

Student Handbook 2025- 2026



Soddy Elementary School

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Soddy Elementary School Mission Statement

The Soddy Elementary School Community is a respectful, inclusive and safe learning environment where relationships, engagement and growth lead to the success of the whole child.

The Titans Pledge

We are Titans! We have POWER!

P Persevere

O Ownership

W Wisdom

E Effort

R Respect

I show **Titan Power** when I **persevere**, take **ownership**, have **wisdom**, give **effort**, and show **respect**.

HCS Mission Statement

All students will thrive and experience a future without limits.

Character Counts at Soddy Elementary

September – Respect

Showing high regard for authority, other people, self and country.
Treating others as you would want to be treated. Understanding that all people have value as human beings.

October – Responsibility

Being accountable in word and deed. Having a sense of duty to fulfill tasks with reliability, dependability and commitment.

November – Perseverance

Pursuing worthy objectives with determination and patience while exhibiting fortitude when confronted with failure.

December – Caring

Showing understanding of others by treating them with kindness, compassion, generosity and a forgiving spirit.

January – Self-Discipline

Demonstrating hard work. Controlling your emotions, words, actions, impulses and desires. Giving your best in all situations.

February – Citizenship

Being law abiding and involved in service to school, community, and country.

March – Honesty

Telling the truth, admitting wrongdoing, being trustworthy and acting with integrity.

April – Courage

Doing the right thing in the face of difficulty and following your conscience instead of the crowd.

May – Fairness

Practicing justice, equity and equality. Cooperating with one another. Recognizing the uniqueness and value of each individual within our diverse society.

Table of Contents

Soddy Staff
Attendance
Balloons
Before and After Care (SACC)
Bell Schedule
Bus Transportation
Car Drop Off and Dismissal
Communication
Community School Information
Conferences
Dress Code
Early Dismissals
Field Trips
Food Services
Grades
Homework
Make-Up Work
Medicine
Parties
Possession or Use of Tobacco
Registration and Emergency Forms
School Messenger
School Payments
School-wide Discipline Plan
Searches
Student Electronics
Student Transfers
Tardies
Transportation Changes
Vandalism
Visitors and Volunteers
Weapons on School Property
Zero Tolerance/Discipline Violation

Soddy Elementary Faculty and Staff

Office

Rachel Teas – Principal
Becky Covington – Assistant Principal
Caroline Carpenter - Secretary
Michelle Graham – Clerical Assistant
Janet Bryant – Nurse
Jennifer Bearden – Bookkeeper
Lori Durham - Permanent Sub

Pre-K

Wood, Missy – Teacher
Alexander, Emily – Assistant

Pre-K DLP

Haymaker, Mary - Teacher
Ducker, Holley – Assistant
Williams, Haley – Assistan

Kindergarten

Booher, Kylene
Daughtery, Kaylin
Roberts, Misty

First Grade

Clem, Ashley
Vickers, Sarah
Pressley, Kelsey
Varner, Cindy

Second Grade

Clements, Jacqueline
Cordell, Meredith
Mercer, Tonia
Renshaw, Cameron

Third Grade

Hicks, Matt - Math
Karpinko, Andrew - ELA
Stapleton, Katie - Sci/SS

Fourth Grade

Branam, Callie - SS/Sc
Lillie, Scott - Math
Olive-Cate, Jamie - ELA

Fifth Grade

Burdine, Cristina - Math
Cook, Tina - SS/Sc
Johnson, Lisa - ELA

Related Arts

Burnett, Allison - Library
Croft, Kevin - PE
Williams, Jeremiah - Music.
Wood, Amber - Art

Exceptional Education Teachers

Smith, Elizabeth - DCC
Strauss, Brian - IDS
Schoolfield, Ellen - Direct Service
Smith, Morgan - Direct Service
Stout, Melissa - Direct Service

