

# Margaret Winn Holt Elementary School

Parent Handbook  
2020-2021



## General Information of Policies and Procedures

Parents,

Welcome to Margaret Winn Holt Elementary School and the 2020-2021 school year. The staff and I are thrilled to welcome each of you to a wonderful school experience. We believe in making decisions that support student safety and create optimal learning environments. We appreciate you taking note of the guidelines outlined below and adhering to our established county policies and local school procedures and processes. Together we can make our school community a healthy environment for all. During these uncertain times, procedures and processes can frequently change based on GCPS and health department guidance. We appreciate your understanding and flexibility.

Mrs. Ellyce Cone, Principal

### Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Instruction for the day begins at 8:15 a.m. Students who are not in their classrooms or logged online by the 8:15 bell will be marked tardy and in-person tardy students must be signed in at the front lobby desk by their parents. Students in grades K-5 will proceed immediately to the dining room for a grab and go breakfast that will be taken to their classrooms. Students are not counted tardy if their GCPS bus arrives late.

Any student using transportation to or from an address other than the home address will need an Alternate Transportation Form on file. These can be located and completed on MyPaymentsPlus. **Please be aware that approval for a change in transportation may take up to 10 school days if you are using a GCPS bus.**

Each student must have a transportation tag attached to his/her book bag per Gwinnett County policy, which should not be removed, by the parents or the students for the entire school year. This helps us to ensure that each child gets home safely. If your child gets a new book bag or the tag comes off, please remind them to report to the main office at school as soon as they arrive to have their tag replaced. Bus drivers require transportation tags for every student.

Per Gwinnett County policy, transportation for students on a permissive transfer is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. Permissive Transfers will be revoked for excessive absences and/or excessive tardies.

**Bus Supervisor: 770-338-4800**

**Early Student Checkouts Must Be Completed by 2:15 p.m. each day.**

### Attendance, Absence/Illness Policy

Attendance at school is an important part of student success and achievement. A pattern of absences may put a student at risk of not achieving the Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) for their grade level and courses. Certain absences are considered to be excused according to state guidelines. Excused absences include:

- A. Personal illness or attendance in school endangering a student's health or the health of others. This includes scheduled doctor appointments.
- B. A serious illness or death in a student's immediate family requiring absence from school.
- C. A court order or an order by a governmental agency, including pre-induction physical examination for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school.
- D. Observing religious holidays, necessitating absence from school.

- E. Conditions making attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.
- F. Serving as a page in the Georgia General Assembly.

Please provide a written note to your child's teacher on the day your child returns to school. The note should include the date of absence and reason for the absence. Should the reason be one noted above, your child's absence will be marked excused. Should a student accumulate five or more unexcused absences, an Attendance Letter will be mailed notifying the parent/guardian. Continued absences or tardies may result in the need for a SARC (Student Attendance Review Committee) Meeting, in which the counselor, parent, teacher, and social worker will work to ensure your child's school attendance improves. A SARC Meeting may also be scheduled for other attendance issues (i.e. excessive tardies, excessive checkouts, or excused absences).

The state truancy law (O.C.G.A. Section 20-2-690.2) defines truant as "any child subject to compulsory school attendance who during the school calendar year has more than five days of unexcused absences." This same state law also ties attendance to a student's driving privileges.

It is important for parents to be aware of attendance requirements. Please read Gwinnett County Public Schools' Student/Parent Handbook, which outlines attendance expectations. In addition, our teachers and school leadership will communicate with you regularly on school attendance issues.

