

Lowell Elementary School 2024-2025



Student/Parent Handbook

Lowell Elementary Vision

Through collaboration with community, parents, and school, Lowell Elementary students will be lifelong learners.

Lowell Elementary Mission

We will serve students by name and need in a safe and respectful environment.

At Lowell, we believe in.....

Our Students

Our Parents

Our Community

Collaboration

Respect

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Attendance Policy

We realize that there are times when students must be absent from school. To receive the maximum benefit from our instructional program, it is important for students to be at school each day. To be considered in attendance on any day, the student must be present in school for at least half of the school day. The goal is for every student to be present for at least 95% of the school year (no more than 9 missed days). You should always provide a written note to the teacher indicating the reason for the absence. **Written documentation from the parent immediately upon the student's return to school (but no more than 3 days after the return) is required for the school to code the absence as excused.**

If you have any questions about your child's illness, please contact the school nurse. Extended sickness or excessive days absent due to sickness may require doctor's notes. The reasons listed below are considered excusable absences by the NC State Board of Education:

- | | |
|--|---|
| Sickness or Injury | Court Proceedings |
| Quarantine | Religious Observances |
| Death in Family | Educational Opportunities (requires prior approval) |
| Suspension | Medical/Dental Appointments |
| Military Active Duty Need or Leave of Legal Guardian (requires prior approval) | |

Students who are absent for reasons other than these will have the absences coded as unexcused (unlawful). When students accumulate unlawful absences, parents will receive a notification after 3, 6, and 10 unlawful absences under the North Carolina Compulsory Attendance Law. Per Gaston County Schools Board Policy, excessive absences will also be a factor in consideration of promotion to the

next grade level.

If you will be requesting an absence to count as an educational opportunity, you must first get prior approval from the principal at least 3 weeks in advance.

Approval from the principal will require written details of the academic benefit and the curriculum standards taught by each activity. After the principal's approval is obtained, the parent is responsible for obtaining the assignment(s) from the teacher(s) that will be completed to show what the student has learned. The assignment that shows what the student has learned must also be approved by the principal and teacher in advance. Failure to submit the agreed upon assignment(s) will result in the days being coded as unexcused. No trip will be approved as an educational opportunity after it occurs.

NOTE: Please do not ask that family vacations be counted as educational opportunities. Such requests will not be approved. As a general rule, an educational opportunity is a planned event for the primary purpose of providing a first-hand experience and educational opportunity that directly relates to the standard course of study.

Arrival

The building is open to students beginning at 7:00 a.m. each day. School staff will be on duty at the car rider drop-off area located at the front of the building at this time. It is important for students to be on time for school each day, so please be sure to allow your child enough time to eat breakfast before the instructional day begins at 7:30 a.m.

If you are bringing your child to school after 7:30 a.m., our instructional day has already begun. Please park your car and escort your child to the front door for check-in. **For the safety of your child, do not ever drop your child off without an adult visible outside and on duty.**



Book Bags

It is important for students to bring a book bag to and from school each day. This allows students to develop responsibility, organize and keep up with school supplies/papers, and provides a safe place for important communications between school and home. Rolling book bags are not recommended, since they pose a tripping hazard in the hallway and in lines. They can also be difficult when loading and unloading the buses. Sometimes, we receive donations from community organizations and churches; please contact Ms. Busch (school counselor), Ms. Young (school social worker), or your child's teacher if you need assistance with getting a book bag for your child.

Breakfast

Breakfast is served from 7:00 to 7:30 each morning. All students receive free breakfast. If your child is a car rider, he or she should arrive at school early enough to be finished eating by the beginning of the instructional day (7:30 a.m.) If school is delayed because of weather by 1 or 2 hours, breakfast will still be served. If school is delayed because of weather by 3 hours, breakfast will not be served.

