the school, you must immediately report to the office to sign in and receive a visitor's tag. **Name tags are to be worn at all times while at school.** Your picture will be printed when you sign in and placed on your name tag. Those visitors not wearing a name tag will be stopped by teachers, administrators, or other staff members.
- All visitors are subject to random metal detection and bag searches. We are confident that parents want their school safe and secure.
- Parents **MUST** sign their child out **using a photo ID** before the child can leave the school building. This procedure

protects all Bess students.

Volunteers

Per Policy 5010, parents wishing to assist in the classroom and/or fieldtrips **MUST** complete a **Volunteer Application through the district office which includes a criminal background check**. This process should be completed several weeks prior to your first planned volunteer opportunity. Each volunteer must also be approved by the principal. If a parent wishes to help chaperone on a field trip, a Volunteer Application is required. 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. We have a tremendous need for parent volunteers and encourage you to complete this process.

WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENTS

The school should be notified at least two days in advance of a student's withdrawal. All textbooks, technology, and library books must be returned and lunch payments and other debts must be cleared before transfer of records occurs.

Thank you for partnering with us to
continue inspiring success at
W.A. Bess!



W.A.
BESS