

# Matthews Elementary Parent - Student Handbook

Matthews Elementary School

200 McDowell Avenue

Matthews, NC 28105

(980) 343-3940

<http://schoolsauth.cms.k12.nc.us/MatthewsES/Pages/Default.aspx>

Michael Miliote, Principal

The purpose of the Matthews Elementary Parent -Student Handbook is to assist parents in learning policies, rules, and procedures to keep a safe and orderly environment. We request that parents follow all policies, rules, and procedures to ensure that high levels of learning and a safe and orderly environment are afforded to each student.



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## Absences and Attendance

According to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education policy and the North Carolina Compulsory Attendance Law (GS-115C-378), parents and guardians are responsible for seeing that their children attend school each day it is in session unless ill or unable to attend due to an unavoidable circumstance. Studies show that students who have a high rate of absenteeism do not perform well in class or on tests. We urge students and parents to make school a priority and to schedule vacations, family visits, etc. around the school calendar. A student must be in attendance for at least half of the school day (3 1/2 hours) in order to be counted present.

In order to code an absence as excused the parent/guardian is required to send a note from home within two days of the child's return to school. The note should contain the following: date(s) of absence(s) and the reason for absence; signature of the parent/guardian. A written note from a parent does not automatically result in an excused absence. The reason code for the absence must be one of those determined by Public School Law. The absences listed below are considered **excused** once school personnel have received verification:

- Illness of student
- Death in the immediate family
- Quarantine
- Observance of a religious holiday
- Court or administrative proceedings

Absences for reasons other than those listed above are deemed **unexcused**. Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to, missing the bus, oversleeping, car trouble, lack of heat, water, or electricity, inclement weather, babysitting, or vacations.

When a child returns to school following an absence, the student must assume the responsibility for contacting the individual teachers immediately about making up missed work. If the work is satisfactory, full or partial credit will be given for the completed work depending on the status of the absence. After three unexcused absences, the teacher will report the absence to the attendance official/principal. Letters are sent to parents after 3, 6, and 10 unexcused absences. A notification letter is sent that legal action will be taken when a student has accumulated 10 unexcused absences and the student will automatically be placed in the category of "violation."

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education believes that regular and punctual attendance at school is imperative for educational success. The Board further believes that there is no substitute for the uninterrupted personal contact between teachers and students in the classroom environment where learning experiences are carefully planned and taught by teachers. The primary responsibility for school attendance rests with the students and parents. Schools, however, have the responsibility for properly recording absenteeism and tardiness, notifying parents when needed, and discouraging excessive absences in accordance with state law. We seek the full cooperation from parents in promoting good attendance and punctuality. In particular,

1. Medical and dental appointments should be scheduled after school hours except in cases of emergency.
2. Family vacations should be taken during school vacation and recess periods.
3. NO student will be excused from regular schoolwork to take private lessons in music, art, dance, or any other area without prior approval from the principal's office.

## Accidents

Parents will be notified of accidents needing medical or immediate attention. Parents must ensure that teachers and the office always have current emergency telephone numbers.

## After-School Enrichment Program

The After School Enrichment Program (ASEP) provides programming for kindergarten-fifth grade students after the instructional day. ASEP offers a safe, nurturing, and enriching environment with a relaxed atmosphere and activity choices. Programming is designed to further the growth of children's social skills and to support academic achievement.

Curriculum-correlated activities are planned daily to reinforce reading and math skills. There is time for talking with friends, playing games of strategy, physical and recreational activities, and reading. Homework sessions are supervised and a snack is provided. CMS does not provide transportation home from ASEP. ASEP is open from 2:45-6:00 pm on all school days and all day on teacher workdays. ASEP also offers optional programming, for an additional fee, on days that are not school holidays during winter break and spring break. Registration is required yearly.

## Arrival Procedures

Parents are strongly encouraged to use the school bus transportation provided by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. If you do provide transportation in the morning, please remain in your car and let your child out of the car at the designated student drop off site. The arrival procedure will keep the traffic flowing in the morning. Staff members will be on duty to assist with the arrival procedures to ensure the safety of all students. Students may begin arriving at school at 7:20 am. The tardy bell rings at 7:45 am.

## Assignment Books (Student Agendas)

All second, third, fourth and fifth grade students are required to use a school assignment book to record daily homework assignments. Parents are asked to check assignment books nightly and provide a signature to indicate that all assigned work was completed. Teacher/parent communication will be utilized through the student agenda. An agenda can be purchased at the school store from 7:20-7:45 daily.



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## Birthday Celebrations

Birthday snacks or treats are permitted during your child's lunch period. Any treats must be in the original store container with a label listing ingredients. The cafeteria will also provide birthday treats at a nominal fee. Check the Matthews website for more information. We realize that social occasions occur and students want to extend invitations to their friends; however, party invitations cannot be distributed during the school day.

