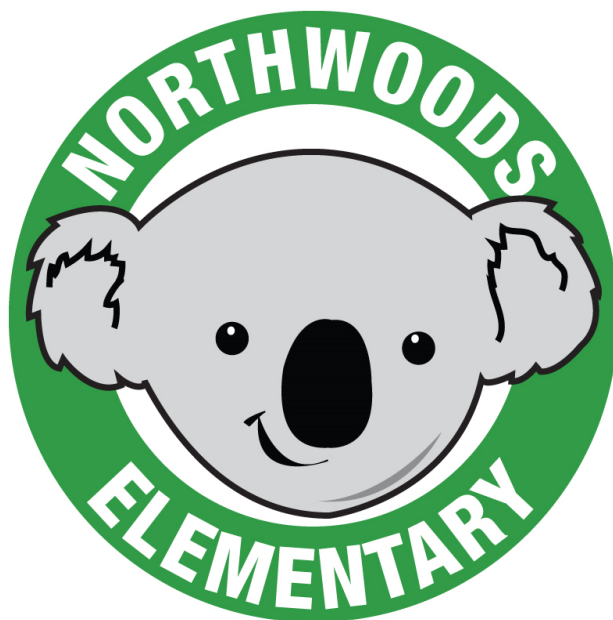




PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

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Important Phone Numbers

NAME	POSITION	PHONE NUMBER
JOE NIXON	Principal	919-460-3491
KATE FEDICH	Assistant Principal	919-460-3491
CRYSTAL HARTZELL	Data Manager	919-460-3491 ext. 26930
DANIELLE DOWNING	Cafeteria Manager	919-460-3491 ext. 26939
JACKIE KACICH	School Nurse	919-460-3491
Audrey Pak	Counselor	919-460-3491 26944
BRENNAN MALY	Counselor	919-460-3491 ext. 26941

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

Arrival	School hours are 9:15 AM to 3:45 PM. Our daily arrival period begins at 8:45 AM and concludes at 9:15 AM. Any child arriving after 9:15 AM will be marked as tardy and should be signed in at the front office by a parent/guardian. Students arriving after 12:30 PM will be marked absent for the entire school day.
Carpool	Safety is our primary focus during carpool times. Staff members are on duty each morning and afternoon to monitor student safety during arrival and dismissal. We need parents' continued support to keep students safe by adhering to the following practices: <u>Morning:</u> • When entering the parking lot from Chapel Hill Road, please keep the center-left incoming lane free for buses and vans to enter. Once two lanes open up to the right, we ask that you use both lanes. The buses and vans should be able to get through by using the very center lane. Once you reach the curve in the lanes approaching the school at the end of the parking lot, merge back into one lane. • Please watch your speed in the parking lots. • Students arriving early are to remain in the car with parents until 8:45 AM, as teachers are not available to supervise until that time. • Please refrain from cell phone use while in the carpool line. <u>Afternoon:</u> • Parents should pick up their children between 3:45 PM and 4:00 PM. • Parents should drive to one of the safety patrol students or staff members to open car doors. • Car riders will be released to parents in the front carpool line only. Children will not be released from other exits. • Students are prohibited from walking between cars due to safety precautions. • Parents are not to park their cars and go into the building to check out students in order to avoid the car-pool lane. • Parking in the carpool lane during loading/unloading periods is prohibited. • Be sure to display your child's number in your car window as you pull into the carpool lane. Students will be directed to the appropriate place for pick up.
Bus Dismissal	School dismisses at 3:45 PM, and buses depart campus between 3:45 PM and 4:15 PM. The Wake County School System Transportation Department assigns students to buses and bus stops. To change a bus stop, request transportation or if you need assistance, go to wcpss.net/transportation website and click on "Questions or Concerns." All requests for assistance need to be done electronically. Parents can also enroll for bus alerts via the Here Comes the Bus app. To enroll, you will need your child's student ID number and the county code, which is 67500.