Bus Safety & Bus Rules

Students riding a bus are taught specific expectations for behavior and safety. Any behavior that interferes with the safe and efficient operation of the bus cannot be permitted. Students must always comply with the directions and requests of the bus driver to ensure the safety of all. The following bus rules shall

apply at all times:

- Students are expected to follow all *GCS* bus rider rules and procedures when riding a bus to and from school and while on any school related activity involving bus transportation.
- Students are expected to follow the bus driver's directions when getting on the bus, during the bus ride and when exiting the bus.
- When getting on the bus, students are expected to find their assigned seat and remain there until they reach their destination and only get out of their seat when the bus comes to a complete stop.
- Students are expected to sit facing forward with their backs against the back seat cushion, feet towards the floor and hands to themselves.
- Students are expected to keep their hands and feet to themselves so as not to be touching other students or other students' belongings.
- Students are expected to keep their book bag and other belongings out of the aisle.
- Students are expected to keep their arms, legs and hands out of the aisles and inside the bus.
- Students are expected to leave all items in their book bags while riding the bus. Pens, pencils, toys, paper, drink bottles etc. are to be placed in book bags before getting on the bus. **Drink bottles must have a lid that closes completely and securely; NO CONTAINERS WITH STRAWS due to liquid being able to spill out.**
- Students are not allowed to have drinks, food, gum, or candy while on the bus due to bus cleanliness issues and due to possible choking hazards.
- Voice levels on the bus will remain Level 0 to Level 1 based on the bus driver's directive.
- When exiting the bus, students will watch for the bus driver's instructions to let them know when it is safe to step off the bus.

- If it is necessary to cross the street when exiting the bus, students will watch for the bus driver's signal that it is safe to cross the street. Students should never cross the street behind the bus.

Note: Glass containers, balloons, or other items that pose a safety hazard on the bus are not permitted. Food items that cannot fit in a book bag are also not permitted.

When bus safety rules are violated, the driver will report the infraction to the principal with a written disciplinary referral. After talking with the student and the driver, the school administrator will determine the consequence for the infraction on the bus. Typically, depending upon the severity of the infraction, the first incident will often result in a conference with the student and parent contact. Further infractions typically result in a withdrawal of riding privileges for 1-5 days, depending on the nature of the infraction and age of the child. However, **some behaviors, including physical aggression or other behaviors that have significant safety implications, may result in a withdrawal of riding privileges with the first offense.** Special circumstances may warrant the suspension of riding privileges for a longer period of time, including for the remainder of the school year.

During the period of bus suspension, it is the parent's responsibility to provide transportation to and from school on a daily basis. (Regular attendance is still required by law even though riding privileges have been suspended.)

Bus Transportation Information

Registration/Getting a Bus Assignment:

All students must be registered for the bus for the 24-25 school year using a Lowell Elementary bus registration form. Bus registration forms are available at the beginning of the year at Orientation or online at the school **website (until**

Orientation day) and also at any time during the year (front office). Please allow 24 business hours to process bus registration forms. Our point of contact for bus registration, bus discipline, or other bus issues/questions is Ms. Queen in the front office. If you need assistance with any bus matter, please do not hesitate to contact her at the school (704-836-9118).

Important Regulations/Other Information for Parents:

- Students should be at their assigned bus stop at least 10 minutes before the bus is due to arrive to avoid delaying the bus schedule. **Bus drivers are not permitted to wait for students who are not physically at the stop when the bus arrives. Students are only allowed to be at their assigned stops and no other bus stop.** Bus drivers do not have the authority to change a bus stop assignment.
- **Students are not permitted to ride a bus other than the one to which they are registered and assigned. (For liability, safety reasons, and limited capacity, students are not allowed to ride the bus with a friend.)**
-Parents/other adults are never to board a school bus and threaten or intimidate a driver or its passengers. It is a criminal offense to board a school bus without permission and law enforcement officials may be notified.
If a significant concern arises, please contact the principal to voice your concerns, rather than trying to address a driver behind the wheel or in front of children.
- **If you have concerns about your child's bus stop location or questions about the bus route, please call the bus route coordinator/lead driver or a school administrator.**
- In the event of a delayed bus schedule, we will send a Parent Link message to your primary phone in PowerSchool as soon as we receive the information.



