

# Apex Friendship Elementary School

## Student/Parent Handbook

### 2024-25

*Updated 6/2024*



Home of the Shooting Stars where "Together, We SHINE."  
(Safety First, Have Respect, Include Everyone, Never Give Up, Exceed Expectations)

<https://www.wcpss.net/apexfriendships>



@AFESStars (School Twitter Account) #AFESStarsAligning

@AFESBuses (School Twitter Bus Dismissal Account)

**\*\*This document is subject to change.\*\***

## ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

The first school bell rings at 8:45 AM, at which time students are permitted to enter the building and go to their classrooms. Students are NOT permitted to enter the school before 8:45 AM unless they are enrolled in the **YMCA Before Care Program**. Registration for Before and After School can be completed at [www.YMCATriangle.org](http://www.YMCATriangle.org). Parents will have the option to register for the whole year or by individual weeks (dependent on availability). Applications for financial assistance are available [HERE](#). Question? Contact Katherine Vance, Kraft Associate of Youth Programs, at [Katherine.Vance@YMCATriangle.org](mailto:Katherine.Vance@YMCATriangle.org).

Any students arriving before 8:45 AM must remain with their parents/guardian. Students must be in their seats ready for the day at 9:15 AM.

**The school dismissal bell rings at 3:45 PM. Any transportation changes must be requested in writing by a parent or legal guardian and provided to the teacher.** If a written request is not received, your child will be transported home by their "usual" way. Please send these written requests to school with your child that morning. If you have an emergency transportation issue that cannot be requested in writing, please call the school office prior to **2:45 PM** and we will notify your child's teacher.

**Please do not send an email to the teacher during the school day to request a transportation change... your child's teacher is busy instructing and may not be able to read your email until after dismissal.**

There are three arrival/dismissal procedures at AFES; **bus, carpool, and walkers**. Please use one of these three methods to help ensure the safety of your children. All students will have a bookbag tag that designates their transportation. Please keep this tag on bookbags all year.

### **BUS TRANSPORTATION (see *Transportation heading for bus rider registration*)**

Buses arrive in the bus loop and unload students no earlier than 8:45 AM. Staff members will direct students into the building.

Buses/daycare buses depart from the bus loop at staggered times. Students riding buses home from school will be dismissed from their classroom as their bus arrives. Staff and safety patrol will ensure they board the correct bus/day care bus.

***For bus dismissal notifications, follow our bus twitter account @AFESBuses.***

**Students cannot go home on buses other than the one to which they are assigned.**

**If a child is going to another student's home after school, we must have written permission from parents and students must be picked up in carpool.**



The same behaviors that are appropriate in the classroom are expected at the school bus stop and on the school bus. Riding a school bus is a privilege that may be revoked if rules are not obeyed.

**Bus drivers will NOT release Kindergarten or 1<sup>st</sup> grade students at a bus stop unless a responsible person is present at the stop for that child.** The bus driver will bring the child back to the school office and the parent/guardian will need to come pick up that student.

If we are made aware of a change in schedule for a bus we will communicate through the @AFESBuses Twitter account. There are occasions when issues arise that cause routes to be delayed or canceled. We will do our best to communicate as soon as we are made aware of a change.

### **WCPSS Contracted CAB AND VAN TRANSPORTATION:**

Students are dropped off in the designed area near the bus loop no earlier than 8:45 AM.

Vans/cabs depart from the bus loop at staggered times. Students using this means of transportation will be escorted by their Teacher or IA to the appropriate van/cab.

### **CARPOOL TRANSPORTATION:**

Students may ONLY be dropped off in the CARPOOL LANES (at the front of the school) between 8:45 and 9:15 AM where they will be directed into the building by staff members.

- Please follow the designated traffic flow
- Be courteous and mindful of pedestrians
- Pull all the way forward and come to a complete stop before allowing students to exit vehicles
- Do not exit your vehicle in the carpool lane
- Please have your child exit from the passenger side
- Please do NOT use cell phones while in carpool lane

Students will be dismissed to carpool from the cafeteria. Families will receive a carpool tag at Meet the Teacher or when they enroll. Please have your carpool number on display in your vehicle. Please help your child to memorize their carpool number, as it will help with the flow of carpool. We will begin dismissal at 3:45.

