

RANKIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

One Town. One School. One Goal. Success!

Principal, Donna Kelly

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Mt. Holly, NC 28120**

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2019-2020

Information Handbook

MISSION STATEMENT

Working with all stakeholders, we will motivate, nurture, and inspire children to meet their highest potential.

VISION

The vision of Rankin Elementary is to empower students to be lifelong learners.

BELIEFS

- Education is a shared responsibility. It is a partnership between the student, home, and school.
- All children can learn given appropriate time, instruction, and access to resources.
- Students must be assessed in a variety of ways to demonstrate their achievement.
- Students and staff will feel safe, cared for, and accepted in our learning.
- We will recognize and celebrate the individuality of every learner.

Welcome to the Rankin Elementary School Family!

We believe that by working with YOU, and others in our community, we can provide a safe and orderly learning environment conducive to both the academic achievement and the socialization of each individual student. We want to welcome each of you to a new school year that is full of the expectation that EVERY student rise to his/her highest level of capability. Our students will do so through guidance and effective instruction delivered by our teachers so that they may achieve and succeed in every manner possible. Our entire staff at Rankin is looking forward to working with your children this year. We will continue to provide an exciting educational program each day for your child at Rankin Elementary School.

The purpose of this handbook is to inform you of some routine schedules and procedures at Rankin Elementary School as well as the policies adopted by the Board of Education. We hope that you will find this helpful when you have a question about school policies and procedures. If further information is needed, please call or stop by the school. Our phone number is (704)836-9136 and office hours are from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm.

Warm regards,

Donna Kelly, Principal

Charlotte Friday, Assistant Principal

RANKIN IS TITLE I

Title I is a federally funded program designed to improve academic achievement in schools with a high percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunches. The purpose of Title I funding is to help schools move all students toward meeting each state's content and performance standards by improving the instructional program for the entire school. Rankin Elementary recognizes the critical role of parents in the education of their children and in the schools. You will learn more about our Parent Involvement Policy at our Annual Meeting in September. Each parent is encouraged to learn about Rankin's educational program, the educational goals and objectives of our school, and his or her own child's progress. We invite and encourage parents to participate in activities such as parent conferences, spirit nights, PTA, field day, and support our parent volunteer program. We value your input and encourage each of you to become part of the team that impacts your child's life.

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Computers and the internet can be powerful tools for learning, but only when used appropriately. The use of such resources is a privilege, not a right. Students are expected to conduct themselves appropriately while using the computer and internet. The acceptable use policy outlines what is considered appropriate and inappropriate use of the computer and internet. Students and parents will be asked to read and sign the student network and internet acceptable use form before students will be allowed to use school computers. This form will be sent home at the

beginning of the school year. Every student at Rankin will be assigned a device to use throughout the school year.

ATTENDANCE

It is the responsibility of the parents to see that their children attend school as provided under Article 20, Section 115C-166 of the **Public School Laws of North Carolina**. All children under sixteen are required to attend school. When a child has been absent, the parent must inform the teacher by **written notice** giving the reason for the absence. The attendance policy for Gaston County Schools limits the number of excused and/or unexcused absences to 12 per year. Any student having more will be reviewed by the school's promotion/retention committee and a recommendation made before that student can be promoted to the next grade. Parents will receive a letter from the school upon the child's third, fifth, and ninth absences. Any absences or tardies deemed excessive shall be reported to the school social worker and appropriate action taken. In order to be counted present, a student must attend at least one-half of the school day which is **11:30 am**.

The School Day:

- **7:30 Building Opens**
- **7:50 First Bell/Students report to homeroom**
- **8:00 Tardy Bell**
- **2:20 Car riders Kindergarten/First Grade**
- **2:25 – 2:30 All buses and 2nd-5th grade car Riders**

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

ARRIVAL: All students are expected to be in class by 8:00 A.M. Our building opens at 7:30. Students will report to the cafeteria area until being dismissed to class. Please **do not drop students off before 7:20**, as there will be no supervision until that time. Breakfast service begins at 7:20 and closes at 7:50; any student wishing to eat should arrive by 7:45. Students are released to the classrooms at 7:50 and the school day will begin promptly at 8 am.