	Students can only ride their assigned buses. Changes cannot be made to accommodate situations such as visits to friends, parties, group project work, etc. Bus transportation is a privilege extended to students who are assigned to Northwoods. Students should behave in a manner consistent with the rules and regulations of Wake County Public Schools. The school bus is an extension of the school day; therefore, all school rules and regulations apply. Failure to comply with these rules subjects violators to denial of transportation privileges and/or suspension and expulsion, depending on the severity of the violation. Call or email the assistant principal with concerns about bus discipline. We have clearly defined rules and expectations that lead to a safe and positive environment for all bus passengers. Students are expected to: • be on time • wait at their assigned stops • get on and off at designated stops • remain seated • refrain from throwing objects and eating/drinking • keep aisles clear of personal belongings • use polite language • respect the property of others • respect the bus driver
Walkers	Students should enter the building through the front doors in the morning. Parents meeting walkers should wait outside the side door of the building until the 3:45 PM dismissal bell. All K-2 student walkers must be escorted home by a parent or older sibling.
Transportation Changes	The Northwoods staff is obligated to have each child depart from school by his/her regular means of transportation. Parents are required to inform the school either in writing or by phone prior to 2:15 pm when there is any change in a child's usual routine. Without a note or call, students will be sent home via their normal transportation mode. By district policy, students may not ride an alternate bus or depart at an alternate stop.

ATTENDANCE

Regular school attendance is crucial for ensuring that all students achieve the expected learning gains throughout the year. **Parents have a responsibility to ensure their child(ren) attend school daily.** Student attendance is monitored daily by a variety of school employees, including teachers, administration, counselors, and social workers. Absences may be excused for the following reasons

- death in the family;
- medical or dental appointment with documentation;
- court when the child is under a subpoena;
- religious observance;
- participation in a valid educational opportunity (prior approval is needed);
- catastrophic event or natural disaster.

Absences not classified above will be considered unexcused, **even with a note from a parent.**

Reporting Absences

With the introduction of Infinite Campus, our new student information system, teachers no longer have the ability to mark student absences as excused or unexcused. As such, effective July 1, 2025, all student absences must be reported by a parent or guardian to the front office via an electronic [Absence Reporting Form](#). Our data manager will review submissions and ensure absences are correctly coded in the system.

Tardies

Promptness to school is very important. All students arriving to class after 9:15 AM are considered tardy and must report to the office with their parents before going to the classroom. Parents will be asked to complete an electronic student check-in form. Students are considered absent if they arrive at school after 12:30 p.m. or leave before this time.

Early Check Out

Please bring a photo ID when you arrive to check your child out of school. For the safety of all our students, our office staff will ask to see an ID before releasing a child to anyone. To be considered present at school, students must be in attendance at least one-half of the school day (3 hours and 15 minutes). Students who arrive after 12:30 PM or leave before 12:30 PM are considered absent for the entire day.

Requests for student check-out after 3:15 PM will not be accepted. Parents will be redirected to the carpool line.

BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Before School Program

Before-school care will be provided on-site by Northwoods Staff. Hours of operation are 7:00 AM-8:45 AM on instructional days for students. Families wishing to participate must complete a before-school care application and pay

	the application fee. Applications will be available during the Meet the Teacher event in August. Before-school care is not available on teacher workdays, holidays, or inclement weather days. Effective July 1, 2025 all families participating in the Before-School program will be charged a flat monthly fee of \$94.65 per child, regardless of how many days the child attends. This change is necessitated due to increased operating costs associated with staff pay and program materials. This change will enable us to continue offering this valuable service to our community in an income-neutral and self-sustaining manner.
After School (YMCA)	After-school care will be provided on-site by the Taylor Family YMCA. All families wishing to participate in after-school care must register online at the Taylor Family YMCA website. Hours of operation are 3:45 PM – 6:00 PM.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES/INVITATIONS

Birthday Parties—**Birthday parties are not permitted at school. Due to the potential of allergies, balloons and flowers are also prohibited and will not be accepted.** Additionally, students and teachers are not permitted to pass out invitations to birthday parties at school. Teachers may not share parent contact information with families seeking to distribute party invitations.

