

**WEST ELEMENTARY
STUDENT HANDBOOK
2017-2018**



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“Real Warriors, with Pride and Power to Achieve”

Mission Statement

The mission of West Elementary School is to create a total educational experience that allows all students to excel academically, grow emotionally and socially, and become lifelong learners who demonstrate useful decision-making skills.

Common Beliefs

We believe all students can learn, achieve, and succeed.

We believe students learn in different ways and should be provided with a variety of research-based instruction to enable success.

We believe that assessment should be data-driven, developmental, outcome-based, and provide guidance for program improvement.

We believe all students should develop a healthy self-concept and social relationships.

We believe the active participation, communication, and support of our community is vital to advance our mission.

Warrior Expectations and Goals

Prepared

Respect

Integrity

Develop Leadership

Ensure Safety of All

School Hours

Doors open for students at 7:15 a.m. Students may choose to eat breakfast from 7:15 a.m.-7:45 a.m. All students will be dismissed from gym/cafeteria at 7:50 to go to their classrooms. The tardy bell rings at 8:05 a.m. any student who enters the building after 8:05 a.m. must report to the office, and get a tardy slip before entering the classroom. Students are considered tardy if they are not in their classroom before 8:05. **All parents/visitors must sign in at the office and have an appointment before entering the learning area. Please understand that we must guard our instructional time and school structure. ONLY Parents of Pre-K and Kindergarten students will be allowed to walk students to class during the first week of school.**

Parent Communication

Communication between the school and home is vital to student success. Students in K-1 will have a parent communication folder, and 2nd – 5th grade will have a student planner. Please check the folder/planner daily for important information and notes. Important notes from the school will be copied on yellow paper. Parent Portal is available to check student's attendance and grades. School Messenger is also available, this service allows for the school system to send you text/voice messages.

Cafeteria

Students receive a free healthy breakfast every day, and they may purchase a healthy lunch each day. Breakfast is served from 7:15 a.m. until 7:45 a.m. each morning.

Parents are expected to keep up with students' accounts in the cafeteria. Hamblen County Board Policy does not allow students to charge lunch. In emergency situations only, a student may be allowed to charge up to 3 days for lunch. After three days, a student may receive an alternate meal until the charges are paid.

After Labor Day, Parents/Grandparents/Guardians are invited to eat lunch with students on the first and third Tuesday of each month, unless otherwise noted. Any parent wanting to eat lunch at school with his/her child will be expected to show a photo ID. No other students are allowed to eat with guests. Restaurant food is not allowed. Students are not permitted to have guests for breakfast.

Afternoon Dismissal

Each school year you mark how your child will go home on the registration form. This is your child's "usual" way they go home. If you need to change their "usual" way home a note must be sent, or a phone call to the school office must be made. If we do not receive a note/phone call they will be sent home their "usual" way. The office will verify all notes sent from home.

Bus Riders

Students will only be allowed to exit the bus at their designated bus stop. If you need to make a change in where your child will get off the bus please contact the school office.

Bus drivers will not accept notes from parents; these must be sent to the school office for confirmation.

