

The cover features a decorative border composed of a repeating pattern of peace signs in various colors (red, green, blue, yellow, purple) and large, stylized flowers in matching colors. The text is centered within this border.

STUDENT

HANDBOOK OF ROUTINE
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
2023-2024

Gretna Elementary School

302 S. Franklin Blvd.

Gretna, VA 24557

Paula B. Cocke

Principal

Jennifer B. Andrews

Assistant Principal

GES is Feeling
Groovy about
Learning!

Pittsylvania County Public Schools – 2023-2024

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Introduction

The Gretna Elementary School Handbook provides information about rules, policies, privileges, and responsibilities. We encourage each student and/or parent to become familiar with the information in the handbook as it may answer many questions concerning the operation of the school. Also, we ask that all forms are completed and returned to the school as soon as possible.

We are looking forward to a great 2023-2024 school year. Our theme this year is “GES is feeling Groovy about learning.”

We thank you for your support.

Paula B. Cocke, Principal

Jennifer Andrews, Assistant Principal

Philosophy and Objectives

The Pittsylvania County School System endeavors to prepare its youth to become productive members of their society. To this end, the instructional program of an elementary school should develop responsible individuals. It must provide the tools which will enable them to develop to the best of their abilities.

The staff of Gretna Elementary School, in keeping with the Standards of Quality and the philosophy and objectives of the Pittsylvania County School System, believes that each student should be treated and respected as an individual with specific needs and abilities. Each student should be given the opportunity to develop responsibility, independence, and respect for himself/herself and others commensurate with his/her ability, maturation level, interests, and needs.

The Gretna Elementary faculty and staff allow students the opportunity to develop good habits of sound living that will promote positive mental and physical health. We believe that any educational program must be in keeping with the current teaching methodology. By adjusting our instruction to these ideas, our program provides each individual with the academic and social tools needed to advance his/her understanding of intellectual, democratic, moral, and social concepts. As a result, each student shall become a more productive citizen of our society.

Gretna Elementary actively communicates and reinforces the belief that the school is accountable to the community it serves. The school, therefore, attempts to generate interest and encouragement from those in the community whose attitudes influence student motivation and learning.

Gretna Elementary recognizes that its philosophy and objectives must be flexible to adapt to the constantly changing economic, social, and cultural patterns of society.

Gretna Elementary School Mission Statement

Every Moment, Every Child, Matters

Gretna Elementary School Vision Statement

S.U.C.C.E.S.S. – Students Understanding Core Content and Experiencing Substantial Success

Objectives

Gretna Elementary endeavors to accomplish the following objectives:

Gretna Elementary School will provide experiences through which students may acquire a good foundation in the skills of language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, health, and technology.

Gretna Elementary School will use the SOL objectives to assess the students' mastery of skills as a partial determinant for promotion and retention. Realistically, this will prepare students to meet and qualify for further educational goals and/or future employment in our society.

Gretna Elementary School will encourage students to become excited about learning.

Gretna Elementary School will guide students in the development of self-discipline, a good self-image, and respect for others.

Gretna Elementary School will assist students in developing skills needed to meet the challenges of life and the opportunities of our free enterprise system.

Gretna Elementary School will encourage and guide students to participate as responsible family members and citizens.

Gretna Elementary School will initiate, develop, and refine educational skills that will allow students the opportunity to achieve self-motivation toward future independence.

Gretna Elementary School will encourage students to have respect for cultural differences and an understanding of the interdependence of people which will ensure well-rounded citizens of our democracy.

Gretna Elementary School will promote the development and appreciation of the arts and the creativity and imagination of students.

Gretna Elementary School will promote awareness of physical health and sound living habits.

Gretna Elementary School will foster an active community involvement program.

Gretna Elementary School will develop students' appreciation for the environment and instill in them a desire to enhance their natural surroundings.

GRETNA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL-COMMUNITY INTERACTION PLAN

Maintaining an open line of communication between the citizens and parents is the responsibility of the school. The school will keep the community informed of its objectives, achievements, and needs. The following implementations are used to ensure effective school-community interaction:

The school's open-door policy allows parents and other community people to visit the school to discuss problems pertaining to the welfare of the students. Parents desiring a conference with an administrator should contact the office to schedule an appointment.

