

SOUTHSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
STUDENT HANDBOOK

Principal: Carmen Hayes
Assistant Principal: Hannah Tomerlin

707 South Cedar Lane
Pulaski, Tennessee 38478
Phone: 931-424-7005
Fax: 931-424-1644
Webpage: <http://www.gcboe.com/ses>

STUDENTS **E**xcel and **S**ucceed

MISSION STATEMENT

Southside students are challenged to excel in order to succeed academically and socially.

Our Beliefs

1. Southside's personnel empower parents by offering opportunities for them to actively participate in their child's education.
2. All students are valued individuals with unique physical, social, emotional, and intellectual needs that are met using innovative teaching strategies.
3. Students learn in a physically and emotionally safe learning environment that promotes student achievement and growth.
4. Teachers monitor individualized student learning through the use of research-based teaching strategies.
5. Teachers use formative and summative assessment data to drive instruction.
6. Teachers share and implement differentiated instructional methods through collaboration.
7. Students are accountable for their own behavior and learning by setting goals and tracking their progress.

Southside Elementary School is a Schoolwide Title I School.

SCHOOL DAY SCHEDULE

7:00 A.M. Doors Open

7:00-7:45 Breakfast

7:00-7:45 Study Time in gym

7:45 Students report to class

7:45-8:00 Homeroom

2:55 Dismissal

SOUTHSIDE COLORS AND SOUTHSIDE MASCOT

Royal blue and yellow

Southside Supercat

GRADING

Giles County Schools operate on a nine week grading system. A report card will be sent home after each nine week period. Progress reports are sent four and a half weeks into a grading period. You may check your child's grades using ParentVue, the student management app, to stay updated on his/her progress. Grades are updated weekly.

VISITORS

Parents are welcome to visit our school, but the safety of our students is our main concern. All visitors, including parents, must report to the office upon entering the building or coming onto our campus. Driver's licenses or other valid state IDs are required when signing in. You must notify the office staff of your destination and purpose and wait for approval. Parents leaving the office must wear a visitor's badge. Parents and visitors are not allowed to go into a classroom unannounced. All parents who wish to talk with a teacher need to make an appointment during the teacher's planning time to avoid disturbing class. All teachers have an email address that can be accessed through The Giles County/Southside website. You are welcome to visit and eat lunch with your child. A special table near the windows is designated for parents eating with students. Parents are asked to avoid having cell phones out or taking photographs of other students during lunch for privacy reasons. Outside fast food is not allowed in the cafeteria.

TRAFFIC FLOW

To help maintain order during arrival and dismissal times, parents are asked to remain in the traffic line when dropping off or picking up students. Students will load and unload at the front entrance only. Please do not park or **pass in the circle** and do not stop in the outer lane. For safety reasons, students will be assigned a car tag, and this should be displayed when picking up students. Parents are asked to remain in the car rider line during dismissal instead of parking and walking in to get students. Parents who park and come in during dismissal will be asked to wait to have their credentials verified. This may require waiting for a period of time until students with tags are dismissed. Parents who need to enter the school for business must park in the lower parking area during arrival and dismissal times. For the safety of our students, no student will be allowed to cross the traffic unescorted. No cars are permitted at any time in the bus loading zone/free play area.

CAFETERIA

The cafeteria provides a very nourishing and well-prepared breakfast and lunch daily. *No soft drinks in cans or bottles are allowed in the cafeteria. No foods or drinks are to be brought to school from commercial establishments (such as McDonald's, Hardee's, etc.). Purchases from vending machines may not be used for lunch. Items purchased in the cafeteria must be consumed in the cafeteria; food from the cafeteria may not be brought back to classrooms due to food safety and contamination concerns.*

EARLY DISMISSAL IN EMERGENCIES

You will receive a School Status phone call in the event that there is a change to the school day. Be sure that we have several up-to-date emergency numbers for your child. **Please make sure your child knows where he/she should go if school is dismissed early.**

MEDICATION

Students who take prescription or over-the-counter medications during the school day must have parents fill out a Giles County Medication Authorization form. If a physician prescribes the medication, a doctor's order must also be on file in the office. See the school nurse to obtain the necessary forms. A responsible adult must bring the medication to the school nurse. It cannot be sent to school on the bus or carried into the school by a child. Our school nurse can be reached at 424-7005.

ILLNESS

Teachers will take care of minor incidents and basic first aid such as applying a Band-Aid in the classroom. Students will be sent to the nurse for more serious conditions. Parents are requested to leave a phone number where they or other responsible persons can be reached. Students known to have communicable diseases or an infestation (such as lice and bed bugs) will be sent home immediately and may require verification from the family physician or the Giles County Health Department to reenter school.

