

North Carroll Community School

Family Handbook

A Resource For Families
2023-2024



NORTH CARROLL
COMMUNITY
SCHOOL

Welcome

As we begin another year of providing quality education for children, we'd like to thank you for being part of the 2023-2024 "NCCS Nation!" We're excited for what is bound to be our best year yet!

This handbook is intended to be a reference for you as we navigate the year together. Our policies and procedures on everything from academics to school life are included on the pages within. Please invest the time to familiarize yourself with these policies and procedures in order to ensure a smooth school year for all. In addition, we always encourage and invite your questions, ideas, and comments.

Again, thank you for being a valued and important part of our school. We are looking forward to a fantastic year!

Yours for kids,

Sam

"The goal of education is to teach children to become adults who can handle complex ideas, in uncertain situations, with confidence... Learning should breathe life into us and inspire us to share the ideas we learn with people we love...But realistically, academic excellence only occurs when one thing happens: everyone works hard whether they want to or not and whether they are good at it or not."

--Leigh A. Bortins, *The Core*



NORTH CARROLL
COMMUNITY
SCHOOL

School Structure, Frameworks, and Reporting Policies

Statement of Purpose

North Carroll Community School was formed to meet the needs of a variety of learners while offering families another choice for their children's education. We are committed to teaching each child at his or her level of readiness, regardless of age or grade status.

Using our own standards, based on the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards as our starting point, students will build a solid foundation in Literature, Writing, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, and the Arts.

Our vision includes small class sizes, creative opportunities for learning, and most importantly, the time for students to own the concepts that they study. Differences between individuals are acknowledged and celebrated.

We feel strongly about the value of character education and strive each day to create a learning culture that focuses on and emphasizes character. At North Carroll Community School, students and teachers alike belong to a community that values, teaches, and expects respect, responsibility, integrity, gratitude, humility, kindness, and balance.

Our Vision

The vision of North Carroll Community School is to create an unparalleled educational experience centered around the growth of the whole child.

Our Mission

In pursuit of our vision, each day, we strive to:

- Generate excitement about learning
- Foster respect, responsibility, integrity, gratitude, kindness, humility, and balance
- Encourage students to be in charge of their learning
- Create a learning community with high expectations
- Promote family involvement
- Provide multi-age, differentiated, hands-on instruction

Parent Responsibilities

Our program thrives on the partnership between parents and the school. Accordingly, there are a few basic responsibilities that we ask of all parents who are a part of our community. As a dedicated parent and partner in your child's learning, we expect parents to:

- Support and respect our teachers as professionals with regard to all academic and behavioral issues
- Schedule and attend all Parent/Teacher/Student conferences
- Ensure students arrive at campus on time to start their school day

- Read progress reports each semester
- Ensure homework is completed on time and that students have the time and appropriate space to do so
- Read and sign weekly communication such as the Friday Folders or Data Binder
- Stay abreast of what is happening at school and in the classroom by reading the Weekly Round-Up and weekly classroom communications

Administrative Responsibilities

Employee	Responsibilities
Sam Havighurst	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison between the school community and the Board of Directors • Strategic Growth and Development • Budget Projections and Long-Term Financials • Admissions Oversight • HR/Employee Contracts/Payroll • Retirement Management • Banking and Accounting • MSDE/MDOCC Point of Contact • FACTS Tuition Management • FACTS SIS Management • Marketing and Fundraising Oversight • Staffing • Google Services Management • Scholarship Fund Management • Endowment Management • Rentals Management • Donations Management • Weekly Communication (Weekly Round-Up)
Rebecca Beyer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Oversight • IEP/ISP Oversight • Weekly Teacher Meetings to Improve Craft • Present in Classrooms to Observe and Assist • Plan and Implement Professional Development • Research and Share Best Practices • Curriculum Revision and Management • Fostering Consistency for Teachers • Proofreading Progress Reports • Attend Parent Conferences for Coaching Teachers • Staffing • Title II Oversight • Supervise Interventionists • Screen Incoming Students and Set Shadow Days