**Extended absences due to required quarantine periods or extended periods of illness will not automatically generate an Attendance Letter. Please reach out to the school if you have any questions or concerns.**

### Arrival:

Students dropped off in the car rider area may arrive at the school no earlier than 7:45 a.m. Prior to that time, the staff is busy with training, planning, and conferencing, which makes them unavailable to supervise students. A bell will ring at 7:45 a.m. signaling that students may enter the building. If you should arrive before the bell has rung, your child must stay in the car with you. The 7:45 a.m. bell signals the time students may exit their car at the supervised drop off area. For the safety of your child, only drop him/her off at the car rider's curb directly on the side entrance to building. **Do not drop your child off in the parking lot to walk to the sidewalk.** For student safety, *car riders are not allowed to cut through the parking lanes, but should stay in the car rider lane that follows around the side of the parking lot.* Staff assistance for car riders ends at 8:10 a.m. Please arrive early enough to allow your child to be on time.

Students on buses will be exited into the building immediately upon arrival.

### Birthday Parties

Birthday treats will not be allowed due to the current health crisis.

### Bus Lane

No child will be released to an adult from the bus lane. For the security of all of our students, students must be checked out through the main lobby desk where identification can be checked. **Please complete all early checkouts before 2:15 at the main lobby desk of the school.** In the absence of a note or call from a parent or guardian, children will be placed on their usual mode of transportation. We will not take a child's word about their dismissal procedure. Please do not change your child's dismissal without notifying the Main Office.

*Please know that your children's safety is our utmost concern. Parents may not park their cars in the front parking lot and drop children off before school, nor pick students up after school. Because there are two schools on our campus, Margaret Winn Holt Elementary does not allow walkers.*

### Bus Safety Rules

Posted on all GCPS school buses, and printed in all school handbooks. Students will follow directions of the driver.

- A. Students should be at the bus stop five minutes before the bus arrives, waiting in a safe place, clear of traffic and ten feet from where the bus stops.

- B. Students will wait in an orderly line and avoid playing.
- C. 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.
- D. 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.
- E. Students will go directly to assigned seat when entering the bus. Keep the aisles and exits clear.
- F. Students will remain properly seated, back against the back of the seat, bottom against the bottom of the seat, and keep hands to themselves.
- G. Students will not eat, drink, chew gum, or bring tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or any controlled substances on the bus.
- H. 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.
- I. Students will refrain from using loud voices, profanity, and/or obscene gestures, and will respect the rights and safety of others.
- J. Students will not extend head, arms, or objects out of the bus windows.
- K. Students will be very silent at railroad crossings.
- L. Students will stay seated until time to get off the bus. The open door is the signal to get up from the bus seat.
- M. Students must provide a written note, signed by a parent/guardian and a school official who will provide a bus pass giving permission to ride a different bus or to get on or off at a different bus stop location. In the event of an emergency, a bus pass will be issued by a school official only.
- N. Students will keep their bus clean and in good, safe condition.
- O. 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 or compact disc players, or any other electronic device in a manner that might interfere with the school bus communication 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.
- P. 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.
- Q. Students will wear masks on all GCPS buses, per board policy.

## Car Riders

**Arrival:** Parents should remain in the car during drop-off and children must open and close car doors. Parents may drop their child off only at the Moon Road entrance of the building starting at 7:45. Due to safety concerns, staff on duty will close the doors at 8:10 to ensure promptness. After 8:10, parents are to sign in their students at the main lobby desk. Parents must park in the front lot and refrain from using the bus lanes for drop off. *Also, Parents are not to park in the front parking lot to drop off their students in lieu of following car rider procedures.*

**Dismissal:** All families must have an assigned car rider number and tag in order to pick up your child in this line. For security reasons, no child will be released to any adults presenting themselves at any other school doors, nor should you arrange with your child to meet you anywhere on campus. Please remain in your car with your number displayed in your front car window. *Additional reminders are printed on the back of each car rider tag.*

## Change of Address or Phone

It is imperative that we have updated information for each student when emergencies or illnesses occur. Please notify the school, in writing, of any changes in work or residential phone numbers or addresses as soon as they occur. We must be notified even if it is a temporary change.