Ex. Ed. Assistants

Alonge, Kerry - ExEd Assistant
Hendrix, Marti - IDS
Jules, Cherita - DCC
Morrow, Keona - DCC
Vandergriff, Jerri - ExEd Assistant
Wainscott, Heather - Ancillary Assistant

Support Staff

Harlan, Brandi - School Counselor
Harmer, Sarah - Student Support Coach
Edmondson, Jamie - Ed. Assistant
McCurdy, MaKenzie - Community School Coordinator
Leech, Katie - Instructional Coach - Math
Myers, Victoria - Social Worker
Phillips, Julia - eLab Teacher
Sammons, Kim - Instructional Coach - ELA
Weems, Melinda - SLP

RTI Team

Prater, Lindsay - RTI Lead
Burchard, Angie - Ed. Assistant
Chandler, Mildred - Interventionist
Vetter, Angie - Ed. Assistant

Itinerant Staff

Gibb, Linda - SLP - A
Long, Susan - School Psychologist

Day Time Custodian

Brett Neal

Attendance

The Hamilton County Board of Education believes in the establishment of a tradition of regular school attendance for each student. This establishes the first step toward a successful academic career culminating in a high school diploma and this is an essential concept to learn for the job market.

***Students are limited to three (3) Parent Excuses per school year.**

Excused Absences

1. **Personal Illness:** Students are excused who are sick and whose attendance would be detrimental to their health and the health of other students. A physician's statement may be required. **Three parent notes** are allowed per year.
2. **Death in Immediate Family:** Students may be excused for three (3) days in the event of a death in their immediate families including mother, father, stepparent, brother, sister, or grandparent. Extenuating circumstances may require a longer period of excused absence.
3. **Family Illness:** Students having an illness in the family which requires them to give temporary help will be excused from attendance after receipt of a physician's statement concerning the necessity of the student's assistance.
4. **Religious Holiday:** Students shall be excused on special or recognized religious holidays regularly observed by that particular faith. Prior approval is required should these days occur while school is in session.
5. **Personal:** Students who are absent for a good cause such as a doctor or dental appointment which cannot be scheduled at times other than school hours, court appearances, etc. may be excused upon proof of appointment. Prior approval by parent or guardian and the principal or designee is required.
6. **Approved School Sponsored Activities:** Students shall be marked present when participating in a school sponsored activity away from the school building.

Excessive Absences

The law requires that school officials report to the court any parent/guardian of a child who is unlawfully absent from school for any five (5) days during the school year. When a student reaches five (5) unexcused absences, the school will notify the parent/guardian that their child must attend school on a regular basis by mailing the Attendance Notification Letter and scheduling a Tier 1 meeting with the assistant principal. After ten (10) days absence without adequate excuse, a student is referred to the school principal for a Tier 2 meeting. If the child continues to accrue unexcused absences a Tier 3 hearing will be scheduled.

Balloons

Balloons can be hazardous to the health of children. They are not allowed on school property. Balloons are not to be delivered to students at school. If delivered, the parent will be called to pick up the balloons.

Before and After Care (School Aged Child Care)

The Hamilton County Department of Education provides before and after school childcare. Parents may register at any time during the school year. It is recommended

to register during school registration in case there is an emergency, and you need to use this service. The hours of operation for this program are from 6:00 am until 8:00 am and from 3:30 pm until 6:00 pm. All day childcare service is available on days school is not in session (in-service days, snow days, fall, winter, spring and summer breaks, etc.) A registration form and fee are due the first day of attendance. For more information, contact the SACC Director, 332-8823.

***Please note that more than five late car rider pickups in the afternoon will require parents to sign-up student(s) for aftercare.**

Bell Schedule

8:00 First bell, doors open, breakfast begins

Students report to breakfast or the class hallway.

Car Riders must arrive no later than 8:15 to be served breakfast.