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assist With Prospective Tours Involving Special Education Students ● Communicate with Special Ed Liason for CCPS
Alex Will	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher Oversight ● Student Discipline ● Instructional Schedules ● Lunch/Recess Oversight ● Day to Day Issues ● Securing Substitutes ● Before and Aftercare Management ● Transportation Oversight ● Morning Meeting and /or Community Connections Oversight ● RLC Trips, Field Trips, and Community Service Coordination ● Ignite, Interest Learning, and Club Management ● Parent Organization ● Staffing ● Building Maintenance Oversight ● Purchase Orders and Bill Payment ● Banking and Accounting ● Endowment Management ● Special Areas Oversight

Positions at North Carroll Community School

Position	Name
Executive Director	Samuel T. Havighurst
Administrative Director of Teaching & Learning	Rebecca D. Beyer
Administrative Director of Students	Alexander R. Will
Preschool Director and Lead Teacher	Jennifer Barnard
Preschool Assistant Teacher	Allyson Rabaiotti
Classroom Teacher (Year 1)	Donna Schisler
Classroom Teacher (Years 2 & 3)	Kristie Wright
Classroom Teacher (Years 2 & 3)	Chet Hinton
Classroom Teacher (Years 3 & 4)	Katelyn Rhoads
Classroom Teacher (Years 3 & 4)	Sarah Rose Alexander
Classroom Teacher (Years 5 & 6)	Katherine Carrick
Classroom Teacher (Years 5 & 6)	Kathleen Thomas
Classroom Teachers (Year 7) & NCCS Co-Founders	Diane L. Havighurst Scot M. Lynn
Classroom Teacher (Years 8 & 9)	Holly Johnson
Classroom Teacher (Years 8 & 9)	JanElle Seegars
General Music Teacher	Joann Benson
Instrumental Music Teacher	Brandon Dull
World Cultures Teacher	Erica Hansbrough
Technology Teacher, Interventionist	Jamie Widerman
Makerspace Teacher, STEM Coordinator	Kelley Neubert
Health and Physical Education Teachers	Erin Durden Jeff Schnorr
Art Teacher	Pamela Newton
NCCS Essentials Teacher, Guidance Counselor	Leigh Ann Wingate
Head Interventionist	Ruth Rice
Instructional Interventionists	Pamela Newton Margot Morris
Instructional Assistants	Katie Haynie Heather Rey
School Nurse	Jacqueline Dintino
Lunch Coordinator	Gail Graham
Development and Engagement Director	Shelley Gold
Marketing and Development Cooridnator	Aubry Mortimer
Building Supervisor, Marketing and Media Manager	Paul Havighurst
Executive Assistant	Maria Berry
Shuttle Bus Drivers	Kimberli Harkless Sandi Marsh

Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation Policy

Pursuant to Education Article §7-424.3 of the State of Maryland, and in compliance with MSDE licensure, North Carroll Community School has adopted the following policy.

Definitions:

- a. “Bullying, harassment, and intimidation” means any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, including an electronic communication that:

- (i)1. Physically harms an individual;
- 2. Damages an individual’s property;
- 3. Substantially interferes with an individual’s education or learning environment; or
- 4. Places an individual in reasonable fear of harm to the individual’s person or property;

And

(ii)1. Occurs on school property, at a school-sponsored activity or event, on school-provided transportation or

- 2. Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.

- b. “Electronic communication” means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including a telephone, cellular phone, computer, i-pod, or pager.

North Carroll Community School (NCCS) prohibits bullying, harassment, and intimidation by any student, staff member, or volunteer toward any other student, staff member, or volunteer on the premises of the school during the regularly scheduled school day, on school-sponsored trips, or at school-sponsored activities.

In addition, reprisal, retaliation, or suggestions thereof, against individuals who report acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation are expressly prohibited.

Students who violate this policy will be subject to suspension or expulsion, at the discretion of the head(s) of the school.

