

Mulberry Elementary School

A Dacula Cluster School



Parent and Student Handbook

2022-2023

Success Rooted in a Community of Learners

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MULBERRY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
442 EAST UNION GROVE CIRCLE, AUBURN, GEORGIA 30011
PHONE: (678) 226-7460



MANDY YEARBY
Principal

Dear Parents and Students,

As the proud principal of Mulberry Elementary School, I am excited to welcome you to the 2022-2023 school year. Our teachers and staff continue to show their dedication to making each school year a success and helping each student to develop a love of learning. While we have encountered many challenges over the last couple of years, we maintain high expectations and work tirelessly to provide the support every student needs.

The elementary school years are the foundational years in a child's educational career, and it is not lost on us that you have chosen Mulberry as the school to build your little falcon. We believe in creating memorable experiences ingrained within engaging learning opportunities. From our PTA sponsored events to our classroom experiments, your child will have countless opportunities to be involved and excited about school. We encourage you to join the PTA which consists of many dedicated parents who support our school by hosting events and donating time and resources. We attribute a huge part of our success to the collaboration and connection between home and school and that starts with you! Our goal each year is to have 100% PTA membership of both faculty and parents. In addition, PTA challenges parents to donate 4 hours of service or volunteer time to the school. Look for information regarding PTA during registration and Curriculum Nights. The PTA welcomes all questions, comments, and assistance as we work together to enhance the learning opportunities for students at Mulberry.

We firmly believe that parents are their child's first teacher. Therefore, we continue to encourage your support by attending school meetings, maintaining communication with your child's teacher, and reading with them nightly. The Student/Parent Handbook that follows is full of helpful information and provides specific details on how you can support throughout the year. In this handbook you will find information about field trips, the cost of breakfast and lunch, what to do if we have inclement weather, and more. There are also specific guidelines that we ask you to review such as student dress code, how to complete early check-outs, and a description of appropriate student conduct.

Weekly communication from the school will be posted on our website and progress information from the classroom will be sent to you via email. The Gwinnett Parent Portal provides access to important information regarding your child's achievement and school history. My eCLASS, Gwinnett's student portal, is a valuable resource, allowing your child to monitor progress and access electronic resources. If you do not have access to the internet, please let us know and we will arrange for information to be sent home via Friday folders.

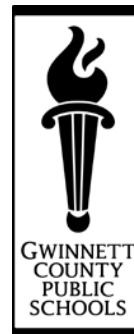
We are excited for all that this upcoming school year has in store for each of our students and can't wait to embark on this journey of learning with you.

Please contact me if you have questions or suggestions about our school. I look forward to leading and learning with you during these next months.

Your Principal and Partner,

Mandy Yearby

Dr. Mandy Yearby,
Principal



Gwinnett County Public Schools

Vision Statement

Gwinnett County Public Schools will be a system of world-class schools where students acquire the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and careers.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Gwinnett County Public Schools is to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior for each student resulting in measured improvement against local, national, and world-class standards.

Strategic Goals

Goal 1: Gwinnett County Public Schools will ensure a world-class education for all students by focusing on teaching and learning the Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) curriculum.

Goal 2: Gwinnett County Public Schools will ensure a safe, secure, and orderly environment for all.

Goal 3: Gwinnett County Public Schools will optimize student achievement through responsible stewardship of its financial resources and the proactive pursuit of all resources necessary to meet current and future demands.

Goal 4: Gwinnett County Public Schools will recruit, employ, develop, and retain a workforce that achieves the mission and goals of the organization.

Goal 5: Gwinnett County Public Schools will meet the continuing and changing demand for essential information through technological systems and processes that support effective performance and desired results.

Goal 6: Gwinnett County Public Schools will provide and manage the system's facilities and operations in an exemplary manner as determined by programmatic needs and best management practices.

Goal 7: Gwinnett County Public Schools will apply continuous quality improvement strategies and principles as the way the organization does business.

Mulberry Elementary

Vision Statement

It is the vision of the staff and community of Mulberry Elementary to develop and maintain a learning environment that fosters high levels of learning and individual student success in a safe and secure setting.

Mission Statement

Mulberry Elementary students will achieve academic excellence as measured by local, state and national standards, as well as develop an appreciation for education and community.

Mulberry Motto

Success Rooted in a Community of Learners

Part I: General School Information, Policies and Procedures

Admission / Enrollment Requirements

Students entering Kindergarten must be age five on or before September 1, and Grade 1 students must be six years old on or before September 1. All students entering Kindergarten or Grade 1 must present:

1. A copy of the birth certificate
2. Proof of residency in the Mulberry attendance zone*
3. An official Georgia Department of Human Resources Certificate of Immunization (#3231)
4. A Georgia Vision, Hearing and Dental Certificate (#3300)
5. Student's Social Security number (A waiver can also be signed if a parent is uncomfortable providing the Social Security number.)
6. Valid Parent or Guardian photo I.D.

* Proof of residency includes a lease, deed or contract, most recent tax return, homeowner's insurance policy, residential property tax statement, paycheck stub, or Medicaid card, AND one current utility bill (gas, electric or water). Proof of residence must be established before registration can be completed and a student enrolled in classes.

The enrollment process can be started online by visiting www.gcpsk12.org/MulberryES. Please complete each step of the enrollment process. The school will receive notification of the online registration process. Parents or guardians will then present pertinent documentation to the school in order to complete registration.

School contributions (including supplies, technology, clinic, PTA membership) and meals can be prepaid online using at www.mypaymentsplus.com.

Approved residence for school attendance purposes occurs when the student lives with the following person(s) who resides within the county school district and the Mulberry attendance zone.

- Parent (natural or adopted)
- Legal guardian or other person legally entitled to act on behalf of the student
- Foster parents appointed by a state agency
- Sponsor for approved International Exchange programs

When residing with other individuals in their home or apartment, the parent must submit a notarized affidavit, signed by the individual with whom the student/guardian is residing, verifying that the enrolling student is residing in that home or apartment. The individual with whom the student/guardian is residing must also provide proof of residency documentation and photo identification with home address. Parent or Guardian will also have 30 days to provide a piece of business mail with their name and residing address.

Extensions for immunization and hearing, vision, dental forms (3231 and 3300) can only be granted to out-of-state students for up to 30 days in order to have the needed information transferred onto the appropriate Georgia forms.

Parents must notify the school immediately if there is a change of residence. If a family moves out of Gwinnett County after the school year begins, the student must be withdrawn unless the move occurs after the spring holidays.