3:30 Dismiss for the day

Bus Transportation

Bus service is provided for Hamilton County students. Riding the bus is a privilege and should be treated as such. For a safe and enjoyable ride to and from school, children should be reminded frequently about good behavior on the bus. A student will become ineligible for bus transportation when the student's behavior physically or emotionally endangers other riders, causes dissension on the school bus or when the student disobeys the HCDE Rules of Conduct for bus riders. Bus drivers are authorized to enforce these rules. Any student referred to the principal for disciplinary action may lose bus transportation privileges. All parents will receive a copy of the Rules of Conduct and consequences during registration.

Car Drop Off and Pick Up – Law states no phone use in the school zone. Law states no smoking on school property which includes your car.

The goal of Soddy Elementary is to create arrival and dismissal procedures that ensure safety for all. For the safety of students and staff, we ask that all procedures be followed on a daily basis. All drivers must follow the directions of staff on duty. All car riders will need a car tag. Car tags will be available on registration day and in the main office.

Specific procedures are given below. It is important that all parents and guardians follow our procedures so that all students and staff will be safe.

Morning Drop-Off 8:00 – 8:30 – No phone use or smoking when in the car line.

All cars must enter by turning right off of Oak Street. Cars will use **two** lanes (Next to the fire lane) for student drop off. When cars come to a stop, students will be given a horn signal to exit the cars. They should exit immediately and go straight to the sidewalk. Then walk to the doors and enter the building. Staff will give a signal when cars can move to the exit.

Parents and students must wait in the car until the 8:00 bell rings and teachers are on duty. No parents or students should be standing outside the front doors.

Parents should drop students off in the car line and students will walk in alone. We have staff on duty to supervise them as they enter the building.

Afternoon Pick-Up 3:30 – 3:50 – No phone use or smoking when in the car line. Due to outdoor activities and PreK pickup, please do not enter the parking lot until 3:00 to wait for student dismissal at 3:30.

***Please note that more than five late car rider pickups (after 3:50 p.m.) will require the parent to enroll student(s) in aftercare.**

All cars must enter the parking lot by turning right off of Oak Street in the afternoons. Cars cannot turn left into the lot from School St. This blocks cars from leaving after picking up students.

Parents should stay in the car at dismissal. Students will be called and told the cone color of their car row. Students need to go to that color cone and walk across the front of that line to find their car. They should not go behind their car.

All cars must have a 25-26 car tag in the window so names can be called quickly and correctly. If you do not have a car tag, you will be asked to park and come to the office to dismiss students. Our procedures must be followed to ensure safety of students and staff. Car tags will be available at registration.

Communication

The DOJO app will be used by all teachers and the school. All parents/guardians should sign up for this at the beginning of the year. We will no longer use Remind and other apps for communication.

Community Schools Information

Through a partnership with Northside Neighborhood House, Soddy Elementary is a Community School. The goal is to support, provide opportunities, and remove barriers to student learning and family wellness. Community schools respond to whole-child and whole-family strengths and needs. In the past, this partnership has provided the following services to our students and families:

- Student Success Planning
- Care Closet
- Thrift Vouchers
- Enhanced Learning Opportunities
- Community Partnerships
- Family Engagement Activities

We will continue to add to this list in the coming year.

Conferences (Teacher/Parent)

School-wide parent conferences will be planned once each semester. The exact date and times will be sent home at a later time. Please plan to meet with your child's teacher on that day. The teacher or parent can request other conferences throughout the year to discuss successes and challenges for the students. Conferences must be

scheduled with the teacher ahead of time. Conferences can be held in person or on Microsoft Team if the parent is unable to attend in person.

Dress Code

The major purpose of our school is to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning. Any manner of dress that attracts an unusual amount of attention is unacceptable. We rely on the parent to monitor the appropriate dress of the child before he or she comes to school. Students are encouraged to dress in a manner that reflects pride in themselves and their school. Students are expected to use good taste in hairstyles, jewelry, etc., so that a school atmosphere of neatness, cleanliness, and self-respect is generated. All clothing should fit properly and follow the dress code policy.