### **4-5 WALKERS AND 4-5 BIKE RIDERS**

Fourth and Fifth grade students are permitted to be a walker unaccompanied by an adult. Fourth and Fifth grade students only are permitted to ride a bike to and from school. The school is not responsible for damage to or theft of bicycles. The school does not investigate these issues. Walkers and Bike Riders should not arrive before 8:45am and must exit the campus immediately when dismissed.

### **K-3 WALKERS**

Families who live in close proximity to the school may choose to allow their child to walk to school. K-3 students should be accompanied by an adult or a responsible sibling in 4-5 grades. Walkers meet their adult at the front of the school. Students should walk to the office if they do not see a parent so that the school can call home and inquire. Please reinforce that students should not walk home by themselves if they are in K-3 and do not have an older sibling or parent to accompany them. All walkers should not arrive before 8:45am and must exit the campus immediately when dismissed.

### **If you find it necessary to check your child out of school early, please do so before 3:15 PM.**

Due to the large number of students we have preparing for dismissal each day, we are unable to accommodate requests for early check-out **after 3:15 PM. Only individuals indicated on the child's locator card are permitted to check out students.** For the safety of all of our students, please bring a photo ID with you when you arrive to check your child out of school - our office staff will need to see a photo ID before releasing a child.

If there is an event being held in your child's classroom at the end of the day, the teacher will have a QR code to scan for parents to sign their child out directly from the classroom. If you have another child in a different classroom that you wish to check out the same day, please let the office know and they will make sure the other student and teacher is notified.

### **YMCA AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM:**

Students enrolled in the YMCA after school program go to the cafeteria when the dismissal bell rings. Registration for Before and After School can be completed at [www.YMCATriangle.org](http://www.YMCATriangle.org). Question? Contact Katherine Vance, Kraft Associate of Youth Programs, at [Katherine.Vance@YMCATriangle.org](mailto:Katherine.Vance@YMCATriangle.org).

## **ATTENDANCE/APPOINTMENTS/VACATIONS**

If your child arrives late to school you will need to come to the building with them to sign them in and have them receive a tardy slip to take to class.

### **ABSENCE:**

Attendance at school is essential for student learning. An absence from school is **only** excused for the reasons below:

*illness or injury; quarantine; death in the immediate family; medical or dental appointments; court when a student is under subpoena; religious observances; or participation in an approved educational opportunity.*

If your child is absent, please send a note to school when he/she returns indicating the reason. If we do not receive a note explaining one of the excused reasons above, we must record the absence as unexcused. To be considered present at school, students must be in attendance at least one-half of the student school day (**3 hours and 15 minutes**). Every school day is important, so we hope you will try to schedule family vacations, appointments, etc. after hours.

Any child who has been absent from school for 6 unexcused days will be notified via letter. The parent/guardian of any child who has been absent for 25 days, MAY be required to have an attendance hearing, and the parent will be notified by Wake County if such hearing occurs.

### **APPOINTMENTS:**

If a student needs to leave for an appointment during school hours, please communicate with the teacher prior to the appointment. Please try to give enough advance notice when emailing, as teachers are instructing a good part of the day and often cannot check email during the school day. Whenever possible, please try to make appointments before or after school. If a student is not present for at least 3 hours and 15 minutes on any given day, the student will be marked absent for the whole day. If you must check out your student early you must come into the office to sign them out. Please allocate enough time to sign your student out and make it to appointments in a timely manner. We do not release students prior to being signed out at the front office.

### **VACATION:**

A vacation will not be excused as an educational opportunity unless the primary purpose of the trip is educational and commensurate with the instruction the child would receive in school. The Request for Educational Leave form will need to be submitted prior to the vacation. Teachers will provide students with their make-up work either before they leave or when they return to school. All requests for educational leave must receive prior approval from the principal.