If a family moves out of the Mulberry attendance area after the school year begins, but remains within Gwinnett County, the student(s) can complete the school year at Mulberry if:

- The student is granted a permissive transfer
- The parent provides transportation
- The student exhibits good behavior
- The student remains in good standing for attendance and parents are punctual for arrival and dismissal

New Student Placement

New students who meet eligibility guidelines and attended an accredited school will be placed in the appropriate grade that was recommended by the sending school. Placement for students moving from non-accredited schools will be handled on an individual basis.

Attendance

The importance of punctual and regular attendance for every student cannot be emphasized enough. A good attendance record has a direct effect on the student's understanding of the curriculum. Any student who is absent must have a parent/guardian notify the school in writing in order to excuse the student's absence. A signed, written notification is required upon the student's return stating the reason for the absence including a daytime phone number. Listed below are valid reasons for absence. All other absences are considered unexcused.

- personal illness,
- a death or serious illness in the immediate family,
- recognized religious holidays observed by the family's faith,
- absences mandated by order of governmental agencies, and,
- conditions, which render school attendance impossible or hazardous to health and safety.

Individual students who have emergencies necessitating their absence from school for a portion of the school day must be present for the majority of the school day in order to be considered present. Students checked out prior to 11:30 AM are considered absent for the day.

School hours are from 8:15 AM to 2:45 PM. It is both the parent and student's responsibility to be punctual and remain in attendance for the entire school day. Students are expected to make up assignments missed due to absence, tardiness or early checkout. **Students arriving after 8:10 AM must be checked in through the office by a parent or guardian. Students are tardy after 8:15 AM. Except in the event of an emergency, there will be no checkouts between 2:15-2:45.**

A student is considered truant if he/she has ten or more unexcused absences. The school will contact the parent or guardian to notify them of the unexcused absences and possible consequences under State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-10.

Arrival and Dismissal

Students enter building

7:45 – 8:10 AM

First Bell / Car Rider and Breakfast services
close

8:10 AM

Instructional Day begins

8:15 AM

Instructional Day ends

2:45 PM

Students dismissed

2:45 – 3:00 PM

Building Secured (closed)

3:30 PM

Our school hours are 8:15 AM – 2:45 PM. Students may enter the building beginning at 7:45 AM. Children who are driven to school should not arrive before 7:45 AM. This is for their safety. There is no one on duty to supervise students prior to this time, as staff members are involved in planning, conferences, clubs and meetings prior to 7:45 AM. For the same reason, students will not be permitted to re-enter the building after dismissal in the afternoon.

Bus Riders

Students are highly encouraged to ride the bus on the first and every day of the school year. This helps alleviate traffic congestion and provides for a safe means of transportation. All students living within the Mulberry attendance area are assigned a bus stop. Please ensure safety by having an adult at the bus stop with children each morning and afternoon.

All students who ride the bus will have a yellow or green book bag tag. The tag will identify a student's proper bus route home each day. Bus drivers also work quickly to get to know the children.

Students are to adhere to safe bus practices and appropriate bus behavior. Expectations are provided in the final section of this booklet. You will also receive a copy of the Gwinnett County Student Handbook, which contains additional information pertaining to bus transportation.

Car Riders

The following guidelines have been established to provide the highest level of safety for our students:

Morning Procedures:

- Parent drop off line is located on the side lot with a dedicated entrance/exit. (Do not enter the bus lane at the front of the school while buses are present.)
- Parent drop off is open at 7:45 AM and closes **promptly** at 8:10 AM.
- Drivers should remain in their vehicles at all times.
- Staff members are present each day to help students open car doors and enter the school. For the safety of all students, do not let your child out of the car until signaled by the teacher on duty.
- Pull all the way up so that 8-9 cars can be unloaded at the same time. Students will unload from the right passenger side of the vehicle only.
- If a parent needs to come in the building with a child, park in a designated space, enter the building at the front door, and sign in at the office. All visitors should enter and leave through the front entrance.

Afternoon Procedures:

- A car tag must be visible to pick up a student in the afternoon. If you know your child will be a car rider for various after school activities during the school year, please secure a set of car rider tags from the front office.
- When requested, your family will receive two identical tags; one is to be hung from your rearview mirror where it is easily visible when you pick up your child. The second is a back up to be used as needed by those you authorize to pick up your child.
- Please be aware that drivers of cars without numbers may be required to present a photo I.D. that matches a name on the approved pick up list and may be asked to leave the car rider line, park and go to the front office to check out the student.
- If a note has been written to request that a student be a car rider and no tag number is on the vehicle picking up the student, a staff member may ask to see the driver's I.D. to make sure the driver is the person listed on the note.
- The Mulberry car rider area is designed for single lane traffic only. Please be courteous and advance forward slowly to the pick-up area where students are entering cars. Pull all the way up in the driveway so approximately 8-9 cars can be loaded at the same time.
- Teachers on duty will have a list of students and numbers. Students will also have matching numbers on their blue bag tags. Children should load from the passenger side of the vehicle only.
- No child standing in the car rider lane will be released to anyone who walks up to the line and asks for a child.
- If a parent is late picking up their child, the child will be taken to the front office where the parent can pick up the child upon arrival.
- *At no time is smoking permitted on school grounds.

Daycare Riders

Students being transported to and from daycare centers in the area will receive an orange bag tag. These students will dismiss to the front of the school once their daycare provider arrives in the afternoon or via a Gwinnett County school bus if the daycare is located in the Mulberry attendance area.

Walkers

For the safety of all children, we encourage you to have your student ride the bus rather than walk to and from school. However, if you choose, students walking to and from school must enter at the front of the building. No student may walk across traffic lanes or through the parking lot. Walkers will be dismissed after buses leave the premise in the afternoon.

Changes in Student Transportation

It is very confusing for students as well as teachers to change transportation plans or alternate between day care, parent pick-up and buses. Additionally, accepting changes by telephone or email does not allow us to provide maximum safety measures for our students. Therefore, should there be a need to change transportation, a written note to the teacher from the child's parent or guardian (with current date, signature and a phone number already in our student information database) indicating the change in transportation home is required on the morning of the change. Parents may request in writing to the teacher that a student be allowed to go home with a specified person not already listed on the student data verification form or with a friend on a different bus. Students who have an afternoon transportation change will bring their note to the office to obtain a transportation pass. Bus drivers cannot transport students who do not have a bus pass signed by a school representative. In the absence of a note from the parent, the child will be placed on his/her usual mode of transportation.