ATTENDANCE

Valid reasons for an excused absence are illness, doctor's appointment, court appearance, or death in the family. **A student must bring a written excuse every time he/she is absent or tardy from school.** The parent may call to notify the school of a child's absence, but a written excuse is still required. The child has five days to provide this written note, after that time it will be an unexcused absence. The school will accept only 5 parent's notes throughout the year. Doctor's notes, proof of court, or funeral attendance are required to excuse a child's absence after the five parent notes have been used. In addition, three tardies accumulate to equal an absence. (Tardies include arriving after 8:00 and checking out early.) The school will call parents when concerned about a student's absence. If attendance is problematic, an internal truancy review meeting and external truancy review meeting will be conducted prior to petitioning a family to court. Should you desire make up work, please request assignments for absent students by 10:00 A.M. The office will place a message in the teacher's mailbox. The classroom will not be interrupted to receive assignments. Assignments will then be ready to pick up in the office after 1:30 P.M. A parent or guardian must sign out any student who leaves the building at any time during the day. Since school attendance is important, only sign your child out for the valid reasons listed above. Please do not sign your child out just to avoid the traffic. The office will request identification of the person signing a child out if he or she is unknown to the office staff.

TESTING

Students will be given benchmark tests throughout the year to assess skill mastery. Achievement tests will be given yearly to track student progress. Attendance during the week of testing is essential. State testing dates are generally the last two weeks of April and first week of May. Exact dates can be obtained on the district website.

ROOM MOTHERS/FATHERS

Volunteers play an essential role in the success of Southside. There are numerous ways that you can help. Please let your child's teacher know that you are interested.

CLASS PARTIES

Class parties are up to the discretion of the teacher and must be approved by the teacher.

WELLNESS POLICY

The Giles County School District promotes healthy schools by supporting wellness, good nutrition, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment. The District's policy states: Classroom snacks will feature healthy choices. Refreshments served at parties, celebrations, and meetings during the school day should provide 50 percent or more of the items that are from the nutrient dense food list. Examples of allowable foods include fresh fruit, raw vegetables and dip, cheese and crackers and fruit drinks or water. We try to give opportunities for physical activity during the school day through daily recess periods, physical education classes, walking programs, and the integration of physical activity into the academic curriculum.

TELEPHONE

Our school phone is a business phone. **Students will not be allowed to use the phone except in the case of an emergency. Calls for permission to attend parties or ride buses with friends, etc. will not be permitted.** These matters should be taken care of at home. A telephone pass from the classroom teacher is required to use the phone. **The school nurse will call the parent if a child is sick.**

DRESS CODE

The complete dress code can be found on the district's webpage. Please remember, that pants, shorts, skirts must fit at the waist and not sag. Shorts and skirts may be no shorter than four inches above the knee. If leggings are worn, they must be accompanied by a top that is mid-thigh length. Shirts must be buttoned properly, and the midriff may not be exposed. Clothing may not reference alcohol, tobacco, or other offensive, lewd, or indecent material. Hats or hoods may not be worn in the building except for medical reasons. Please reference the policy on the district's webpage for clarification and a more comprehensive list of guidelines.

DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Pursuant to the State of Tennessee's policy of non-discrimination, the Giles County School system does not discriminate against any person for reasons of race, color, religion, handicap, national origin, sex, age, or socio-economic status in its policies or in the admission of access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs, services or activities. Complaints of discrimination under Title VI should be directed to the office of Director, 270 Richland Drive, Pulaski, TN 38478 (931) 363-4558.

REHABILITATION ACT

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights statute which prohibits discrimination against a person with a disability as anyone who has a record of having, or is regarded as having a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits a major life activity, such as learning, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, caring for oneself and performing manual tasks. If a teacher or parent suspects a student would come under the 504 policy, please feel free to contact Carmen Hayes or Hannah Tomerlin at Southside at (931) 424-7005 or Supervisor of Special Education at the Giles County Board of Education at (931) 363-4558.

TRANSFER OPTION FOR STUDENTS VICTIMIZED BY CRIME AT SCHOOL

Under the Tennessee State Board of Education's Unsafe School Choice Policy, any public school student who is the victim of a violent crime as defined under Tennessee Code Annotated 40-38-111 (g), or the attempt to commit one of these offenses as defined under Tennessee Code Annotated 30-12-101, shall be provided an opportunity to transfer to another grade level appropriate school within the district. If you would like more information regarding this option please contact: Penny Monks, Federal Program Supervisor, 270 Richland Drive, Pulaski, Tennessee 38478 or call (931) 363-4558, ext. 113.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

For the 2025-2026 school year, Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) will meet once, monthly, before school. Meetings are open to all students, who have submitted a permission slip. There are no fees associated with participation. The mission of the student-led group is to grow in their faith.