Birthday Treats— Birthday treats are permitted at school, provided that parents coordinate with the classroom teacher prior to dropping off food items. **Only store-bought food items are permitted in classrooms. Homemade treats will not be accepted.** Additionally, we encourage parents to exercise sensitivity to students with dietary restrictions (nut allergies, gluten allergies, dairy allergies, egg allergies, etc.) When possible, parents should provide alternate food items that are allergy-friendly. Furthermore, it is expected that sufficient treats will be provided so that all children in the classroom can participate if they choose. Please remember that there are also many wonderful alternatives for recognizing birthdays. Contact your child's teacher for ideas, or view [this sample list](#).

BREAKFAST, LUNCH, & SNACK

Breakfast	Breakfast options will be available to students during the morning arrival period (8:45 – 9:15 AM). We operate a “grab-n-go” style breakfast, which means that students will pick up a bagged breakfast from the cafeteria and will eat their breakfast in their assigned classroom. Doing so ensures that students are present and ready to begin their instructional day on time with the rest of their peers.
Lunch	Students will also have a daily 30-minute lunch period. During this time, students will eat in the cafeteria at assigned tables with their peers. Occasionally, students may eat in their classrooms or outside with their teacher. Please alert the school if your child has any special dietary needs or allergies that prevent them from eating

	certain foods (peanuts, eggs, meat, etc.). Sodas are not permitted. Please also refrain from bringing or sending "fast food" into the cafeteria. After the first 30 days of the school year, parents are welcome to join their children for lunch. As with all parent visits, please sign in at the office and wear a "Visitor" badge prior to going into the cafeteria. Fast food is not permitted during parent visits. Due to health/safety regulations, we are not permitted to microwave student meals, nor can we store food items for students in our refrigerators. Parents are encouraged to send students with food that does not require special preparation in containers that can be easily opened without assistance from adults.
Snack	All classroom teachers will provide a daily snack time for their students. Families are encouraged to send a healthy snack each day. The school is not responsible for providing snacks to students who do not have one.
2025-26 School Meal Prices	Meal prices can be found at https://www.wcpss.net/Page/1848
Free & Reduced Meals	To apply for free or reduced-price meals, you can do so online by visiting www2.MySchoolApps.com/Application . Paper applications will be mailed to each student's residence in August and will also be available at the school.

CANDY & GUM

Candy may be used as an occasional treat, but will not be used as a reward or motivation to learn. Chewing gum is only permitted for students with specific accommodations on a formal IEP or 504 Plan.

DEVICES

Student Cellphones & Smart Watches

On June 3, 2025, the Wake County Board of Education approved a new policy governing the use of personal wireless communication devices by students, including cell phones and smartwatches. **Under the new policy, all personal student devices (cell phones and smartwatches) must be silenced and stored in backpacks between morning arrival and afternoon dismissal bells, as well as during all instructional time.**

In some instances, exceptions may be made to this policy. Please contact the school administration for more details regarding exceptions.

Use on School Buses:

Students may use devices, but the volume must be low, and headphones must be used. Drivers can limit device use if safety is a concern.

If a student uses a device when they shouldn't:

- They will get a verbal warning first.
- If the behavior continues, the device may be taken away temporarily.
- Parents will be contacted if it becomes a pattern.

Important Notes:

- Students are responsible for keeping their own devices safe.
- The school system is not responsible for lost or stolen devices.
- Any student device may be searched if there is a reasonable suspicion that a rule is being broken.
- No permission is required for a student to use a personal device to call 911.

Student Chromebooks

All WCPSS students will be issued a Chromebook. Students in Kindergarten, 1st Grade, and 2nd Grade will be issued a device that stays at school permanently. Students in grades 3-5 are permitted to transport their devices to and from school, but may also choose to keep them at school. Students who take their devices home are expected to bring their devices to school each day, fully charged. Access to plugs is limited in the classroom, and we cannot guarantee that your child will be able to charge his/her device at school.

In the event that a student loses or damages their Chromebook charger, their family is responsible for replacing it. Replacement chargers are no longer available at the school or through the district.