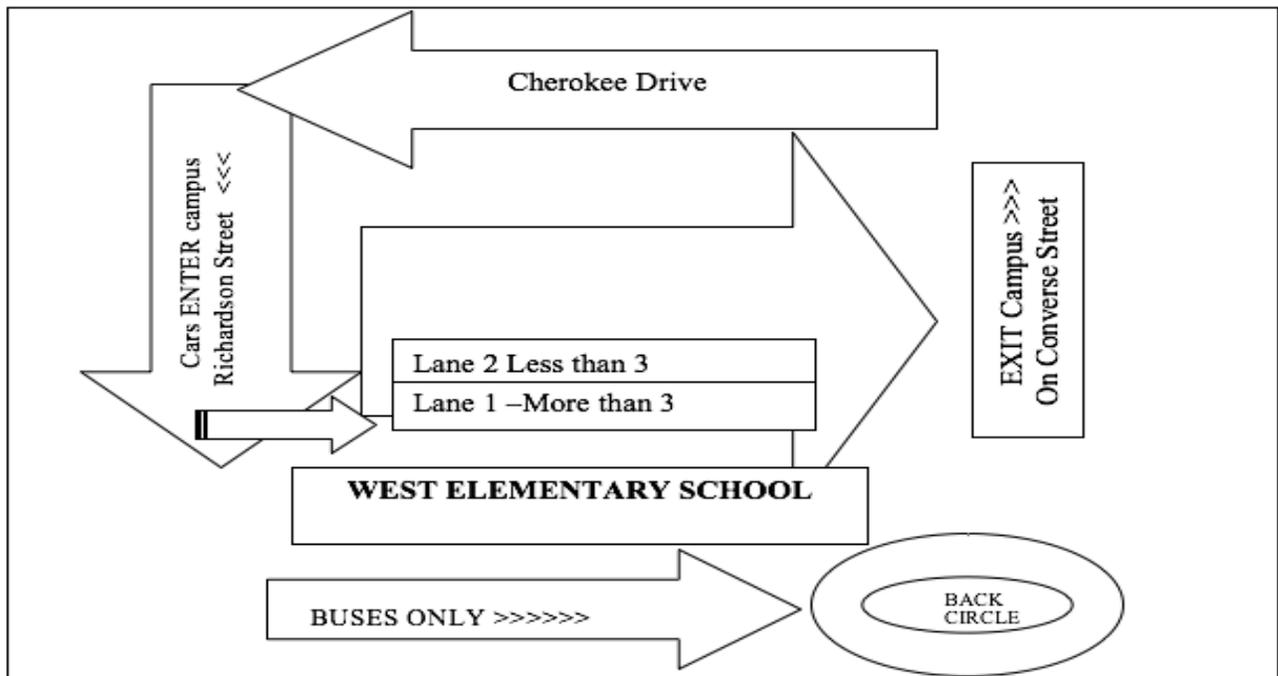
Walkers

Students who walk home will be dismissed at 3:15. Only those students who walk to their homes should be walkers. If you plan on meeting your walking child then you must do so off the school's campus.

Car Riders

- ❖ Car Riders are dismissed at 3:00 p.m. All car riders must be picked up by 3:20. If you are unable to be here by 3:20 you can enroll your student into after school care provided by ESP, or they can ride a bus home. Our office staff can provide you with ESP information if you are interested.
- ❖ **Display your West Elementary car tag from your rear-view mirror, and leave hanging until your child is loaded in the car.** This identifies you as an authorized person to pick up a student. **If you do not have your car tag displayed, you will be asked to park and go into the school to sign them out.** This is for your child's safety.
- ❖ Please do not use your cell phone while in line.
- ❖ For safer loading, if you are loading 3 or more children use the inside lane.
- ❖ **Parents should stay in your vehicle and wait for your child to be dismissed with car riders at 3:00. Please do not wait in the office, foyer, or on the front steps for your child. If you need to pick your child up early, please do so before 2:45 this is for safety reasons and to reduce confusion at dismissal.**

Please follow the traffic patterns that are set up by school officials. All cars are to enter the campus from Richardson Street, and exit down Converse Street. No cars are allowed to enter the road at the rear of the building. All car riders will be in the FRONT of the school. Please follow traffic pattern as shown.



Bus Transportation

State law does not require school bus transportation, but is a privilege extended to students by the department of education. Misconduct on the bus endangers safety and will result in a loss of this privilege.

First Offense:	Warning
Second Offense:	Five days off the bus
Third Offense:	Fifteen days off the bus
Fourth Offense:	Thirty Days off the bus
Fifth Offense:	One Calendar Year Off the Bus

Students are expected to remain seated while the bus is in motion and behave appropriately. Parents are responsible for the transportation of their child in the event a child is suspended from the bus.

Any student riding home with a friend must have a parent note with phone number, signed for approval by the principal/office personnel before boarding the bus. Confirmation will be made by phone, and a principal will sign an official form confirming the transportation change.

Pre-K drop off/pick up

Pre-K drop off begins at 7:25 a.m. Pre-K will drop in their designated area only. Pre-K Students will begin loading at 2:40 p.m. in the back circle. Teachers will walk, and load students in cars. Please remain inside of your car to allow for faster dismissal. All Pre-K students should be picked up by 2:50 p.m. Parents are required to sign in/out daily.

