



2020-2021  
Dr. Thomas L. Higdon  
Elementary School  
Parent Handbook

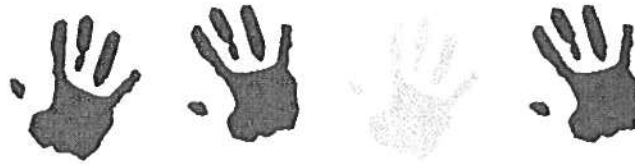
Principal: Mrs. Kathleen Morgan  
Vice Principal: Dr. Shannon Finnegan

Phone: 301-934-4091 or 301-753-1766  
Fax: 301-934-1718

Address: 12872 Rock Point Road  
Newburg, Maryland 20664

*Parents/Guardians,*

*Please be advised that due to the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic, traditional guidance provided in this handbook, including but not limited to grading, attendance and behavior expectations, may be subject to change or different interpretation during the school year without advance notice. In the event of necessary adjustments, any decisions by the school's administration may supersede the information contained in this handbook.*



# Dr. Thomas L. Higdon Elementary Parent/Student Handbook

## Principal's Corner - A Message From Mrs. Morgan

### Dear Parents & Students,

This handbook has been designed to help families become familiar with Dr. Higdon's procedures, expectations and academic requirements. Although we will be starting the school year with distance learning, our commitment is to meet the needs of all students through live lessons that the teachers will do to engage students. Our mission is to create a learning climate for all students to become the best that they can be through teaching and learning.

### School Hours:

The school day starts at 9:10 A.M. The doors open at 9:00 A.M. and students can report to their home-rooms. Students arriving after 9:10 A.M. are considered tardy and need to be signed in by a parent and a tardy slip will be issued. It is very important that students arrive on time to ensure a good start to the day.

Regular school attendance is important for students' school success. Parents can help to ensure that each child attends school regularly and on time!



### Home & School Communication:

All students will be provided with a Thursday Take Home folder. The Thursday folders are used to send home information for parents/guardians to read and review. When school resumes, the folders will be returned to school each week to the child's homeroom teacher. Students in Grades 2-5 will be provided with Agenda Books (\$5.00 each) that are used to record homework and notes from the child's teacher to the parent.

### Transportation

Bus information and schedules will be available at [www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com) under the link for parents and community. The bus information is no longer mailed to families but is available on the CCPS website for reference starting in August.

### PTO Membership

Parents are encouraged to join the PTO. Our PTO Officers are working to plan activities for this new year to help get our families connected and involved with the school!

### President:

Mrs. Swann

VP: Mrs. Shasho-Clark

Secretary:  
Mrs. Immler

Treasurer: Ms. Kelly

Staff Liaison: Ms. White

### PBIS Behavior Program:

Our PBIS Program is incorporated into our school-wide rules and expectations centered around positive discipline strategies and rewards to help shape student's behaviors. Homeroom teachers will be using a program called, *Move This World* to help students grow in their use of strategies to promote positive behaviors and relationships. *Move this World* activities provide social emotional learning with the use of interactive videos, movement, and creative expression to help students and teachers develop emotional intelligence skills for long-term wellbeing.

Additional information can be found in the Parent Handbook about specific PBIS rules and guidelines.

School Mascot: Husky (dog)

School Colors: Burgundy & Gray



Please keep this booklet and refer to it when you have questions. It takes the school, parents and the students working together to make a successful school program!

## "Husky News"



### Office Staff

Principal:

Mrs. Morgan

Vice Principal:

Dr. Finnegan

Principal's Secretary:  
Mrs. Parker

Attendance Secretary:  
Mrs. Butler

School Nurse:  
Mrs. Chappelle

Counselor:

Ms. Fretwell



### School Hours

9:10-3:40 P.M.

(K through Grade 5)

\*\*2 Hour Early Dismissals  
Students are dismissed at  
1:40 P.M.

\* Car riders are dismissed  
after buses each day.

Office Phone Number:

301-934-4091 or

301-753-1766

Office Fax Number:

301-934-1718

## Attendance

Regular attendance at school is necessary for children to receive the maximum benefit of learning. Children should be in school at all times except in the case of illness, medical or dental appointments, family emergency or certain religious holidays. When a child is absent from school, he/she must bring a note written by parent or guardian (or doctor note), stating dates and reasons for the absence. These notes are to be given to the child's teacher.