STUDENT SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. We find ourselves housed in a very beautiful building. It is expected of us, by the taxpayers, School Board, and County Court to maintain and preserve the school building in its present condition. It is your responsibility as a student to take pride in your school and help maintain the beauty of the school. Parents will pay for any damages to the building or furniture caused by a child.
2. Students should arrive between 7:00 and 7:45. Breakfast is served until 7:45. Students will report to the gym and read or work on assignments until dismissal to class. No student will be admitted before 7:00 a.m. Homeroom starts promptly at 7:45 a.m. The regular school day will begin at 8:00 a.m. Any student who arrives after 8:00 must report to the office to obtain a permission slip to enter class.
3. A child walking or riding a bicycle must have written permission from the parent on file with the principal. The school cannot be responsible for any lost or damaged bicycles.
4. Rolling backpacks are not allowed due to lack of available locker space and danger of accidents in the hall.
5. Students should have their full names on all coats, sweaters, jackets and other personal items. Lost items will be returned if they have a name in them. Students may check in the lost and found box for missing items. All lost items not claimed by the end of the year will be given away.
6. All students are required to take Physical Education. If a student is unable to take P.E. for any reason, he/she should bring a note. The student will be given a written assignment pertaining to physical education or be asked to walk during the time they are unable to participate. A child who is unable to take P.E. is also unable to participate in free play. We do not dress out for P.E. at Southside. Students must wear tennis shoes on the days that they have P.E. classes.
7. Any member of the staff who witnesses inappropriate behavior may correct a student.
8. Control of behavioral problems in the classroom is the responsibility of the teacher. He/she may do this only in a way that is fair and in compliance with school and board policies. The teacher may use varying forms of punishment depending upon the nature of the situation. Corporal punishment may be used by administrators with good judgment and in compliance with School Board policy. Parents will be asked to sign a permission form prior to paddling, and they will be notified prior to corporal punishment. Parents who request that paddling not be used must meet with the teacher and/or principal to discuss alternative consequences. The teacher may refer the child to the principal's office using an Office Referral Form. A copy of the Office Referral Form will be sent to the parent to notify them of the actions taken by the principal.
9. Students are expected to behave in the bathroom. Playing around, bullying, not using the facilities appropriately, graffiti, and damage to the bathroom will not be tolerated.
10. If a student has a concern, he/she should try to work it out with the classroom teacher. If a solution cannot be reached, then the principal should be involved.
11. If toys are brought to school, they should be appropriate and played with only during free play. No toy guns or toy weapons are to be brought to school. Expensive toys such as tablets, iPods, and trading cards should not be brought to school. No footballs or baseballs are allowed.
12. The chewing of gum is not allowed at any time. This also includes fun day activities, field day, testing time, and after school activities.
13. Halls should be quiet, safe, and orderly; therefore students should not run or talk loudly in the halls.
14. School bus transportation is a privilege that may be withdrawn for inappropriate behavior. A student is to ride the bus he/she is assigned. Any emergency request to ride a bus or a different bus must be requested by the parent and submitted to the office. The bus driver is in complete charge of the bus and the students must obey the driver at all times. Misbehavior will result in disciplinary action including a suspension from riding the bus.
15. Students should play safely at all times. No climbing trees, throwing of rocks, dirt, mulch, sticks, or other objects. Students should remain in sight of their teacher and take turns on the playground equipment. No game that involves hitting, tackling, or intentionally hurting another student will be allowed.
16. Foul language, threatening language, language or gestures of a sexual nature, bullying behaviors, and the drawing of indecent pictures are not acceptable.
17. No smoking, chewing, or dipping is allowed at any time on school property. Vaping or possessing are not permitted on school campus.
18. Knives, guns, liquor, and abusive drugs will not be tolerated on school property.
19. Fighting is not tolerated at any time. Since play fighting often leads to real fighting, it is not permitted. Students who fight may be suspended from school regardless of who started the fight.
20. For a complete list of disciplinary offenses and appropriate consequences, please consult the "Manual of Student Discipline Code" posted on the GCBOE webpage. The document contains a more complete list of disciplinary information.
21. Do not bring valuable items to school that may become lost, broken, or stolen. The school will not be responsible for money, jewelry, or other valuable possessions, which are lost or stolen.
22. Students are prohibited from passing out invitations for private non-school parties in the classroom or any place on the school grounds. These invitations must either be mailed or given off campus.
23. We believe that the completion of homework is an essential part of a student's academic success. The assignments given and the requirements of homework acceptance and grading are the responsibility of the classroom teacher. Students are expected to complete and return homework.