Home-school communications will include school calendars/menus, interim progress reports, report cards, scheduled parent-teacher conference times, a student handbook, electronic e-mails, School

Gretna Elementary School – Community Interaction Plan (Continued)

Messenger, and PowerSchool/Parent Portal. Additional home-school communications will also consist of the use of discipline notices and bus conduct reports. Telephone calls and home visitations may be utilized.

The Parent-Teacher Organization Executive Committee will meet to make plans for the Parent-Teacher Organization.

The administrators will be available for conferences at the same time as the teachers.

Parents will be involved with various school-level committees as deemed appropriate.

A list of community resource people will be on file and used by the school as needed. The school maintains an active volunteer program.

The school will cooperate with businesses in formulating educational programs and conducting joint enterprises involving personnel, facilities, and training programs. Such programs will include special reading incentives, guest speakers, etc. Programs will be virtual when needed.

Daily Schedule

7:45 AM – 4:00 PM	Office Hours
7:45 AM	Car Riders Begin Unloading
7:45 AM	Buses Begin Unloading
2:55 PM	Dismissal
3:10 PM	Teachers Leave
4:00 PM	Office Closes/No Access to Classrooms

SCHOOL POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

Arrival / Departure

The following procedure should be adhered to when dropping off or picking up students from school.

- A. **Students are not to be dropped off before 7:45 AM as there is no supervision.**
- B. There are two traffic lanes that pass in front of the school. **Cars should not be parked in either lane at any time.** Please park in one of the **Visitor Parking** spaces on the front row or another designated space in the parking area.
- C. In the morning, students should be dropped off in the designated area in the front of the building. For your child's safety, please have your child get out on the passenger side of your car to avoid him/her walking between vehicles. **If you are the first to arrive, please drive down to the last orange cone in order to help control the traffic flow.** Students will not be allowed to walk across the drop-off lane unless accompanied by an adult. **Please do not park behind the first row of cars in the parking lot and release your child.**
- D. There will be a teacher or aide on duty during this time to ensure that all students entering the building will be safe.
- E. **GES faculty/staff will be available to walk students to class.** This is being done for the safety of our students and to protect instructional time.
- F. **Students who arrive after 8:10 AM must be accompanied by an adult to the office to obtain a tardy pass.**

AFTERNOON DISMISSAL

- A. In the afternoon, all car riders will report to the cafeteria at 2:50 PM. Parents will be issued a Car Pass that must be present on the right side of the dashboard as they enter the car rider line. Parents will pull up to the loading zone, student names will be announced and they will be released to come to the car. You will only be required to enter the building if you do not have your car pass. Parents should be in their cars and ready to depart when their child is in the car.
- B. Parents must send a note with the date, explanation, and signature if their child is being picked up by someone other than the parent. These notes should be turned in upon their child's arrival at school that morning. Notes will not be accepted during dismissal.
- C. All car riders **must** be picked up by 3:15 PM. There is no supervision of students after this time.

***Please Note:**

***ALL CHANGES TO THE REGULAR DISMISSAL ROUTINE MUST BE DOCUMENTED IN WRITING PRIOR TO NOON. PLEASE SEND THIS INFORMATION TO SCHOOL WITH YOUR STUDENT . PHONE CALLS AND EMAILS CAN NOT BE ACCEPTED. IN CASE OF A DIRE EMERGENCY, CONTACT AN ADMINISTRATOR.**

Breakfast & Lunch

Good News: GES is one of the Pittsylvania County Schools chosen to participate in USDA's Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for the 2023-2024 School Year. Please refer to the **Student/Parent Information Booklet** for a detailed letter from the school nutrition department.

This program allows **all students to receive free breakfast and lunch.** No further action is required of you.

Extra food and or beverages can be purchased (not charged) at the prices below:

Prices for Extra Food or Beverage

Milk - \$.50	Bottled Water - \$.75	Range of Other Entrées - \$1.25 - \$2.00
Juice Box - \$.50	Switch - \$1.00	Fruit / Vegetable - \$.50

Adult Lunch Price - \$4.25

On early dismissal days, lunch is served at regular time BUT ice cream orders are not taken.