Please make sure that your child knows of any change in transportation plans. If an emergency occurs and you must request a change in transportation after the day has begun, please contact the front office staff or administrator.

Cafeteria

Breakfast and lunch are provided daily in our cafeteria or students may bring their own lunch from home.

Meal Prices

Student Breakfast	\$1.50
Reduced Price Breakfast	\$.30
Adult Breakfast	\$1.75
Extra Milk	\$.40
Student Lunch	\$2.25
Reduced Price Lunch	\$.40
Adult Lunch	\$3.00
Extra Milk	\$.40
A La Carte Items	\$.25 - \$1.50

Sack Lunches

Students are permitted to bring a packed lunch from home. However, canned and bottled drinks (except water) are not permitted.

Prepaid Meals

Students may prepay for multiple meals. A single account will be established in each student's name, which can be used to pay for breakfast, lunch and any extra items sold separately. When a student makes a purchase, his/her account will be debited for the purchase. If you wish your child's account be used for the purchase of meals only, notify our Cafeteria Manager. All transactions for lunch charges and prepaid meals are made each morning. Please have your child's full name as well as the teacher's name on all transactions.

Gwinnett County also offers a means to monitor your child's balance and add money to your child's account using checking account or credit card. Information and access to this service is available at www.mypaymentsplus.com. Visit the Gwinnett School Nutrition Program site to access valuable information including menus, nutrition information and pricing at <http://www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us/gcsnp.nsf?OpenDatabase&0~QuickLinks>.

Free and Reduced Meals

All students are eligible to apply for free or reduced meal rates, which include breakfast and lunch. Applications are available from the school cafeteria manager and online on <http://www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us/gcsnp.nsf>. We are required by federal law to have a completed application each year for every student receiving these benefits.

Lunch Charges

We appreciate parental assistance in reminding students to bring lunch money and in checking frequently with your children about when additional payments are needed. Parents will receive a lunch charge notice when there are charges on their child's account. Parents are also encouraged to use www.mypaymentsplus.com services to monitor their child's account.

Frozen Snacks

Frozen snacks (ice cream, popsicles, etc.) are available **only Wednesdays and Fridays** for \$1.00. These items can be purchased through your child's classroom in the morning and will be served during lunch.

Visiting for Lunch

Parents are welcome to join us for lunch. (We do ask parents, however, to refrain from eating with your child the first week of school so that children can acclimate to the school and routines.)

After signing in and securing a visitor badge, parents should meet their child at the entrance to the cafeteria. Please allow your child to follow his/her normal routine in the cafeteria line while you visit our adult food bar. Students may invite **one friend** and their visitors to eat at the designated parent tables.

School Celebrations / Parties

Gwinnett County Board of Education policy permits one school-wide party each year. These dates are designated by each individual school, typically the last day before winter holidays.

Birthday parties are not permitted; however, you may deliver a snack (individually portioned and store bought) to the front office or purchase frozen snacks for the class in honor of your child's birthday. We will handle the rest! We regret that we cannot distribute party invitations through the classroom or the school.

Clinic

The clinic is available to students who get hurt at school or feel ill during the day. If a child becomes sick during the school day, the clinic worker will attempt to reach the child's parents. If unsuccessful, other persons listed in the student information system will be called. It is imperative that we are able to reach a parent at all times. Be sure to contact the school if your phone number or other contact information changes.

The clinic worker will call parents if a student is vomiting, has a fever in excess of 100.4 degrees, or has a significant injury. In case of serious medical emergencies, paramedics will be called. Students in any of these situations cannot be sent home on the bus. Students should be fever free, without medication, for 24 hours before returning to school.

The clinic worker dispenses all medications at school. In the event that medication (including aspirin or Tylenol) needs to be dispensed during school hours, a parent must hand deliver it to the front office in its original container. The parent or guardian must sign a medical release form. No medication is allowed on the bus. Children are not to have medications in their possession during the school day, including cough drops. For medications given on a long-term basis, a special form must be signed by the child's physician and filed with the clinic worker. A medical management plan may also be established for students with certain medical conditions or severe allergies. The clinic phone number is 678-226-7465.

Communication **Teacher-Parent Communication**

Communication between parents and teachers is an essential component of student success. The school system designates two days during the fall and spring term for parent / teacher conferences, October 19-20, and March 1-2. School is dismissed on 12:15 on these days so that conferences can be conducted. We also encourage you to communicate regularly with your child's teacher. If you have a concern about your child, please do not hesitate to contact your child's classroom teacher.

Checking Progress

Friday folders are sent home by each classroom teacher to provide timely information regarding classroom progress and conduct. Progress reports are sent home to parents as well as report cards. Report cards are sent home at the end of each semester.

Parent Portal

The Gwinnett Parent Portal allows parents access to pertinent information about a child's progress at school. To access the Portal, parents will set up a secure account for each of their children. The Portal provides access to test history, attendance, conduct and grade updates.

Student Portal

My eCLASS, accessed with the student's ID and a password, allows students to view grades, assignments, and other pertinent information. The portal is also a valuable resource for eTextbooks and educational links.

Contacting Your Child's Teacher

If you would like to speak with a teacher regarding your child's progress, you may call the school at 678-226-7460, email your child's teacher or send a note. Phone calls will be received by our office staff between 7:30 AM and 3:30 PM. Messages will be taken for teachers to return calls. We do not interrupt teachers during instructional time. Teachers will make every effort to return phone messages within 24 hours of receipt. We invite parents to write a note or send an email as other means of communication. Please be aware, however, that teachers respond to notes and emails outside instructional time. Therefore, time sensitive information should be handled through the front office.

Remember: As a courtesy to your child's teacher, we ask that an appointment be made for visitation and/or conferences. If you need to meet with a teacher, please schedule a time by contacting the teacher directly. Though it may seem convenient or quick to stop by the room before, during or after the school day, our teachers' responsibility is to the students in the classroom. The teacher must supervise students at all times.

Messages to Students

Only messages of an emergency nature can be delivered to students during the instructional day. Please remember that our purpose is to provide an excellent learning environment, free from interruptions. Use of the telephone by students is permitted only in emergencies and under the direct supervision of school personnel.

Newsletters/School Menus

Each week you will receive via email and be able to access the school newsletter, the *Mulberry Messenger*, from our school website. This publication includes a calendar of dates to keep you informed of school events and other information you may need for the upcoming week. Individual teachers and/or grade levels will post information on the Mulberry website and/or send weekly newsletters via eCLASS. We will provide hard copies to households that do not have internet capability. Let your classroom teacher know if you need a paper copy of these items.