Car Rider Line

The car rider line in the morning is one lane. Drop off occurs along the front sidewalk beginning at 7:00 a.m. **For safety reasons, cars are not permitted to drive into or drop off students in the bus circle or side of the building.** In the afternoons, the car rider line forms into two lanes wide along the loading lane (in front of the sidewalk). All cars must have an official Lowell car tag to use the car rider line in the afternoon and a car tag for each student being picked up must be visible. No exceptions. Please understand that car tags ensure the safety of your child and help to maintain a consistent and efficient procedure. No cars are permitted in the bus circle in the afternoons after 2:00 p.m.; **the bus circle is for buses and day-care vans only.** Drivers should follow staff member directions for moving forward in the line to the loading area. Staff will assist students into the loading area and indicate when you should move forward outside of the loading zone. For the safety of our students and staff, please do not attempt to move out of the loading zone until you are told to do so, or attempt to signal your child to your car: Staff members on duty will let your child know when it is safe to approach your car. If you have forgotten your car tag, you will be asked to park and go to the main door for assistance. **Please be sure to take your photo ID with you to the main door.** Extra car tags for a family member can be provided for you in the front office.

Change in Address or Phone

In the event of a move, the new home address must be provided to the office staff. If it comes to our attention that your address has changed, we will ask for a new proof of address, which must be provided within 5 days. Please be sure to

always provide current phone/address information to the school's front office staff so that we may update your contact information in PowerSchool and get important information to you as the need arises. Providing the updated information to your child's teacher is also important, but it is imperative that you share the updated information with office staff as well.

Change in Transportation

If a student needs to go home by a mode of transportation that is different from the one indicated at Orientation or the beginning of the year, the teacher must have a written note from the parent/guardian. **Changes in transportation cannot be accepted over the telephone.** For bus riders, students will always be placed on their assigned bus in the afternoon unless we have a written note telling us that the child will be a car rider that day. Only people who have been named by you on the contact list as having permission to pick up will be permitted to sign your child out of school.

Character Education

Character education is an important part of your child's school experience. Monthly character traits are stressed through guidance lessons and classroom discussions. Kindness, respect, responsibility, integrity, courage, and perseverance are some of the areas discussed.

Checking Students Out of Class

Checking students out of class early is discouraged because it interrupts the teacher's instruction and the entire classroom of students and their routines; early checkouts **should not occur after 1:45 p.m.** No student should have more than 5 tardies or early check-outs. Please try to schedule doctor appointments or other appointments after school hours whenever possible. **Always bring your photo ID**

to the front door. Once you have arrived and we have checked your ID, we will call your child to the front door to meet you. It is not permissible to call ahead and ask for your child to be waiting for you. **Please be patient when checking your child out of school at a time other than dismissal, as the safety and security of all children is our top priority and concern.** Our procedures are in place to protect your child.

Classroom Celebrations

The classroom teacher may plan classroom celebrations occasionally with the students as a reward or before a school break. Birthday celebrations or "parties" are not permitted at school. **Balloons, floral arrangements, cupcakes, etc. will not be delivered to the classroom and are not allowed on the bus.** If you are interested in donating a store-bought snack for a classroom celebration organized by the teacher, **you should communicate with the teacher in advance, since there may be dietary restrictions among some of the students that require prior parent approval. (Food allergies and diabetes are the most common dietary restrictions that require advance notice.)** All teachers follow specific procedures for scheduling classroom celebrations or donated snack time so that instructional time is not lost.

Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled at the request of the teacher OR parent at any time during the school year. Two conferences will be scheduled during the year by the teacher, and Gaston County Schools designates two dates for these conferences. This year, the dates are October 10 and March 13. School will dismiss at 11:30 on those dates so that conferences may occur. Additional conferences between teacher and parent are encouraged if there are concerns about a student's academic, behavioral, or social/emotional development.

