



Benefield Elementary School

Parent/Student Handbook

Shonda Gipson Stevens, Principal

1221 Old Norcross Road, Lawrenceville, Georgia 30046

Phone: (770) 962-3771

Fax: (770) 682-4187

Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS)

All parents will receive a grade level booklet containing the AKS their child will be expected to learn during the school year. The AKS reflects the curriculum objectives students learn in each subject area and at each grade level. The AKS guarantees consistency in the curriculum across the district. Although how the students learn may vary from class to class and school to school, what students learn is the same.

Attendance

In compliance with the Georgia Attendance Law, the following absences will be classified as excused:

- Personal illness or attendance in school endangering a student's health or the health of others
- Serious illness or death in a student's immediate family requiring absence from school
- Court order or an order by a governmental agency, including pre-induction physical examination for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school
- Observing GCPS recognized religious holidays or military families on leave
- Conditions making attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety
- Serving as a page in the Georgia General Assembly

For each absentee, a written excuse explaining the absence must be brought to school.

Early checkouts are occasionally necessary; however, when they are done on a regular basis, they have an impact on the instructional time that is missed. GCPS schools have "bell-to-bell" instruction, so even when students are preparing for dismissal, learning activities are taking place. We want to make sure you are aware that early checkouts are documented.



Birthday Celebrations

Birthday celebration snacks for the entire class should be store bought in original packaging. Items should be left at the front office for the teacher and your child to give to the class. They should be ready to serve, require no refrigeration or cutting, and should not include drinks. **Please be aware of allergies of students in the classroom and plan accordingly. There should be no birthday favors or gifts.** Birthday invitations may not be sent to school unless every student in the class receives an invitation. Balloons are not allowed.

Cafeteria Service

The school cafeteria is maintained as a service to students and parents and is a vital part of our health program. To encourage good nutrition, a well-balanced breakfast and lunch are served.

Student breakfast...\$1.50	Reduced breakfast....\$0.30
Student lunch....\$2.25	Reduced Lunch....\$0.40
Adult breakfast.....\$2.50	Adult lunch.....\$3.75
Bottled water....\$0.75	Additional Milk....\$0.40

Applications for free and reduced lunch/breakfast are available on our website and for new students during the year. We ask that you please do not bring fast food into the cafeteria. Parents who come to eat lunch with their children should sit in the designated parent areas and only with their child. Parents/adults will be asked to show a picture ID. This policy helps maintain a safe school. Glass bottles and cans can be a danger and should not be brought in lunches from home. Students must eat lunch before they get their ice cream. **Water cannot be charged. The last day to charge lunch will be April 30, 2023. Due to schedule changes and limited seating, there will be no lunch visitors on standardized testing days.** These dates will be shared in *The Benefield Parent Newsletter*.

Parent Requests

If you do not want your child to buy extra items at lunch, please send in a note stating "no extra items purchase allowed". Parents should also send a note if you do not want your child to eat breakfast. The cafeteria will then make a note on the account. If a student has an allergy to milk, parents must send a note from the doctor to the cafeteria. A juice will then be provided instead of milk.



Cell Phones and Electronic Devices

Cell phones may be brought to school for after school use as long as they are turned off and left in the student's book bag at all times during the school day. If a phone is taken out during the school day, it will be taken up by the teacher, and the parent will need to come to the school to retrieve it. No games should be brought to school at any time. Devices such as computers and tablets can only be brought for instructional purposes through the BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) initiative. The appropriate form must be submitted and approved prior to bringing a device. Students must follow teacher guidelines for device use.

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, home/business phone number of each parent and person to call in an emergency or when the parent cannot be reached.

Class Parties

There are two parties each year (December and May). We ask that parents who choose to attend not bring younger siblings/children to the class parties as it is a special time for our students. We sincerely appreciate your understanding.

Clinic

A clinic worker is available to provide first aid assistance to students. Parents/guardians will be called if a child is too ill to remain at school. Students with a fever of 101 or higher will be sent home and ***need to be fever free (without medication) for 24 hours before returning to school.*** Parents should go to the office to sign out a child. If a parent wants to administer medication themselves at school to a student, this must take place in the clinic with school personnel present. For student safety we need to be aware of the medication and dosage in case there are any adverse reactions. The clinic worker is authorized to administer medications to students **when proper paperwork is completed.** Medications should always be in the **original containers** when brought to or picked up from school by an adult. These procedures are a safety precaution for your child, both on the bus and when they visit the clinic. Parents should inform the school if their child has a contagious disease. Please do not send your child to school when he/she is feeling ill and there is risk of infecting others.



Closing of School

In the event of severe weather or mechanical failure, the starting time of school may be delayed or school may be closed. Announcements will be made over the local television and radio stations. If no report is broadcast, school will be in session. Please do not call the school to see if school is in session. We will be focused on keeping your child safe and telephone lines need to be kept open for emergencies. Please sign up for our Remind text to receive timely information.