Dress Code

School is a place to learn, and the clothing children wear should reflect this attitude. No student's clothing or jewelry shall distract from the learning process or disrupt instruction. Students should be dressed appropriately, suitable to the weather conditions, and in good taste. Dresses, skirts, tops and shorts should be of conservative length and not be such that sitting, bending, kneeling, etc. causes an embarrassment to the student or those around him/her. Midriffs, tank tops, halters, muscle shirts, midriff jerseys, see-through or mesh jerseys, torn clothing, or other clothing, which is revealing are not acceptable wear for school. Shirts or pants that expose any portion of the waist, hips or midriff are not allowed. Also prohibited are excessively baggy clothes and those displaying inappropriate advertisements or symbols. If a student comes to school in clothing considered inappropriate by the school staff or that causes a class disruption, he or she will be sent to the office and parents will be notified to bring something more acceptable.

Students must wear safe and appropriate shoes each day. Sneakers are required for physical education both in the gym and on the playground. Failure to wear the proper shoes may result in the student being unable to participate in class.

Students are encouraged to wear school colors and/or spirit wear every Friday. Spirit wear can be purchased from the PTA on Registration Day or by contacting a member of our PTA or office staff.

Early Check-Out of Students

If early checkout is necessary, the parent should plan to do so **prior to 2:15 PM.** This is necessary in order to provide a safe and timely dismissal for all students.

A parent wishing to check out his or her child any time prior to 2:15 PM should send a note to the teacher that morning explaining the reason. The parent should then come to the front office to sign out the student. It usually takes 5-10 minutes for a student to arrive after being called for checkout. If the student is on the playground or in another part of the building, it may take a little longer. Please plan accordingly.

For safety reasons, we release students **only** to those persons listed on the student's information form. If anyone not listed attempts to check out a student, the office staff and/or an administrator will verify the person's I.D. and the parent will be contacted. In each situation, anyone picking up a student should be prepared to show photo identification. Students are released from the front office and only to parents or adults designated by parents. **Please do not go to the classroom to check out a student. Teachers are instructed not to release a student to anyone unless the office staff has notified them to do so.**

Please allow your young child to become an independent and responsible student. To do this, we ask that you do not go into the classroom with your child in the mornings or afternoons to help him/her with book bags, etc.

Electronic Technology and Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)

Students are responsible for appropriate behavior on the school computer networks. Access to network services is given to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Any member of the staff may suspend specific user access. Use of the Internet must support education and be consistent with the academic expectations of Mulberry Elementary School.

Students use technology more and more as an embedded part of the teaching and learning process. Through a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program, students are provided access to the Internet at school using the GCPS network. To be granted access, students and their parents must confirm they accept the terms and conditions of Gwinnett County Public Schools Responsible Use Policy (RUP). Users agree to uphold the contents of the RUP as well as the Student Code of Conduct on their student-owned and school-owned devices while on system property. In compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), GCPS will filter content for users connected to the GCPS network at school.

The owner of the device is responsible for ensuring that the device is safe and secure. GCPS and employees of GCPS are not liable or responsible for any theft, damage, or loss of any non-district device or the information on any such device, nor are they responsible for any fees associated with using any personal technology devices. All fees and charges related to texting or Internet use on any student-owned device are the sole responsibility of the owner.

Emergency Procedures

We are committed to providing your student with a safe and secure environment in which to learn. Every effort is made to anticipate and plan for potential safety challenges on our campus. In addition to the implementation of carefully planned safety procedures, Mulberry Elementary employs a camera security system to monitor hallways, exit doors and exterior areas of the building.

Fire, tornado and disaster drills are held throughout the school year. While we cannot anticipate all emergencies that could occur, we want students and staff to be familiar with all appropriate safety plans.

If it is necessary for students to be picked up due to an emergency, parents should park at the front of the building. Parents should enter through the front doors to the school only. Your identification will be verified and school personnel will be responsible for summoning your child. It is imperative that student contact information is up-to-date with at least one other person who is responsible if you cannot be reached.

If students must be evacuated from the campus, Gwinnett County buses will be used and parents will be directed to a relocation site.

Field Trips

We make every effort to bring individuals and groups to our school in order to minimize/eliminate cost and travel time for students. We may offer an opportunity for an off-campus field trip that requires a request for funds from parents for admission and transportation. No student will be denied or penalized for failure to contribute; however, if enough funds cannot be secured, the field trip will be canceled.

Ice Cream and Frozen Treats

Mulberry Elementary will sell ice cream and popsicles **only on Wednesdays and Fridays** for \$1.00. You are able to preview the selections and the nutritional information on the school website.

Inclement Weather

If overnight weather conditions make it necessary to cancel school, the announcement will be made by 6:00 AM on WSB Radio (750 AM, 95.5 FM) or WSB/Channel 2 News and GCPS TV. Cancellation information is also posted at www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us. If no cancellation is announced, school is in session. Sometimes severe weather moves in during the day. Listen to WSB Radio for early dismissal information. An announcement will always be made before any schools are dismissed early. **Please do not call the school – we need to keep phone lines open.**

Local School Council

Mulberry Elementary School Council is an advisory board, designated by GA House Bill 1187, that meets throughout the year to discuss and make recommendations for continuous school improvement and to build community awareness and interest in educational affairs. The committee is comprised of parent representatives, teacher representatives, local business members and the principal.

Meeting dates and times are published in the Mulberry Messenger, and on the GCPS and Mulberry website at www.gcpsk12.org/MulberryES.

All meetings are open to the public, and community attendance is encouraged at these meetings.

Lost & Found

Items found in hallways, playground, cafeteria or restrooms will be taken to the Lost & Found, located on Hall E. Unclaimed articles are donated to a local charity every semester. Please write your child's name on all personal property for easy identification.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

The Mulberry PTA plays an integral role in ensuring that students receive an enhanced experience at school. All parents are highly encouraged to become members of the Mulberry PTA on behalf of children at our school. The PTA holds many opportunities for parent involvement, whether you are an at-home or working parent. Please contact our PTA representatives to learn about the many ways that you can support teaching and learning at Mulberry.

Parking

Visitors to our school should park in the main parking lot at the front of the school, avoiding reserved spaces. **Please do not park in the fire lanes, as they must remain open for emergency vehicles.**

Pictures

Group and individual pictures will be taken in the Fall. These are offered as an option for purchase to students and parents.