Staff members who violate this policy will be subject to suspension or dismissal at the discretion of the head(s) of the school

Volunteers who violate this policy will be subject to dismissal from volunteer duties and/or prohibition of access to volunteer opportunities with the school at the discretion of the head(s) of the school.

All persons who commit acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation will also be required to participate in educational or therapeutic services concerning bullying. Costs incurred from professional counseling and/or

programs shall be the sole responsibility of the individual receiving the services or, in the case of a minor, his/her parent or guardian.

Students, staff, or volunteers who repeatedly violate this policy will be dismissed from North Carroll Community School.

Further, students, staff members, and volunteers of NCCS are strictly prohibited from making false accusations of bullying, harassment, and/or intimidation against any other student, staff member, or volunteer.

Students who make false accusations of bullying, harassment, or intimidation will be subject to suspension or expulsion at the discretion of the head(s) of the school.

Staff members who make false accusations of bullying, harassment, or intimidation will be subject to suspension or dismissal at the discretion of the head(s) of the school.

Volunteers who make false accusations of bullying, harassment, or intimidation will be subject to dismissal from volunteer duties and/or prohibition of access to volunteer opportunities with the school at the discretion of the head(s) of the school.

Students, staff members, or volunteers must report occurrences of bullying, harassment, and intimidation as soon as they occur or are witnessed.

The process for individuals reporting instances of bullying, harassment, and intimidation is as follows:

Students: A student must **immediately** report the incident to the staff member or volunteer who is in charge at the time the incident occurs. The staff member must make pertinent notes on the situation and report the situation to an administrator as soon as is prudently possible.

Staff Members: A staff member must report the incident to an administrator as soon as is prudently possible. The administrator will make notes on the incident for follow-up.

Volunteers: A volunteer must report the incident to an administrator or administrator's designee as soon as is prudently possible. The administrator or administrator's designee will make notes on the incident for follow-up.

Incidents of bullying, harassment, and intimidation will be investigated as soon as prudently possible, but not later than the conclusion of the *following* school day.

If a student is involved in the incident, his/her parent or guardian will be notified as soon as prudently possible, but not later than the conclusion of the *current* school day.

Student victims of bullying, harassment, and intimidation will be protected by the implementation of the following:

1. As much as possible, students will be separated within the confines of the classroom or workspace including, but not limited to, placement at table groups, in work groups, and in partner activities.
2. Teachers of additional classes (e.g., art, music, foreign language, physical education), and substitute teachers will be notified of the need for separation of students as outlined above.

Resources and support services for students involved in bullying will be provided or suggested as deemed necessary or in accordance with this policy.

This policy is officially in effect beginning March 1, 2012

Communication and Grievance Policy

Teachers and parents should use the daily folder and/or other means of communication such as e-mail or the Friday Folder to pass notes back and forth. Occasionally, problems arise that need to be addressed personally with a phone call or face-to-face. In these situations, we ask that you adhere to the following policy. Please remember that, as we teach children, we as adults should treat others the way in which we would like to be treated.

Students/Parents to Teachers:

1. All concerns about the classroom must first be presented to the teacher by the parents or the student. It is assumed that the person presenting the concern will do so in a mature and respectful manner.
2. If the problem is not resolved after a discussion with the teacher, the parents or student may bring the concern to the appropriate Administrative Director. This must be done through a phone call or visit to the office to schedule an appointment.
3. After investigation and reflection by the Administrative Director, his/her decision will be final.

Parents/Patrons to Executive Director:

1. If parents or patrons have a grievance or dispute about the general operation of the school (apart from the operation of the classrooms), they should bring their concerns to the Executive Director. This must be done through a phone call or visit to the office to schedule an appointment.
2. The Executive Director will investigate and reflect on the grievance and may bring it to the school's advisory board.
3. After investigation and reflection by the Executive Director, his/her decision will be final.

Staff to Administration:

1. All concerns about the standards of the school must first be presented to the appropriate Administrative Director.
2. After investigation and reflection by the Administrative Director, his/her decision will be final.