## Change in Normal Procedures

GCPS transportation cannot be used for play dates, birthdays, Girl Scout or Boy Scout meetings, etc. Bus passes to an address other than home will be issued only for emergency situations. If your child is not going home by their normal mode of transportation, a note to the teacher must be sent with your child on that day. If an emergency arises during the day, please contact the office as soon as possible. You must FAX us a signed note with picture ID so we can verify that it is a legal parent/guardian calling to change the child's transportation home. Parents must come into school and make any transportation changes in person with the front office.

School Fax #: 678-376-8611

## Checkout of Students:

All students must be checked out through the office prior to 2:15 pm. No student will be released to parents from the classroom or from Car Riders. Teachers have been instructed not to release students directly to parents and/or guardians at any time.

## Clinic

Margaret Winn Holt Elementary School provides limited health services to our students. First aid will be administered in the clinic, but medication can only be given if the parent brings the medication to the clinic and fills out a medication administration form. Students cannot transport medication. Asthma inhalers and epi-pens are the only exceptions. *When your child is ill or running a temperature, please do not send him or her to school and risk the health of others.* All parents have been asked to complete an acknowledgement of COVID-19 symptoms and are expected to keep their child home and isolated should they display these symptoms. Children exhibiting these symptoms at school will immediately be isolated under adult supervision and the parent or guardian is expected to immediately pick up their student. This procedure helps to protect the safety of other students and staff. Parents will be called if students are too sick to remain in school, if they are seriously injured, if they are running a temperature of 100 degrees or higher (or other symptoms related to the current health crisis), or if we believe your child needs further medical attention.

Additional symptoms that are considered to be of concern during the current pandemic include the following:

- Fever and chills
- A persistent cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Runny nose
- Lack of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Nausea or diarrhea

\*\*\*If your child has a chronic or seasonal condition that presents with the above noted symptoms, it is up to the parent to present a current note from a doctor stating that the child is under their care and is not at risk of transmitting COVID-19 to others.

There are significant concerns regarding children with allergies as symptoms come about quickly. A parent meeting should be held at Winn Holt to develop an allergy emergency plan to include all medicines and to understand the severity of the student's special need. Please contact the clinic as soon as possible to make these arrangements at 678-376-8607.

Additional Information Related to the current COVID-19 pandemic:

- Students exhibiting symptoms as noted above will be sent home.
- Students identified as potential contacts to a known or suspected positive case will also be required to quarantine at home for 14 days or until further notice.
- Students who live with a COVID-19 suspected or confirmed positive case or who live with someone who is awaiting test results must quarantine for 14 days. Please call the school to confirm a return date.

### Over-the-counter Medication Guidelines

- A. Administration of over-the-counter medication is discouraged. Only in cases in which the student absolutely needs the medication in order to attend school should a parent/guardian request that the school administer over-the-counter nonprescription drugs. In this case, a designated school employee will be permitted to supervise and/or provide reasonable assistance in administering the medication. This includes requests for cough medicine, aspirin, and other pain relievers.
- B. The parent/guardian must furnish a written request, which includes the date, student's first and last names, name of medication, dosage, time to be administered, and reason for medication.
- C. Medications must be received by the school in the ORIGINAL CHILD PROOF CONTAINER. MEDICATIONS RECEIVED IN ANYTHING OTHER THAN THE ORIGINAL CONTAINER WILL NOT BE ADMINISTERED AT SCHOOL.

### Too sick for School or Childcare

If you suspect your child has an illness, parents may bring their child into the clinic to be checked before the school day starts. It is often hard to decide if your child is too sick to go to school early in the morning. The main reasons to keep your child home are: if she/he is too sick to be comfortable, a temperature over 100, vomiting, frequent watery stools, mouth sores, severe cough, fast or troubled breathing, red or pink eyes with white or yellow drainage, ear pain, stomach pain, or body rash. **Children are able to return to school when they are fever free for 24 hours without medication and 24 hours after stomach irregularities have returned to normal.** Returning to school any earlier risks the spread of the illness to other children.

### Returning to School

Once your child is ready to return to school, please send in a note to their teacher so that we can note in our attendance system that the absence is excused.