At any time during the year, if a need or concern arises, please contact the school to schedule a time to speak with the teacher. Teachers are not permitted to accept calls during the school day, but will call you back as soon as they are available and within 24 hours. **If the teacher is unable to assist you with your concern, please contact Dr. Conley.**

Contacts

Please reach out to us for any needs you may have throughout the year. Staff members may be reached at (704) 836-9118.

Principal	Dr. Conley	alconley@gaston.k12.nc.us
Principal Intern/Bus Issues	Ms. Queen	khqueen@gaston.k12.nc.us
Receptionist	Ms. Morgan	mwmorgan@gaston.k12.nc.us
Student Records	Ms. Scott	slscott@gaston.k12.nc.us
School Nurse	Ms. Ghantt	TBA
School Social Worker	Ms. Young	dinayoung@gaston.k12.nc.us
School Counselor	Ms. Busch	dmbusch@gaston.k12.nc.us
Library	Mrs. Pekarek	lcpekarek@gaston.k12.nc.us
Bus Route/Stop Questions	Ms. Motsinger	dkmotskinger@gaston.k12.nc.us

Counseling

Our school counselor, Ms. Busch, provides classroom guidance for our students. She is also able to provide individual and small group counseling as needed, if there are difficulties or concerns that interfere with a student's school success or well-being. She is not able to provide long-term therapy, but is available to assist parents with finding available resources and services that are available. One of those resources is school-based therapy and Ms. Busch can assist with filling out the paperwork for this free service.

Custody Issues

If you and your spouse are separated or divorced and you have been granted

custody of your child through a court order, please provide a copy. ***Without a copy of the court order, both parents on the birth certificate have equal rights at school.***



Dental Screenings

When children have dental problems, their overall health and ability to learn can be compromised. Kintegra partners with us to provide dental exams, x-rays (if needed), dental cleanings, and flouride treatments for all of our students. Services provided by Kintegra require parent permission and you will receive information on this opportunity in advance. Kintegra has a mobile dental bus and will be visiting us at two different times during the school year. Again, your child will not participate unless you want them to participate and provide signed consent.

Discipline

To guarantee a safe and positive educational climate, it is important for students to understand that acceptable standards of behavior will be expected at all times. Students will be taught, acknowledged, and rewarded for appropriate behaviors. (See Section on Positive Behavior Intervention and Support.) Behavior interventions will also be attempted and a referral to the counselor will be made when appropriate. Consequences will be administered when any individual's actions interfere with the right of teachers to teach and students to learn. Any teacher or staff member in the school has the right to correct any student at any place in the school at any time. Classroom and school rules and procedures are established and discussed at school. As a result, students have been made aware of what is expected of them. Your child's teacher will provide you with information about the

classroom expectations and behavior plan. All parents will also receive a copy of the Gaston County Schools Code of Conduct at the beginning of the school year. The GCS Code of Conduct may also be found on the GCS website. Consequences for rule violations should correspond to the severity of the offense and take into consideration the individual child and the particular offense. Consequences may include, but are not limited to:

Verbal reprimand/warning

Change in seating arrangement

Loss of class privilege/reward

Communication with parent

Time-out in the classroom or in another teacher's classroom

Silent lunch

Restricted privileges at recess*

Parent-teacher-student conference

Referral to administrator

Behavior lab (designated time period)

In-school suspension (behavior lab all day)

Out-of-school suspension

* Students will never be denied physical activity as a punishment while in the classroom, but they may be denied interactive play privileges with others.

Your child's teacher and/or administration will communicate with you when disciplinary actions are necessary. We will always strive to be consistent and fair, and treat students with dignity.

Note: Items that may be used as or that may imitate weapons (including toy guns/knives), sharp objects, chains, matches, etc. are strictly prohibited from campus. Students are not permitted to sell or trade any merchandise or collectibles in the school or on school grounds, including trading cards. Electronic devices and cell phones are not permitted at this age due to the risk of loss or damage. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or

damaged devices. Students are not permitted to share food or drinks from home under any circumstances due to safety reasons.