**School begins at 9:10 a.m. Our school hours are 9:10 a.m. to 3:40 p.m. for students in Kindergarten through Grade 5.** It is important that children arrive at school on time each day. When a child arrives late and misses instruction, it makes adjusting to routines more difficult. If a child arrives at school after school begins, he/she should report to the office with his/her parent, where the attendance report will be changed from absent to tardy.

If your child frequently complains of being ill but there are no physical symptoms, we encourage you to send your child to school and to alert the school nurse. If this pattern continues, please come in and see us; more than likely there is a problem which needs to be addressed. If your child is not feeling well and would be better off in bed, please don't send him/her to school.

It is our goal to work with families and we offer classroom incentives when classrooms have had 10 days of exemplary attendance.

The Charles County Board of Education adopted an attendance policy which has been in effect since September, 1985. The policy emphasizes consistent monitoring of absences, increased parent involvement in attendance matters and improved student attendance.

Parents are encouraged to maintain up-to-date information regarding residency and/or health issues pertaining to their child. Mrs. Butler (Attendance Secretary) should be notified of any changes.



## Attendance Policy:

1. **Parents are expected to give written excuses to the school for the purpose of coding absences.**

2. **The school and CCPS will take specific steps to monitor absences. They are:**

- **After 5 absences**, the school will notify the parents by letter stating the system-wide requirements.
- **After 10 absences**, a letter will be issued informing the parents that the case will be referred to the Administration; the Vice Principal, PPW and/or Principal will contact the parent by phone or schedule to meet the parent and student to develop a plan to improve attendance.
- **After 15 absences**, a letter will be issued to the parent and the student's case will be referred to the school's pupil personnel worker (PPW) and the plan will be re-evaluated.
- **After 20 absences**, the student and parents will attend a hearing held at the Board of Education and the Hearing Officer and the parent will be informed that the case may be referred to the MD State Attorney's Office for review.

3. Exceptions to this policy would be granted to students on Home & Hospital, students enrolled in the Chronically Health Impaired Program (CHIP) or those who have a medical excuse written by a doctor.

*Automated phone messages are sent out two times a day for absences and AM/PM tardies.*

The Charles County Board of Education requires students to attend schools in their geographical attendance zone. The request for the transfer of a student to another school must meet the regulations of the superintendent and be approved through Student Services.

## Bus Behavior

Riding the bus to and from school is a privilege. We expect children riding the bus to

behave in a polite and dignified manner. Inappropriate behavior on the school bus is considered serious misconduct and infractions are handled at the school level. Parents will be notified if there is a bus infraction and the disciplinary action that will be taken. At the beginning of the year, all students receive a handbook concerning bus rules and regulations that are followed by CCPS. **Bus route information will be posted on the CCPS web site at [www.ccboe.com/schoollocator](http://www.ccboe.com/schoollocator). The school system no longer mails the bus routes home to families before the start of the school year.**

**Bus Guidelines to Follow:**

- Be at the assigned stop **5-10 minutes prior to the arrival of the bus.**
- Always follow the bus driver's directions at all times as soon as they are issued.
- No cell phone use while on the bus. Cell phones should be concealed and turned off at all times. *Written permission from the parent and Principal is needed for students to have cell phones.*

To ensure student safety, even our car riders should know the rules for safe riding, since school buses are used for most field trips.

**Bus Safety Rules:**

1. Remain seated and faced forward at all times.
2. Quiet talking is permissible.
3. Keep hands, feet, and all objects to yourself (and inside the bus).
4. No eating, drinking or chewing gum on the bus.

The safety of our children is of primary importance to us. Misbehavior, fighting or disobeying the bus driver can endanger the lives and safety of all passengers on the bus.

When a child misbehaves on the bus, the driver will fill out a bus Discipline Report which is then given to the Vice Principal and/or Principal. The administrator will have a conference with the child, review the bus safety rules and remind the child of the

consequences of continued misbehavior. The parent/guardian will be contacted regarding the bus referral and appropriate consequences.

**Cafeteria Procedures**

Lunch is served daily in the school cafeteria. Children may buy their lunch or bring it from home. Students who bring lunch from home may buy milk. Students should not bring glass bottles with their lunch.