### Closing of School

If inclement weather causes school to be cancelled or dismissed early, public announcements will be made on GCPS Television, MWHES website and calling system, on the school system's web site (<https://www.gcpsk12.org/WinnHoltES>) and via metro-Atlanta radio and television stations. Full-day cancellations usually are announced by 6:00 a.m. WSB-TV Channel 2 or WSB 750am will most likely be the first to announce school closings and/or delays. School closings due to the current health crisis will be communicated in the same manner.

### Communication from School to Home

Margaret Winn Holt Elementary School will use a variety of media to communicate with our families. These forms of communication may consist of: phone calls, email, texts, classroom reports (Friday Folders), website updates, teacher and school newsletters, flyers, the Parent Portal, Disciplinary Referrals, Early Release Conferences, progress reports, and School Messenger. The School Messenger system will contact the primary email you have designated with a message of importance, which may merely be a reminder about upcoming events. If a school wide emergency were to arise, families would be notified in a variety of ways. Please make certain that all email addresses and phone numbers are current in our system.

### Conferences and School Visits

To ensure the safety and security of our school community, no visitors are currently allowed in our school. **All students will be released only to parents/guardians through the office.** Our staff has been instructed **not** to release any student from the classroom directly to any adult, including parents/guardians. This is a safeguard for all children and is an integral part of our security plan. Your cooperation is appreciated.

## Counseling Department

Margaret Winn Holt Elementary is fortunate to have exceptional counselors in our school. Counselors offer large group classroom guidance sessions, small group special needs sessions (friendship, divorce, etc.), and individual student and parent counseling sessions. Please take advantage of their services.

Lamees Dabbas (Grades 3-5): **678-225-7687**, Angie MacDougall (Grades K-2): **678-225-7673**

## Disciplinary Referrals

Ongoing communication regarding your child's behavior choices will occur, as needed, throughout the school year. The communication will most likely be in the form of a phone call, and be accompanied by an Administrative Disciplinary Referral Form. When the Disciplinary Referral Form is sent home, please discuss the violation and comments with your child and sign the form indicating that you have seen it. Return it on the next school day. Your cooperation and support are greatly appreciated.

## Dismissal

The dismissal bell rings at **2:45 p.m.** to release car riders and day care buses. We will dismiss students from two different locations. Students riding the bus will be dismissed from the doors in the front of the building. Car riders will be dismissed from the exit doors on the Moon Road side of building. Students who ride a private day care bus will also be dismissed from the doors near the cafeteria. Students will not be allowed to re-enter the building to pick up forgotten items such as books or lunch boxes. We encourage students to learn responsibility in remembering items when leaving for home.

## Dress Code

Students are expected to dress in a manner that is supportive of a positive learning environment. Students shall not dress in a way that distracts their classmates from the school's purpose: Teaching and Learning. Per GCPS Board of Education Student Conduct Behavior Code Rule 1-1 (Policy: J-Students), students are not to wear clothing that depicts anything associated with drugs, alcohol, or graffiti. Parents will be called to bring a change of clothing for any student violating the Dress Code unless appropriate attire is secured at school from the clinic's clothing inventory. Masks are required per board policy.

## Early Checkout of Students

When you must check your child out of school, he/she will be released from the front office only. Teachers have been instructed not to release students to any adult without notification from the office. ID's will be required for all adults who check students out and they will sign the electronic checkout log before the child is released. **Early student checkouts must be completed before 2:15 pm.** Your cooperation with these measures is appreciated.

## Early Release

Students will be dismissed at **12:15 p.m.** on the four Early Release days (see calendar for dates) for Parent-Teacher Conferences

## Emergency Drills

- A. Fire drills are held monthly throughout the school year in accordance with the laws of the State of Georgia.
- B. Severe weather drills are held on the date designated by the State of Georgia during Severe Weather Awareness Week.
- C. Lockdown and evacuation drills are reviewed with staff and students. They are practiced and evaluated on an as needed basis.