Breakfast is served when school operates on a delayed schedule. **Food from fast-food restaurants or other sources cannot be brought into the cafeteria or classroom during breakfast or lunch.**

Carbonated sodas and candy are never allowed during mealtime (USDA regulation).

Menus are posted on the Pittsylvania County Website by month.

Go To: pcs.k12.va.us, click on the Parent Tab near the top, and Scroll the drop-down box to “Menus”, Click “Menus” on the left side, click the blue word “Elementary”, and Browse the breakfast and/or lunch monthly menu.

Cell Phones/Electronic Devices

The unauthorized use of cell phones and other electronic devices by students is prohibited during the school day. Unauthorized use of cell phones and other electronic devices by students will result in disciplinary actions including, but not limited to, a warning issued to a student, confiscation of cell phone or other electronic devices, and an out-of-school suspension are some options. Adults visiting the school should not use their cell phones to take pictures of students.

Child Abuse/Neglect

School officials are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.

Classroom Parties

Classes are allowed two parties per school year: winter & spring. Students may have treats on various occasions at the teacher’s discretion. Please avoid homemade goodies. **Please notify the classroom teacher in advance before providing any type of treat. Store-bought items only must be used for class parties and treats.**

Custody Issues

The school is obligated to follow the most recent court documents on file at the school. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide documents to the school.

Early Dismissal

When a student must leave school early, the parent or guardian **must** send a signed note of explanation. The parent or authorized adult must have the office staff call the student to the office at the time of the dismissal. **The office staff will not call ahead to have a child waiting for a parent to arrive.**

The school will not release a child to anyone other than parents, legal guardians, or persons whose names appear on the Emergency Information Form unless authorized in writing.

Field Trips

Field trips are scheduled throughout the year by grade level.

Fundraisers/Collection of Labels

The school participates in several fundraisers that assist the school and PTO in raising funds for our students. We ask that all families participate in these fundraisers. The school also participates in the Box Tops for Education program (you submit electronically using the Box Tops app), cell phones, ink, and toner cartridges. Funds and prizes received by the school are used solely to benefit the students, for example, instructional supplies and student incentives.

Grading

Elementary school is a critical time for building the foundation necessary for future success. It is at the elementary level that it is important that students demonstrate mastery of the basic “building blocks” necessary for future learning. Satisfactory achievement or above is essential, especially in the core curriculum areas of English/language arts, mathematics, science, and history and social science. Satisfactory achievement means “C” or above in subject areas and “S” in other areas. A letter grade of “D” at the elementary school level indicates that the student is “having difficulty”. A “D” suggests that there is limited understanding and knowledge of a subject; however, it cautions that the fundamental skills may not be strong enough to support future progress and success. The “building blocks” are not strong and well established.

The decision to promote or retain a student is the result of a carefully considered process of evaluation. The teacher and the principal will keep parents informed of the student’s progress throughout the year. In all cases, the teacher and principal have the final responsibility for making a decision regarding promotion. A final grade of “D” on the report card will be seriously reviewed and considered in the final determination for promotion and retention. Final grades of “D” or “F” on the elementary student’s report card, in addition to other considerations of student achievement, may result in the decision to retain a student. Always, decisions to promote or retain are made in the student’s best interest.

Promotion and retention decisions are based on the following:

- Academic Achievement
- Results on the Standards of Learning Tests in grades 3, 4, and 5
- Reading and Math Levels
- Attendance
- Maturity
- Chronological age
- Effort
- Possible effect on the child

Please review your child’s progress regularly with your child’s teacher. Interim reports are issued at the midpoint of each marking period, and report cards are issued each nine weeks. Teachers will schedule conferences at points throughout the year; however, please do not hesitate to request a conference with your child’s teacher at any time you find it necessary.

Pittsylvania County has adopted a new 10 point grading system. Please see policy for details.

[New Grading Policy](#)

Hall Passes

Students in the hall without their teacher must have a hall pass.