Communication - IMPORTANT

The Benefield Parent Newsletter will be sent home and shared electronically. This is our primary form of school-to-parent communication. Please make sure you read it to ensure you do not miss any important information or deadlines. The newsletter will be sent via School Messenger and ClassDojo. Please check the website at www.benefield.org regularly for updated information. You may also sign up for text/email communication through Remind to receive timely information..

Homeless Children and Youth

The Stewart B. McKinney/Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act ensures the educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. It provides legal protections for children and youth in homeless situations to enroll in, attend, and succeed in school and preschool. In accordance with this law, Gwinnett County Public Schools afford homeless children and youth equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education such as Head Start, Even Start, State Pre-K, and Title I Preschool Programs as provided to other students. Homeless children and youth will have access to education and other services needed to have an opportunity to meet the same challenging state student academic achievement standards to which all students are held. Please contact individual schools for further information.

Homework Guidelines

Meaningful homework can be a way for children to practice what they have learned in school, and in doing so, communicate the curriculum to the parents. Although homework is primarily the responsibility of the students, there needs to be a homework partnership with parents providing guidance and encouragement. Homework is assigned Monday through Thursday for 10 - 50 minutes depending on the age of the child. Reading every night is expected in addition to homework assignments. All children in grades 1-5 use a *Student Agenda* to help communicate curriculum assignments.



Lunchroom Music

During lunch, music is played in the cafeteria. While the music is on, students do not talk and are encouraged to eat. This also helps to keep the noise level to a minimum. The music is on for 5 minutes (followed by 10 minutes when students may talk). This rotates throughout the lunch time which allows each class a total of 15-20 minutes to talk with classmates. (Note: Students also have 20 minutes of TDPE each day which gives additional time for them to talk with their classmates.)

Make Up Work Policy

Student work missed due to an excused or unexcused absence will be given to the student upon return to school. Please do not call the school on the day your child is absent and ask to pick up work for them to do that night. We believe if a child is too sick to come to school, they should be resting at home. They will be allowed to make up their missed work over a reasonable amount of time. This will be communicated to the parent by the teacher. Our Make Up Policy also applies to absences due to vacations.

Parent Involvement

We are very fortunate to have many parents willing to help at Benefield. Local School Council, school events, and volunteering are all ways you can get involved at our school. Please contact your child's teacher if you are interested in finding out more information about these opportunities. The role of a Benefield parent is vital to your child and to Benefield Elementary School. Students excel when you, the parent, are supportive in your child's education at home and in the school. We welcome and encourage parents to volunteer; however, we ask that parents who are here as volunteers (to read, cut out things, help with a project or event, etc.) not bring siblings/small children into the classrooms. This also applies to Class Parties. Siblings are welcome when a parent comes to have lunch with their child or when they are here to view a presentation in the classroom. Benefield loves to see family participation at several evening events throughout the year. These are perfect times for the whole family to come together at school.

School Contribution Requests

The school requests a \$10.00 supply contribution and \$10.00 technology fee as approved by the Gwinnett County Board of Education. During the year, field trip contributions are requested for admission and transportation and are voluntary. If enough funds are not secured the field trip may be canceled. No student will be denied access to or participation in any course funded by the Gwinnett County Board of Education or by the State of Georgia.



School Hours

School hours are 8:45 a.m. - 3:20 p.m. Buses are unloaded at 8:20 a.m. Supervision of children will not be provided before that time. All students should be in their classrooms when the 8:45 a.m. bell rings. (Note: If you are in the Car Rider line at 8:40 a.m. and your child has not entered the school, they may be considered tardy if they are not in their room by 8:45 a.m. If your child is tardy, we ask that you park and walk him or her in through the front door to check your child in.) Students arriving after 8:45 a.m. must be signed in at the front office. Students will be dismissed at 3:20 p.m. each day. No student should be checked out **after 2:30 p.m.** Parents must go through the front office when checking students out. Please do not go to the classroom. Students are expected to be at school on time and not leave without being checked out.

Returning to school after hours- If you need to return to school to pick up something that has been forgotten, please call first to make sure your child's teacher will be here. ***Due to confidentiality, we cannot let parents or students into classrooms after hours.*** Thank you for your understanding.

School Visits

For the safety of our children, all visitors must check in and out through the office and wear a visitor's badge while in the building. If you would like to discuss the progress of your child, you should call, send an email, or make a conference appointment at a time when class is not in session in order to protect instructional time. Staff hours are generally 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Spirit Days

Benefield school spirit day is held every week on Friday. On these days, students and staff members are encouraged to wear their Benefield or Discovery spirit wear (e.g. school T-shirts). Our school colors are navy blue, gray, and lime green. Spirit wear can be purchased on **MyPaymentsPlus.com** in the fall of the school year.

Student Conduct Behavior Code

Our school is committed to providing a school program that allows all students to achieve; therefore, no student should interfere with the rights of students to learn. Our local school discipline plan is based on the Gwinnett County Public Schools Student Conduct Behavior Code. Parents will be notified if their child is having discipline problems.