Please see that your child has his/her lunch, or money to buy lunch or milk at school, unless you pay in advance to your child's meal account. We do not have funds to loan money to children who forget theirs. If for some reason your child arrives at school without lunch, money to buy lunch, or money on account, he/she will be given a sandwich and milk. We believe that learning to remember one's lunch or lunch money is part of developing responsibility and children should be encouraged to accept this as part of growing up.

Lunch & Breakfast menus are posted on the CCPS website each month.

Federal funds are available for free or reduced-price lunch for children whose families qualify. Information and application forms are sent home on the first day of school. Our school cafeteria has a meal service plan that allows for each student to have a personalized lunch account. Parents can write checks payable to the school and this money will be deposited into the child's account. This is a convenient way to ensure that your child has his/her lunch money each day without the hassles of sending money each school day. We strongly encourage parents to take full advantage of this system.



<b>Lunch Prices:</b>	<b>\$2.80 full lunch</b>
	<b>\$.20 reduced priced lunch</b>
	<b>\$1.35 breakfast</b>
	<b>\$.10 reduced breakfast</b>
	<b>\$.50 milk</b>

### **Specific Cafeteria Procedures:**

Parents may send a note giving permission for snack items to be purchased using their pre-paid meal account. Snack items range from \$.25- \$.75 per item.

### **Cafeteria Safety Rules:**

1. Walk quietly to the line and keep your hands to yourself.
2. Talk in a quiet voice to your friends.
3. Raise your hand and ask an adult on duty if you need something.
4. Sit at your assigned seat/table.
5. Students will be alerted to when they can purchase ice cream and snack items.
6. Students will remain seated until directed to line up by the adults on duty.
7. Five minutes of silence will be observed prior to lining up for recess. Students can use this time to finish eating and to listen to directions by the teachers on duty.

### **Classroom Parties**

All parties are coordinated by the classroom teacher. Parents must keep in mind that some students in the classroom may have food allergies and we ask that parents be supportive of specific foods that must be avoided. Parties will not take more than 45 minutes of instructional time. Please inform the teacher if your child cannot participate because of religious or other reasons. If your child has any special dietary needs, please send food items in to the classroom teacher.

### **Communications**

The Dr. Higdon Newsletter will be sent out monthly and updates will be posted on the school's website. All sign-and-return papers will be sent in Thursday Folders. Parents should check these folders for important information regarding your child's educational program. Many grade levels also send home weekly/monthly newsletters as well. Agenda books are used by students in Grades 3-5. This is also an excellent source of information for parents as well as a home/school communication tool.

Report cards are issued at the end of each nine-week period for students in Kindergarten through Grade 5. (Refer to the school calendar for interim and report card dates.) The parent or the teacher may use the report card to request a conference.

Teachers often telephone parents when there is a concern. If you, as a parent, have a concern, please contact your child's teacher. Teachers have been assigned "voice mail" numbers. All Charles County Public School employees also have e-mail accounts. To access your child's teacher's e-mail, log onto [www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com) and click on the Dr. Higdon web site.

If you wish a conference with a teacher or an administrator, you can send a note or call the school. Most likely, the teacher can see you before school in the morning or right after school. Please do not insist on seeing a teacher during school hours, unless it is convenient for the teacher. Teachers may not leave their classes unsupervised for any reason.



### **Counseling**

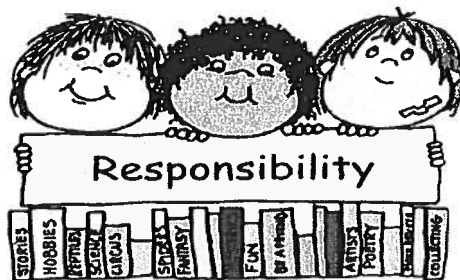
The goals of the Guidance Program at Dr. Higdon Elementary are to facilitate the personal and academic growth of students, promote the effective development of students' interpersonal skills and to improve understanding and application of the decision-making process. These goals are primarily met through individual, group and classroom guidance in addition to parent and teacher conferences. Parents are encouraged to contact the School Counselor, Ms. Freetwell, if you have any questions or concerns regarding your child.

