

Hickory Flat Elementary

2022-2023

Parent Guide



Contacting Hickory Flat Elementary

School Phone number: (770)898-0107

School Fax Number: (770)898-0114

School Address: 841 Brannan Road, McDonough, GA 30253

School Website: www.henry.k12.ga.us/hfe

For general information, calendars, lunch menus, survey links, links to educational websites, teacher pages and much more

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/HickoryFlatElementary>

- For quick, immediate information shared from HFE staff

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/hfemiway>

- For quick, immediate information shared from HFE staff

Campus Messenger:

- For weekly information and/or important announcements via phone, text, or email
- Enrolled students and families are automatically connected to receive these messages and cannot opt out

Infinite Campus:

- For tracking your child's academic progress and attendance
- Website and App versions (details available via school/district website)

School Calendar for 2022 - 2023

Important Dates:

- September 5: School Closed / Labor Day
- September 19 - 23: No School / Fall Break
- October 14: Early Release Day
- November 8: No School for Students / Teacher Workday
- November 21 - 25: No School / Thanksgiving Break
- December 21: Early Release Day
- December 22 - January 6: No School for Students / Winter Break
- February 20 - 24: No School / Mid-Winter Break
- March 10: Early Release Day
- April 3 - 7: No School / Spring Break
- May 26: Last Day of School / Early Release Day

Attendance / Tardies / Check Outs

Frequent absences, tardies, and/or checkouts from school are detrimental to the academic success of individual students and classmates. Students should arrive to school on time and remain in school for the complete school day. Regular and punctual attendance is mandated by the Henry County Board of Education and the State Board of Education. Attendance also directly affects our school's CCRPI score.

If your child is absent from school he/she must bring a written note or a medical doctor's excuse the first day he/she returns to school for the absence to be excused. Calling the school, sending a DOJO message, or sending an email to Administration to report your child's absence does NOT excuse the absence. Please review the list of excused absences in the HCS Student Handbook.

We will only accept five (5) handwritten notes from home as excused absences for the entire year. After five (5) handwritten notes or a total of 10 days absent (excused or unexcused) a medical doctor's excuse will be required to excuse any further absence. In addition, if a student is absent due to an illness resulting in three or more consecutive days absent, a medical doctor's note will be required to excuse the absence.

All students who arrive after 7:35 are considered tardy and MUST be checked-in by an adult. All check-ins after 7:35 a.m. will be unexcused unless the reason meets the criteria for an excused absence in the handbook.

Attendance Protocol

- Upon three cumulative unexcused absences, parents will be notified by letter
- Upon five cumulative unexcused absences, parents will be notified by letter
- Upon eight cumulative unexcused absences, parents will be required to attend a truancy meeting with the principal or designee
- Subsequent unexcused absences will be reported to the social worker and BOE for review
- Parents of students with excessive absences, tardies, or checkouts may be required to attend a meeting to set up an attendance contract with the counselor, social worker, and/or administrator.

Check Outs

All checkouts will be unexcused unless the reason meets the criteria for an excused absence in the handbook. Parents may be asked to provide additional information, such as medical documentation, about tardies and early checkouts.

Students may be checked out through the front office until 1:45. Anyone checking out a child MUST present identification and be listed on the Infinite Campus emergency contacts. NO EXCEPTIONS.

A child leaving and returning to school the same day must be checked-in by an adult. A student must be present for half of a school day to be counted as present for the day. Half of the school day hours are 7:35 -11:05 or 11:20 – 2:15.

Arrival / Dismissal & Transportation Information

We understand that morning traffic can be challenging to say the least. Although it can be frustrating at times, our number one priority is ensuring the safety of our students and staff. In an effort to move traffic along as smoothly and safely as possible, please adhere to the following guidelines:

Morning drop-off

- Students may be dropped off at school beginning at 7:10.
- All students must be dropped off in the front of the school building along the sidewalk.
- If your child cannot unlatch his/her seatbelt and exit the vehicle independently, you need to park in a parking space and assist your child across at the crosswalk. The driver should never park and exit the vehicle in the drop-off line.
- Vehicles must pull forward as far as possible to allow as many students as possible to exit their vehicle. All students and adults are required to enter through the designated doors. All exterior doors will remain locked during car rider drop off and throughout the day. Staff will be on duty in the car rider line to direct vehicles and students from 7:10 – 7:35.
- The drop off line is one lane. Please do not attempt to pass those in front of you who may be slower. This endangers the safety of students and staff members.
- If at all possible, please position students so they exit on the passenger's side of the vehicle for safety reasons.
- Please do not hold up the drop off line to sign papers, write notes, find ice cream money, etc. If this occurs, simply pull around to a parking space to take care of these items then walk your child across at the crosswalk or reenter the drop off line.
- Students who arrive after 7:35 must be checked-in by an adult in the front office.