Student Dress Code

Student dress should not cause any distraction from the instructional program. Students are encouraged to dress appropriately for the school setting, suitable to weather conditions, and in good taste. **Short skirts, short shorts, halter tops/crop shirts, and spaghetti straps** are not considered appropriate dress for school. Hats, bandanas, and sweatbands should not be worn in school. Students should not wear any clothing that advertises alcoholic beverages, drugs, or violence. **If wearing jeans with holes, the holes must be below the fingertips, not in the upper thigh area. Students should wear shoes that allow for safe play during outside time and PE class.**

Student Progress Reports

Parents have access to the Parent Portal. Parents will receive formal reports on student progress at the end of each semester. Midterm reports are sent for grades K-5. In addition, parent conferences are held in October and March. Additional conferences can be held at parent or teacher request. Promotion, retention, and acceleration will be determined based on AKS progress and passing designated promotion tests.

Student Records

Under the Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, parents have several rights. These include: 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 the educational records of their child, the right to complain to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Office about the school's failure to comply with the law, and the right to be informed of these rights just listed. To obtain a copy of Gwinnett County's policies on their compliance with the law, or to request the opportunity to inspect and review your child's records, contact your child's school.

Support Services

Our school has many programs and services which enhance the learning experience. These include physical education, art, music, math, science, media, technology, and counseling. In addition, special education and resource teachers work to promote school success for students identified with specific needs. These programs include ESOL, EIP, speech and language therapy, learning and behavior disabilities, and gifted. Placement in many of these special needs programs is handled through the Student Support Team (SST) in accordance with local, state, and federal guidelines.



Testing

Testing occurs throughout the school year. These include state and local assessments. Please refer to *The Benefield Parent Newsletter* and our website to see when upcoming tests are scheduled and plan ahead so that your child will be present during testing days.

Textbooks & Chromebooks

GCPS provides textbooks and one Chromebook for all students in the county at no cost. Every student is obligated to give his/her books the best care. Textbooks must be paid for if lost or damaged. When a student is issued a Chromebook, they are responsible for its care. Damages due to neglect or misuse will result in a fine to cover repair or replacement costs.

Title IX Notice

If you believe you are being mistreated by school employees on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin or handicap, please tell any school employee in whom you have confidence that you have a complaint about the manner in which you were treated and why. Our Title IX coordinator is **Kelli O'Loughlin**.

Transportation Procedures

- **BUS** - Riding a school bus is a privilege contingent upon proper student conduct. If students choose not to follow the bus rules, then interventions will be put in place for the remainder of the school year or duration needed. If the interventions do not work, a student will be suspended from the bus. We must maintain safe transportation for all students.
- **CAR RIDER** - Students should be dropped off and picked up only through the Car Rider/Parent Pick-Up line.
 - Morning – Morning Drop Off will be from 8:15 a.m. - 8:45 a.m. Students should be in the building by 8:40 a.m. in order to give them time to make it to their classroom before the bell rings. Staff will be on duty to monitor your child when you drop them off in the morning. They may not exit the car until the 8:15 a.m. bell has rung. If you are in the Car Rider line at 8:45 a.m. and your child has not entered the school, they will be considered tardy. If your child is tardy, we ask that you park and walk your child in at the front of the building to sign them in. The front of the school is for BUSES only. In order to ensure the safety of all students, **the front lanes should not be used between 8:15 a.m. and 8:45 a.m.**



- Afternoon - Remember to always have your car rider number displayed in your vehicle window. Enter the car rider lane and drive around to the entrance near the cafeteria. Wait for a staff member to signal that it is safe for your child to enter or exit your vehicle from the passenger side only. Car riders will be dismissed from the classroom to the cafeteria where they will wait for their name/car rider number to be called. Car rider numbers will be called in order of the cars in the car rider line. Please remain in your vehicle during car rider pick up.

TRANSPORTATION CHANGES - If transportation arrangements for students need to change on any given day, you must send a written note to your child's teacher. In this note, you need to include the following information: your child's name, your name, his/her usual transportation home, the new arrangements home and your signature. **We cannot accept requests by phone or e-mail to alter arrangements.** A transportation change form must be issued from the school office for a student to ride a different bus. Students will not be permitted to board another bus unless they have a transportation change form which will be issued only for an emergency.

NOTE: There are a finite number of cars that can make it through the line during the thirty minutes of arrival. Students who ride the school bus will not be counted tardy if the bus arrives late; however, those who come as car riders (regardless of weather or traffic) are considered tardy after 8:45 a.m. Please plan to be in the car rider line no later than 8:40 a.m. to ensure your child will not be late.

Unscheduled Releases

Children will not be released from school at any unscheduled time without written explanation from the parent/guardian. A parent wishing their child to be released from school must sign the release form in the office. Children are released from the office before **2:30 p.m.** and only to parents or adults designated as an emergency contact. **Parents/adults will be asked to show a picture ID.** Parents are not permitted to go to the classrooms to check their students out. This policy helps to maintain a safe school.

Withdrawal Procedure

It is helpful to have at least a two-day notice before a student withdraws from school. Contact the front office to initiate the withdrawal procedure. This gives the teacher time to average grades and determine the status of all textbooks, library books, and fees. If



such notice is not provided, we may be unable to give the parent the withdrawal information necessary for entrance into another school.