Parents and students should review the following documents to ensure they understand the responsibilities and terms/conditions of using a district-owned student device:

	• Student Device Program Agreement • Acuerdo del Programa de Dispositivos Estudiantiles • Student Device Terms and Conditions • Términos y Condiciones para el Uso de Dispositivos Estudiantiles • Student Device Care and Use Guidelines • Pautas para el Uso y Cuidado de Dispositivos Estudiantiles de WCPSS
Toys & Misc Electronic Devices	Students should not bring toys of any kind to school. Trading cards are considered toys. School personnel will not assume responsibility for the safety of toys or electronic devices brought to school (including personal devices used for instructional purposes). Electronic devices (other than district Chromebooks), such as students' gaming systems, MP3 players, etc., are not permitted at school. If a parent feels his/her child must have a cell phone, it must be turned off and kept in the student's backpack during the school day. Items brought to school in violation of this policy will be kept in the front office until a parent comes to school to get the items. In addition, fidgets (spinners, putty, etc.) should truly be used intentionally and not as toys. Please make your best judgment when allowing these items in the classroom. GPS/Listening Devices that enable a parent to remotely track or listen in on the classroom are not permitted in the Wake County Public School System. School administration reserves the right to remove GPS/Listening Devices from the classroom. Such devices will be stored in the front office until they can be picked up by the parent.

DRESS CODE

To help keep our students focused on learning without distractions, we expect each one to dress appropriately. The WCPSS [Student Dress Code](#) prohibits disruptive, provocative, revealing, profane, vulgar, offensive, obscene, or unsafe clothing or bodily appearances. Here are some examples.

Don't wear:

- exposed undergarments
- see-through or excessively short, tight, or revealing clothes
- bare midriff shirts
- clothing with lewd, indecent, or vulgar messages or illustrations
- clothing that advertises products or services illegal to minors
- head coverings
 - Head coverings are allowed if they are an expression of a sincerely held religious belief (e.g., hijabs or yarmulkes) or cultural expression (e.g., geles) or to reasonably accommodate medical or disability-related issues (e.g., protective helmets).
- chains, spikes or other accessories that could be perceived as or used as a weapon

- clothing that violates the school system's policies against gang and gang-related activities.

EVENING & WEEKEND EVENTS

Students may not attend evening or weekend events unless supervised by an adult. (They may not be dropped off and then picked up. A supervising adult must be present, and the student must stay with the adult at all times.) The same expectations for student behavior apply at evening and weekend events as during the school day, including our dress code.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Teacher Communication

Appropriate communication between the school and home is essential for the success of all children. At Northwoods, we value clear, consistent communication. As such, parents can expect a weekly email or newsletter from their child's teacher that highlights important events, dates, and curriculum focus for each week. Teachers will also schedule a minimum of two conferences per year. These are typically offered after the 1st and 3rd quarters. Parents may request a conference by contacting the child's teacher. (Drop-in conferences are not possible- please see our visitor policy.)

FRIDAY FOLDERS

Green folders are sent home every week and contain information from the school and the classroom teacher. It can also contain samples of your child's work, assignment sheets, and other important information about your child's academic progress and needs. In many cases, a signature is required for the folder. Please review all its contents carefully and send it back the next school day.

School Newsletter

Parents are encouraged to read our "Northwoods News" Newsletter, which will be shared every other Monday. The school newsletter provides information about student learning, special events, and classroom and/or school-wide projects underway. Additional details about meetings and activities involving the PTA are also provided in it. The Northwoods News is a useful complement to the information that parents regularly receive through the newsletters and communications provided by their child's teacher.

FIELD TRIPS

Parent or legal guardian permission is required for students to participate in field trips. We must have a signed permission slip from a parent before a student can participate or leave school. This is necessary for student safety. There are no exceptions to this policy.

Parent Chaperones:

All parent chaperones must first register and be cleared as volunteers by the school district. Volunteer registration must be completed each school year. The approval process often takes several weeks to complete, so early registration is critical. Teachers will determine how many parents are needed as chaperones and will notify parents regarding participation. Parents who participate in field trips may not bring preschool-age siblings or siblings from other classes.