<https://www.wcpss.net/attendance-absences>

## **BIRTHDAY PARTIES/INVITATIONS/CLASS LISTS**

Birthday parties are to be held outside of school. Parents may send in invitations as long as all students receive one. You may not ask for addresses from classroom teachers. Food is not allowed to be brought into school for birthday celebrations.

## **BOOK BAGS**

We ask that students NOT use rolling book bags. They are a safety concern as large groups of children walk in the hallways and to and from the buses in the morning and afternoon. Also, there is insufficient storage space in the classrooms for rolling book bags and they are dangerous on the stairs for students in Grades 3-5.

## **BUS TIMES**

WCPSS Transportation recognizes that the bus arrival times to stops in the afternoon can vary widely. Please watch our live twitter feed or navigate to our home page to be aware of the departure times. An adult must be present at the stop for all K and 1 students. Thank you for your continued patience and understanding.

## **BUS TAGS**

If you have requested bus transportation, your child will receive a bus tag which will be attached to their backpack the first day of school. The bus driver will not permit any student to board the bus without this bus tag. If your child switches bags, please make sure you attach the bus tag to the new backpack. If your child loses their bus tag, please notify the front office to reissue another one. If your child does not ride the bus 10 consecutive days, they will be removed from the bus roster and you will need to go to our website and resubmit your transportation request.

## **CAFETERIA MEALS/ PRICES/PAYMENT**

Breakfast is served from 8:45 AM – 9:15 AM. Lunch takes place from 10:30-1:30. Teachers will share individual schedules.

We do not microwave students' lunches nor are students permitted to use microwaves in school. No canned or bottled soda drinks are permitted in the cafeteria or for snacks.

**Our intention is to eventually allow parents to come and have lunch with their child. We will communicate with you after we monitor the cafeteria space.**

You may choose to bring an outside lunch for you and your child, but it may not be shared with other students. Many of our students have allergies that you may not know about.

## **CHANGE OF ADDRESS/NAME/PHONE/EMERGENCY CONTACT**

Please notify the school office and your child's teacher any time you have a change of any pertinent information. This is very important if we would need to 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.**

## **COMMUNICATION/FRIDAY FOLDERS**

Every Friday, teachers send home Friday folders with important information that has happened during the week or that will be happening in the upcoming week. Review the contents of the folder with your child, remove items to keep, and return the folder to the teacher the following Monday.

## CONFERENCES

Teachers will schedule conferences with parents after the first and third grading periods. If additional conferences are needed, please schedule with the teacher in advance. Our teachers are committed to planning engaging and challenging lessons for all our students, and we work hard to eliminate unnecessary disruptions to the classroom during the school day. Teachers use the time before students arrive in the morning, their planning periods, and frequently their lunch breaks to plan instruction for your children. Many mornings and afternoons they are also involved in meetings. Unexpected conferences can put the teacher and children in the classroom behind. Scheduling conferences in advance will benefit your child and all the other children in the class.

## CUSTODY/VISITATION AGREEMENTS

Judges' orders regarding custody and visitation are kept on file in the school office so that staff is aware of who is authorized to pick up a child. Please make sure that the school receives an official copy of the judge's ruling, as we are not required to honor a parent/guardian's interpretation of a court order. For students whose parents have joint custody, the school is not responsible for managing what day the child is allowed to go home with which parent. That is the responsibility of the family. Any changes in court orders should be given to the office as soon as possible. The data manager is the contact for custody/visitation agreements.

## DELAY OR CLOSING OF SCHOOL/MAKE UP DAYS

Information on closing or delay of school due to inclement weather is available at <http://www.wcpss.net/>, on local television, WCPSS twitter page, and radio.



If there is any kind of school delay, (1, 2 or 3 hour) **please do not bring your child to school early. The decision to delay school due to severe weather is for the safety of staff as well as students, and no one will be here to supervise your children.**

**\*\* YMCA does not operate on delay or early release days due to inclement weather. Parents will need to make arrangements for arrival or dismissal on these inclement weather days and notify the school of changes. \*\***

When school is closed due to severe weather, the district will announce make-up days as outlined on the district calendar.