## Book Bags

Please note that rolling book bags are not permitted at Matthews Elementary School for safety and storage reasons.

## Bus Conduct

Riding the school bus is a privilege. We know you share our concern for the safety of every student who rides a school bus. The staff at Matthews Elementary School strongly urges parents to review these rules with their children to ensure the safety of all passengers. Students who fail to observe these rules are subject to immediate disciplinary action since their failure to do so may affect the safety of themselves and others. The bus driver will report a student who misbehaves to a school administrator. Disciplinary actions may include suspensions from the bus. If a student is suspended from the bus, the parent is responsible for providing transportation to and from school during the duration of the suspension. The parent should observe established arrival and dismissal schedules. Students that do not attend school during a bus suspension will be marked with an **unexcused** absence. Students suspended from the bus are not permitted to be at any Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District bus stop or ride any school bus during their suspension.

Parents can help to support their child's appropriate behavior on the school bus by reviewing the following bus expectations with their child on a regular basis.

- Students are only to get on and off the bus at their regular bus stops unless they have permission from the principal to do otherwise.
- Students and parents are advised that video cameras are used to monitor behavior on the bus.
- Students are to sit in their assigned seats and are to remain seated until their bus comes to a complete stop at their bus stop or at the school.
- Students are permitted to talk quietly.
- Students are to obey the instructions of the bus driver promptly and consistently.
- Students are to refrain from eating, drinking, or chewing gum on the bus.
- Students are not permitted to use profane or inappropriate language while riding the bus.
- Students are not permitted to tamper with the emergency door, emergency windows, fire extinguishers, or first aid supplies.
- Students are not to deface the bus in any way.
- Students are not permitted to take pets or other animals on the bus.

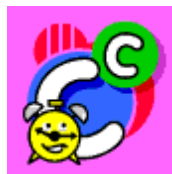
## Bus Schedules and Stops

Bus schedules, routes, and stops are determined by the CMS Transportation Department in accordance with North Carolina State Law. School buses will come to a complete stop at each bus stop. If no student is in sight, the bus will continue on its route immediately. Students should arrive at the bus stop at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled pick up time. To allow for uncontrollable incidents, such as traffic delays, students should wait for the bus at least 15 minutes after the scheduled pick up time before leaving the bus stop. Parents are responsible for student safety at bus stops. If you have concerns regarding your child's bus route or stop, there are "Change in Bus Stop" forms available on the CMS website

( [www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdeaprtments/transportation](http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdeaprtments/transportation) ) **Stop changes cannot be made on roads that are not state maintained.** To ensure bus safety, it is important that you impress upon your child that it is absolutely necessary that he/she follow bus safety rules as indicated in the *CMS Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Character Development Handbook*. CMS behavior guidelines will be followed in addressing inappropriate bus behavior.

### General Guidelines

- Students may only exit the bus at their designated stop.
- Children who are not bus students may not ride on the school bus with a friend for an after-school play date.
- The privilege of riding the school bus will be revoked for any child who interferes with the rights of other children to have a safe bus ride.
- CMS policy requires students to sit in assigned seat throughout the year, as assigned by the bus driver.



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## Car-Rider Traffic

- All car-rider traffic enters and exits on the west side of the school next to the school marquee. **ONLY BUSES WILL BE PERMITTED TO TURN ONTO McDOWELL AVENUE between the church and the school.** No student drop off or pick up will be permitted in this area
- The cut-through sidewalk and driveway sidewalk and drive behind the First Baptist Church off Sadie Drive is permanently closed to all car and pedestrian traffic, please do not use this as a means of access to the school.

- Car rider traffic will enter the driveway beside the school sign and travel around the staff parking area to let out or pick up students at designated points along the sidewalks. No U-turns are permitted by the canopy section. Please drive around the staff parking area.
- For the safety of your child and all others, please turn off your cell phone when you approach the student drop-off/pick-up zone.
- Parents are to provide a place card with their child's name on it. The place card must be displayed so that it is easily read by the car line supervisors at dismissal.
- Students must be let out and picked up only from the right (passenger) side of the car when the car is parallel to the sidewalk in front of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade wing with black railing and the main building (under the canopy).
- Cars cannot pass once they are in line in the drive and parking lot area.
- The drop off/pick- up area is quite lengthy. To assist in drop off please look for staff on duty at these drop off points: 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade drop off is at the black railing outside the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade hall, and kindergarten and first grade should continue to the canopy next to the main building.