Health Issues

ALLERGIES – Under certain circumstances, it may be necessary for schools to restrict various products such as food items and/or fragrances. To help ensure the safety of all students it is requested that all food be commercially prepared for any classroom activity. Home-baked items are not allowed.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES – Students will be excluded from school if they have contracted a communicable disease, which includes head lice.

IMMUNIZATIONS – Students will be excluded from school if immunizations are not complete.

MEDICATIONS – We would prefer not to administer medicine at school. Please try to arrange for your child to take medicine at home before he comes to school and when he comes home in the afternoon. If we must administer medicine during school hours, you must complete a medication permission form and **you must bring the medication to the school in the original container. Students may not bring medicine of any kind to school.** The school will not administer any medication without the permission form. Aspirin, adult medications, and herbal/homeopathic medications require a physician's order.

Homework

Homework is a part of the school program. Homework is used to reinforce concepts taught during the day. Students should be able to complete their assignments with little difficulty. If there is a difficulty, please contact the teacher. A student's written homework assignment from all teachers should not exceed more than 30 minutes in grades K-2 and not more than one hour in grades 3-5. Teachers may choose to incorporate a reading incentive program in their classrooms.

Pittsylvania County Schools utilizes an internet-based program (PowerSchool) which allows parents to access students' grades and attendance through a parent portal. Parents of students new to Gretna Elementary School will be assigned a user ID and password. **The user ID is a confidential number and can only be issued in person to the student's parent/guardian by office staff.**

Grades 3-5: Please utilize the homework assignment notebooks that are provided by the school to ensure the needed communication between home and school.

Ice Cream

Students may purchase ice cream for \$.60. Ice cream will be sold daily with the exception of 1:00 dismissal or delayed opening days. Purchases must be made by 8:30 AM in the student's classroom.

Lost and Found

Unlabeled items misplaced by students are displayed in **Lost and Found** in the Primary and Elementary halls. Students/parents can check this area for missing items. **Be sure to put names on the labels of coats and jackets and on lunch boxes, etc.** to assist with returning such items to the proper student.

Moment of Silence

The school recognizes a moment of silence and participates in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. It is requested that all students observe this moment of silence for reflection, prayer, or meditation, as well as the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Visitors are also asked to respectfully observe this time.

Permission to Photograph

Pittsylvania County Schools require parent permission to photograph students. Please refer to the forms section in the middle of the Student/Parent Information Booklet for a form to complete and return to school.

Phone

The office phone is used in the event of an emergency. Calling home for homework, signed papers, etc. is not permitted.

PTO

An active Parent/Teacher Organization is an asset to the school. You can keep abreast of PTO activities by attending the meetings and reading the published flyers. We encourage you to take advantage of another avenue of productive home-school interaction by becoming a working member of our PTO. **The GES PTO has a Facebook page where you can access more information.**

Visitation/Conferences –

Conferences can be scheduled as needed in addition to conference nights and should be scheduled in advance.

All persons entering the building are required to check-in at the office and present a driver's license or a picture ID

Lunch visits will be allowed during the second and third nine week marking periods. A special table will be provided for the student and visitor. Please refrain from using your cell phone to photograph students in the cafeteria.

Due to morning procedures, conferences with administrators should be scheduled after 9:00 AM.

Report Cards

Report Cards are electronic and emailed to parents by School Messenger.

Username = Your Child's Date of Birth / Password = Your Child's Student ID Number

School Messenger

This is an automated phone system that notifies parents of announcements and school closings. A School Messenger form will be provided to each student at his or her school. Every person listed on the School Messenger form will be contacted. Please text "Yes" to 67587 to receive text messages from School Messenger.

School Pictures

School pictures will be taken in the fall and spring. Please support our picture sales as this is the school's primary money-making project. The fall fundraiser will be handled by the PTO.

Selling of Merchandise

Students are not allowed to sell items of any kind while on school property (including the school bus) during the school day.

Student Conduct

Students are expected to come to school ready to learn. Good behavior is expected at all times. Each student has the right to a safe and healthy environment conducive to learning. Students are expected to follow the school rules below:

- Accept responsibility for your actions.
- Accept responsibility for your schoolwork.
- Respect yourself and others.