## Discipline

A major goal of the Dr. Higdon Elementary staff is to establish a safe and secure atmosphere in which children can learn. A child must feel safe and secure in his/her environment in order for optimum learning to occur. The environment must also be conducive to learning. No child will be allowed to deprive other children of learning nor will any child serve as a threat to his/her fellow students. All children need to know and follow the school rules to ensure a safe and orderly learning environment.

Students will be provided with a copy of the Charles County Student Code of Conduct on the first day of school. These rules/guidelines will be reviewed with the students and all students are expected to follow the CCPS rules as well as the school rules and procedures. Students who break the rules repeatedly or cause a serious problem will be referred to the office. Disciplinary action will occur and may result in: detention, in-school suspension, suspension out of school or a suspension to the Superintendent if the disciplinary action warrants. The CCPS Code of Conduct will be followed on all bus and office referrals.

School-wide discipline is based on the Positive Behavior Incentive Program (PBIS). Staff utilize positive rewards and reinforcement to encourage students to follow the school rules. Positive Paws are used daily to reinforce positive behavior choices by the students. In working together, we can make a difference in the lives of our students.



## Dr. Higdon Elementary school rules :

- 1. Respectful:**  
We listen to each other.  
We are polite and use kind words.
- 2. Responsible:**  
We are responsible for what we say and do.
- 3. Safe:**  
We use our hands for helping and not for hurting.  
We use furniture and supplies safely.

Each family is provided with a PBIS brochure at the beginning of the year. The students review the school rules with their teachers and practice following the rules in different locations of the building. Grade level assemblies are held with the Administration to review school rules and expectations.

## Student Dress Code

Charles County Public Schools has adopted a student dress code to ensure safe and orderly environments in all of the county's schools. Certain types of dress are appropriate for school and certain types are appropriate for outside of school. The following is the dress code for all students:

1. Clothing should be suitable for classroom activities including wearing safe shoes for recess and PE.
2. Shorts and skirts are permitted as long as they reach the middle of the thigh.
3. Spaghetti straps and garments that are strapless are not permitted.
4. Undergarments must not be visible at any time.
5. Pants must be secured no lower than mid-hip.
6. Ripped pants are permitted as long as rips fall below the shorts length criteria and limited to the front side of the leg.
7. Leggings, biker shorts must be opaque and worn with a top that meets the length expectations of shorts.
8. Foam and soft soled shoes are not permitted such as flip flops or beach footwear.

9. Headwear is not permitted except for outside activities.
10. Sleepwear and sleep-wear type clothing is only permitted for certain activities such as spirit days.
11. Clothing that contains inappropriate symbols or wording is not permitted.

**\*\*The Administration has the flexibility to exercise judgment to determine if a student's attire is considered disruptive, distracting or a safety hazard.**

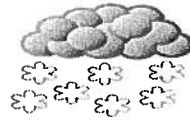
**\*\*A copy of the complete Dress Code for CCPS can be found on the school's website and inside the CCPS school calendar.**

Parents should help their children learn how to determine appropriate dress for different occasions. If a student's dress is deemed to be unacceptable, parents will be notified and all efforts will be made to work with the student to provide the proper attire. ***All students should have a change of clothing at school for emergencies.***

### **Early Departure**

Dismissal of children during the school day is discouraged because it creates some of the same problems as tardiness - missing out on directions or important parts of a lesson. Occasions do arise, however, when it is necessary for parents to pick children up early such as: medical reasons, dental appointments, etc. In such cases, the child should bring a written note to his/her teacher when he/she arrives at school in the morning. When the parents or guardian come to pick up a child, he/she must come into the school office and sign the child out. It is school system policy that the school must have written approval from the parent/guardian before releasing a child to an adult not listed on the emergency card. We will also lean on the side of safety for our students. The person picking up the child will need to provide a picture ID at the front office. This is also important during inclement early release days. **We can not make changes from phone calls. Please have alternative transportation procedures in place and clearly explain**

**emergency procedures in place for your family so children know where they should go if no one is at home to receive them.**



### **Early Dismissal Due to Weather**

During inclement weather, there is always the possibility that school may close early. In the event that you are to be away from home at such times, your child should know where he/she is to go. It is advisable for all parents to develop a plan so that their children know what to do when an emergency situation arises. **Parents can access the 24 hour information line and website for further information [www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com) or 301-934-7410.** A second informational source parents may wish to sign up for is [www.schoolsout.com](http://www.schoolsout.com) to register and receive automatic notification whenever a change to the school schedule occurs.