School Contributions

The following contributions enable students to receive materials and programs that are not covered by your tax dollars. Below is an explanation of the various items included on our contribution form.

Grade K-5 General Supplies: \$10.00 (maximum per student) – This contribution is used to purchase consumable supplies such as paper, pencils, art supplies and paint to support the curriculum.

Clinic: \$10.00 (maximum per family) – This contribution defrays the cost of clinic supplies.

Technology: \$25.00 (maximum per family) – This contribution is used to purchase ink cartridges, toner, paper and supplies for our computers, as well as projector bulbs and additional technology such as Mimio Interactive projection systems, notebook laptops and tablets.

School Spirit

Mascot – Falcon
Colors – blue and gold

We encourage everyone to wear spirit wear and/or school colors every Friday!

Student Records

Under the Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), parents have certain rights:

- The right to inspect and review educational records of their child
- The right to challenge the content of those records
- The right to control the release of education records of their student
- The right to complain to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Office about the school's failure to comply with the law
- The right to be informed of these rights just listed

For additional information pertaining to Gwinnett County's policies and compliance, please refer to the GCPS Parent/Student Handbook.

Changes in School Records

In order to keep our records current, please notify the office immediately of a change in any of the following:

- address
- telephone number
- employer and phone number of each parent
- change of guardianship
- person to call in case of emergency or when the parent cannot be reached
- medical information

Textbooks

Textbooks and instructional resource materials are provided by the State of Georgia and Gwinnett County and are issued to students. These books and materials are on loan to the students during the school year and should be treated as borrowed property. Every student is obligated to give his/her books the best of care.

In case of loss or abuse of textbooks or school resources, a student must pay for the item(s) in accordance with a scale determined by the State Department of Education and/or the local Board of Education.

Electronic resources, including eTextbooks, are available through the student "my eCLASS" portal.

Toys and Non-Academic Items

In order to provide the best learning environment for students, please do not allow your child to bring toys or items that are distracting to the learning at school. If present at school, cell phones may not be visible and must remain off during school hours unless specifically used through the Gwinnett network contracted under the terms and conditions of the Gwinnett County Public Schools Responsible Use Policy (RUP).

Visitor Check-In

We encourage and welcome parents to visit our school! For the safety of our students and staff, however, **ALL** visitors who enter Mulberry Elementary must do so through the front of the building and register with the office staff. Please be prepared to show photo identification. Visitors will receive a visitor sticker and it should remain visible at all times while on school property. Staff members have been instructed to monitor our visitors and to send those without a badge or sticker to the front office. Visitors are asked to turn cell phones off while in the building. Parents and visitors play an integral role in insuring safety at school. Please make it a priority to follow safety rules and to report to the office any concerns that you notice while on campus.

Classroom visits must be approved by the office and the teacher notified prior to the visit so that there will be no disruption of instruction. This includes arrival and dismissal times 7:45-3:15. A prior appointment should be made for any visitation and/or conference so that proper planning and focus can be given to the meeting.

When leaving the school, visitors should return to the front office, check out and leave through the front door.

Volunteering

Please take advantage of the many opportunities to become involved with our school. Research shows a strong correlation between successful schools and the amount of volunteer presence by parents and community members. Teachers will determine schedules and needs within individual classrooms. We also seek volunteer readers, media and technology parents, and greeters in the front lobby. Please contact our front office staff to explore the ways you can become involved!

Withdrawal Information

Please notify the front office at least one week before your child is to be withdrawn from school. The Registrar will complete the withdrawal form, contact the enrolling parent to set up an appointment for a signature and provide a copy of the completed form to the parent. This form should be given to your child's new school at enrollment. Upon receiving a signed release of records from the transferring school, a copy of the student's records will be mailed to the new school.

Part II: Student Academic Information

Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS)

The Gwinnett County Public Schools Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) is the adopted curriculum. The AKS represent the curriculum and standards of academic excellence for all students in our school system. The AKS is aligned with Common Core state standards. Parents will receive an AKS pamphlet for their child's grade level at the beginning of the school year. This allows parents to know what their child is expected to learn and be able to do at each grade level.

Curriculum and instruction are designed for mastery of the AKS for all students. Each teacher has his/her own teaching style and each student has his/her own learning style. Teachers will use AKS resources, national standards, textbooks, trade books, and other educational materials, including electronic media, as resources for instruction.

Academic Contracts

Anytime a student is not achieving AKS curriculum goals, an academic contract may be written between the teacher, student and parent. Academic contracts target the student's area(s) of weakness within the AKS, and lists interventions to be implemented at school and home in order to help the student succeed. Progress is noted on the academic contract throughout the year and shared at parent-teacher conferences.

Achievement Recognition

During the school year, students are recognized who have shown exemplary academic achievement, progress, and/or citizenship. Award criteria are listed below and are based on students' performance during each semester grading period.

Principal's Academic Achievement Award

Straight A's (grades 2-5) or E's (grade 1) and
All S/E's in conduct, effort and special area classes

Honor Roll

All A's and/or B's (grades 2-5) or S/E's (grade 1) and
All S/E's in conduct, effort and special area classes

Perfect Attendance

Present each day at school with no more than 3 total tardies or early checkouts

Achievement Award

Recognizing one or two students per class, this award honors students that have demonstrated significant improvement in academic performance based on high effort and motivation.

Citizenship Award

This special award recognizes one child in each room who:

- ❖ is a diligent worker
- ❖ respects personal and school property
- ❖ follows rules
- ❖ has a pleasant and positive attitude
- ❖ is helpful to others
- ❖ demonstrates leadership qualities
- ❖ shows him/herself as an asset to the class and community

Counseling

The goal of school counseling is to remove barriers to student learning. Our school counselor serves as a resource for all students and staff. Through classroom guidance, individual and small group sessions, the counselor works with all students on a range of issues such as grief, anxiety and friendship. She also works with students on study and test-taking skills, as well as guides parents as they support the education of their students.

Gifted Education Program

Students who meet state guidelines are served through our school's gifted education program, called FOCUS, in an interdisciplinary approach. Referrals to the gifted program may come from teachers, parents, administrators or as a result of system-wide testing. A student may be referred once during Grades K-2, once in Grades 3-5, once in middle school and once during high school. Evaluation for the FOCUS program includes mental aptitude, achievement, creativity and motivation. Private evaluation and testing may not be substituted for test data generated by the local school. Mulberry's gifted eligibility team reviews referrals at the beginning, middle and end of each school year to determine which students may qualify for the program.