Attendance

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Absences are classified as either excused or unexcused as determined by the principal or designee in charge of attendance. When a student is absent, the parent or guardian shall contact the school. Upon return to the school, the student must present a note signed by the parent/guardian. The principal or attendance designee will determine if student notes are valid.

A student is excused for the day or days absent, but not from the responsibility for the material covered in class. It is therefore the responsibility of the student, not the teacher, for make-up work in all subject matters covered during the absence.

Absences shall be excused for:

1. Personal illness; parent/guardian signed note shall be accepted for five (5) days for each semester; after five (5) days a physician statement shall be required.
2. Death in the immediate family; not to exceed three (3) days.
3. Illness of parent/guardian requiring temporary help; physician's statement required.
4. Recognized religious holidays.
5. Court summons; only time actually in court shall be excused.

6. Absences approved by the principal (if, after consulting with the parent/guardian, the principal agrees that the absence is legitimate, the absence may be excused).

When a student returns to school following an absence, the student MUST bring a signed note by the parent/doctor.

Without a note, the absence will be classified as unexcused.

Absences due to a student's personal illness can be excused by a parent for up to a maximum of 5 school days each semester. Beyond this limit, a medical statement is required from a physician. Excessive absences will result in a home visit from the attendance coordinator and a referral to the Hamblen County Attendance Review Committee.

A student must be present for a minimum of three hours and sixteen minutes to be counted present for the whole day. Therefore, a student must be present until 11:37 a.m. in order for the day to count.

** When a student has accrued 3 unexcused absences, the principal or attendance coordinator will send a letter. At 4 unexcused absences, the attendance coordinator will contact parents and a contract will be set up. Continuous absences are subject to the Attendance Committee and possible referral to court. **

Excused and Unexcused Tardies/Early Dismissals

Students are considered tardy if they arrive to school after the bell rings at 8:05, or are signed out before 3:00.

1. Excused tardies/early dismissals
 - a. Late Bus
 - b. Illness with doctor's note
 - c. Death in family
 - d. Religious holiday
 - e. Medical/dental appointment (with a doctor's note)
2. Unexcused tardies/early dismissals
 - a. Tardy # 3 Parent contact by mail
 - b. Tardy # 6 Loss of perfect attendance, parent contact by attendance designee
 - c. Tardy # 10 Referral to juvenile court

If you sign your child out of school early it is considered an early dismissal. If you need to pick your child up early for an appointment, please do so before 2:45 to avoid traffic and confusion at dismissal. If it is after 2:45 you will need to be in the car line, or meet your child at their regular bus stop. Excessive unexcused early dismissals are included in Hamblen County's Attendance Policy and have consequences. Please do not sign your child out of school early to avoid waiting in the car line.

Athletics

West Elementary School offers both boys and girls' basketball and cheerleading. Games begin in November. Students who desire to try out for basketball and cheerleading must have an overall "C" average and no failing grades in the core academic areas. WES students must maintain these academic standards. An annual physical is required to try out for athletics at WES.

School Events

Students are encouraged to attend school events such as basketball games and school programs. Students must be accompanied by an adult and follow school rules while in attendance.

Organizations

4-H Club

Every fourth and fifth grade student has the opportunity to join 4-H Club. The mission of 4-H is to empower youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnership with caring adults. Membership is free and optional. The students will meet once a month to work on projects for posters/speech contests, baking and other science/consumer related curriculum.

Beta Club

Beta is an organization based on grades/behavior. Fourth and Fifth grade students are eligible to join this club. The mission of Beta Club is to promote the ideals of academic achievement, character, service, and leadership among elementary and secondary adults.

At the conclusion of the second six weeks the students grade cards will be analyzed to see who is eligible to join the club. Students who are eligible for Beta will be notified by letter. Dues are \$20.00, and membership is optional.

Band

Fifth grade students have the opportunity to participate in band. Band meets twice a week during school hours. This program is for students to explore their interest in musical instruments. Students will play in 2 concerts, and build a foundation for participation in band classes in middle school. Students are required to provide their own instrument, and participation is optional.

Safety Patrol

AAA is the supporting sponsor of Safety Patrol. Safety Patrol is a program that has been helping students since 1920. Students who participate in safety patrol gain safety awareness, leadership, teamwork, pride citizenship, and respect for law enforcement. Fifth grade students are eligible for safety patrol, and their teachers select the patrol officers. Students who have been selected will be notified by mail. Membership is optional and there is no cost for students to join.