Dress Code

Student dress should be comfortable and appropriate for learning. Clothing should fit in such a way that undergarments are not shown and clothing and shoes should not interfere with safety. Flip flops and other shoes without a closed heel are discouraged due to the safety hazard during physical play and activity. During PE class, restrictions may be given if shoes or clothing pose a tripping or safety risk. The following items are not permitted in school: Headwear (hats, bandanas, sleeping bonnets or wraps, any covering other than for religious reasons), tube tops, halter tops, see-through tops, midriff tops, jeans with rips above the knees, heelys (roller shoes), or high heels that cause difficulty walking or running. Sleeveless shirts must fit appropriately and provide adequate coverage. Sunglasses and hats are for outside use only, unless there is a special occasion at school that allows for it. Any clothing or headwear used as sleepwear is also prohibited, unless there is a special occasion at school that allows for sleepwear (such as PJ day). Shorts and skirts must fall at least to the fingertips when hands are by one's sides. Sleeveless shirts must have shoulder straps that are at least 3 fingers wide. Any clothing with profanity, messages about drugs, alcohol, gangs, violence, racism, or general lack of tolerance for any group for any reason or any content which creates an educational disruption is prohibited. Lowell Elementary is an inclusive school for all.



Early Release Days

We will have 2 early release days this year. Please be sure that appropriate arrangements are made for your child to be picked up early on early release days or that someone is home when the bus arrives early on early release days. Dismissal time is at 11:30 a.m. on early release days. This year, the early release dates are: October 10, 2024 and March 13, 2025.

Emergency Closing/Delayed Opening of School

Schools may be closed due to inclement weather conditions. The superintendent or designee will make public information announcements and releases to news media when this occurs. Parents are encouraged to listen to local TV and radio stations for public information announcements regarding the potential closing of school due to weather conditions. You may also visit the GCS website. Announcements regarding the closing of school are usually made by 6:30 a.m.

If schools are operating on a delay, school employees are often not at school at the regular time. **For that reason, students may not be dropped off until the designated times:**

1-hour delay: Car rider drop-off line begins at 8:00 a.m.

2-hour delay: Car rider drop-off line begins at 9:00 a.m.

3-hour delay: Car rider drop-off line begins at 10:00 a.m.

Buses are typically delayed the same amount of time as the time delay (1-hr delay means buses will arrive 1 hour late, for example). Our school office will also open on the same delay indicated (1-hr delay means our office will open at 8:30 a.m.)

Evacuations & Emergency Procedures

Evacuations are conducted throughout the school year. All students, staff, and visitors must evacuate the building upon hearing an alarm or evacuation announcement. Fire evacuation routes are posted in each classroom. Students are taught evacuation procedures, severe weather protocols, and other safety protocols at the beginning of the school year and practice procedures at unannounced times. Lockdown of the school is also practiced during the year.

During the practice of any safety protocol or evacuation, it is not possible to check your child out in the front office. If you arrive at the school while we are practicing an evacuation or protocol, please be patient and we will assist you as soon as the practice is complete (generally only a couple of minutes). These practices will help to ensure student safety in the event of an emergency and are required by law and by the Department of Public Safety. We also randomly scan students and classrooms with a metal detector as required by GCS.



Field Trips/Educational Opportunities

Your child will bring home information about the off-campus learning opportunity and a permission form to participate. The permission form must be signed and returned before the trip--no verbal permission or permission over the phone can be accepted per board policy. Please return the permission form indicating whether or not your child is permitted to participate and do so by the due date so that we may finalize plans for the trip in advance. Payments for field trips should be given to your child's teacher by the due date. Please note: Field Trips are NON-REFUNDABLE due to costs being based on specific numbers of persons attending. The only exception is if the entire field trip for all students must be

canceled. If you have questions or concerns about the cost of a field trip, please contact Dr. Conley. Children will not be excluded from the learning opportunity due to an inability to pay. If parents are allowed to attend the field trip they will need to complete the volunteer form located on the Gaston County School's website by visiting the "Become a Volunteer" link under the "For Parents" tab. Parents attending a field trip will also need to supply their own transportation to and from the field trip site.