•Tennis shoes or closed toe shoes with tennis shoe type soles must be worn at all times. Sandals and/or open toe shoes are not allowed. Rollers on tennis shoes are not allowed. If rain boots are worn to school, tennis shoes should be brought to wear upon arrival. Boots should not be worn at school.

***At no time other than special dress-up days should a student wear animal ears, tails, etc.**

- Use good judgment in student dress.
- Pants and shorts must fit at the waist.
- Shorts, skirts and dresses should be mid-thigh length or longer. Shorts should be longer than your shirt. NO short shorts.
- Spaghetti straps in grades 3 - 5 should not be worn unless they are covered by a sweater or shirt at all times. Straps must be three fingers wide to wear without a covering.
- At no time should undergarments be showing. Wear shorts under dresses or skirts due to PE, recess or carpet time.
- If there is a design or writing on the t-shirt, it must be appropriate. It should not be scary or offensive.
- Jeans, shorts etc. should not have holes in them.
- *The parent of a student not in dress code may be contacted to bring proper attire.

Early Dismissals:

There will be no early dismissals after 3:00 p.m. unless prearranged with the principal or in the case of an emergency.

Our school day ends at 3:30. Any student who is dismissed early is missing instruction. We are very protective of our instruction time and want to make every moment count. Early dismissals interrupt the routines and instruction at the end of the day. Students with 5 early dismissals and/or late arrivals during a quarter will not be eligible for the Perfect Attendance award.

Procedures to follow:

- Write a note to your child's teacher indicating the reason for the early dismissal and the approximate time you will arrive.
- Come to the office to check your child out of school. A child will not be dismissed to anyone not listed on the registration/dismissal card.

- Identification is required for dismissal. Staff will call the child when you arrive and not before.

Field Trips

Field trips are planned for the educational value and enrichment of the curriculum. It is important for each child to participate and learn from the experience. When a trip is planned students will bring home a permission slip. **All permission slips and money must be returned by the date due on the form.** There will be no exceptions to this timeline. Students will not be able to attend if permission slips and money are not returned on time. No phone calls will be accepted for permission to attend. If enough money is not collected the trip could be canceled.

If parent chaperones are requested, please volunteer to attend. Because chaperones are responsible for the safety and supervision of students, younger siblings cannot attend the field trip with the parent. We ask that all students return to school after the field trip. This is a learning day, and they will be asked to complete activities as they reflect on their learning from the trip. Students should not be dismissed at the end of the field trip. However, students who are dismissed will complete the activities during recess on the day they return.

Food Services

Breakfast and lunch are served on a daily basis. Through the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010, our school is one of several in Hamilton County that has been approved to provide **free** breakfast and lunch to **EVERY** child for the 2025-2026 school year. Students are not allowed to bring carbonated drinks to lunch.(ex. Cokes, monster drinks, energy drinks, etc) If one is brought, it will be taken and student will be given a cup of water instead. If a child has a milk allergy, water will be provided as approved by the nurse. Any money sent for extra items should be in an envelope with the student and teacher name on the front.

Grades

K – 2 are graded based on standards. Parents will receive a standards-based report card to show progress made on each specific standard. Teachers will work to help you understand what this means and how to help your child.

3-5 are given number grades. All students will be working to master state standards for appropriate grade levels. Teachers for grades 3-5 will post grades on PowerTeacher. Parents will have access in order to monitor students' grades and completion of work. Teachers will give out usernames and passwords at the beginning of the school year. A state law was passed and we have changed to a 10 point grading scale.
A = 90-100 B = 89 - 80 C = 79 – 70 D = 69 – 60 F = 59 or below.

Homework

All students should read at least 20 minutes each night and practice math facts, and younger grades should practice sight words. Other homework will be kept to a minimum. Teachers will send more information at the beginning of the year.