In addition to school rules, each teacher maintains standards for children to follow. Students violating school rules may receive consequences such as a conference with the principal or assistant principal, parent contact, removal from class, detention (lunch, after-school, recess, etc.), or suspension from school. Parents will receive copies of the Pittsylvania County Schools Code of Conduct and the Pittsylvania County Schools Elementary Student Handbook which details specific misconduct and consequences. These guidelines should be reviewed with your child.

Student Dress

Students are to dress appropriately for school. Students should refrain from wearing clothing, jewelry, badges, etc. with printed messages about alcohol, drugs, tobacco, sex, or vulgarity. Items should not make fun of race or gender. Clothes should be free of holes and tears. Hats should be removed upon entering the building. Belts should be worn with pants. Shorts, skirts, and skorts should measure no more than six inches above the knee when standing. Leggings may be worn, if the shirt/dress is long enough to freely cover the upper thigh. All sleeveless clothing should fit under the arms and not hang loosely. No halters, spaghetti straps, or fish net-type clothing should be worn. Sneakers must be worn to participate in gym and recess activities.

When a student's dress is in question, the principal or a designee will contact the parent/guardian.

The administration requests all visitors follow the dress policy while on school property.

Textbooks

Textbooks are provided to all students at no cost. However, students are held responsible for books that are lost or damaged. If a book is lost, the cost will be the amount needed to replace the book. Fines for damaged books will be assessed at the end of the school year. The School Board may take action against students who fail to return property owned by or under the control of the School Board and used by the student in the course of his or her studies.

Valuables at School

Items having value for one individual usually have an attractive appeal to others. These items can disappear during the school day. Valuable items should not be brought to school. Money should be kept in a pocket, book bag, or wallet, not left lying on a table or desk. **The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.**

Volunteers – We Will Follow CDC Guidelines

We encourage parents and other interested persons who have a particular interest in working with children to become active volunteers in the school. We prefer that you not volunteer in your child's classroom as this is a distraction to your child. We also ask for all cell phones to be placed on vibrate or silent. If you must make or accept a call, please do so outside of the classroom.

We have a need for volunteers to serve in the following areas:

- Classroom / Library
- Tutors
- Office
- Lunch Duty

All volunteers are required to complete a Level I or Level II Volunteer Certification Form and have it notarized. Notary service is available in the office. Level I includes resource speakers, PTO volunteers, Science Fair judges, field trip guests, volunteers not in supervisory positions, and classroom visitors. Level II includes PTO officers, tutors, mentors, field trip chaperones, and volunteers in supervisory positions. Level I forms can be completed in the office. Level II forms must be completed at the school board office in Chatham and require fingerprinting.

Weather Closings/Delays

Announcements concerning school closings or delays will be made via local radio or television stations, Pittsylvania County Schools website postings (www.pcs.k12.va.us), and the School Messenger System.

The superintendent or designee will announce information regarding closings. Please do not call the school. During these times, telephone lines are needed for emergency communication with the School Board Office.

Early closing is necessary if weather conditions warrant. We request that you have a plan in effect for your child in the event of early dismissal.

We do have a 2-hour delay schedule as well as a 3-hour delay schedule. Please make sure you are prepared.

GRETNA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL'S STUDENT RECOGNITION
GUIDELINES & INCENTIVES

Students at Gretna Elementary School will be recognized for their academic achievements as well as citizenship. The criteria for recognition is as follows:

Principal's List:

- All A's and S's in all core subjects, exclusive of conduct.

Academic List:

- All A's and B's and S's in all core subjects, exclusive of conduct.

Hawk's List:

- GPA of 3.0 and above in all core subjects, exclusive of conduct.

Citizenship List:

- Students with good citizenship must maintain the following:
 - *satisfactory conduct in all classes including resource classes;
 - *not more than one discipline referral from the office and not more than 1 bus referral for minor infractions, and satisfactory behavior throughout the school, playground, and on the bus;
 - *determination of minor infractions will be at the discretion of the administrators.

Perfect Attendance:

- Students who did not miss any school days.

Instruction Information

Faculty and Support Staff – The faculty and support staff at GES are highly qualified and devoted.