### **Emergency Information**

Parents/guardians will be asked to complete an emergency form each year. This form contains up-to-date information such as address of parents, home and work phone numbers and the names of who to call in the case of an emergency. It is important that this information be kept current. Please complete the form, and send it to school right away. If your address, phone number or emergency numbers change at any time during the school year, please notify the front office of any changes to phone numbers or emergency contacts. Remember, if your child becomes ill or has an accident, the emergency card is our best link with you!

***If there is a custody agreement between parents, please alert the school by providing the necessary court documents. Please make sure we have current documents.*** All information is kept strictly confidential in the student's file. If nothing is on file in the child's cumulative folder, either parent has the right to pick up the child.

## Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of the school program and serve as an extension of the curriculum. They are planned in conjunction with something that is being studied in the classroom and can serve as an introductory-type activity, as a resource during a unit of study, or sometimes as a culminating activity.

In order to go on a scheduled field trip, the student **MUST** bring a permission slip signed by a parent or legal guardian. In addition, there is usually a charge for the bus and sometimes an admission fee. **Refunds will not be given if you are absent on the day of the field trip.** Before each field trip, teachers will send home a letter giving details as to what each child needs to bring as well as any special information about the trip. We strongly encourage parental involvement on our field trips. We hope that you will make time to attend at least one field trip with your child this year!

Adult chaperones are sometimes needed to assist the classroom teachers on field trips, depending on the number of other adult staff members available to chaperone. The number of adults needed depends on the age of the children and/or the place to be visited. Due to limited space on the buses and limited group size at some venues, it is not always possible to include all parents who wish to participate. Please be understanding since every effort will be made to be fair and give all those who wish to participate an opportunity some time during the school year to attend.

***Only children who are students of Dr. Higdon Elementary will be permitted to go on the trips.*** If you choose to drive and take other children, you will not be considered a part of the school sponsored field trip. All parents/chaperones are expected to follow the guidelines set by the Charles County Board of Education and this includes not smoking on field trips.

## Fundraising

The school sponsors two fund-raisers per year. The money earned from fundraisers directly supports the students' learning and the school. The PTO sponsors several fund-raisers during the year. The proceeds are used to provide cultural experiences for the students and to assist the teachers with special projects and items needed to support instruction.



## Report Card Grading

Report cards for elementary students in Kindergarten through Grade 5 are issued every 9 weeks. Student performance and progress in grades K-2 is reported to parents using the following ratings:

**(CD) Consistently Demonstrating:** The student successfully exhibits the indicated skills, knowledge and behaviors.

**(D) Developing:** The student generally exhibits the indicated skills, knowledge and behaviors.

**(NI) Needs Improvement:** The student rarely exhibits the indicated skills, knowledge and behaviors. The performance is inconsistent and below the normal range of expectancy for a student at that grade level.

Students in grades 3-5 receive letter grades A-B-C-D-E.

- A - Excellent Performance
- B - Very Good Performance
- C - Satisfactory Performance
- D - Minimal Performance
- E - Unsatisfactory Performance

Grades may be assigned numerical value such as: (A= 90-100%, B= 80-89%, C= 70-79%, D= 60-69%, E= 0-59%) The grade includes participation, daily work, homework, and tests and other performance evaluations.



### **Health Room/Medication Procedures**

When a child is injured at school, the only first aid we are allowed to administer is to wash the cut or wound and put on a band aid. If the injury is serious or even questionable, we try to contact the parent at home or work or through the emergency numbers on the student emergency card. *(It is critical that parents keep these cards updated at all times in the event of an emergency.)*

When a child is ill, every effort will be made to contact the parent/guardian. If you are not able to leave your job to pick up a sick child, please make arrangements for an adult listed on the emergency card to pick up the child.

It is imperative, therefore, that the school have a current home phone number, work numbers and emergency numbers. **Please be sure to report any changes in these numbers immediately!** If you have an unlisted or an unpublished number, you will need to give it to the school, but indicate that it is unlisted and we will treat it as such.