Make-up Work

Excused absences (those meeting State attendance rules) will entitle students to make up missed work. Unexcused absences may result in receiving reduced credit. For each day missed the child will have 5 days to complete make-up work. Parents must call before 10:00 am on the day of the absence in order to pick up work after 2:00 that day.

Medicine

Students needing medicine administered at school will need to submit a signed doctor's order. The nurse will supply you with this form. All medication should be brought to school by an adult and given to the nurse. Students are not to transport any medicine to and from school.

Parties

There are two school parties per year: Christmas and Valentine's Day.

Unless the entire class is invited, private party invitations should not be distributed at school. If you want to send a small birthday prepackaged treat for the class, do so in the morning and notification will be given to the teacher. All treats must adhere to the allergy policy for the class. The teacher will give out the treat at the end of the day or during recess. Please make prior arrangements with the teacher. Do not send balloons, flowers or other gifts for the student while in school.

Possession or use of Tobacco

Any student who uses or possesses tobacco products on school property will receive disciplinary measures that could include suspension and/or a citation from law enforcement that would force them to appear in Juvenile Court. This includes vaping and e-cigarettes. **All persons should refrain from smoking on school grounds. This includes the parking lot as parents are waiting in cars for students.**

Registration and Emergency Forms

Occasionally it may be necessary to contact parents quickly due to illness or emergencies. Emergency information is kept in the office and classroom. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide the school with accurate and up-to-date information and phone numbers. Copies of restraining orders and custody documents that may affect dismissal of your child must be supplied and put on file in the school office. Be sure all information in Powerschool is kept up-to-date as well.

School Messenger

Hamilton County Schools has implemented a messaging service. It enables the system or school to communicate with parents about emergency situations, school events and important issues impacting students. It allows us to send messages to your home phone, cell phone, text and email based on the information you put in powerschool. It is very important that we have correct updated numbers in the Powerschool system. The school or district number will be displayed when we send messages. You can push the star * key to listen to the message again if needed.

Each Sunday at 4:00 pm the administration will send a call and/or email to communicate upcoming events. It is called "Titan News".

School Payments

\$25 Art and Stem fee is requested but not required. At this time, this is the only fee for the school. It can all be paid online on our Soddy Elementary Website. You may also pay in cash or a check to the teacher.

Field trip payments may also be paid online.

Separate checks for each child and event (field trips, coupon books, etc) should be made payable to Soddy Elementary School and given to the homeroom teacher. Different checks must be written for each of your children who are in different classrooms. Be sure the child's full name is on all checks. Cafeteria payments for ice cream or extras are made out to Hamilton County Food Services (HCFS).

Child Care payments are made to the School Age Child Care Program (SACC).

School-wide Discipline Plan

Our school-wide expectations will be based on our ***Titan Power Pledge***: I show Titan Power when I **PERSEVERE**, take **OWNERSHIP**, have **WISDOM**, give **EFFORT** and show **RESPECT**. Students will practice what these expectations look like in each area of the school. We also use a House System that allows students to earn points for following our Titan Pledge. These points go towards Fun Fridays. Students earning the required number of points will enjoy a time of games, art, sports, etc. at a designated time on Fun Friday. Attendance matters! Excessive unexcused absences, tardies and early dismissals can result in a student not earning the required number of points.

All classroom teachers will have a discipline plan and procedures posted in the classroom. Copies will be sent to parents by the end of August. For severe and/or multiple instances of misbehavior any teacher, faculty member, substitute or the principal will issue a Disciplinary Referral. When a referral is made, the principal and teacher will work with the child to correct the behavior and help the child make better future choices. Referrals will be sent home at the time of conference, by mail or by the student. In the rare event that it becomes necessary for a student to be suspended from school, a parent conference will be required before the student is readmitted to school. Conduct can have an impact on field trip eligibility and extracurricular activities. Any threat to do harm to another student, school employee, school system employee or self will be taken seriously by the school administration.