Afternoon pick-up

- Vehicles must form a single line on the right side of the drive.
- ALL students must be picked up in a vehicle in the car rider line. No walk-up pick-up.
- Car tags must be clearly visible in the front windshield of the vehicle.
- Students will have car-rider tags attached to their backpack with their car-rider number.
- Anyone picking up a student through the line MUST have a car tag. Anyone without a car tag will be required to park, go into the office, show proper identification and be on the approved pick up list to retrieve a student. **NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE.**
- A staff member will enter numbers on an iPad. Your student will see the displayed number and will meet you at the designated colored-cone.
- Once you pull up to the front doors, your child will be escorted to the car by a staff member who will match their car-tag number with your displayed car-tag number.
- Do not get out of the car. When vehicles are loaded, you'll be directed to pull away from the loading station. DO NOT drive off until directed to do so.
- All students must be picked up no later than 2:40.

Transportation Changes:

All changes in transportation for your child **MUST BE MADE IN WRITING** by the enrolling parent. For the safety of our students, no changes in transportation requested through phone calls or emails will be accepted. If no prior written notification is received, your child will follow his/her regular means of transportation.

Behavior Expectations

The Hickory Flat community, including staff, students, parents and families, will work as a team to provide a positive and safe learning environment. We are a proud Positive Behavior Intervention School (PBIS) and we strive to cultivate students who are ready for learning by displaying positive choices that reflect Respectful, Responsible, and Safe Behavior.

Discipline

From time to time, students may exhibit behavior that does not adhere to our Wildcat Way principles, established classroom expectations, or is an infraction of the Henry County Schools behavior policies. When such behavior is displayed, teachers have the authority to implement classroom consequences. If the behavior is egregious enough to warrant an office referral, staff will submit an office referral to be investigated by an administrator. An administrator will fully investigate the infraction and make contact with the involved parties' parent or guardian. Please refer to the Henry County Schools Code of Conduct for specific details about infractions and possible disciplinary actions.

Administrators will not release information regarding another student, including names or any disciplinary action taken. Additionally, HFE Administrators will not connect families in an attempt to resolve disputes between their students.

Bullying

Bullying is defined as behavior that intends to cause harm, fear, or humiliation. It is usually repeated over time and involves an unequal balance of power and strength. Oftentimes, administrators and teachers are unaware of bullying situations as students are keenly aware that such behavior is not tolerated therefore they will not exhibit such behaviors in the presence of adults. If your child reports he or she is being bullied or witnesses another child being bullied, please do not hesitate to contact an administrator. All reports will be fully investigated and consequences will take place as deemed appropriate.

Clinic and Medication

HFE offers clinic services for students to address minor injuries and illnesses. A full-time clinic aide is available every day from 7:35 – 2:15. Parents will be contacted by phone or email if your child visits the clinic. Children who exhibit the following illnesses will be sent home:

- Fever of 100.0 or greater (Must be fever free for 24 hours without medication before returning.)
- Vomiting or diarrhea (Must be vomit or diarrhea free for 24 hours before returning to school.)
- Drainage from wound, rash, eyes, or nose.
- Head lice (Your child must be cleared by the school clinic to return to class.)
- Unexplained rash

If your child goes home sick, he/she must not return to school for a full 24 hours. Upon return, please send in a written note for the excuse. The school clinic aide or principal may request a “Release to Return to School” from your child’s doctor before returning to school.

Parents will be contacted by phone if their child becomes ill and needs to go home. If you are unable to pick up your child within the hour, parents need to arrange pick up with an alternate contact from the emergency card.

Daily Medication:

Many students require medication on a daily basis. School personnel may not administer any medication, prescription or over the counter, to children without parental consent. Parents or legal guardians must complete and sign a Medication Authorization form before medication can be administered. Medication must be brought to the school clinic by the parent with the appropriate paperwork. All medication **MUST** be in the original container with unexpired dates and labels. **DO NOT SEND ANY MEDICATION TO SCHOOL WITH YOUR CHILD.** This violates district policy.

Students with a serious medical condition (i.e., diabetes, asthma, seizures, etc.) may be granted permission to carry life-saving medication on his or her person. Such permission will only be granted in response to a written Health Care Plan from your child’s physician. If this is a need for your child, please contact our clinic-aide or an administrator immediately.