## DOGS

Families walking to school to pick up their child should not bring dogs on campus.

## DRESS CODE

Appropriate dress is necessary in order to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning and safety. Please review the Dress Code policy approved by the WCPSS School Board at <https://www.wcpss.net/domain/50>

## ELEVATOR

Please contact the Assistant Principal to request elevator use for your Grades 3-5 child in the event they have a special need.

## EARLY MORNING, EVENING, & WEEKEND EVENTS

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

## EARLY CHECKOUTS AT AFES

We end early student checkout 30 minutes prior to school dismissal. On regular school days, the early check out time ends at 3:15 and on Early Release Days, the early check out time ends at 1:15. Thank you in advance for your understanding as the end of the school day is busy time for us, and we need to ensure that this process is smooth.

## FIRE DRILLS / SEVERE WEATHER DRILLS / LOCKDOWN DRILLS

Fire drills are conducted monthly during the school year. Evacuation routes are posted in each classroom and around the school. Severe Weather drills and lockdown drills are also practiced throughout the year. In the event of severe weather warnings, we require all students and staff members to take shelter until conditions improve.

## HOMEWORK POLICY

Students work hard during the school day. When at home, the expectation is that students read nightly for approximately 10-20 minutes depending on the age of your child. Teachers will share occasional resources such as math facts or other skills that can be practiced at home. Anything sent home is optional. If you need more resources for working with your child at home, please talk with your child's teacher.

## Important School Contacts:

<b>Apex Friendship Elementary School Office</b>	919-694-8454
<b>Principal</b>	Dr. Tanner Gamble <a href="mailto:mgamble@wcpss.net">mgamble@wcpss.net</a>
<b>Assistant Principal</b>	Michele Eisenberg <a href="mailto:meisenberg@wcpss.net">meisenberg@wcpss.net</a> Diann Tucker <a href="mailto:dtucker@wcpss.net">dtucker@wcpss.net</a>
<b>Lead Secretary</b>	Stephanie Banks
<b>Data Manager/Attendance</b>	Angie Middleton <a href="mailto:amiddleton@wcpss.net">amiddleton@wcpss.net</a>
<b>Receptionist/Health Room</b>	Jamie Rogan <a href="mailto:jrogan@wcpss.net">jrogan@wcpss.net</a>
<b>Child Nutrition Services</b>	Rhonda Amato <a href="mailto:ramato@wcpss.net">ramato@wcpss.net</a>

Counseling/Guidance Services

Erin Mills [emills@wcpss.net](mailto:emills@wcpss.net)

Lisa Mize [lmize@wcpss.net](mailto:lmize@wcpss.net)

PTA President

Alison Edmonds [carolinagirlali@yahoo.com](mailto:carolinagirlali@yahoo.com)

Nurse

Sherry Davis [sdavis9@wcpss.net](mailto:sdavis9@wcpss.net)

## DEVICE AND INTERNET USE



School computers, iPad and Chromebooks will be used only for instructional purposes. Your child's teacher monitors and approves educational websites that the students are permitted to view. There are certain blocks on websites that will not permit entry. Students should also only be using WCPSS Chromebooks at home for education purposes. Misuse of these devices may result in disciplinary action and revoking privileges.

## INTERRUPTIONS/UNSCHEDULED VISITS

Visitors to the classroom are permitted if the teacher is aware of your visit and purpose. If a lunch box, homework, glasses, project, or other item of a student has been forgotten at home and is brought to school by a parent, please ring the front bell and a staff member will assist you. The student will be called down to the office. Parents are not permitted to walk to the classroom.

## LATE ARRIVALS AND EARLY DEPARTURES

We recognize there are many circumstances that require a student to arrive or depart late from school. Please be aware that repeated instances do impact the day. Thanks for your partnership in minimizing these when possible.

Our carpool ends by 4:10 each day. Students who remain on campus after carpool will be moved into the front office area. Parents will need to come into the school and sign them out. Please call the office and let us know if you are going to be late due to an emergency or extenuating circumstance.