## Cell Phones

All cell phones should be turned off upon entering the school building or classrooms. We ask that everyone be respectful of instructional time. Children may bring cell phones to school, but they must remain off at all times and out of sight. They will be confiscated if seen or heard by a staff member. Parents can refer to the Students Right and Responsibilities Handbook for further details.

## Change of Address or Phone

Please notify the office and your child's teacher if you move or change your telephone number during the year. It is imperative that we always have your current phone numbers and address.

## Character

All adults and children are expected to demonstrate good character within our school, as well as when representing Matthews Elementary School in our community. Above all, it is expected that respect be held in the highest regard. Inappropriate language, threats, or bullying by children or adults will not be tolerated.

## Checking Students In and Out

It is very important that student remain in class for a full daily schedule. Tardiness and early dismissals interrupt the instructional time of all our students. A student is tardy if not in their classroom at 7:45 am. At that time, a parent or guardian MUST accompany the child to the office to sign in for the day and obtain a tardy slip. Early dismissals will not be permitted after 2:00. Students will be released early only by written notifications sent to their teacher at the beginning of the school day. Written notifications must include the date and time for release and the name of the person who will pick up your child. If a student must check out during the day, a parent or guardian must come to the school office to sign the child out. Students will not be called to the office until the parent/guardian arrives at school. Parents or guardians picking up students must speak with the office staff first, present a photo ID, and sign out in the appropriate log book. Students will not be released to the parent from the classroom. Children will only be released to the individuals who are listed on the emergency locator card. Please be sure to list the names of all relatives or friends who have permission to pick up your child. Any person picking up a child must present picture identification.

## Child Custody

If there are special custody agreements for a child, the parent(s) should provide the school office a copy of the official court documentation. Otherwise, the school considers both parents to have equal access to the child(ren).

## Child Nutrition Services

It is the goal of *Child Nutrition Services* to provide a healthy and nutritious breakfast and lunch daily, while allowing students to choose from foods they enjoy eating.

**Breakfast Program:** Breakfast is offered daily before the start of the instructional day from 7:20-7:45 am. Students may select from a variety of hot items or cereals, fruit or juice, and milk to make a complete nutritious breakfast. A healthy school breakfast jump starts the mind and body. In order to participate in the breakfast program, students must arrive prior to 7:40 am.

**Free/Reduced Meal Applications:** The meal application is a multi-child, family application. Only one application needs to be completed for each household. Applications are available in the main office at school. Return the completed application to Child Nutrition Services, PO Box 66847, Charlotte, NC 28226-8847. You can also return your completed application to the main office. A new application must be completed every year.



**Purchasing Meals in Advance:** Each child will be assigned a lunch account number (PIN number) that will be used throughout the school year to make purchases. A computer-based PIN number system keeps a record of all transactions for each account. Parents may choose to prepay accounts to eliminate the need to send money daily. Checks can be made payable to Matthews Elementary cafeteria and must contain the child's full name, PIN number, and teacher's name. Although we encourage students to make selections from all the basic food groups, we cannot demand that they do so.

**Students with Lunchboxes:** No soft drinks in cans or bottles will be permitted at school. Teachers and instructional assistants are not permitted to warm or refrigerate students' foods for them.

**Parent Visitation at Lunch:** Please obtain a visitor's badge from the office, sign in and meet your child's class at the cafeteria entrance at their scheduled lunch time. Our cafeteria staff works hard to provide nutritious and appetizing meals. We ask that parents refrain from bringing in commercial food during lunch.

**Students Without Meal Money:** All students must have an approved meal application, cash, or money on account to make meal purchases. Procedures are in place for students in elementary schools who do not have money to purchase a meal until a parent can be contacted.

Breakfast	Cost
Daily Breakfast	\$1.25
Reduced Breakfast	\$0.30
Adult Breakfast	A la carte
Milk	\$0.50

Lunch	Cost
Daily Lunch	\$2.05
Reduced Lunch	\$0.40
Adult Lunch	A la carte
Milk	\$0.50

## Conferences

All parents are invited to attend a pre-arranged parent-teacher conference at the end of the first quarter. These conferences provide a planned opportunity for parents and teachers to discuss a child's achievement and to plan cooperatively for continued student progress. Please contact your child's teacher to schedule additional conferences as needed. Protecting the instructional time for all of our students is a priority when scheduling conferences. As a professional courtesy, please schedule conferences in advance with your child's teacher.



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## Daily Dismissal Changes

Daily dismissal changes are only permitted with a written note to your child's teacher on the day of the event. Without a note, students will be sent home their regular way. Students are not permitted to change buses to go home with a friend or for a play date. Telephone or email requests cannot be accepted to ensure the safety of your child.