Grading

Kindergarten and First Grade: Students are assessed on progress toward the AKS using the following scale:

E - Excellent
S - Satisfactory
N - Needs Improvement
U - Unsatisfactory

Grades 2 – 5: The following scale is used to assess student acquisition of grade level AKS:

A = 90 and above	Excellent Progress
B = 80 – 89	Above Average Progress
C = 74 – 79	Average Progress
D = 70 – 73	Below Average Progress
U = 0 – 69	Unsatisfactory Progress

When reporting progress (effort, participation, skill acquisition and completion of tasks) for special areas such as art, music and physical education the following scale is used:

E = Excellent
S = Satisfactory
N = Needs to Improve
U = Unsatisfactory

Homework

Homework is an extension of the classroom learning process. It is one method to help students establish self-discipline and study skills. Homework is also a way to keep parents informed and involved with their child's schoolwork. Assignments may be brief or may include long-range projects. Assignments may be individualized for remediation or enrichment. Time spent on homework should promote productive and positive experiences.

Parents can help by encouraging children to establish effective study habits and by reviewing homework with their child. It is very helpful for parents to establish set times to work. If your child has no current assignment, he/she should be encouraged to read.

Mulberry's PTA funds agenda books for all students to aid communication and foster planning and work completion. Parents are encouraged to check agenda books each day and to communicate with teachers using this tool.

Make-Up Work

Students will be given an opportunity to make-up work they have missed due to an excused absence. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements to make up work missed when absent and work must be completed in a timely manner (generally one day for each day missed). Parents of students who are absent two or more days may request assignments by calling the school before 9:00 AM. Assignments may be picked up in the front office between 2:00 and 3:30 PM. Requests for assignments made after 9:00 AM will be ready the following day. Make-up work for students traveling will be available upon their return.

Media & Technology

Media Center Guidelines

The media center has books and magazines for assigned study and recreational reading. It is open for use during the entire school day. Students are encouraged to use the media center for reference work and for selecting books to read. There are special rules for reference books, magazines, and reserved books. E-books, e-textbooks and online resources are also available for student use. The media specialist is available to assist those who need help. Students are responsible for the replacement of lost or damaged library books, media materials or textbooks.

Technology Guidelines

Mulberry Elementary School is very fortunate to have many technology resources. Up-to-date equipment provides a variety of opportunities for students. It also requires great consideration of how we will use these technology resources for instruction.

One of the most versatile information sources for teachers and students is the Internet. Students and parents are required to sign the Gwinnett County Acceptable Use (AUP) agreement before students are allowed to access the Internet at school. If bringing your own device (BYOD), students and parents must confirm they accept the terms and conditions outlined in the Gwinnett County Public Schools Responsible Use Policy (RUP) as well as the Student Code of Conduct.

In addition to these requirements, the following guidelines for Internet use at Mulberry Elementary have been developed:

- A. Students will be instructed on the proper use of the Internet and their use will be closely monitored.
- B. For most lessons, students will use bookmarked sites. The teacher will have previewed these sites prior to the lesson.
- C. If it is necessary to locate additional information on a specific educational topic, students will use online media resources or *Webpath Express*. These sites are monitored for appropriate material and are specifically designed for use by children. There is to be no random searching by students.

Our website is updated frequently and provides an additional source of information about Mulberry including menus and lunch times, photos of Mulberry events, student projects, business partners, and educational links. Please visit our site often at: www.gcpsk12.org/MulberryES or download the Mulberry APP on your cellphone or mobile device. Mulberry is on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. Check us out! You can make website suggestions or share your photos of Mulberry events by contacting melissa.timmerman@gcpsk12.org. The Dacula cluster shares events and information using social media. Be part of the happenings; stay linked in!

Promotion Requirements

Gwinnett County Public Schools measure student learning of the school system's curriculum (AKS) in a number of ways. Each student must earn grade promotion through demonstration of proficiency of the grade level AKS.

Special Education

Programs are available at Mulberry for students with various special needs in a collaborative and co-teaching team, resource and self-contained setting. Programs include: Speech and Language, Significant Developmental Delays, Specific Learning Disabilities, Emotional/Behavior Disorders, and Other Health Impairments. Special needs pre-kindergarten services are also available for those who qualify.

Student Progress Reports

Elementary report cards are sent home each semester. Parent conferences are held during October and February. Teachers will contact parents to schedule these conferences. The dates for issuing are:

Report Card Dates:

1st Semester: January

2nd Semester: May

Progress Report Dates (grades 1-5):

1st Semester: September 16 & October 28

2nd Semester: February 15 & March 31

Student Organizations

Students at Mulberry have many opportunities to participate in school sponsored initiatives. Some past activities include: student council, ambassadors, chess club, Falcon Network News, Readers Rally team, Witzzle Pro team, Odyssey of the Mind, Helping Hands, Running club, science fair, technology, robotics, and chorus. A brochure outlining extracurricular offerings can be accessed online.

Student Support Team (SST)

The purpose of the Student Support Team (SST) is to allow teachers, parents and other educators to work in a collaborative manner to develop an intervention plan to address the needs of students who are not meeting success. This group provides advice, suggests alternative teaching strategies or interventions, and may recommend an academic contract or referral for specialized testing.

Part III: Student Conduct

Students learn best in a safe, positive and orderly environment. All students are capable, with support and encouragement, of being responsible for their own behavior. Parents and educators must work together as partners in teaching students to make good choices about their behavior, and to understand that there are consequences for making poor decisions. Rules are established to help make Mulberry a productive learning environment and to develop students as responsible citizens of the Mulberry community.

Students are expected to respect one another and all adults and to behave appropriately in class and throughout the school grounds. The school uses the common language of leadership habits as established expectations and has uniform discipline guidelines that are utilized for all classes including special areas. Each teacher, then, establishes his/her own classroom management strategies within these guidelines.

In addition to the information provided below, parents also have access to the GCPS Elementary School Student/Parent Handbook.