If you are interested in any other off-campus educational opportunities, these must be approved by the principal at least 3 weeks in advance. A written summary of the trip is required, noting specific curriculum standards that are being addressed by the trip's activities. The assignment(s) that shows what the student has learned must also be approved by the principal and teacher in advance. Failure to submit the agreed upon assignment(s) will result in the days being coded as unexcused. No trip will be approved as an educational opportunity after it occurs. Family vacations are not, in most circumstances, educational opportunities.



Library/Media

Our library/media center is a vital part of our instructional program. Through regularly scheduled classes and open library book check-out times, students are encouraged to explore the many books and materials available to them. In order to maintain an adequate collection, all books or materials checked out from the library should be returned, in good condition, and on time. If books or materials are not returned, are lost, or damaged, a fee will be charged. This includes Chromebooks. We will hold various literary events throughout the year, including book fairs and

Read Across America activities. If you have questions about our library or literary events, please contact our Library/Media Specialist, Mrs. Pekarek.

Lost and Found Items

Items that are lost and found are turned into the school. Unlabeled and unclaimed property is turned over to a charitable agency in December and again in June. School personnel are not responsible for lost items. Items of unusual value or those that do not have any purpose at school are strongly discouraged. If your child has lost an item, please encourage him/her to report the loss to his/her teacher and ask the teacher for assistance in checking the lost/found inventory.

Lunch

Students receive free lunch every day, but may bring lunch from home if they wish to do so. If bringing a lunch from home, please avoid sodas, as they are not permitted at school. Nutritious, balanced foods are encouraged.



Medication

Medication may only be given at school with a written authorization of both the parent and a health care clinician licensed to prescribe medication. An *Authorization of Medication for Students in School* form is available in the front office and must be completed and signed by the health care clinician and parent before the medication (prescription or non-prescription) will be dispensed at school. Medication must be delivered in person by the parent or guardian (never sent with the student). All medications shall be administered by designated school

staff exactly as directed by the health care clinician. Prescription medications must be in a properly labeled container from the pharmacy and shall include the name of the student, the name of the drug, the frequency of administration, and the dosage. Non-prescription medication (anything over-the-counter) must be in the original container and will be administered according to the written instructions of the health care clinician. Whenever the medication is changed by the health care clinician, the parent is responsible for informing the school and submitting a new *Authorization of Medication for Students in School* form. All medications are to be kept secured in a location designated by the principal and school nurse.

Any unused medication should always be picked up by the parent or guardian at the end of the school year. Unclaimed medication will be properly disposed of within one week after the last day of the school year--medication is not stored at school over the summer.



Parent Concerns

It is always advantageous to the parent, the student, and the teacher for problems or issues to be discussed and solved by those who are directly involved. Issues are best resolved in a face-to-face discussion as opposed to a telephone call. **If there is an issue that needs to be discussed, please call the school to request a meeting with the teacher or staff member who is most directly involved.** If the matter cannot be resolved, the next step is to seek Dr. Conley's assistance. **Any concern or suggestion related to schoolwide matters or unresolved matters should be discussed with the principal or assistant principal.** An open dialogue is always welcome and we are here to help you with any concerns that you may have.

Parent Involvement

Parents and guardians are encouraged to be a part of educational decisions and events at school. There are a variety of ways to be involved:

- PTO-The Parent Teacher Organization holds meetings to plan events and fundraisers that help students and enhance their educational experience. PTO leaders also work closely with the school principal and advise her on matters that are important to parents. PTO also supports the staff in a variety of ways.
- Family Engagement Committee-The Family Engagement Committee is part of our Title I plan and this group also plans events at school. This committee is also responsible for evaluating how well we are keeping families engaged and informed.
- School Improvement Team-The School Improvement Team meets at least once per month and helps to make financial decisions and other important decisions related to school operations and the instructional program.