## Delayed Opening (Early Dismissal or Cancellation of School)

The superintendent of schools and/or the Board of Education may suspend the operation of any school(s) for particular days or portions of days in the event of an emergency, hazardous weather conditions, or other conditions requiring the cancellation of classes. Notification will be available by 5:00 am via media announcements - television and radio stations, CMS Channel 3, Connect-Ed, and the CMS website <http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/Pages/Default.aspx>. Parents are encouraged to listen to the television and radio reports if they anticipate the closing of school. In the event of cancellation, all CMS-sponsored activities for students will be cancelled. If weather conditions worsen during the day after children have arrived at school, local radio stations will make an announcement regarding early dismissal. Please do not call the school or your child's teacher.

## Discipline

The Matthews Elementary School staff is committed to creating a positive school climate that is conducive to effective teaching and learning. Behavior and discipline are shared responsibilities of the home and the school. In addition, consequences for inappropriate behavior are clearly spelled out in the *CMS Rights and Responsibilities Handbook*. **All students and parents should read this handbook, sign the pledge form in the back of the handbook agreeing to adhere to the guidelines established within, and return the form to the classroom teacher the first week of school.** The handbook is sent home with all students at the beginning of the school year.

## Dress Code

Students are expected to adhere to the standards of cleanliness and dress that are compatible with the requirements of a productive and safe school environment. A student's appearance, mode of dress, or condition of personal hygiene will not be permitted to disrupt the educational process or constitute a threat to the health or safety of others. Therefore, the following is included in our student dress policy:

- The shoulder width of shirts or blouses must completely cover undergarments.
- Spaghetti strap tops and tube tops are not allowed.
- Net shirts, bare midriffs, or other revealing attire are not acceptable.
- Short dresses, short skirts, or short shorts will not be allowed.
- Pants or shorts must be worn at the waistline. No underwear shall be revealed.
- Headgear, hats, or sunglasses are not to be worn on campus except for medical and/or safety reasons.
- No clothing, jewelry, or buttons with letters, initials, symbols, or wording that is obscene, offensive, inflammatory, or detrimental to the instructional process are allowed.
- All students are encouraged to wear tennis shoes, as they will be outside everyday for physical activity. Tennis shoes with wheels are not permitted.



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## Emergency Drills

**Fire Drill:** Fire evacuation drills are conducted once a month to provide building evacuation practice. Students are expected to follow their teacher's directions and quietly exit the building. Detailed exit directions are posted in every classroom.

**Lockdown Drill:** Lockdown drills are held several times throughout the year as practice for emergency conditions. Children are instructed to maintain an orderly environment in the event of a security threat.

**Tornado Drill:** All students are instructed in tornado evacuation procedures.

## Emergency Locator Cards

The school annually updates all contact information on the emergency locator cards. It is important that the information be accurate since in medical emergencies, time and accuracy are essential. Please be sure to complete all information on the front

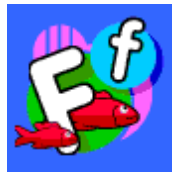
and back of the blue card. **The school can only release a student to individuals authorized by the parent/guardian on the emergency card.** Please list multiple names so that in the event of an emergency, you have choices as to who can pick up your child.

## *End-of-Grade (EOG) Tests*

EOGs are state standardized tests administered to third, fourth, and fifth graders in May. The tests provide information on students' progress in meeting the objectives of the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study*. The state defines promotion standards, called *Gateways*, in third and fifth grades.

## *Exceptional Children's (EC) Services*

The purpose of the EC program is to ensure that students with disabilities develop academically, mentally, physically, and emotionally through the provision of an appropriate and individualized education in the least restrictive environment. Students with disabilities receive specially designed instruction from certified special education teachers and related services, based on educational needs. Services are provided in varying amounts of time and may range from consultative to full-time services. The need for special education is determined through a comprehensive evaluation process.



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## *Field Trips*

Field trips are a direct outgrowth of the instructional program. Written parental permission is required for students participating in each field trip. Telephone calls are not acceptable. A fee may be charged for non-required trips to offset the cost of buses and admission fees. All students are required to travel and remain with their class on field trips. Appropriate arrangements for instruction will be made for students whose parents choose for them not to attend the field trip. The classroom teacher will notify parents when chaperones are needed for field trips. Younger siblings may not accompany parent chaperones on field trips.

## Food Policy

Recent changes in society and our environment necessitate that we use foods in the classroom with a measure of caution. Increases in food-borne pathogens that can cause severe illness and a great increase in the number of children with potentially lethal food allergies dictate that care be taken with foods brought from home and eaten in school. The following cautions are to be followed in all schools in order to protect the health and safety of children and staff.