Whenever possible, medication should be given at home. *If it is absolutely necessary that a child take medicine during the school day, a form must be filled out by the doctor and parent/guardian. This form can be picked up in the nurse's office.* All medicine will be kept in the nurse's office. The nurse administers all medication in the health room. *Children should not have any form of medication in their possession.*

No "over-the-counter" medicines may be brought to school or carried on the school bus. Serious consequences may result, such as an allergic reaction. This policy is to protect your child as well as other children.

Charles County Public Schools have full-time nurses assigned at each school. The nurse works closely with school personnel and parents to ensure the health and wellness of our students. Parents are encouraged to contact the school nurse (Mrs. Chappelle) if

there are any health concerns regarding their child.

### **Homework**



The purpose of homework is to help students:

- improve skills
- become independent workers
- learn to use books and other resources for learning
- increase their knowledge
- express thoughts creatively

Parents often ask how they can best help their child with homework. Here are some homework suggestions:

- Provide a quiet place for the child to work (away from TV and other distractions).
- Be sure there are ample supplies of paper, pencils, erasers, etc.
- Guide your child (firmly, if necessary) in planning and organizing time wisely so that the assignment gets completed before that favorite TV show or before bedtime.
- Show an interest in your child's homework, but make sure the actual assignment is done by him/her.
- Let your child know that homework is important and that it is imperative that it gets done.
- Homework is not optional. It is an assignment and should take priority over other activities.
- Let the teacher know if the homework assignments are consistently requiring more time than the guidelines. If your child consistently says that he/she has no homework, then you should become suspicious. A note, e-mail or a phone call to the teacher should help clarify the problem.

### **Board of Education Homework Policy states:**

- Pre-K & Kindergarten- optional
- Students in grades 1-5 will have homework nightly ranging from 15 minutes in the lower grades to 45 minutes in the upper grades depending upon the assignments. We will make every effort to assign homework Mondays-Thursdays and there will not be formal homework assigned over the weekends

or holidays. Please include reading and practicing math facts as part of the nightly homework routine.

### **Library/Media Center**

The Library/Media Center serves the needs of all students, Pre-K through Grade 5, and the school staff. All students are taught the importance of careful book use before they check out library books. It is helpful if parents emphasize the value of reading by reading their child's book with them or asking questions about their reading. The school requires that lost and damaged library books be paid for so they can be replaced. Students also do research using library materials including books, references and audio-visual materials. The library always needs volunteers to shelve books and help students check in and out at the computer. Please let the Media Specialist know if you wish to volunteer at the school.

### **Lost and Found**

The Lost and Found area is situated in the hallway outside of the gym. All lost coats, hats, gloves, sweaters, etc. will be placed in the bins. If your child is missing an article of clothing, book bag or lunch box, we suggest you encourage him/her to check the Lost and Found area! Parents should mark their child's belongings with the child's name. Unclaimed items will be displayed from time to time. Items remaining unclaimed by the close of the school year will be donated to Children's Aid.

### **Parents Groups**

Monthly PTO meetings are held where parents are encouraged to get involved with the school. Notice of the meeting dates will be made in the school's monthly newsletter, phone message and/or flyer before the meeting. The PTO meetings are held the third week of each month from 6-7:15 P.M.

Teachers and parents are encouraged to attend PTO meetings. It is by working together that we can accomplish the most for the students of Dr. Higdon. Parents are encouraged to share what types of programs they would like to have at the meetings. Dr.

Higdon has a very active parent/teacher group who devote many hours of their time to provide quality programs and activities. Please show your appreciation and your support by volunteering to assist when help is requested.

### **Parent Volunteers**

At Dr. Higdon Elementary, parents are encouraged to volunteer. The staff and students greatly appreciate the time that volunteers help at the school. If you are interested in getting involved as a volunteer, please visit the CCPS website to register and become "Verified" as a substitute. If you would like more information about volunteering, please contact the school office.

### **Recess**

Recess procedures are at the discretion of the classroom teacher. A 30 minute free play period will be provided daily. During inclement weather or extreme cold, children will remain indoors. If your child needs to stay indoors, please notify the classroom teacher in writing indicating the reason.