Students Arriving in Cars:

Students should be dropped off at the front of the school where staff and Safety Patrol students are on duty. All students should enter the building at the front and proceed to the cafeteria. If it is necessary for you to walk your child into school during the first days (or special event/project days), we ask that you park in the parking lot (beside car lanes). **DO NOT DROP OFF YOUR CHILD IN AN UNSUPERVISED AREA.** The few seconds you may save is NOT worth the risk of injury to your child! **NO CAR TRAFFIC, drop off/pick up, permitted in Staff parking lot or Bus/Day Care Loop**

DISMISSAL: School staff will provide supervision at the front of the building until 2:45 pm. It is our expectation that all dismissed children will clear the campus by this time. Children will not be permitted to wait on campus unsupervised after 2:45 pm. Parents picking students up will need to file through the parking lot in two lanes. As the car line moves forward, a staff member will place your student in the car. Please remain in line and **for the safety of students and staff, do not cross from one lane to another.**

TARDIES/EARLY CHECKOUT

By Board Policy, students must be in the learning environment for 6 hours daily. In order to increase the learning time our students deserve, we ask that parents limit interruptions due to late arrivals and early checkouts.

Any student arriving at 8:00 or after is tardy and must be signed in by an adult in the office.

We ask that early dismissals be done before 1:50 pm. **Anyone signing a student out early is required to have a photo ID and be on the student's approved pick up list.**

BUS AND STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

- Students who live 1 ½ miles from the school are eligible to ride the bus.
- We presently operate three buses in the AM and 5 buses in the PM:
- All bus riders leave our campus by 2:30 p.m.

• To further assist the drivers, there are video cameras on each bus. Information on rules, regulations, and policies will be provided in a letter from the Superintendent on the first day of classes.

• Bus riders must turn in a signed form indicating the family understands the bus rules. These forms must be updated each school year. The GCS Transportation Department makes bus assignments. Questions related to bus stop locations, should be directed to **Charlotte Friday, Assistant Principal, at Rankin Elementary at 704-836-9136.**

****If a child must ride a bus other than the bus to which he/she is assigned, the child must bring a note from home requesting that change. However, if a bus is at capacity, this request may not be granted. The note must be signed by the assistant principal and presented to the bus driver.**

Bus Discipline: Our first and foremost concern with student transportation is **safety**. In order for students to be transported safely to and from school, **behavior must be appropriate at all times**. The rules listed below should be helpful as you discuss the importance of bus safety with your child.

BUS RULES

- Students are to be respectful & obey the driver at all times.
- Students are to stay seated with their backs against the seats at all times.
- Students are to use quiet voices and should only talk to the person in the seat with them.
- Students are not to touch other students or their belongings.
- Students are to wait at their bus stops in a safe & orderly manner.
- Students who must cross the road are to cross over in front of the bus after the driver has signaled the way is clear.
- Cell phones and other electronic devices should not be out while on the bus.

****If the rule violation is severe, a suspension may result with the first offense. Please remember that riding a bus is a privilege and not a right.** When students are suspended from the bus, it is the parent's responsibility to provide prompt transportation to and from school. Questions related to bus discipline should be directed to the **Assistant Principal, Charlotte Friday.**

CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATION OF BUS RULES

- For first referral, a phone call to parent and/or a letter of warning to be signed by a parent and returned to the assistant principal the next day.
- For second referral, student is given one day bus suspension.
- For third referral, student is given three days bus suspension.
- For fourth referral, student is given five days bus suspension.

For fifth referral, student is given a ten day bus suspension. A parent will also receive a letter noting the ten day suspension as the student's final warning. Any referral after the fifth event will result in the student losing his/her privilege of riding the bus for the remainder of the school year.