- Any food shared in school **must be from an inspected commercial facility** and must be labeled with its contents (Ex: Harris Teeter cupcakes, with a printed list of ingredients from the HT bakery).
- Fresh fruit and vegetables may be shared, but must be thoroughly washed.
- Avoid using a knife to cut anything else that has been used to cut other items containing peanut butter, cheese, or meat. Cross contamination could lead to allergic reactions or food poisoning.

An individual diet plan will be developed for those students with severe food allergies.



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## Health

A child who is ill will be sent to the school health room where the school nurse, office staff, or parent volunteer will assess the child, contact the parent or guardian, and send the child home if necessary. If your child has a chronic health problem (i.e. diabetes, seizures, asthma, etc.), be sure to make the teacher and office staff aware of his/her special needs. Parents will be contacted if there is an accident at school, a child has an elevated temperature, or is vomiting. If for medical reasons, it is inadvisable for a student to take part in physical education classes, games, or play outside during physical activity, written notification should be sent to the classroom teacher. As a general rule, we assume if students are well enough to attend school, then they are well enough to participate in the total program. *Your child must be free of fever or vomiting for 24 hours before they can return to school.*

# Homework Policy

**Average Homework Time:** Average homework times are recommendations only and are not meant to be minimum or maximum times. The time varies with the subject area, content matter, teacher, the student's ability, and the complexity of the assigned task. The time allotted to homework should increase gradually from grade to grade and may vary due to student needs. If your child has made consistent effort and has not completed homework in the allotted time, you are asked to stop your child and write a note to the teacher concerning the amount of time spent and the assignments that were not completed. When enough time has been allotted in school for class work, and that work has not been completed, it may be assigned as homework, thereby exceeding the recommended daily time allotted to homework.

- Grades K - 1                    15-30\* minutes per night + 30 minutes of reading
- Grades 2 - 5                    45-60\* minutes per night + 30 minutes of reading

\*Occasionally, special projects may require some home study over several evenings.

## **Responsibilities of Student:**

1. A student should ask questions in class if unsure of an assignment.
2. A student should complete homework in as neat and accurate a manner as possible.
3. A student should schedule study time so that projects and long-term assignments are planned and completed over a period of time.
4. A student should copy and take home assignments.

**Responsibilities of Parents:** Parents are encouraged to assist their child with homework. If a child's homework is consistently too difficult or exceeding the recommended time allotment, the child's teacher should be notified. While the student should assume the major responsibility for completing homework assignments, parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the child's homework by the following:

1. Promoting a positive attitude toward homework.
2. Providing a consistent time and a suitable place for study.
3. Making resource materials available whenever possible.
4. Communicating to the teacher special circumstances that may affect the child's ability to complete assignments.

A student who misses homework assignments or due dates because of absences, whether excused or unexcused, will be allowed to make up the work. Arrangements for completing the work must be made within five school days of the student's return to school. Arrangements should include a schedule for completion of the work. In all circumstances, homework and other

assignments will be accepted, even when turned in after the designated due date. Credit for late work shall be awarded according to the following guidelines:

- A. If the student was present in class on the due date, the work may be given less credit.
- B. If the student was not present in class on the due date because of an excused absence, full credit shall be given for the completed work.
- C. If the student was not present in class on the due date because of an unexcused absence, the work may be given less credit.



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## *Instructional Schedule*

Assessment information is consistently used to make instructional decisions in order to provide a curriculum that is academically challenging and appropriate for each student. A variety of instructional strategies is utilized by teachers to enhance the overall quality of instruction while challenging students at appropriate levels. Students receive direct instruction in art, music, physical education, and media/library from special area teachers on a weekly basis. Your child's teacher will share the daily classroom schedule with you at the beginning of the school year.

## *Internet Access Policy*

CMS requires that each school keep on file an *Acceptable Use* form signed by each student and his/her parent or guardian if they choose not to use the internet at school. Teachers will review the policy at the beginning of each year and send home the *Acceptable Use Policy* for any student that wishes not to have access.

## *Intervention Team*

The mission of Matthews Elementary School's Intervention Team is to identify and implement strategies to enhance the learning and achievement of individual students. The team is comprised of a combination of the following: exceptional children's teachers, classroom teachers, school administrators, counselor, mentor, and a psychologist. If your child is experiencing difficulty in school, a referral may be requested through your child's teacher or a school counselor. This request will lead to

the development of the *Intervention Plan for Student Success* through a team process of reviewing information, proposing success strategies/interventions, and monitoring results.



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## *Junior Achievement (JA)*

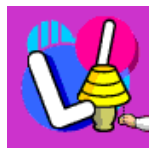
Junior Achievement is a non-profit organization sponsored by corporate and individual contributors. JA programs begin at the elementary school level, teaching children how they can impact the world around them as individuals, workers, and consumers. JA uses hands on experiences to help young people understand the economics of life. In partnership with business and educators, Junior Achievement brings the real world to students, opening their minds to their potential. If you are interested in volunteering for the program, please call the school. All volunteers receive training and typically teach for five weeks from a developed JA curriculum.