Elementary Modified Version of Student Conduct Behavior Code

The following rules apply when a student is:

- a. On the school grounds;
 - b. Off the school grounds at a school activity, function, or event;
 - c. Either the alleged perpetrator or the alleged victim is en route to and from school or to or from a school activity or function; or
 - d. Off the school grounds while the student is in attendance of any school function, or is otherwise subject to the jurisdiction of school authorities.
1. Each student will not interrupt learning and teaching.
 2. Each student will not damage or attempt to damage or take or attempt to take the property of the school.
 3. Each student will not damage or attempt to damage or take or attempt to take the personal property of others.
 4. Each student will not threaten, hit, kick, bite, bump, push, pull hair, pinch, hurt or use disrespectful language with staff (administrators, teachers, bus drivers, etc.).
 5. Each student will not bully, threaten, hit, kick, bite, bump, push, pull hair, pinch, hurt or use disrespectful language with other students or any other person not employed by the school. Fighting on the school bus may result in suspension from school and/or from riding the bus.
 6. Each student will not possess or use weapons, whether assembled or disassembled (guns, including toy guns), knives, firecrackers, etc.) whether toy, operational or not operational if a person could reasonably perceive the object to be a weapon or if the object is a destructive device.
 7. Each student will not possess, use, or distribute alcohol or drugs or any substances they represent to be alcohol or drugs.
 8. Each student will not disobey directions or commands of teachers, principals, bus drivers, etc.
 9. Each student will not expose or touch himself/herself or others inappropriately including private areas of the body.
 10. Each student will not miss school or class without an unexcused absence.
 11. Each student will not exhibit unsafe and/or inappropriate conduct at any time including use of any electronic device, mirror, laser, flash camera, or any other light or reflective device during the operation of a school bus or during school hours except as permitted.
 12. Severe or repeated violations of school rules may result in a parental conference and/or discipline review committee meeting.
 13. Each student must obey all rules of bus safety.

Student Code of Ethics Guidelines for Student Behavior

- I will be honest in my statements and actions.
- I will respect myself, the school staff and fellow students.
- I will respect the beliefs of others.
- I will display good conduct and sportsmanship at school, on the bus and at all school activities.
- I will respect the property of others.
- I will work to the best of my ability.
- I will use criticism in a helpful manner.
- I will promote school cleanliness and the upkeep of school property.
- I will make substitute teachers and visitors feel welcome.
- I will support school activities.

Bus Rider Information

Riding the bus is a privilege. Improper conduct on the bus will result in that privilege being denied. Bus drivers teach Bus Guidelines and Safety Procedures on the first day of school, with monthly reviews to enhance the safety of children being transported. All students are expected to obey the following bus rules:

Students will:

- Students will follow directions of the driver.
- Students should be at the bus stop 5 minutes before the bus arrives, waiting in a safe place, clear of traffic and 10 feet from where the bus stops.
- Students will wait in an orderly line and avoid playing.
- Students will cross the roadway in front of the bus after the bus has stopped, they have looked at the driver for a hand signal, and they have looked in both directions for traffic; left, right, left.
- Students will signal the driver with a waving motion if something is dropped and wait for the driver to give a signal before picking up object.
- Students will go directly to assigned seat when entering the bus. Keep the aisles and exits clear.
- Students will remain properly seated, back against the back of the seat, bottom against the bottom of the seat, and keep hands to themselves.
- Students will not eat, drink, chew gum, or bring tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or any controlled substances on the bus.
- Students will not carry animals, glass objects, nuisance items, hazardous materials, or weapons onto the bus. Students may carry only objects that can be held in their laps to include musical instruments.
- Students will refrain from using loud voices, profanity, and/or obscene gestures, and respect the rights and safety of others.
- Students will not extend head, arms, or objects out of the bus windows.
- Students will be totally silent at railroad crossings.
- Students will stay seated until time to get off the bus. The open door is the signal to get up from the bus seat.
- Students must provide a written note, signed by a parent/guardian and a local school official will provide a bus pass giving permission to ride a different bus or to get on or off at a different bus stop location. A bus pass only will be issued in the event of an emergency, determined by a local school official.
- Students will keep their bus clean and in good, safe condition.
- Students shall be prohibited from using any electronic devices during the operation of a school bus, including but not limited to cell phones, pagers, radios, tape, CD or MP3 players; or any other electronic device in a manner that might interfere with the school bus communications equipment or the school bus driver's operation of the school bus. The bus driver may allow the wearing of headphones with an audio system on a case-by-case basis as long as it is in accord with the local school rules.
- Students shall be prohibited from using mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.

Student Grievance Procedure






If a student believes he or she is being mistreated by school employees on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin or handicap, the student should report this to any school employee such as their counselor or the principal.






























Mulberry Elementary, a PBIS Implementation School

We are excited to announce that Mulberry Elementary is a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) school. PBIS is a researched based framework that is used in schools throughout the nation and includes a set of clear practices that are embedded into a support system for students. The following pages outline everything you need to know about school-wide expectations and procedures. The expectations for Mulberry ES students are broken down into four main categories:

Synergize, Ownership, Attitude and Respect

The matrix seen below takes each major location on campus and breaks down the specific expectations for that environment. The expectations are separated by the categories synergize, ownership, attitude and respect. Copies of the matrix are posted in all of these locations, including every classroom, and are used to remind students of expectations and to serve as a guide for behavior.

	Classroom	Hall	Restroom	Cafeteria	Playground	Bus
 Synergize	Be engaged in your learning	Remember that others are learning	Report unsafe behavior	Clean up after yourself and others	Include others and play fair	Follow bus driver directions
 Ownership	Take responsibility for materials and actions	Level 0 voice	Treat facilities with care	Eat your own food.	Control words and actions	Keep control of your belongings
 Attitude	Persevere	Walk with a purpose	Use time wisely	Use good table manners	Sportsmanship always wins	Level 1 voice when speaking
 Respect	Listen to others and communicate kindly	Eyes forward, hands to yourself	Honor people's privacy and personal space	Speak kindly to those nearby	Treat others and equipment with care	Follow safety rules

	Classroom	Hall	Restroom	Cafeteria	Playground	Bus
 Synergize						
 Ownership						
 Attitude						
 Respect						

Students will be taught each expectation through a series of videos and classroom lessons that are standardized, school wide. The expectations will continually be reviewed throughout the school year in classrooms and on morning announcements.

Mission Statement:

Each morning on announcements, students will repeat our mission statement as a school community:

Mulberry Elementary: A learning environment that SOARS. We synergize, show ownership, have a positive attitude, and show respect. We achieve excellence.

Incentive Program:

To reinforce behaviors that meet Mulberry ES expectations, students will have an opportunity to earn behavior bucks throughout the school day. The behavior bucks will be color coded based on their monetary value. Blue behavior bucks will be earned in the classrooms and are worth \$1. Gold bucks will be earned on the bus, cafeteria, hallways, Specials, playground and during dismissal. Gold bucks are worth \$2.