Classroom Celebrations

We do not have birthday parties in the classroom. One time per month, students with birthdays will be called to the office for a celebration of their special day. Three parties are allowed each year. Teachers will send home information as needed for these events. Parents may occasionally send in snacks for the entire class. All outside food should be store bought, including cupcakes.

Conferences

Parent conferences are very important to the success of your child. The school or parent may call or write and request a meeting at any time. Please make an appointment with the teacher at least 24 hours prior to your requested visit. Teachers are not available to meet everyday or during instructional time. School-wide conferences will be scheduled in the fall and spring.

Custody Issues

Should there be a change in normal custodial arrangements for your child/children, it is imperative the principal be informed as soon as possible. A legal copy signed by the judge must be included in the documentation with custodial rights. A parenting plan will be kept on file in the office.

Discipline

The Hamblen County School System uses a system-wide discipline plan, called Assertive Discipline, which will afford every student guidance in making good decisions about their behavior, and thus an opportunity to learn in a positive, nurturing classroom environment. The plan below outlines our classroom rules and consequences for appropriate and inappropriate behavior. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful manner. Any threat to a staff member or another student will be taken seriously.

Classroom Rules

1. Follow directions the first time given.
2. Be prepared and ready to work with all materials.
3. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
4. Remain seated until given permission to get up.
5. Be respectful to others and the learning environment.

To encourage students to follow the classroom rules, teachers reinforce appropriate behavior with praise; "good news" notes home, positive phone calls, special privileges, and other rewards.

Severe Clause: Students may be sent immediately to the principal for fighting, profanity, vandalism, stealing, or refusal to follow teacher's instructions. The principal may assign loss of privileges, detention, or suspension. Detentions will be assigned up to one hour and parents will be required to pick up their child at the end of the detention. We believe that no student has the right to prevent any teacher from teaching, or to prevent any other student from learning, due to misconduct.

In severe forms of misconduct, including assault of a staff member, weapons, presence of alcohol or drugs, or repeated mis-behavior disrupting the learning environment, a student may be placed in the alternative school for a minimum of 45 days or recommended for expulsion from school.

Board Policies

Board Policies concerning student conduct are included in this handbook. Changes in board policy may occur during a school year. The public may view the Hamblen County School Board policies on the systems' website at: www.hcboe.net

Bullying Policy

Bullying happens when someone with more power unfairly hurts someone with less power. Power may be physical strength, social skills, verbal ability, or other resources. The teacher and the guidance counselor will try to help students who feel bullied by others. Students who commit bullying offenses will be given the opportunity to make better choices. If behavior persists, parents will be contacted and the principal may set up a conference. Bullying will not be tolerated.

Students shall be provided a safe learning environment. It shall be a violation of HCBOE policy for any student to bully, intimidate, or create a hostile educational environment for another student. Harassment, bullying, and intimidation occurs if the act takes place on school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided equipment or transportation or at any official school bus stop if the act either physically harms a student or damages his/her property or knowingly places the student in reasonable fear of such, causes emotional distress to a student or students, or creates a hostile educational environment. If the act takes place off school property or outside of a school-sponsored activity, an act of harassment, bullying, or intimidation occurs if the act is directed specifically at a student or students and has the effect of creating a hostile educational environment or otherwise creating a substantial disruption to the education environment or learning process. These acts may also take place through electronic means.

Discrimination/Harassment

Students shall be provided a learning environment free from sexual, racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination/harassment. It shall be a violation of HCBOE policy for any employee or any student to discriminate against or harass a student through disparaging conduct or communication that is sexual, racial, ethnic, or religious in nature.

Dress Code

All pants must be hemmed and worn at the waist. No saggy pants. Skirts, shorts and dresses must be at least mid-thigh length. Shirts and blouses must be appropriately fitted. Tank tops are not permitted. Girls are not to wear thin-strapped tops. Shoes, sneakers, and sandals with a back strap are allowed, but flip-flops are not. Facial jewelry will be limited to the ear with no more than 3 piercings per ear. The display of any symbol that promotes racial discord or gang activity is prohibited. The Principal has the right to determine if dress is inappropriate if not specifically covered in this policy.