Searches

To protect the health and safety of any member of the student body, students and their possessions may be searched by school officials if illegal articles or activities are suspected.

Student Phones/Smart Watches

Cell Phones are not allowed to be used during school hours. This is the new board policy. Student Phones or Smart watches will not be seen or heard on school property

Possession of a cell phone must be approved by the principal. If permission is not given, the phone will be confiscated and held for parent pick-up in the office. If given permission, all phones should be turned off and kept in the backpack or with the teacher or office for safe keeping during the school day. Damage or loss of the item will not be the responsibility of the school.

Smart watches are not allowed unless it is medically necessary.

Student Transfers

If a student transfers to another school parents must notify the office and teacher as soon as it is known that the student will be leaving. Library books and textbooks must be returned before leaving. All money owed to Soddy Elementary must be paid before records can be transferred to another school. This includes library books, fund-raisers, pictures, Child Care fees, and lunch charges. Please contact the office to complete a transfer form and sign a records release so that office staff may forward the records to the receiving school.

Tardiness

It is important that students arrive at school on time in order to begin the day on a good note. Instruction begins at 8:30 am. Students must be in the classroom by 8:30 to be on time for school. Car riders who are still eating breakfast at 8:30 will be counted tardy even if they arrived earlier. Car Riders need to arrive by 8:15 in order to eat and have time to get to classrooms. After 8:30 am, students will be considered tardy. They need to be brought to the office by a parent or guardian. Students cannot enter the classroom without a tardy slip after 8:30.

Excessive tardiness or early dismissals will result in a social worker referral.

If a student arrives after 12:00 or leaves before 12:00, an official absence for the day is recorded. Students who have 5 or more late arrivals and/or early dismissals for the quarter will not be eligible for the perfect attendance award.

Transportation Changes

Our school uses the School Dismissal Manager APP to manage transportation changes. We DO NOT accept changes in transportation over the phone, DoJo, via note or agenda. All changes must be made through the APP. Changes can be made using a laptop, tablet or Smartphone. This information is then sent to the administration who will notify your child and his/her teacher of the change. Transportation changes must be made before 3:00PM. Announcements regarding changes will be made by 3:15PM. Transportation changes over the phone can only be made in emergency situations and must be approved by an administrator. Our goal is to keep students safe. These procedures must be followed to ensure students arrive home safely. Specific directions are included to set up and use the program.

Vandalism

Vandalism inside or outside will not be tolerated. The school system will require parents of students who commit vandalism to pay for damages.

Visitors and Volunteers

Parent involvement is an important and vital part of the academic success of students. We welcome volunteers to help teachers throughout the day. For the safety of your children and the protection of instructional time, there is a specific classroom volunteer policy. Volunteers in our school may not go to any classroom unless (#1) they have permission from the administration. (#2) The teacher is aware and has informed the office staff that the volunteer is coming.

All volunteers must sign in (and out) in the office and obtain a visitor's pass from office personnel.

Parents can eat lunch with students, but no outside food should be brought in. No pictures can be taken and the student will sit with the visitor at a visitor table. Students enjoy eating with their friends, so try to keep visiting at lunch to a minimum.

Weapons on School Property

It is unlawful for any student to possess or carry a weapon on the bus, school property or any other property owned, used or operated by any board of education or school or public educational institution. Students should not bring toy guns or weapons to school either.

Zero Tolerance/Discipline Violations

According to state and federal law, a student who commits a zero tolerance offense will be expelled for one calendar year, unless modified by the superintendent. This includes offenses on school property, including buses and at school-sponsored activities. The following could be considered zero tolerance offenses:

- *Possession of a firearm, explosive, poison gas device, bomb or similar device
- *Illegal possession of a controlled substance or drug
- *Striking a teacher, principal, administrator or any other employee of the Hamilton County Department of Education or an SRO
- *Transmitting by an electronic device a credible threat to cause bodily injury or death to another student or school employee and the threat causes actual disruptive activity at the school.