## Emergency Information for Families

If a situation of a serious nature occurred at school, families would be notified by way of the School Messenger system. We will also post basic information on the school's website giving instructions to the families of our students. This is another reason why it is imperative that the school has all up to date telephone information.

## Emergency Situations

If there were an emergency where students had to be evacuated from Winn Holt Elementary, parents may be re-united with their child at Moore Middle School, 1221 Lawrenceville Hwy, Lawrenceville, GA 30046. All Winn Holt students will be transported there by Gwinnett County School buses and children will be released to parents/guardians after proper identification has been made. The release of children to parents and guardians needs to be an orderly process so please stay in your cars and follow all instructions when you arrive at Moore Middle School. We thank the principal and staff for allowing us to use Moore Middle as our evacuation site.

## Field Trips

Due to the current health crisis, no out of school or in school field trips will be scheduled this year.

## Ice Cream Snack

Ice cream will only be sold on Fridays. Students may purchase ice cream during their lunchtime. The price is \$1.00. Students will be asked to finish their main meal prior to being allowed to purchase ice cream. Students serving a disciplinary time-out will not be allowed to purchase an ice cream snack.

## Internet

At Winn Holt, the Internet is used for academic purposes only. Students must have a signed permission slip from a parent (Acceptable Use Policy-AUP) in order to use the Internet. Students may go to sites designated by the teacher and are responsible for following the teacher's instructions. Failure to use the Internet properly or have signed permission slip may result in the loss of Internet privileges. This also applies to the use of GCPS issued Hot Spots and devices for our digital learners.

## Late Pickup/Returning Students

Gwinnett County has the following policy for students returned on the bus because no one is at home to meet them or because they are not picked up on time as a car rider:

- A. First Incident: School manages the situation by contacting parent(s), guardian, or emergency contact for pick up.
- B. Second Incident: School manages the situation by contacting the parent(s), guardian or emergency contacts for pickup. The School will then report the incidents to Gwinnett County's Safety and Security office no later than the following morning of the second incident. School's SRO (School Resource Officer) will follow up, make contact and explain that DFACS (Department Family and Children Services) will be contacted the next time the student is left or returned to the school.
- C. Third Incident: Principal or designee will call DFACS (Department Family and Children Services) and make a referral for neglect.

## Lunch /Breakfast Charges

We appreciate parental assistance in reminding students to bring lunch money and for frequently checking with your child/children when additional payments are needed.

We use a prepayment system for lunch/breakfast. Our online prepayment system allows parents to go online and manage their child's meal account, [www.mypaymentsplus.com](http://www.mypaymentsplus.com) allows you to make deposits at no cost and create settings to auto-replenish your account or receive free reminders when the balance is low.

Please call the Lunchroom Manager, Glardeya Diggs, if you have a question about your child's cafeteria charges. The phone number is 678-376-8627.

## Lunch Guests

Due to the current health crisis, no lunch visitors will be allowed at this time.

## Make-Up Work After an Absence

Students have *one school day per day absent* to make up missed work. Work missed due to unexcused absences may or may not be credited. Please give teachers 24-hour notice to get work ready for parents to pick up in the office. Students quarantined but well enough to continue working may be moved to a digital teacher to avoid lost work time.

## Media Center

The media center has books, magazines, software, and pamphlets for assigned study and recreational reading. It is open for use during the entire school day, and a short time before school. Parents are strongly encouraged to monitor closely what their children are reading and viewing on T.V., and regular trips to the public library can be a fun family activity. Because of the limited amount of material, which must be shared among all students and our computerized checkout system, it is not possible for parents to check materials out for their child. Please see "Parent Center" below. Textbooks, library books, and other school materials must be paid for if lost, stolen, or damaged. Contact the Media Clerk at 678-376-8622.

## Messages to Teachers and Students

Phone calls will be received by the school between 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Teachers will be notified about your phone call via an email. Instructional time will not be interrupted for incoming calls. Teacher email is also available to parents in this form: **Teacher's first name. Teacher's last name@gcpsk12.org**. Emails are not instant messages, so please do not expect an immediate response. Teachers have 24 hours to respond to parent notes. Only messages of an emergency nature will be delivered to students during the school day.