NOTE: WITH EACH SUSPENSION, THE PARENT IS NOTIFIED BY PHONE AND IN WRITING EXPLAINING THE REASON FOR SUSPENSION AND THE DATES OF THE SUSPENSION. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT PARENTS PROVIDE THE CORRECT PHONE NUMBERS AND ADDRESSES.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION CHANGES

If your child's mode of transportation is going to be different, please send a note. **ALL changes in transportation MUST be in writing.** Transportation changes will not be accepted over the phone as this is a measure to ensure student safety. Changes must be made in writing before 1:50 p.m.

SCHOOL NUTRITION

While in the cafeteria, students should always remember to:

- Only make one trip through the serving line
- Remain seated and use inside voices
- Use appropriate manners
- Clean up after themselves

The Gaston County Board of Education recently approved a district Wellness Policy which recommends: "To ensure safety and sanitation, all food served to students in the school must be obtained from a

commercial food service entity subject to local rules, regulations and inspections."

Homemade foods and snacks in the classrooms and cafeteria are not allowed except for personal meals consumed by individual students. Parents may pay for breakfast and/or lunch with cash, check, or online at k12paymentcenter.com

****There will be a \$10.00 service charge on all returned checks.**

Applications for free/reduced prices are available from the school. Parents are responsible for all charges while waiting for an application to be approved.

Any student without his/her money will be allowed to charge their meal as long as their account has not exceeded \$11.50 in previous charges. Parents will be notified any time their student charges a meal and we ask that the charge amount be settled as soon as possible.

In the event that a student does not have his/her money and their account has exceeded the charge limit, a complimentary, but alternative meal will be served. Every child will be fed every day.

Parents are welcome to have lunch with their student at any time, however please be aware that lunch times may vary throughout the year under certain circumstances.

We do ask if you bring fast food items, such as McDonald's, Subway, etc., that you eat with your child in the designated area.

Students who have special diet/nutrition needs must have a completed Diet Order form signed by a physician 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, or school nurse. 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. The rules are not new but are being strictly enforced. In years past, several schools in Gaston County received fines up to \$1300 for violations of these policies.

Breakfast (all grade levels)

Reduced price: \$0.00

Full price: \$1.20

Lunch

Full price: \$2.70 (PreK – 5)

Reduced price: \$0.40

Adult visitor: \$3.75

Adult holiday meal: \$4.00

The daily menu will be sent home with students each month, posted in the classroom, and announced during the morning announcements.

Key points for your understanding:

Snacks can be given, not sold, between breakfast and lunch periods.

1. Parents can bring in store-bought items for school designated celebrations, but NOT during meal times.
2. Students are not allowed to use Staff Vending Machines at any time during the school day.
3. Delivery of any fast food items during the lunch period will not be permitted.

COMMUNICATIONS

Effective communication is essential in any organization. Outlined below are examples of the many ways Rankin communicates with parents. Please make sure you are taking advantage of every opportunity.

- District to Family (TV Channel 21, www.gaston.k12.nc.us, Connect Ed Phone System)
- Teacher to Family (Thursday folders, phone calls, progress reports, conferences)
- Family to Teacher (Sign sent documents, conferences, calls)
- School to Family (Connect Ed messages, email, web page, Principal's newsletter)

COUNSELING

The counseling program is designed to help students in their social and emotional development process. The counselor works with individuals, small groups, and classes to help them develop an understanding of themselves and others.

It is also the counselor's responsibility to interpret test scores and confer with parents who wish to examine their child's cumulative folder. The counselor is available to any student, parent, or teacher who has a concern or problem. Ms. Chinatti Toure' is our guidance counselor. She may be contacted at (704)836-9136.

CUSTODY

- Please send a copy of any 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.

DENTAL SCREENING

As a part of our regular school preventative dental health program, a Public Health Dental Hygienist will conduct dental screenings for all Pre-K, Kindergarten, and fifth grade students. A follow up letter will be sent home with your child's results and provide important information to help you access dental services for your child.