Parent Responsibilities

Parents are the child's first teacher and are important partners in the child's education. We ask that parents:

- Ensure your child is at school each day and on time.
- Allow your child to stay at school for the full instructional day.
- Stay connected through Class Dojo; Always update the teacher and front office staff if your phone number changes.
- Communicate with your child's teacher if you have questions or concerns.
- Read and sign materials sent home; Check the book bag nightly.
- Provide a consistent area and time for homework/nightly reading.
- Let the teacher, school counselor, or school social worker know if your child or family is experiencing a significant event or trauma that may impact your

child's learning or social/emotional well-being. We may be able to provide additional support at school or help with community resources.

Picture Days

School pictures are taken at various times throughout the school year. All pictures are PRE-PAY only. This year's picture schedule is as follows:

Fall Pictures: September 27th

Fall Make-Up Pictures: November 1st

Class Group Pictures: January 24th

Spring Pictures: March 18th

Positive Behavior Interventions & Support (PBIS)

School-wide behavior expectations are based on the PBIS framework which identifies and supports positive behavior expectations for all students. The school-wide behavior expectations that we have identified for all students to follow while in various locations of the building have been established to ensure a safe and positive learning environment for all. We believe that the majority of students will be successful in adhering to the behaviors that make up our "core" behavior plan. We will provide additional support for students who may struggle with following any of the behavior expectations. Our core behavior plan is based on our guidelines for success at school and in life: **P**actice respect, **A**lways be kind, **W**ork responsibly, and **S**tay safe (PAWS).

- The school-wide behavior expectations are posted throughout the school building.
- We will teach, model and reteach the behaviors we expect from all students.
- We will celebrate students' success for demonstrating positive behaviors in several ways: Individually, students can be awarded points that allow them to participate in mid-quarter and quarterly reward activities and/or "purchase"

items with their behavior points. As a class, students can earn class rewards/celebrations from their teachers.

Promotion and Retention

A variety of factors will be considered and carefully evaluated before promotion or retention decisions are made. Parents of students at risk of retention will receive written notification by the end of the second grading period and receive at least 2 updates on progress made thereafter. Teachers of students who do not make adequate progress by the end of the year will discuss the child's academic performance with a retention committee, composed of teachers and specialists. The committee will make a recommendation to the principal, but the principal makes the final decision about the child's placement after meeting with the parent. Per board policy, students who miss more than 12 days of school must also be considered for retention after reviewing the student's academic progress and other relevant factors. Please contact your child's teacher or Dr. Conley at any time with questions about this process.



Report Cards (And Interim Reports)

Report cards are issued at the end of each 9-week grading period. All report cards are sent home with your child. The report card envelope should be signed and returned by the parent or guardian the next school day. The last report card is sent home on the last day of school or mailed to your home address and does not need to be signed and returned. This year's report cards will be sent home on the following dates: October 19th January 11th March 14th May 22 (mailed)

Interim reports will be sent home at the midpoint of each grading period.

Rent the Rock

If you would like to paint the school spirit rock for a birthday or a celebration you will need to fill out a request form to reserve it and pay \$20 in cash in advance.

The rock is available for reservations year-round, including weekends, and holidays. All payments and reservations are final. No Refunds. Rental is on a "first come, first served" basis. Rental begins at 4:00 pm on the day before and ends at 4:00 pm the day of the rental. Payment must be given to the front office before painting. Reservations are final, rain or shine. The renter of the reservation must supply paint and be responsible for painting the rock. Gaston County Schools Code of Conduct rules apply: No bullying, profanity, offensive messages, or derogatory symbols are allowed. No political propaganda allowed. Lowell Elementary reserves the right to remove any inappropriate or offensive paintings.