## 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, radios, or sports equipment etc. to school unless prior written approval has been communicated directly from a child's teacher. We will not assume responsibility for the security of such items.. If your child has lost an item, please encourage him or her to check this area as soon as possible. Clothing and other items not claimed by the end of each academic quarter will be donated to charity.

## LUNCH WITH PARENTS

Beginning in October each year, you may eat lunch with your child. Please arrive at school before your child's scheduled lunch time. After signing in at the main office, please wait for your child in the vestibule area. Your child can come join you and then you can eat outside on the blue picnic tables.



We do not have an option to eat with your child indoors. Students are not able to invite a friend to eat lunch for safety reasons. Students will need to reenter the school using the main door.

## MEDICATION/SICK CHILDREN

### **\*Do not give your child medication and send them to school\***

If your child is sick, please keep him or her at home so as not to spread germs in the classroom. 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 red, watery eyes with yellow drainage
- They have an undiagnosed rash
- They have live lice



**Parents: please provide the school with the best phone number to contact you during the hours between 8 AM – 5 PM each weekday in the event of student illness. If your phone number changes, please give us updated information.**

Students who need medications during the school day must have their parents submit to the health room a signed **Physician Order for Medication (Form 1702)** from a doctor. These 1702 forms are available on the wcpss website at <https://www.wcpss.net/Page/167>. This two page form must be signed by a doctor and submitted with the medication to the main office beginning on Open House. Medications will be received by the Receptionist.

Elementary age students may not have any medication with them and that includes over the counter medication and cough drops.

## APEX FRIENDSHIP ELEMENTARY REINFORCEMENT SYSTEM

As a PBIS (**Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support**) school we want to encourage students to work together more frequently and hold each other accountable in an effort to ensure that all students are following the SHINE behavior expectations.

## PARENT PORTAL

Home Base gives parents and students access to real-time information including attendance and bus information. With Home Base, powered by PowerSchool application, everyone stays connected. Families with multiple students can also set up their accounts to view all of their students at one time, with one login. Please apply for access information by filling out the form and returning to your child's school to receive your access information.

<https://www.wcpss.net/cms/lib/NC01911451/Centricity/Domain/69/parent-portal-hand-delivery.pdf>

## **PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)**

Apex Friendship Elementary parents are encouraged to join the PTA. The PTA provides a great deal of support to the school and our students. They also organize many of the “extras” that make school fun, such as cultural arts assemblies, spirit wear, family nights, book fairs, carnival, movie nights and much more. Parents interested in participating on PTA committees should look for more information in the newsletter or visit the PTA link on our school website.

## **SCHOOL NURSE**

Apex Friendship Elementary has a school nurse assigned from the Wake County Health Department who is on campus two to three days each week. The school nurse provides vision screenings for students who have been identified as a risk. The nurse also creates health plans due to medical conditions and case manages students in a group setting. Specific office staff have received appropriate training to dispense medications and care for students with medical needs, as well.

## **STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

Since Apex Friendship Elementary is a PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Support) model school, we teach students appropriate behavior, motivate students to demonstrate good character, and make good choices. We encourage these behaviors by recognizing outstanding individuals 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. Please refer to our SHINE expectations for specific information.

***All students are responsible for complying with and are expected to be familiar with the WCPSS Code of Student Conduct and school board policies governing student behavior and conduct. All Code of Student Conduct policies are contained in the WCPSS Student/Parent Handbook, which is distributed to all students and parents at the beginning of each school year or upon enrollment in the WCPSS. If there is a conflict between the rules expressed in this handbook/agenda/planner and the Code of Student Conduct policies, the WCPSS Code of Student Conduct policies shall take precedence.***

## **STUDENT CELL PHONE POLICY**

Students are only allowed to have cell phones on school grounds if they are turned completely off and kept in their backpack. Students are not allowed to use their cellphones during school hours or on the school bus. If a student has a smartwatch, that device must be turned on Airplane mode in order to disable text messages and phone calls from being received by the watch/device. The watch is considered a cell phone UNLESS airplane mode is activated. Otherwise, all smart watches will need to be powered off and placed in backpacks as well.