### **Report Cards**

Students in Kindergarten through Grade 5 receive 4 report cards a year. Report cards detail a child's school progress. Grades are updated every 2 weeks and are posted on Synergy. The dates report cards are issued are noted on the school calendar. For further information, please contact your child's teacher.

Interim reports will be issued approximately mid way through the report card period. Only students who are in danger of receiving less than a "C" are issued interims. Students in grades 1 and 2 who have received a "Needs Improvement" in any category will receive an interim report. Parents are encouraged to request a conference with the teacher to discuss strategies to help their child to improve their grade (s).

## Retention

Per CCPS guidelines, students may be retained once during their elementary years. If retention is necessary, it is better to do so in the primary grades. Parents will be notified if their child is in danger of being retained.

## School Pictures

Individual pictures will be taken by (Lifetouch Photography) a professional photography group early in the school year. If a child is absent or if the parent is not satisfied with the developed pictures, there will be a picture make-up day. Class and personality pictures will be taken in the spring. There are no make-up dates for class pictures.

## Know the Rules



## Internet Access

Dr. Higdon Elementary has Internet access for every classroom and the computer labs. A signed Internet Contract must be on file for your child to use Internet Access computers. This contract will be sent home during the first week of school for you to review with your child. Please return all forms signed to your child's classroom teacher. If you have any questions regarding this contract, please contact the school.

## Parent Visitation Rule— CCPS Board Policy 1240

In order to maintain a safe and orderly school environment for students and staff at Dr. Higdon, all visitors are required to sign in at the front office and to wear a school visitor badge. If parents wish to visit the classroom or playground at the teacher or school's request, they must sign in at the front office and will be escorted by a staff member to the classroom. Parents wishing to hold a parent conference are strongly encouraged to do so ahead of time to allow for scheduling.

**Parents who wish to visit their child's classroom to make a formal observation need to call to arrange a time with the administration at least 2 school days in advance. This step is necessary to avoid interruptions to the school day and to ensure that questions can be addressed in a professional manner. Parents/guardians may schedule (2) observations up to 45 minutes in duration each grading period.**

An administrator will accompany the visitor to the classroom and will stay during the observation time in the classroom. Teachers will discuss the observation at a mutually agreed upon time with the parent/guardian.

Parents/guardians are welcome to visit the cafeteria eat lunch with their child on a drop in basis. To ensure the safety of the children, all visitors must check in at the front office and display a Visitor's Badge at all times while in the building.

Principals retain the authority to deny access to the school for any individual who has been disruptive or may disrupt or disturb the learning environment. This also includes anyone who lacks a valid or legal purpose for entering the school. Our shared commitment and cooperation is essential for the safety of our students and staff.

All guidelines regarding the CCPS Visitation Rule are outlined in the CCPS Parent/Handbook Calendar that is sent home at the beginning of each school year.

## Weapons

It is very important that parents review the Board of Education's policy regarding weapons at school with their children. Weapons and look-a-like weapons are not permitted on school grounds or buses for any reason. In all weapons cases, the police will be called in to investigate the situation. We ask you to discuss this policy and to check your child's understanding so there will be no questions nor any type of weapon brought to school. **Toys looking like weapons should not be brought to school.**

## Withdraw/Transfer of Schools

If you are moving and will be withdrawing your child from school, please come by the office at least 48 hours prior to the withdrawal date to fill out a Request for Withdrawal form. Please bring the phone/fax number and name of the new school your child will be attending. This will give the office staff ample time to complete the necessary paperwork. The school is responsible for sending the student's records when we receive a request from the new school. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

## Emergency Drills

To ensure student and staff safety, a variety of drills are held throughout the year to train students and staff on the proper procedures to follow in the event of an emergency.

1. **Fire Drills- Evacuate:** Drills are held every month and students and staff practice exiting the building according to safety guidelines. In case of an actual emergency, parents will be asked to follow the emergency plan guidelines.
2. **Shelter! Hazard and safety strategy:** These drills are practiced four times each year to ensure that students and staff know the procedures to follow in the event of a **high wind, tornado warning, earthquake or hazmat situation.**
3. **Hold! In your room or area. Clear the halls:** These drills are practiced four times a year to ensure that students and staff know the procedures to follow in the event of a **threat inside the building.**
4. **Secure! Get Inside. Lock outside doors:** These drills are practiced four times a year to ensure that students and staff know the procedures to follow in the event of a **threat outside of the building** and/or in the event that there would be an extended day at school due to some type of disaster in the community or area.