Students participating in field trips must travel to and from the events with their classmates **unless** parents who have volunteered to chaperone on a field trip have received prior approval to take their child home at the conclusion of the trip. In this case, parents should submit a request in writing to the teacher (emailed or hand-written note) at least **24** hours in advance of the trip.

Field Trip Payment:

All on/off-campus field trips must be paid for in advance using the [Online School Payments](#) program to pay for each trip/experience. The school cannot accept cash or checks.

FIRE DRILLS & TORNADO DRILLS

Fire drills are conducted each month during the school year. Evacuation routes are posted in each classroom. Tornado drills are also practiced during the year. In the event of severe weather warnings, we require all students and staff members to take shelter on the first floor of our school until conditions improve. Students and staff whose classrooms reside in the modular building or individual trailers will take shelter in the main building during severe storm/tornado warning events.

HOMEWORK

To provide our students and families more flexibility and to promote a healthy school-life balance, we will no longer be issuing homework for our students. Instead, we encourage families to spend quality time together. Students are encouraged to read nightly for 15-30 minutes, depending on grade.

GRADING PLAN

Students will receive daily assignments which will be collected and graded by teachers on a regular basis. Systems for grading and assessing students adhere to the WCPSS School Board Policy. [See our specific grading plan.](#)

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of inclement weather or emergency situations, a decision may be made by the district to close or delay school. **Rather than call the school office to check the status of school closings and delays, please refer to local radio and television stations and the WCPSS website (www.wcpss.net).** The district will also send messages to families via School Messenger (text and email). If schools close early for inclement weather the afterschool program does not operate. If schools have a delayed opening, no breakfast will be served.

LOST & FOUND

Please label your child's personal belongings. This will help teachers and staff members locate lost items. **Do not allow your child to bring extra money, valuable items, toys, trading cards, iPods, Nooks/Kindles, or sports equipment to school unless prior approval has been communicated directly from a child's teacher.** We will not assume responsibility for the security of such items. Clothing and other items not claimed by the end of each academic quarter will be donated to charity.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

PBIS

Northwoods is a PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Support) model school. We teach students what appropriate behaviors throughout the school look like and motivate students to demonstrate good character and make good choices. We encourage these behaviors by recognizing outstanding individual and class actions. As a community of learners, our students, teachers, staff members, and parent volunteers all deserve an environment that is conducive to learning and teaching.

Positivity Project (P2)

All students will receive a daily character-building lesson each morning via The Positivity Project (P2). P2 is intended to help students learn about and build upon 24 different character strengths that all individuals possess. More information about P2 can be found at <https://posproject.org/our-story/>.

PTA (PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION)

Northwoods parents are encouraged to join the PTA. The PTA provides a great deal of support to the school and its students. The PTA also organizes many of the "extras" that make school fun, such as cultural arts assemblies, the school garden, the science fair, spirit wear, family nights, book fairs, and visits by guest speakers. Fundraising efforts are led by the PTA and follow all Smart Snack

recommendations from the USDA. Parents interested in participating in PTA committees should look for more information in the school newsletter. [Click here to join the PTA.](#)

RECOMMENDATION LETTERS FOR PRIVATE/CHARTER SCHOOLS

The Family and Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requires that we provide any requesting school at which the student intends to enroll with access to a student's education records, which would include (but not be limited to) grade reports/transcripts, testing information, special education records, etc. FERPA **does not** require that we complete informal assessments or school-specific letters of reference, which are intended to be used for admission purposes.

In accordance with the guidance noted above, Northwoods Elementary staff **WILL NOT** provide letters of recommendation for students/families seeking enrollment at private/charter schools. Given the limited amount of applicable school experience, letters of recommendation for elementary students often require teachers to speculate about a student's performance in a new/unfamiliar school setting. Those speculations/assumptions are not always accurate and, therefore, expose the staff member and school to an unnecessary degree of liability.

RECESS

All students will receive a daily 30-minute recess time. Recess is generally conducted outside but may be moved inside in inclement weather or extreme heat/cold.