24. Students with office referrals or discipline infractions may not be allowed to go on field trips or participate in extra curricular activities.
25. Students may not form clubs or gangs at school.
26. Possession of a cell phone at school is discouraged. Cell phones must be turned off unless it is during a time that is approved by the teacher for instructional purposes. Use of the phone during unapproved times is not permissible. Unauthorized use of a cell phone will result in confiscation of the phone. A parent must come to school to pick up the confiscated phone. The school will not be responsible for lost, stolen, or broken cell phones. Students may not connect to the school's wireless internet on personal devices.
27. Changes in transportation should be phoned in to the office before 2:30.
28. Our school board has supplied chromebooks for each student. Prior to being issued a chromebook, parents must sign an agreement. A \$20 fee is also required to use the devices. Students are reminded to treat the chromebooks with extreme care. Families will be responsible for intentional damage or misuse. Students' chromebooks follow them from grade to grade, so it is important that they take good care of them.

Lockers, book bags, purses, and other storage areas, containers, and packages brought into the school by students or visitors are subject to search. Any vehicle parked on school property is subject to search by school and law enforcement personnel.

BULLYING AND INTIMIDATION

Students shall be provided a safe learning environment. It shall be a violation of school board policy for any student to bully, intimidate, or create a hostile educational environment for another student. **A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself.** Southside has adopted the following rules regarding bullying: We will not bully others. We will try to help students who are bullied. We will try to include students who are left out. If we know that somebody is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home. Please contact Mrs. Hayes or Mrs. Tomerlin if you suspect that a child is being bullied.

THREATS

The safety of all students and staff is our foremost priority. It is important that students not make threatening comments toward peers or staff. TCA 39-16-517 references threats of mass violence made on school property. Students who threaten to harm others may be suspended and petitioned to court for those threats. Students should refrain from making any type of threat to avoid serious disciplinary and legal consequences.

STUDENT DIRECTION INFORMATION PROCEDURES **PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT**

PPRA protects students from being required to participate in certain surveys or activities without consent. These include surveys concerning:

- Political affiliations or beliefs
- Mental or psychological problems
- Sex behavior or attitudes
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
- Critical appraisals of close family members
- Privileged or analogous relationships (e.g., with lawyers, doctors, ministers)
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs

Parents have the right to opt their children out of surveys that are not required by law and are not related to those eight protected areas. Schools must provide notice and an opportunity for parents to opt out of any survey that is created by a third party and covers the eight protected areas. Schools cannot use student data for marketing purposes without consent. Parental consent is required for any non-emergency physical examination or screening, except those that are part of a student's regular curriculum.

Student directory information is restricted under FERPA guidelines. If you do not want the Giles County School System to disclose the types of information designated below as directory information from your student's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify your student's school in writing within two (2) weeks of receipt of notification of these provisions. The designation shall remain in effect until said student changes schools or until it is modified by the written direction of the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s).

The GCSS has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Student's address
- Telephone listing
- Major field of study
- Dates of attendance
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Degrees, honors, and awards received

FERPA

Families are provided with annual notification of their privacy rights under FERPA. Privacy rights can be found [here](#).

School records are confidential, and parents have the expectations that student records will not be shared with outside parties. Generally, schools must obtain written consent before disclosing a student's personal information. Exceptions include disclosure to school officials with a legitimate educational interest or to other schools where the student intends to enroll. Southside Elementary School will keep education records confidential and disclose information only to legally permitted individuals. Parents or eligible students have the right to review education records and request corrections. Giles County School System has adopted policies on the dissemination of student information and directory information, and GCSS ensures staff training on FERPA.

Handbook Acknowledgement

I have received a copy of the student handbook. I have read and familiarized myself with the content contained within the handbook, and I will communicate those expectations to my child.

Parent Signature _____

Date _____

This information must be completed at the beginning of the year and must be kept updated.

STUDENT INFORMATION

Student's Name _____

Parent's Name _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Father's Work Place _____ Work Phone _____

Mother's Work Place _____ Work Phone _____

Emergency Numbers _____

Emergency Information _____

Arrival/Dismissal

Morning Bus Number _____

Afternoon Bus Number _____

____ Car Rider Morning

____ Car Rider Afternoon

In case my child misses the bus or is not picked up on time he/she should:

Parents, please make a plan for your child in the event that school is dismissed early. Inform your child of this plan and indicate below.

In case of early dismissal of school, my child should:

____ Ride the bus home or other location as he/she does daily

____ Ride the bus to a different location (Specify _____)

____ My child will be picked up as he/she is daily

____ My child will be picked up by _____

Parent Signature

Date