Electronic Devices

Pre-K – 5 Students may not possess pagers, cell phones, games, or any other electronic device. Parents that share custody must arrange for items to be exchanged outside of school. Every classroom has a phone in case of an emergency. Hamblen County Policy for cell phones: Possession of a cell phone will result in an office referral, confiscation of the phone for 7 days or a fee of \$50.00 to be picked up early by a parent/guardian. Second offense is an office referral, 14 days or \$100.00 for early pick-up, and third offense results in 45 days Alternative School placement.

Emergency Evacuation Instructions

Emergency drills will be practiced on a regular basis. Students are instructed to listen quietly and follow teacher's instructions.

In the event of an evacuation from the school, students would board buses and be taken a safe location. The location could be another school or a place designated by the Director of Schools. Emergency personnel for the safety of all staff and students would block off streets leading to the school.

Field Trips

Every student is encouraged to attend field trips. Parents will be informed with details in advance of the trip. Every student must have a signed permission slip and pay in cash (no checks) in order to attend a trip. Permission slips and money are due three days prior to the trip. The school must meet deadlines and send information, money and counts in order to attend certain events. In some cases, parents may be asked to chaperone the trip. We do not encourage parents to take younger siblings nor allow other friends on school-sponsored trips. In some cases, due to space availability, some parents may not be able to attend a field trip. All students MUST ride the bus on a field trip in order to be counted present at school.

Health Conditions

The school has a nurse that takes care of students who are in need of medical attention. Any student needing to take an over-the-counter medicine MUST have a medical form from the office and include the original packaging/bottle. Any student needing to take a prescription medication MUST have a medical form signed by a doctor, and medicine MUST be transported by parent to/from the school. Students are not to bring medication to school. A medical form may be obtained in the school office.

Students with any contagious health ailments cannot be sent to school until the condition is properly treated and no longer contagious. Routine head checks are done several times during the year to identify children with lice. Any student found to have nits or bugs will be sent home. A student may receive 2 excused days per year if identified with lice.

Library Privileges

Students may check out books from the library weekly. Students are responsible for taking care of the books and returning them in a timely manner. Any student who misplaces a book will not be allowed to check out another book until the lost book is found or payment is received for it.

Notification of Unsafe Schools

Under the Tennessee State Board of Education's Unsafe School Choice Policy, as required by the No Child Left Behind Act, any public school student who is the victim of a violent crime as defined under the TCA 40-38-111(g), or the attempt to commit one of these offenses as defined under TCA 30-12-101, will be providing an opportunity to transfer to another grade-level appropriate school within the district. Additional information may be obtained through the Hamblen County Board of Education.

Personal Property

Certain items should be left at home. These include, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: trading/game cards, CDs, radios, tape recorders, electronic devices, toys, make-up, rubber bands, distractive jewelry and Silly Bandz. Teachers are directed to confiscate these items and take proper disciplinary action.

Parent Teacher Organization

The West Elementary PTO is an important part of our school. Many of the funds raised by the organization may be used to purchase items to support programs for the school. All interested parents are encouraged to become active members and volunteer to help out with school committees. A sign-up sheet is sent home during the first month of school. In the event parents and grandparents would like to help, they may call the school office or send a note to the classroom teacher. PTO membership is FREE. The meetings are held 3 times a year.

Pets

Pets may not be kept in the classroom due to health and safety regulations. Parents MUST have approval from the teacher/principal before bringing a pet to school. All pets must be kept in a cage or on a leash. Students are not permitted to pet animals. Parents bringing animals along for student pick-up should keep them in the vehicle.

Physical Education

The physical education program provides organized activities planned and directed by a certified physical education teacher. No child will be excused from participation in class unless a written note is presented or the teacher/principal feels it is necessary. Prolonged excused must have a doctor's recommendation for exclusion (in excess of 3 days). Students should wear tennis shoes in gym class.

School Payments

All transactions for field trips, school fees, book orders, athletic events, and fundraising MUST be in the form of cash only. The school office does not accept checks for payments under \$20.00. The supply fee is \$12.00. Online payments can now be made for most all fees.

Parent Portal

Parent portal is a great tool to keep you informed concerning your student. Parent Portal information may be picked up through the office. The secretary has the student username and password and it can only be given to the parent or guardian.