## **STUDENT NAME AND PHOTO/VIDEO PRIVACY RELEASE**

Every parent who enrolls a child at Apex Friendship Elementary completes a Student Name and Photo/Video Privacy Release form giving permission, (or not), for us to use a picture of your child and their name in social media (e.g. our website, Twitter). This form is kept in your child’s cumulative folder and is good for the entire time he/she attends Apex Friendship Elementary. You may change your preference at any time by contacting the Data Manager..

## **TOBACCO-FREE SCHOOLS**

The policy of the Wake County Public School System is all school property is a smoke-free and electronic cigarette-free environment. This policy is intended to promote a healthy working and learning atmosphere, and applies to all students, employees and visitors of the school system.

## TOYS/ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students may not bring toys of any kind to school, unless it is preapproved by the teacher for a special event. Toys brought must be kept in book bags for the rest of the school day. School personnel cannot be responsible for the safety of any toys or electronic devices brought to school. Electronic devices such as iPads, iPods, DS systems, etc, are not permitted at school. Trading cards also should remain at home. Please encourage your child to keep these items safely at home so that nothing can happen to them at school and so that they can focus on learning. If you feel your child must have a cell phone, they may leave it in their backpack.

## UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Due to the enrollment cap effective 2/21/23, students who are absent for 10 or more consecutive unexcused days, may be unenrolled from AFES. This is the policy for capped schools. If your child is unenrolled, you will be required to re-register. If a seat is not available, you may be sent to Baucom at Wood's Creek. Please plan extended trips accordingly for the remainder of this year and for the 2023-2024 school year. More information about attendance can be found here:

<https://www.wcpss.net/attendance-absences>

## VANDALISM/PROPERTY DAMAGE

Students who destroy or vandalize school property will be required to pay for the losses and damages. Damage often results from horseplay in the corridors or rooms and students are liable for either accidental or malicious damage.

## VISITORS / VOLUNTEERS

All visitors after 8:30 AM and before 4:15 PM are required to sign in and wear a visitor's badge.

Volunteer Registration is only necessary if you are going to be working with students alone or chaperoning a group of students by yourself on a field trip. Not all parents may need to complete the volunteer registration process.

Parents and members of the school community are always welcome at Apex Friendship Elementary. Please understand that our first priority must be student safety and learning. Please only enter through the front entrance. When you arrive, ring the doorbell and enter the security vestibule. Please use your phone to scan the QR code for check-in/check-out and present your license or a picture ID. If you do not have a phone, a device will be provided for check-in/check-out. Please continue to bring your ID with you to school until we recognize you.

Visits to classrooms and conferences with teachers should **always** be scheduled in advance so as not to disrupt the instructional program. If a lunch box, homework, or other item of a student has been forgotten at home and is brought to school, please leave it in the office. We will make sure it gets to the right place. This process will make it easier for everyone and protect classroom learning time.

Volunteers make a positive impact on the quality of programs at Apex Friendship Elementary. Please make arrangements in advance with your child's teacher. In order for you to give your full attention to your volunteer responsibilities, please do not bring younger siblings. Parents who attend school

functions during the school day should not bring younger non-school aged children due to liability issues and to ensure student safety. Any hardships can be directed to the principal for consideration.

If you have not registered to be a volunteer you must complete the volunteer registration form for the Wake County Public School System, which includes an approved criminal background check. The registration has to be completed at a Wake County Public School site. To protect all children, this must be completed prior to participating in any volunteer activities. When we begin receiving visitors you may complete the registration at Apex Friendship Elementary in the front office between the hours of 9:15-3:15, Monday through Friday. Ask office staff if you need assistance.

Please note that you have to renew your visitor registration every school year!

When volunteering, sign-in at the computer station in the office and wear your badge at all times. Please do not park your car in the carpool lane and leave it unattended as this creates a fire safety violation. You may park in any vacant parking spaces in any of the parking lots.