Gifted – The gifted resource teacher meets weekly to provide enrichment opportunities to those students who meet the criteria for the gifted program.

PALS – PALS is the state-provided screening tool for Virginia's Early Intervention Reading Initiative (EIRI) for grades PK-3. The purpose of the EIRI is to reduce the number of children with reading problems by detecting those problems early and providing research-based, small-group intervention.

Special Education Inclusion – Students with disabilities are given the opportunity to have access to and participate in all activities of the total school environment. The special needs teacher and regular classroom teacher work together in a co-teaching environment to meet the needs of all students.

Title I School-wide Program – Title I students are integrated into the complete school program, rather than being pulled out of the regular classroom for special assistance. This allows the school to concentrate on early intervention and proper literacy development.

K-2 Foundations – A researched based program that makes learning to read and spell fun! The program emphasizes phonemic awareness, phonics/word study, high frequency words, reading, fluency, comprehension, and spelling.

Read Naturally and My Sidewalks – These are programs that benefit students in building literacy skills.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS (PBIS)

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports is a systematic team based approach to working with all students. PBIS focuses on behavior and academic expectations PBIS is a school-wide system that addresses the whole school: the classroom and areas outside the classroom. Children tend to succeed not just in school, but also throughout life when schools and families work together.

Birthdays:

Students are recognized on their birthdays by having their name announced over the intercom during morning announcements.

Hat Day:

Several Hat Days will be held throughout the year. Dates will be announced.

End-of-the-Year Field Day: This special event will be attended by students who have exhibited good citizenship throughout the year by following school rules.

Information Regarding Attendance at GES:

Daily Attendance: Students should attend school daily to ensure success at school. It is vital for students to be in class and receive quality instruction daily for them to achieve their best.

Education Opportunity: The administration of GES supports students and families who have an opportunity to participate in an educational opportunity throughout the school year. We usually approve days missed for an educational opportunity and therefore the days absent are excused (form must be submitted). If a student is chronically absent, the administration will review the submitted paperwork and make a decision in regards to whether the absence will be excused or unexcused.

Gretna Elementary School
302 Franklin Blvd. South, P.O. Box 595
Gretna, VA 24557

Handbook Acknowledgement Statement
2023-2024

I hereby acknowledge that I have reviewed and read the electronic version of the **Gretna Elementary School and Pittsylvania County Student Handbook**.

PARENT'S
SIGNATURE

STUDENT'S
SIGNATURE

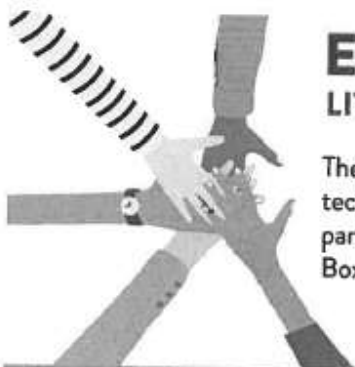
TEACHER'S
NAME

DATE

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE SCHOOL WITHIN **FIVE DAYS OF RECEIPT.**



Box Tops for Education Information



EARN CASH FOR YOUR SCHOOL

LITTLE BY LITTLE WE CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE.

The Box Tops mobile app uses state-of-the-art technology to scan your store receipt, find participating products and instantly add Box Tops to your school's earnings online.

LOOK
FOR THE
LABEL:



HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:



BUY BOX TOPS PRODUCTS

You can find Box Tops on hundreds of products throughout the store.



SCAN YOUR RECEIPT

Use the app to snap a photo of your receipt within 14 days of purchase.



EARN CASH FOR YOUR SCHOOL

Box Tops earnings are identified and automatically updated online.

SHOPPING FOR GROCERIES ONLINE?

You can still earn Box Tops for your school with your e-receipt!
See how at BTFE.com/emailgroceryreceipts



BOX TOPS CLIPS

You may occasionally find an old Box Tops clip on packages in stores. You can still clip them and send them to school, as long as each clip has a valid expiration date.

SEE PRODUCTS & LEARN MORE ABOUT
THE BOX TOPS APP AT BTFE.COM

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