Club Opportunities for Students

Students have opportunities to participate in various activities and clubs that take place before, during, or after school. Information regarding clubs will be sent home with students and available on our website as it becomes available. Our list of clubs is still growing! Current clubs include:

- Art Club
- Beta Club
- Music Club
- Gardening Club
- Reading Bowl
- Safety Patrol

Dress Code

Our tradition of student uniforms will continue on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. The uniform options consist of collared shirts that are white, navy blue, light blue, or black with khaki, black, or navy shorts, pants, or skirts. All clothing should follow the general guidelines for students. Parents or guardians of any students who wear any clothing that, in the judgment of the school's administration, is deemed disruptive to the learning environment, will be contacted to bring a change of clothing. Students will remain in the office until clothing is brought. Shoes must be worn at all times.

We understand that determining the appropriateness of dress can be challenging. The following are general guidelines for appropriateness:

- Jeans with tears or rips above the knee are prohibited.
- Undergarments of any type should never be visible. (i.e., straps, underwear, etc.)
- Tank top straps should be three fingers wide.
- Hats are prohibited other than on designated hat days.
- Leggings may be worn with a long shirt that covers the rear.
- Shorts may be worn if they are of appropriate length. "Hands by your side" gauge is a good rule of thumb. If your child's hand touches skin, the shorts, dress or skirt is too short.
- It is always a good idea for girls to wear shorts under skirts or dresses.
- If you question if something is appropriate, have your child change clothes. It is easier to have your child change than to bring clothing later.

Please be assured that we are always vigilant to be fair-minded to students of all genders, heights, weights, and body types. We know clothing fits differently on different children. We further acknowledge that students in grade K-2 may be given more leniency than students in 3-5.

Grading & Report Cards

Parents may access their child's progress at any time utilizing the Infinite Campus parent portal. (You may contact the school for assistance and directions.) Teachers are expected to enter grades weekly in an effort to keep parents as informed as possible. Report cards will be printed and sent home each 9 weeks.

Inclement Weather

There may be a rare emergency when it is necessary for us to close school once the school day is underway. Such a decision is always based on the safety of our children balanced with the uncertainties of weather forecasting. In the event of a school closing, notification will be provided through:

- Infinite Campus – Campus Messenger
- Website – Henry County Schools and Hickory Flat Elementary
- Social Media – Hickory Flat Facebook
- News Media – WSB-TV

In preparation for such event, please ensure you do the following:

- Update contact preferences in Infinite Campus through the Parent Portal.

Please do not call the school to inquire about school closings. Refer to the above mentioned communication outlets for information.

School Celebration Guidelines

Birthdays

Birthdays are a special day for students and an important time to be recognized. In years past it was customary for parents to bring a special snack for their child's class in recognition of this occasion. However, because of federal nutrition guidelines, the rise of severe food allergies to dyes, eggs, nuts, gluten, etc., students with dietary restrictions because of health conditions such as diabetes, celiac disease, etc., and students with religious restrictions, Hickory Flat Elementary will no longer allow parents to bring food for students other than their own child. This includes pizza, cupcakes, cookies, doughnuts or any other food items. Food items sent or brought in for student consumption for birthday celebrations will be sent back home with your child. We feel this policy is in the best interest of *all* our children so that no child is excluded or left out. We know parents might want to recognize their child's birthday at school therefore, they may opt to purchase ice cream for their child's class (as there are options for students with allergies) or they may send in a small "goodie" bag (without candy or snacks) for all students in the class. The teacher will distribute the items at a time they deem most appropriate (parents will not be present for distribution of treat bags). Bags with candy or snacks will be returned with the student.

Party Invitations

Invitations for personal parties that take place outside of school may NOT be distributed at school by students or adults.

School Parties and Activities

Since parties take away from instructional time, no more than two parties are permitted during the school year. There can be no surprise or planned parties for staff members or students. In an effort to provide a safe and healthy environment for all students, school parties and activities will focus on activities (games or crafts) and limit refreshments and/or treats. Room parents are expected to consult with the classroom teacher to determine if any students have food allergies or dietary restrictions prior to organizing the two class parties.

Field Trips

The purpose of a class field trip is to extend the curriculum beyond the classroom. Field trips are learning activities and are never planned solely for entertainment and fun. (Although a good field trip is both educational and fun!) Requests will be sent home for donations to offset the expense of the field trip. Students who cannot pay the suggested donation will not be discriminated against for inability to pay. However, if the necessary amount of funds are not collected, the field trip may be canceled. If you choose for your child not to participate in the field trip, he or she will still be required to attend school. It is not an excused absence. The school reserves the right to cancel any field trip.