Volunteers to Staff/Administration:

1. If any volunteer has a concern about the volunteer work, they will present that concern to the staff member responsible for his oversight (teacher, appropriate Administrative Director, Administrative Assistant, Volunteer Coordinator, etc.).
2. If the problem is not resolved, then the concern should be presented to the appropriate Administrative Director. This must be done through a phone call or visit to the office to schedule an appointment.
3. After investigation and reflection by the Administrative Director, his/her decision will be final.

Parent to Parent:

Occasionally, situations arise that present conflicts between school parents or students outside of school. In this case, parents/students should resort to the following steps:

1. One parent should contact another outside of the school building to discuss the problem.
2. If possible, parents and/or students should arrange to meet at a neutral location outside of school to discuss the matter.
3. Please refrain from discussing the matter with other families who may not be involved.
4. The staff of NCCS should not be brought into personal conflicts unless it is to directly discuss the impact on a student's learning.

Defamation Policy

NCCS forbids any student or family member from making false statements that damage the reputation of other people (defamation) or the school, including statements made electronically (e.g., e-mail, website, chat room, blog, social media, instant message, text message, etc.). Students and/or family members making such statements shall be liable to discipline up to and including expulsion at the discretion of the Executive Director. In the event of expulsion in this instance, families are not entitled to a refund of fees paid or owed.

Additionally, parents are cautioned to be aware of, and involved in, their children's use of computer and cellular phone activities. Computer use by students is supervised during the instructional day, and the use of cellular phones by students in school is strictly prohibited. Therefore, the school assumes no liability or responsibility in cases where students are using these technologies to communicate in a hurtful or inappropriate way. If you have a concern in this area, please contact the family, with whom there are concerns, directly.



NORTH CARROLL
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Admissions and Enrollment Policies

Admissions Criteria

North Carroll Community School seeks to enroll students who are naturally curious and desire to engage in learning. Our community is best suited to students and families that value learning, connections, sound character, and cooperative spirit.

Age requirements for our program are as follows:

In order for students to be enrolled in the Preschool 3s program for the 2023-2024 school year, students must be three years old and potty trained by September 1, 2023. Students may be considered for enrollment after September 1 once they have reached three years of age and are potty trained, provided that they have successfully completed an academic screening assessment and it has been determined that entrance into the program is in the best interest of the student and the school.

In order for students to be enrolled in the Preschool 4s program for the 2023-2024 school year, students must be four years old and potty trained by September 1, 2023. Students may be considered for enrollment after September 1 once they have reached four years of age and are potty trained, provided that they have successfully completed an academic screening assessment and it has been determined that entrance into the program is in the best interest of the student and the school.

In order for students to be enrolled in the Year 1 program for the 2023-2024 school year, students must be five years old by September 1, 2023. Academic waivers *may* be granted to students who do not meet the age requirement, provided that they have successfully completed an academic screening assessment and it has been determined that entrance into the First Year program is in the best interest of the student and the school.

In order to accommodate space requirements and preserve a low student-teacher ratio, enrollment is limited. Enrollment will be considered full at the point when the teacher-student ratio can no longer be maintained at 10:1 for Preschool, 15:1 in Year 1 & 2 Classrooms, 18:1 in Year 3 & 4 Classrooms, 20:1 in Year 5 and 6 Classrooms, and 24:1 in the Middle School Classrooms (Years 7, 8, and 9) for areas of core academic study, or at such time when the administrator determines that the number of students will adversely affect the quality of the instructional program. The core academic study includes instruction in the areas of Literature, Writing, and Mathematics. In the event that enrollment is at capacity, prospective students will be placed on a waiting list on a first-come, first-served basis until a space becomes available. Once a student is enrolled, a child may continue at North Carroll Community School as long as the enrollment contract terms are met and the experience proves to be satisfying for both the student and the school.

Admissions preference is given to siblings of children currently enrolled in the school. North Carroll Community School seeks families who are committed to the ideals and practices of the school and who see themselves as partners in their children's education.