School Health Program

A school nurse is assigned to our school and is present daily. She oversees the general health of our students. If for some reason you would like for the nurse to see your child, please call the school or send a note to that effect. If a student is injured or becomes ill at school, they may be referred to the nurse by school personnel if she is here at the time of the injury/illness. Students may not remain at school if they have a fever over 100 degrees, are vomiting, have diarrhea, have Covid-19 symptoms, have an undiagnosed or untreated rash, have crawling lice, or pose a health/contagion risk to others. In the event of an injury or illness, we will contact parents if the nature of the issue warrants immediate notification. **In this**

regard, it is essential that the school always has correct and updated phone numbers and contacts/family members who are allowed to pick up your child.

Snacks

Individual classroom teachers may or may not offer snacks during the day, depending on breakfast and lunch times. Your child's teacher will communicate information about snacks in the classroom if she deems them appropriate based on the classroom schedule. In most cases, snacks are not necessary due to all students being provided with 2 free meals each day. However, should your child's teacher offer snacktime, **please do not send your child to school with any type of soda or energy drink. These are not permitted at school. Candy from home or gum of any kind is also not permitted.** If you have questions about drinks or snacks in the classroom, please ask your child's teacher.



Tardiness & Tardy Policy

Students may begin entering the building at 7:10 a.m. each morning. **Our instructional day begins at 7:30 a.m. and it is expected that all students are in class by that time.** If a student is brought to school after this time, the parent must escort the student to the front door for check-in. Being late causes students to miss valuable instructional time and it also creates a disruption to the flow of the classroom as late students enter during the middle of instruction. Please make every effort to have your child at school on time each day for the benefit of your child and all students in the classroom. Tardies are excused with doctor's notes.

Title 1

Title 1 is a federally funded program designed to improve academic achievement in schools with a high percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunches. Lowell Elementary qualifies as a Title 1 school. The purpose of Title 1 funding is to help all students reach proficiency on each state's content and performance standards. Our Title 1 program includes a family engagement policy that outlines our commitment to include families in the educational process, to communicate with families about their child's academic progress, and to provide plenty of opportunities for families to participate in activities at school. Other components of our Title 1 program include supplemental staff to provide more support to students and teachers as they strive to achieve academic gains. The program also includes supplemental materials and resources for students. At the beginning of school, you will receive a comprehensive information packet on Title 1 and we will have an annual Title 1 meeting. We will also be asking you to complete a parent/family survey about our school. Results from the survey will be shared with all families by the end of October.



Visitors

All visitors to the school must enter through the school's main office entrance and receive a visitor's pass that must be worn and visible at all times. When visiting for lunch, visitors wait at the front entrance until directed to the cafeteria. Parents may only eat lunch with their own child; it is not permissible to pull other people's children to eat lunch with you and your child. Students must return to class with their fellow students when lunch is over and visitors sign out at the front entrance

after lunch.

When visiting to observe your child in his/her learning environment, we ask that you limit your observation to 20 minutes at a time, sit at a designated spot indicated by the teacher, refrain from engaging in conversation with your child or the teacher so that the normal routine is not interrupted, AND **turn off your cell phone**. *All classroom observations should be coordinated in advance with the teacher.*



Weekly Communications

Each Sunday evening, you will receive a Parent Link message with information about upcoming school events and other updates relevant to what is happening at school. This weekly call goes to the primary number we have on file for you in PowerSchool. If you do not receive the Sunday evening messages, please call the school so that we may put the appropriate phone number into PowerSchool so that you may begin to receive these messages. Teachers will also communicate weekly through Tuesday folders, but you should also check your child's bookbag nightly for additional information or materials. Teachers will also communicate as needed through Class Dojo. You are encouraged to reach out through Class Dojo or through the Tuesday communication folder at any time to stay in connection with your child's teacher(s). A joint partnership is so important!



Thank you for the opportunity of teaching your child and for letting us be a part of your child's educational journey. We look forward to a great year together!

Sincerely,

April Conley, Principal