Standards for behavior on field trips are the same as school behavior expectations. Students who are not making good behavior choices in school will not be allowed to participate in a field trip. If they are not making good decisions at school, we cannot risk he or she making poor decisions outside of the school walls. If a student has two office referrals within 45 school days of a planned field trip, then the student will not be allowed to participate in the field trip. Administration may withdraw the privilege of a field trip from a student based on his/her behavior even if the student has not had two office referrals.

When a parent volunteers to be a chaperone on a field trip, he/she agrees to assume the responsibility of supervising a small group of students, depending on the grade level. Chaperones

are very important to the safety of our children. Since a chaperone must be able to devote all his/her attention to our students, we require that younger siblings NOT be taken on field trips.

Personal Technology / Chromebooks

All students, grades K-5 will receive a new Chromebook in August. As a general rule, students in Grades K - 2 will not bring their devices home nightly. Teachers will communicate to families when those devices will need to come home. Students are responsible for keeping up with both device and charger. If a Chromebook is lost, stolen or damaged, the student will be required to pay for it. Chromebooks are issued to students for the purpose of supporting their educational needs. Misuse will result in revocation of the Chromebook.

Parents may choose to allow their child to bring a cellphone to school. However, the school assumes no liability if the device is lost, damaged or stolen. Cellphones must be kept in the child's bookbag. Sending or receiving texts or phone calls during the school day is prohibited. If a parent needs to get a message to his/her child, they must contact the front office. The use of social media is also prohibited during the school day (on both personal device and school issued devices). Students will not be allowed to return to the classroom to retrieve his/her forgotten cell phone after school hours. Misuse of a personal cellphone at school will result in confiscation of the phone and an office referral. The child's parent will need to retrieve the phone from an administrator or designee.

Students may only use school issued devices with teacher permission for academic purposes. Devices are not intended for game playing or emailing friends. Devices should ONLY be used in the classroom, not in the cafeteria, hallway, restroom, gym or playground. Violations of this policy will result in an office referral.

Snacks and drinks in the classroom

Drinks containing dye, sugar, or sugar substitute are prohibited in the classroom. Students are welcome to bring water bottles that contain plain water to be consumed in the classroom. Water dries easily if spilled. Other drinks cause stains and/or a sticky mess that causes a disruption to clean up.

Teachers may allow students to bring snacks into the classroom. Students are encouraged to bring snacks that are healthy and create little mess such as grapes, banana, pretzels, dry cereal, etc. Items that are juicy (watermelon, peaches, etc) or create a mess (Cheetos, Takis, etc.) are discouraged. Again, these items create a mess that causes a disruption to clean up.

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

All parents and guardians are encouraged to join our Parent-Teacher Organization. There is no cost for annual membership. Please see parent folders during the week of August 8 - 12 for nomination forms as we will hold our annual Officer Election at the first meeting in August.

Parent Volunteers

All volunteers working with or around students must have a completed background check with state-issued identification. Please see Ms. Middlebrook in our Family Resource Center for details on how to complete that important step prior to serving at Hickory Flat.

Visitors

Parents are encouraged to visit the school for conferences and school activities. For the protection of our children and the integrity of the instructional program, all parents and visitors must check in at the school office for volunteer work. Only visitors listed in Infinite Campus will be permitted access to your child for lunch. Visitors must wear a visitor's badge while at the school. Identification will always be checked even if you are a frequent visitor. Once permitted to enter through ID check, adults must only report to the location designated for the visit. (i.e. cafeteria for lunch, media center for bookfair, etc.) Adults may NOT roam the school, use student restrooms, or visit the classroom without permission from administration.

The following procedures are delineated to assure fair and equitable access to our school:

- All classroom observations must be pre-arranged through administration.
- Observations are limited to two adult observers at a time.
- Younger siblings are not allowed during an observation.
- Observations must be scheduled through an administrator at least one day in advance and are subject to the classroom schedules.
- Observers must respect the confidentiality of all students within the classroom setting; therefore, no pictures, no video, or personally identifiable information may be taken or shared.
- A staff member may be assigned to accompany the observer during the visit.
- Observations are limited to twenty minutes and should not occur more than two times per month.
- Visitors may not bring items for students other than their own (i.e. lunch visitors may choose to bring food for their child only)