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## *Kids*

Kids are what we are here for. If it's not good for kids, we don't do it!



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## *Learning Compact*

The Learning Compact is a signed agreement between students, families, teachers, and the school principal. The purpose is to help all of the adults involved in a child's learning be aware of each other's roles and responsibilities in supporting student achievement. A copy of the compact will be shared with you at the beginning of each school year.



## Lost and Found

The lost and found area is located to the left in the front office. Please clearly write your child's name on all personal belongings. Items not claimed are donated to a charitable organization.



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## Medication Policy

As a general policy, the school recommends that children receive medication at home whenever possible. If your child must have medication of **any** type given during school hours, **including over the counter medication**, you have the following choices:

1. You may come to school and give the medication to your child at the appropriate time. Your child will be called to the office for administration of the medication.
2. You may discuss with your doctor the possibility of giving your child the medication outside of school hours (before or after school).
3. You may take a *Medication Authorization* form to your child's doctor and have him/her complete the form. The doctor and the parent must sign it. **The form must be completed by the physician for both prescription and over-the-counter medications.** Prescription medicines **must** be brought to the school office in a pharmacy-labeled bottle which contains instructions on how and when the medication is to be given. When dosage or times change, a new pharmacy-labeled bottle must be obtained. Over-the-counter medications must be received in the original container and will be administered according to the doctor's written instructions. We cannot administer on an "as needed" basis. Please instruct your child regarding his/her responsibility in taking medication at school. All medications must be brought in by the parent. Students may not bring in their own medication to school.

To ensure that medications are given to students in the safest and most effective manner, there will be no exceptions to this policy.

## Mid-Quarter Progress Reports

Students are on a nine-week grading schedule. *Mid Quarter Progress Reports* are issued midway through each nine-week grading period to inform parents of their child's academic progress before final grades are issued. We encourage you to talk with your child and the teacher if problems are indicated on the report. Progress reports are to be signed and returned promptly. Students served in our Exceptional Children's program will also receive progress reports from the special education teachers.



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## NC Standard Course of Study

At Matthews Elementary School, students in kindergarten through fifth grade receive instruction in reading, writing, math, science/health, social studies, and the arts. The *North Carolina Standard Course of Study* (NCSCOS) outlines the competencies and objectives students should master at each grade level and is based on a philosophy of teaching and learning that is consistent with current research, exemplary practices, and national standards. You can access these state standards at <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/curriculum/>.

## No Child Left Behind

Federal legislation requires our school to meet the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) standards for meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Our state End-of-Grade tests administered to third, fourth, and fifth grade students are used to determine our school's performance in meeting AYP goals. Attendance goals are also included in these AYP goals.

## Nurse

Our school nurse is employed by the Mecklenburg County Health Department and is present in our school 3 days a week. Nursing services include identification of health problems, referrals to community resources, and consultation with parents and physicians about health problems. Teaching and counseling students concerning health issues and consulting with administrators and staff are part of the nurse's responsibilities while on campus. The school nurse also attends to health room issues, medication administration, and communication on communicable diseases.



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## *Observations*

At times parents may request to observe in their child's classroom. We ask that you notify the teacher of your request at least five days in advance. A member of the administrative team or designee will also sit in on the observation to answer any questions or to provide clarification for parents or the teacher.



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## *Parent Assistant*

Parents are able to track their child's homework assignments in grades 3-5 through the parent assistant program. You can also get their grades from this program. Visit the CMS website at <http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/Pages/Default.aspx> to get more information on this program.

## *Parent-Teacher Organization*

The Matthews Elementary School Parent-Teacher Organization (MPTO) is an organized partnership of teachers, parents, and community members dedicated to providing students with the best education possible. All parents are invited to join by paying a small membership fee. A MPTO Executive Board is elected and meets monthly to plan activities that support programs and student achievement.

## Parking for School Functions

We regret that we do not have campus parking for parents and visitors during the drop off and pick up times (7:00-8:00 am and 2:00-2:45 pm). The only parking during those times are located on Trade Street in front of the church, on McDowell Avenue across from the school (north side of Trade) or at Stumptown Park. There is limited parking between 8:00am and 2:00pm in the parking lot to the east of the school, next to the Baptist Church. PARKING IS NOT PERMITTED AT ANY TIME DURING THE SCHOOL DAY BEHIND THE COMMUNITY CENTER OR ON THE BUS PARKING LOT. Matthews Police Officer assistance for crossing and traffic control is provided at the parent drive on the west side of the school at Trade Street. Matthews' staff will provide crossing assistance at McDowell Avenue on the school side of Trade Street. Parents who park on the north side of McDowell must cross at the crosswalk where the Matthews Police Officer is located. PARENTS ARE ASKED NOT TO USE THE CROSSWALK ACROSS TRADE STREET AT MCDOWELL AVENUE.