In accordance with State Board Policy, HRS-E-000, recess and physical activity will not be taken away from students as a form of punishment; furthermore, exercise shall not be assigned for use as a form of punishment for students.

SAFETY & STUDENT HEALTH

Health & Wellness

A student's regular attendance and exposure to the Core Curriculum is related to student success. However, we acknowledge that there are certain circumstances that require your child to be kept home. Children with fevers or experiencing vomiting, diarrhea, untreated pink eye, unidentified rashes, or any communicable diseases should not be sent to school.

You will be contacted if your child becomes sick or if there is an emergency. It is very important that the school has accurate contact information in case of an emergency. If a parent cannot be reached, 911 may be called without your consent. Please be sure to keep your child's teacher informed of any special medical needs.

	If your child is sick, please keep him or her at home. Children should be kept home from school if: • They have a fever of 100.4 or higher. A student should be fever-free without medication for 24 hours before returning to school. • They have nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. A student should be free of these symptoms for 12 hours before returning to school. • They have a severe headache. • They have red, watery eyes with yellow drainage. • They have an undiagnosed rash.
Medication	Students who need medications during the school day must first have their parents submit a signed Physician Order for Medication (Form 1702) from a doctor to the front office. This includes medications such as cough drops, Motrin, and poison ivy creams, which must remain in the original container with the original label. 1702 forms are available for parents to obtain in the front office. All medications must be brought to school by an adult and given to the office by a student's parent/guardian. Northwoods has a school nurse assigned from the Wake County Health Department who is on campus two days each week. The school nurse provides vision and hearing screening for students referred by teachers after a school-wide screening is done by a staff member. The school nurse also assists families of students who may require an individual health plan due to medical conditions or severe allergies.
Release of Information	Any parent or guardian who does not wish for information such as a student's name, grade, or dates of attendance to be released or who objects to their child being photographed for newsletters and school publications, please notify the school office in writing within 20 school days of the receipt of this notice.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

Tobacco-Free Schools	Wake County Public School System policy is that all school system property is smoke-free. This policy is intended to promote a healthy working and learning environment and applies to all students, employees, and visitors of the school system.
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SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Detailed supply lists are posted on the website each year. Please review the requested supply list prior to the beginning of the school year. Supplies can be dropped off at school on scheduled Meet the Teacher/Open House dates or on the first day of school. **Rolling bookbags are considered a safety hazard for other students and are not allowed at school.**

STUDENT INFORMATION

Change of Information

Please notify the school office or your child's teacher any time when you have a change of name, address, phone number, or emergency contact. This is very important so we can reach you in case of an emergency. **Please provide us with the best phone number to reach you between 8 AM – 5 PM each weekday.**

Custody & Visitation Agreements

Judges' orders regarding custody and visitation are kept on file in the school office so that staff are aware of who is authorized to pick up a child. Please make sure that the school receives an official copy of the court's ruling, as we are not required to honor a parent/guardian's interpretation of a court order. Any changes in court orders should be given to the office as soon as possible.

VISITORS & VOLUNTEERS

Visitors

The safety of our students and staff is of utmost importance. In accordance with district security policies, all exterior doors (including the front office doors) will remain locked at all times. All visitors to the building must ring the doorbell near the front entrance, present their identification, and state the purpose of their visit before being allowed inside. **If a visitor refuses to provide a name, purpose, or identification, or if the staff feels uncomfortable with the interaction, the visitor will be denied access to the building.**

Upon entry, visitors will be required to sign in at the front office and obtain a visitor pass. Visitors will not be permitted to enter classrooms or other locations around the building without prior consent.

Volunteers

Volunteers play an important role in our school, and we are grateful to parents and community members who contribute their time and talents to supporting our students.

All new and current volunteers are required to complete the Online Volunteer Registration each year. The registration process is only accessible at school. Individuals seeking to register as volunteers should follow the visitor sign-in policies noted above. Upon entry, an iPad will be made available to complete the registration process. Please note: It takes several weeks for volunteers to be fully cleared, so early registration is of utmost importance.