Our admission process is an "open enrollment" meaning that we do not have a deadline for application to our program. Applications will be considered as long as enrollment is not at capacity. **That said, students who enroll for the current school year after January 31 of the current school year must also enroll for the following school year.** In order for students to be enrolled, we must have a completed application, recommendation form, enrollment packet, signed contract, completed shadow day or screening interview, and parent interview. In addition, payment of the enrollment and materials fees must be completed before a student can be enrolled.

By the nature of our program, different learning styles are encouraged and celebrated. While North Carroll Community School does not offer a formal “special education program,” our team of Learning Support Specialists assists teachers with modifying assignments and instruction to meet the needs of students with learning challenges.

It is the policy of North Carroll Community School to admit students on a trial basis. **Any student new to NCCS will begin a probationary period lasting from the first day of the school year until fall parent/teacher conferences.** For all those entering after the first day, the probationary period will be three months from the start date. This policy allows NCCS to evaluate each student to make sure they are a good fit for our community in terms of behavior and academic effort, but more importantly, it allows NCCS an opportunity to evaluate if our program can meet the educational needs of each student. If a student is deemed to not be a good fit with our program, by the Executive Director, the student will be asked to leave the program. Per our Tuition Policy, any funds given to NCCS will not be refunded and all remaining balances will still be due.

North Carroll Community School admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, or sexual orientation. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, national or ethnic origin, or sexual orientation in the administration of the admission policy, educational policy, or any school-administered program.

Financial Aid

NCCS is working to build its financial aid fund. Accordingly, we have begun a detailed process for awarding financial aid. For those interested in obtaining financial aid, please complete the financial aid application by the January 1 deadline. First priority is given to those families already receiving aid, as well as currently enrolled families before new families.

NCCS awards financial aid according to need. The need is determined through a third-party site that collects information and financial figures from families (FACTS). **Please know that in order to be considered for financial aid, families must submit ALL the required documents requested by FACTS. Additionally, financial information from all adults living in the household with the student requesting aid must be submitted.**

Any financial aid awarded to families has already taken into consideration the sibling discount. Accordingly, those who are awarded and receive financial aid will not be eligible for any and all subsequent sibling discounts.

Withdrawing From NCCS

Although we understand there are unforeseeable circumstances that may affect a child’s ability to attend NCCS, NCCS has relied upon your child’s/children’s Enrollment Contract in making staffing and materials decisions for the upcoming year.

The Enrollment Contract obligates the parents/guardians (the parties to the Enrollment Contract), to pay the entire tuition of the upcoming school year, without regard to student absence, withdrawal, or dismissal for

any reason. If a student withdraws in writing by June 1 (prior to the beginning of the school year), NCCS will forgive or refund 75% of the tuition obligation, including finance fees. If a student withdraws in writing between July 1 and August 31 (prior to the beginning of the school year), NCCS will forgive or refund 25% of the tuition obligation, including finance fees. If a student withdraws on or after September 1 (of the current enrollment term), the parents/guardians of the Enrollment Contract are not entitled to forgiveness or refund of tuition already paid or owed to NCCS.

As with all things, we understand there are unforeseen circumstances that affect a child's enrollment. Should there be a need to withdraw from NCCS, please contact an administrator to see if other financial accommodations can be made. We may be able to prorate your child's tuition with their enrollment. However, should no agreement between the parties be reached, the Administrator's decision is final.

If a child is asked to leave NCCS due to non-compliance with our disciplinary policy, the entire year's tuition will be owed.

There will be no refunds on tuition already paid in which the child(ren) was/were in attendance at NCCS.

Records will not be given to other institutions, and progress reports will not be published until all open invoices, fees, or balances are paid in full.



NORTH CARROLL
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Classroom and In-Building Structures and Policies

Classroom Groupings

Students will work in the classroom settings that best meet their individual needs as learners. In general, students are placed in classrooms based on their academic, social, and emotional needs. We take great time and care to ensure that students are placed in settings that will be most conducive to their learning and growth. We strongly value the concept of students working on the skills that are developmentally appropriate for them, regardless of their age or grade status.