DISCIPLINE/BEHAVIOR SYSTEM

Rankin 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.

DRESS CODE – GASTON COUNTY SCHOOLS POLICY

Students are to dress appropriately for school. In general, a student's dress may not be disruptive to the instructional process. At Rankin Elementary, 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 be disruptive

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.
- Boys or girls may not wear hats 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 hem.

Please Note:

- 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.
- The principal may require a student to change his/her dress or appearance for failure to comply with the dress code.
- 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.

EMERGENCY /INCLEMENT WEATHER DISMISSAL

The need for sending students home before the scheduled time cannot always be determined in advance. Parents are encouraged to provide written instructions for emergency dismissal to teachers. The school cannot contact each parent by telephone during a school wide early/emergency dismissal.

In the event of bad weather, Channel 21 will post any closings immediately upon notification from our Central Office. Parents can also get this information from local TV and radio stations, the GCS website, and the GCS ConnectEd System. We ask that parents do not call the school for this information, as we are made aware from the same resources.

INSURANCE PLANS (OPTIONAL)

School accident insurance is provided for those who choose to purchase a policy. Information is in the school office.

IMMUNIZATIONS/BIRTH CERTIFICATE

All children are required by law to be fully immunized before they enter the public schools. Although this is a requirement, each year we find children at all grade levels that have not been fully immunized. When this is the case, the child is sent home until the parent satisfies the law requirements.

MEDICINE & ILLNESS AT SCHOOL

Medications will be given at school only if parents have provided the completed Medical Authorization Form containing orders and a physician's signature.

HOMEWORK

Work done in the home is an opportunity to practice and extend that, which has been taught or introduced in school. The amount/kind of homework is determined by the grade level of the student 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 little enough for the students to proudly complete.

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

The Rankin Elementary PTA is an active part of the school community. It facilitates a sense of community between the parents and teachers with concern for the students as the focus. Volunteer opportunities abound and we encourage all parents to get involved.

PERSONAL ITEMS

Students should not bring toys, games, radios, cameras or other personal items to school. Such belongings can be lost or broken at school. The only time students may bring something is when the teacher instructs them to do so.

CELL PHONES

- Must be turned off and remain in book bags. If this policy is not followed, teachers or bus drivers will take the phone from the student and a parent will be required to come to the school to pick it up.

SAFETY DRILLS

- All students and adults at Rankin Elementary will practice safety drills. This includes fire, tornado, and lockdown drills.
- The use of metal detection will be done several times a month during the school year for the safety of all students.
- Evacuation plans are posted in every classroom.

SMOKE/DRUG FREE ENVIRONMENT:

- No tobacco products, including a vape, may be used by any person while on the campus including while in your personal vehicle.
- No illegal drug use will be tolerated.

TELEPHONE

- Students will not be allowed to receive telephone calls except in emergency cases.
- Any student is allowed to make telephone calls if the reason is justified and the student has the teacher's permission.
- **Parents are asked not to routinely call school requesting that we give your child a message.** Of course, we will be glad to assist in unforeseen circumstances.

VISITORS/VOLUNTEERS/MENTORS

Visitors:

- In accordance with school policy, all persons arriving on campus must report to the school office. Each visitor will sign in and receive a visitor's badge.
- **All visitors/volunteers in the instructional area must have an approved pass.**
- Unauthorized visitors will be asked to immediately leave the campus or face the penalty of trespassing.
- All visitors are required to show photo ID and are subject to random metal detection.

Volunteers/Mentors:

- Gaston County Schools requires anyone who desires to serve as a mentor or volunteer to complete an application process that includes a criminal background check. Each volunteer must also be approved by the principal.
- We have a tremendous need for parent volunteers and encourage you to complete this process.

WEEKLY FOLDERS

Weekly "Thursday" Folders will be a major means of communicating. Folders will be sent home each Thursday. Please be sure to check weekly for important announcements and information. You will sign the folder on the specified line on the front cover and return the empty folder to school the following day.

Thank you for partnering with us to make this our best school year!