## *Psychologist*

Matthews Elementary shares a school psychologist with other area schools. Primary areas of training include child growth and development, psychological and educational assessment, learning and teaching strategies, counseling, and behavior management. A guidance counselor is on staff full time.

## *Physical Activity*

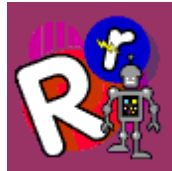
Students will go outside (weather permitting) everyday for physical activity time. It is important for the children to get this time to exercise and play games. We ask that your children wear tennis shoes. Slip-ons, heels, boots, and sandals are not safe.



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## *Questions*

There is no such thing as a dumb question. Our secretaries can answer most questions or direct you to the proper person. Don't hesitate to ask. In addition, your first point of contact should always be your child's classroom teacher when you have questions regarding instruction or classroom issues.



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## *Report Cards*

Report cards are issued four times during the school year, at the end of each quarter. You are encouraged to attend a fall conference to meet with your child's teacher at the end of the first quarter. K-2 parents are asked to sign and return the cream colored card in the report card envelope. The actual grade report is for your records. If a student owes book fees, cafeteria charges, and/or picture money at the end of the school year, parents will need to come to the school and pay the fees to receive the final report card in June. Students in grades 3-5 do not receive a paper copy, as their grades are posted on Parent Assist.

## *Restrictive Diet*

Child Nutrition Services accommodates any special diet for medical reasons. Please notify your child's teacher and the cafeteria manager if your child has a restrictive diet based on food allergies or other medical needs. The school nurse will write a diet order with your input.



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## *School Improvement Plan*

Each school is required by state law to develop a School Improvement Plan. At Matthews Elementary School, we strive for continuous improvement and set goals based on data. The School Leadership Team (SLT), consisting of staff and parent representatives, monitors the improvement process.

### *School Leadership Team*

Each school has a team charged with setting the school's mission and goals and monitoring student achievement. The School Leadership Team (SLT) meets once a month and is responsible for monitoring the School Improvement Plan, which provides strategies for creating school and student success. Elections are held in the spring for any vacant positions.

### *Safe and Orderly Environment*

Safety is given top priority in our school. All visitors are required to sign in and out at the front office with each visit. The office will notify the classroom of your arrival. The safe school plan is communicated to students, staff, and parents. Fire drills, severe weather drills, and lockdown procedures are practiced monthly.

### *School Pictures*

Individual pictures are taken in the fall of the year. Both individual and class pictures are taken in the spring. *Fifty percent of the proceeds from picture sales directly benefit our school.* This money is used to purchase additional materials such as novels, manipulatives, and instructional materials to support the NC Standard Course of Study.

### *School Supplies*

A list of required student supplies is available on the school website. Parents are encouraged to replenish school supplies as needed to ensure that students are prepared for class. Please note that rolling book bags are not permitted at Matthews Elementary School for safety and storage reasons. You can access a copy of grade level supplies from our school's website: ([www.Matthewselem@cms.k12.nc.us](mailto:www.Matthewselem@cms.k12.nc.us)) .

### *Student Transfer*

Please notify office personnel as soon as possible if your child will be transferring to another school. The teacher needs at least one day's notice to prepare transfer papers. All books and materials owned by the school should be returned. Cafeteria charges and library fees must be paid in full.



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## *Talent Development*

The goal of the Talent Development (TD) Program is to provide rigorous curriculum and academic opportunities, whereby each student may demonstrate performance consistent with his/her intellectual ability. The implementation of the program at Matthews Elementary is a joint effort by classroom teachers and the talent development teacher who use the techniques of consultation and collaboration as they develop curriculum. Identification begins at the end of first grade, followed by testing in second grade to determine placement. You will be notified if your child is to be assessed.

## *Tardy Policy*

Students are tardy if they are not in their classroom at 7:45 am. Parents are strongly encouraged to make sure their children arrive at school on time and are prepared for the day. By making sure your child arrives promptly for school, you are helping your child to develop a future work ethic that is also important in the work place. Matthews Elementary *requires* a parent to accompany children who arrive after 7:45 am to the office to sign in and receive a tardy slip. Late students will not be admitted to class without a tardy slip. Students who arrive late due to a delayed bus will not be marked tardy. Teachers are required to keep a record of tardiness. Consistent tardiness will be referred to the school counselors and the administrative team for interventions. Guidelines for monitoring tardiness are aligned with the attendance policy.