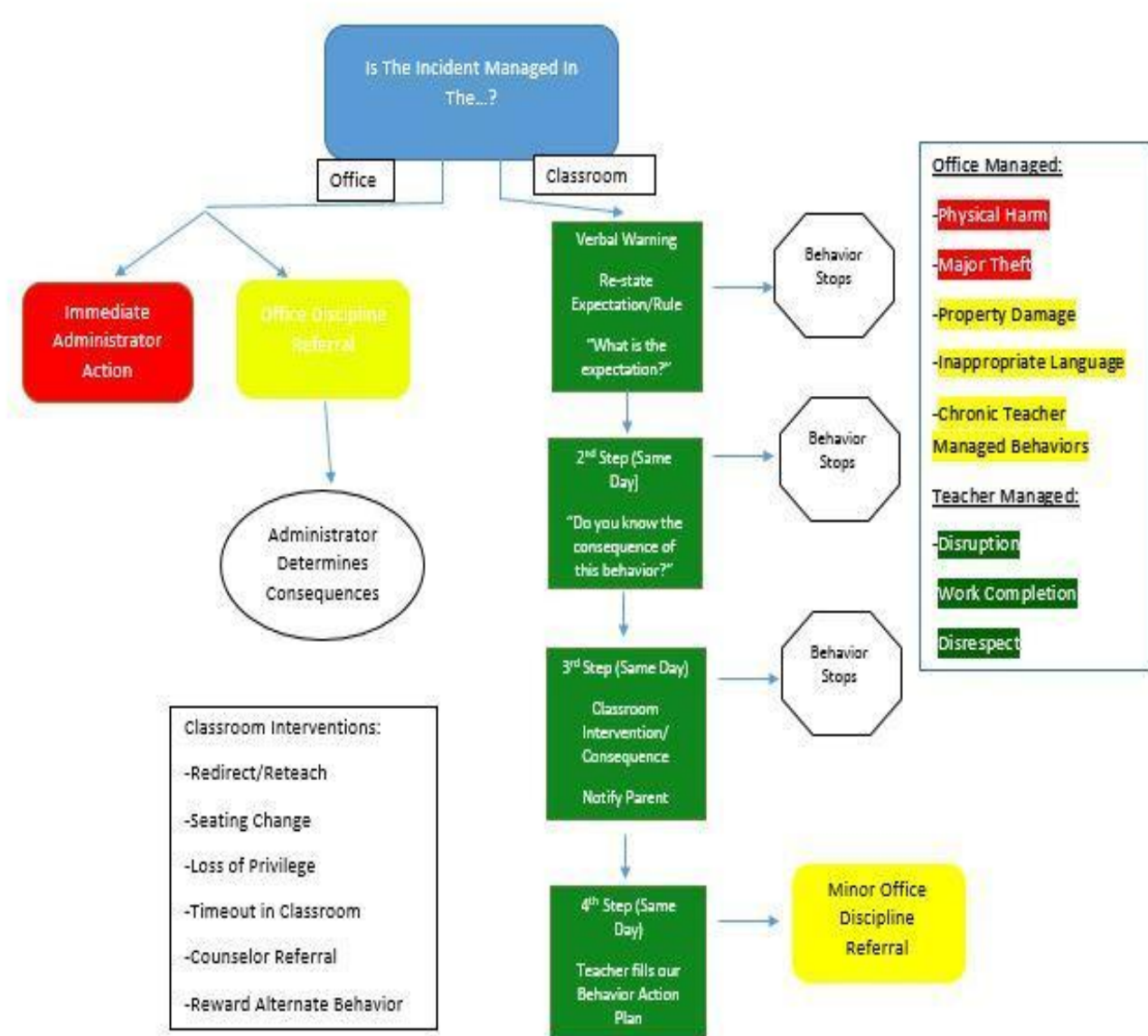
Students will store Behavior Bucks in a central location in the classroom. Each day, Kindergarten and 1st grade students will log the number of bucks earned on a monthly calendar. Second-5th grade students will log the number of bucks earned each day in their agenda books. Weekly, students will be able to cash in their Behavior Bucks for a special incentive listed on our school wide menu board.



At the end of each 9-week grading period, Mulberry ES will have a culminating event (Palooza) to celebrate the students who have met behavior expectations. Students attending the Palooza must have no more than 1 minor office referral **and** meet the standardized school wide requirement for their conduct grade. Each nine weeks, the students will have a new opportunity to earn admission into the Palooza.

Behavior Flow Chart:

If a student does not meet behavior expectations in the classroom, the following behavior flow chart will be used school wide to guide how misbehaviors are handled.



Minor Incident Referral Form:

If a student exhibits an undesired behavior that is classroom managed but does not respond to the interventions on the flow chart, the teacher will complete a minor office referral and a copy will be sent home for parents to review and sign. An administrator will meet with the student and determine the next steps. A copy of the office referral is seen below.

Mulberry Elementary Minor Behavior Referral Form

Name: _____ Student Number: _____

Referring Staff: _____ Homeroom Teacher: _____

Date: _____ Day: _____

Grade: K 1 2 3 4 5

Time: (Circle One)

7:45-8:30 8:30-9:30 9:30-10:30 10:30-11:30 11:30-12:30 12:30-1:30 1:30-2:30
2:30-3:15

Location	Problem Behavior	Possible Motivation
Classroom:	Disrespect for School Property	Gain: Peer Attention Adult Attention Other _____ Avoid: Peer Attention Adult Attention Task/Activity Unknown Other _____
Hallway	Refusal to complete work	
Recess	Inappropriate use of technology	
Café	Cheating	
Specials:	Stealing	
Restroom	Inappropriate language	
Media Center	Outburst	
Bus	Continuous disruptive behavior	
	Physical Contact/Aggression	
	Other _____	

Teacher Actions

- Verbal Warning
- Consequence Reminder
- Parent Contact (Date: _____ Time: _____)
- Loss of Privilege
- Time out in Classroom
- Seating Change
- Reward Alternate Behavior
- Counselor Referral
- Other _____

Additional Comments:

Teacher Signature: _____

Administrator Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Additionally, students who are meeting or exceeding the SOAR expectations will have the opportunity to receive a positive referral note sent home.

Overall Goals of PBIS:

- To improve and sustain a positive and safe school climate.
- To be consistent with consequences and interventions school wide.
- To decrease the amount of class time used to manage misbehaviors.
- To encourage and celebrate behaviors that are meeting expectations.
- To teach students how to manage and correct problem behaviors.

Mulberry Falcons: RISE UP!