## Parent Center

Our Parent Center is open during school hours and at special times during the school year, however, due to the current health crisis, parents will need to make appointments to request the services provided. The Parent Center is for *every* family in our school. The Parent Center stands ready to serve your needs especially supporting you in your efforts to help your children with their schoolwork. Please take advantage of the center. There are books, games, and other materials available for families to check out and use at home. These games are Literacy and Math oriented, so please take advantage of our exemplary Parent Center. English instruction for parents is also available as are evening programs focused on the needs of our families. **Jessica Soto** is our Parent Liaison and is a great help to our Spanish-speaking families. She can be reached through the Parent Center at 678-376-8629.

## Parent Conferences

Parent Conferences are held during Early Release Days on **October 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019 and February 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020**. Students will be dismissed at 12:15 p.m. each day. Teachers will contact parents to schedule these conferences. Other conferences are held throughout the school year at the parent, teacher, or administrator's request. Due to the current health crisis, most parent-teacher conferences will be held virtually.

## Parent Portal

Gwinnett County Public Schools has developed a Parent Portal for parents to review their child's school records and grades from the comfort of their own homes. Each parent will receive a password and will be able to access their children's records. Please contact the front office to request information on how to set up your account.

## Phone Protocol

The Gwinnett County Board of Education (BOE) permits students to have in their possession an electronic pager or communication device on a limited basis. However, the BOE prohibits the use by a student of any personal electronic communications device during school hours or on a school bus. The local school principal may set forth rules pertaining to student possession and use (O.C.G.A. 20-2-1183). Students may use school phones to call home when necessary, with the permission of their teacher. We do not permit students to receive phone calls during the day, as this distracts from the learning environment. All student

phones should be turned off and kept in the child's book bag. Violation of this policy may result in a phone restriction at school. Additionally, the school is not responsible for lost or stolen phones and/or technology devices.

## Report Cards

Students will be graded on a semester system. Report Cards will be issued after the first semester (Winter Break) and second semester. Progress reports will be provided throughout the year, and grades may be checked via the Parent Portal. These dates are listed on the calendar.

## Re-enter the Building

Students will not be allowed to re-enter the building after 3:15 pm to pick up forgotten items. Prior to 3:15 their teacher must be in the room in order to re-enter the room. If the teacher is not available student will not be allowed in classroom without an administrator.

## Student Registration

Margaret Winn Holt Elementary welcomes all new students in grades Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup>. A detailed list of all documentation required for registration can be found on our website: <https://www.gcpsk12.org/WinnHoltES> under the "Registration" section of the Parent tab. Complete the online registration for new students and submit online. Please bring the required documents to us to complete enrollment. If you have any further questions regarding registration, contact our office at 678-376-8600.

## Student Selling

It is a violation of GCPS and Margaret Winn Holt Elementary School for students to sell anything to any other student for any payment. Consequences for violations can be a simple administrative warning to an out-of-school suspension. We operate a School Store for classroom materials and students can access the store (stationed near the 1<sup>st</sup> floor elevator) from 7:45A.M. Until 8:10A.M.

## Textbooks

Textbooks and other instructional material are assigned to your student. It is the student's responsibility to manage these materials. Textbooks, library books, and other school materials must be paid for if lost, stolen, or damaged.

## Visiting the School

Due to the current health crisis, visitors are not allowed in the building.

## Volunteers

Due to the current health crisis, volunteers are not allowed in the building.

## Administrators

**Ellyce Cone**, Principal

Assistant Principals:

**Kari Frega** serves Grades K-2, Testing Coordinator, and Data Support

**Candace Haynes** serves Grades 3-5, Instructional Support, Staff Development, and Title 1

**Mark Moon** serves Special Education, Connections, Safety and Security and Title IX