## *Technology*

The most current technology and software are available for student use in developing word processing skills, research skills, internet use, and multi-media presentations. Our goal is to integrate technology into the curriculum to provide authentic learning experiences for all students.

## *Testing Information*

**The State Board of Education** mandates that at the beginning of each school year, students and parents or guardians be provided with information advising them of the district-wide and state-mandated tests that students take during the school year. Additional testing may be required by Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools.

The following are the state requirements:

**Grades K-2:** Teachers in kindergarten, first, and second grades use a portfolio approach, based on a checklist of goals and objectives, to keep track of children's progress during the year. Teachers will notify parents if their child is not performing at grade level and a Personal Education Plan (PEP) will be developed for the student. Parents are included in the development, implementation, and ongoing review of this plan. Students are assessed using the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Language Skills) three times a year by the classroom teacher. In addition, quarterly assessments are given in reading, writing, and math.

**Grade 3:** Students in third grade also take end-of-grade (EOG) tests in reading and math.

**Grade 4:** Students in grade four take reading comprehension and mathematics end-of-grade (EOG) tests at the end of fourth grade. Some students in grade 4 are randomly chosen to take the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) tests. The information from these tests is used to make national comparisons among states and large urban school districts.

**Grade 5:** Students in grade five take (EOG) end-of-grade test in reading, math, and science.

## *Textbooks*

All CMS schools provide textbooks to students. Textbooks are issued to students at the beginning of the year. Students are expected to return textbooks in good condition, allowing for wear occurring from normal use. Students who lose or damage textbooks will be required to pay a fee for damages or replacement.

## *Twentieth Day of School*

Student enrollment and staff allocations in each school are monitored by the Charlotte Mecklenburg School District.

**Adjustments in class sizes, student assignments, and teacher assignments are carefully reviewed and adjustments are**



**made if necessary to comply with state guidelines.** Parents and students will be notified of any changes after the twentieth day of school. We ask for your patience and understanding if transitions are required by the state to keep our school in compliance.



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## *Vaccines*

- **DTP/DTaP/DT** - a minimum of 4 doses. 1 dose must be on or after the 4<sup>th</sup> birthday. (If DT is recorded, a medical exemption for pertussis must be on file.)
- **Polio** - 4 doses if given prior to the 4<sup>th</sup> birthday, or 3 doses if the 3<sup>rd</sup> dose is given on or after the 4<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- **HIB** - If child is 5 or older HIB is not required. If child is younger than 5, 3 doses and a booster dose on/after 1<sup>st</sup> birthday are required. One dose on/after 15 months of age also meets this requirement.
- **2MMR** - 1<sup>st</sup> dose on or after the 1<sup>st</sup> birthday, with 2<sup>nd</sup> dose upon enrolling in kindergarten
- **3 Hepatitis B** - required for all children born on/after 7-1-94.
- **1 Varicella** dose if born on or after 4-1-2001. (given on or after 1<sup>st</sup> birthday)

Immunizations may be received through your private doctor or through the Mecklenburg County Health Department. For an appointment at the Health Department, call (704) 336-6500. Be sure to bring your child's immunization record with you to the health department.

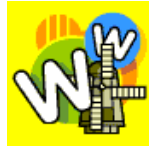
**EACH CHILD ENTERING KINDERGARTEN IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS MUST RECEIVE A HEALTH ASSESSMENT.** The health assessment shall be made no more than 12 months prior to the date of school entry. Contact your health care provider to make arrangements for this examination and take the Kindergarten Health Assessment form with you to the appointment.

## *Visitors and Volunteers*

Visitors are always welcome at Matthews Elementary School. All visitors must report to the office upon arrival to sign in and obtain a visitor's badge.

## *Volunteers*

Volunteers are an invaluable component of our overall school success. To be a volunteer in our school, the district requires all volunteers to register as an "unsupervised" volunteer. You can register at [www.cms.k12.nc.us/volunteersandpartners](http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/volunteersandpartners).



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### *Web page - School*

Our web page includes current events, calendars, relevant links, MPTO information, staff and student resources and accomplishments, AR lists, the principal's newsletter, and other useful resources. Visit us at <http://schoolsauth.acms.k12.nc.us/MatthewsES/Pages/Default.aspx>.



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### *X-tra Curricular Activities*

A list of these activities will be available at the beginning of each school year.



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### *Yearbook*

All students will have an opportunity to pre-purchase a soft cover school yearbook at the beginning of the year for \$18 or less. Yearbooks will arrive in May.



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## *Zest*

We want our children to develop a zest for learning. With strong parent support and an outstanding staff in place who have a passion for teaching, we can truly make a difference.