## 5. **Lock Down! Locks, lights and out of sight.**

Students and staff move out of sight and maintain silence. All doors are locked.

If you have any questions regarding our emergency plan, please contact Mrs. Morgan at 301-934-4091.



*A safe & secure school environment is our priority!*



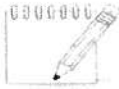
## Cell Phone Rule

Elementary students may not possess and/or use a cell phones on school property including the school bus.

If parents want a student to have a cell phone to ensure safety before or after school while at the bus stop, parents should send a written note or e-mail to the Principal requesting permission for their child to have a cell phone. Once the Principal has given approval, the student will be required to turn the cell phone in to the classroom teacher on a daily basis to ensure its safe keeping. The student will be given the phone at the end of the day.

Electronic devices such as tablets, games, etc. should not be brought to school. If a student is found to be in possession of an electronic device, the device will be confiscated and sent to the office. The parent/guardian will be called to come and pick up the device.

## Instructional Programs



**Math:** All CCPS elementary schools follow the Charles County Curriculum and the MD State College & Career Readiness Curriculum using the following resource materials:

- 1. Kindergarten-Grade 5:**  
Math Investigations is used to support student learning in K & Gr. 1. Grades 2-5 will utilize math materials geared toward improving students' math reasoning and application of skills.
- 2. Grade 5 Accelerated Math Classes:**  
Students will utilize Illustrative Mathematics to extend math reasoning and application of skills.
- 3. Students in Grades 1-5 :**  
Computational fluency blocks will be built into each grade level schedule. This will include opportunities for students to build accuracy with math facts as well as efficient problem solving strategies. Students will be expected to demonstrate proficiency with math facts at each grade level.
- 4. Manipulatives:** Students from Pre-K through Grade 5 use math manipulatives to support instruction. Manipulatives allow for "hands-on" learning and application of skills.
- 4. On-Line Resources:**  
Students will utilize on-line resources to support instruction throughout their day. The school will supply parents with a list of the sites that can be accessed from home.



**Reading:** All elementary schools follow the CCPS Curriculum and MD College and Career Readiness Standards. Teachers use leveled texts and supplementary materials for reading instruction in Pre-K through Grade 5. The daily reading program includes phonics/phonemic awareness, vocabulary, writing, reading fluency, comprehension and the application of these skills in daily reading instruction.

Some students may need additional support with their reading through reading interventions and additional support beyond the classroom. Classroom teachers work very closely with the Reading Resource Teacher to utilize student data to identify students who may need additional support both in and outside of the classroom. If parents have questions about their child's reading instructional program, please contact your child's teacher to discuss your concerns.

Dream Big  
READ!

### Gifted and Enrichment Programs:

Each elementary school has a full time Learning Resource Teacher who works with teachers and students to support student learning. CCPS has identified specific goals for working with students who have been identified for enrichment programming support. Teachers strive to provide challenging learning opportunities for each student daily utilizing a broad range of materials that have been identified to support higher level thinking skills. Flexible groupings within the reading and math blocks allow for differentiation to occur within the classroom. The Learning Resource Teacher will also pull small groups of students for additional instructional support.

**Reading Resource Teacher:** Mrs. Rankin

**Instructional Resource (Math) Teacher:**  
Ms. Nagle

**Learning Resource Teacher:**  
Mrs. Campbell

**Reading Recovery Teacher:** Mrs. Bailey

**Science Resource Teacher:** Ms. Heasley

The Charles County public school system does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or disability in its programs, activities or employment practices. For inquiries, please contact Kathy Kiessling, Title IX/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator (students) or Nikial M. Majors, Title IX/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator (employees/adults), at Charles County Public Schools, Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, P.O. Box 2770, La Plata, MD 20646; 301-932-6610/301-870-3814. For special accommodations call 301-934-7230 or TDD 1-800-735-2258 two weeks prior to the event.

CCPS provides nondiscriminatory equal access to school facilities in accordance with its Use of Facilities rules to designated youth groups (including, but not limited to, the Boy Scouts).