In the multiage classroom, students work together as a community of learners. Each child's learning rate and style are honored, as well as supported in many ways, including through small group instruction within the classroom. The teacher is able to guide a student's growth from year to year, supporting each child's natural learning rate with the gift of time. Without labels, retention, and concrete grade levels, children are free to learn at their own pace and to take risks that include learning from mistakes. Younger students in the group benefit from collaborating with older children who model more sophisticated approaches to learning. Older children benefit by modeling teachers in their roles as mentors to younger children. Therefore, children look to each other and not just to the teacher for learning opportunities.

We discourage the students from discussing their placement and work in relationship to grade level. Instead of relating that they are in "X grade," we encourage children to discuss that they are working in the "X Classroom." Parents can help with this by looking at learning as a journey and not in terms of "grade level."

Grading Policy

In our preschool program (3s and 4s), standards-based grading is used to communicate student development. For these students, there are no formally graded assignments. Instead, it is communicated to parents how students are developing in terms of each developmentally appropriate behavior. This development is communicated in the following ways:

- **I** for Independent, indicating that the child is completely independent in displaying that skill or standard
- **M** for Minimal Support Required, indicating that the child is demonstrating an increasing ability to display that skill independently, but requires very little support or guidance from the teacher.
- **S** for Significant Support Required, indicating that the child is demonstrating some ability to display that skill independently, but it requires significant support or guidance from the teacher.
- **N** for Not Meeting Expectations indicates that the child has not *yet* demonstrated any display of that skill or behavior even with the support of the teacher.

In lower school (years 1-6) at NCCS, standards-based grading is used. Although every assignment serves a purpose, not every assignment will receive a formal grade. Those that do receive a grade will receive one of the following:

- **I** for Independent, indicating that the child is completely independent in applying the learning standard to his/her work.
- **M** for Minimal Support Required, indicating that the child is demonstrating an increasing ability to apply the learning standard independently, with minimal support or guidance from the teacher.
- **S** for Significant Support Required, indicating that the child is at times demonstrating an increasing ability to apply the learning standard, but only with significant support or guidance from the teacher.

- N for Not Meeting Expectations, indicating that the child has not *yet* demonstrated the ability to apply the learning standard, even with the support of the teacher.

Each week, students will bring home their Friday Folder (Years 1-4) or data binder (Years 5-9) with work samples from the previous week, along with a note from the teacher. Please note that many assignments are hands-on, interactive, or completed in journals, so there will not be a plethora of paperwork sent home.

In middle school (years 7-9), traditional letter grades are assigned on assignments and the progress report on the following scale:

A = 90 - 100%
 B = 80 - 89%
 C = 70 - 79%
 D = 60 - 69%
 F = 59% and below.

Late Work, Missing Work, and Homework

As responsibility is one of our anchors, for all students in Years 1-9, those who do not complete their classwork due to not using time responsibly will have it sent home to complete as homework.

For students in Years 1-4, we understand that homework is a collaborative effort with parents and that the responsibility for completion falls on both the student and parent. Thus, we ask that parents partner with us in ensuring that any homework or incomplete classwork is completed promptly.

For students in Years 5-9, the responsibility for completing homework begins to shift solely onto the student with minimal parental support. Therefore, those students in Years 5-9 who do not complete any homework assignment (including incomplete classwork) by the due date will given a missing homework slip to be signed by a guardian (along with an additional copy of the assignment if necessary). The assignment will need to be completed at home by the next day. In the event that the assignment is not completed for the next day, the student will have to work on it during one of their instructional breaks (e.g., if it is a math assignment, the student will work on it during the break in their STEM block). If a student misses three homework assignments in a semester, a parent-teacher-student conference will be held.

In addition to the above, for middle school students, late work may be accepted one day late with a penalty of 50% and after that, the student will still need to complete the assignment but it will not receive any credit. Any assignment found to be plagiarized will result in an automatic 0 on the assignment and a referral to the administration for further consequences. Please know that for assignments for which students have more than one night to complete the work, exceptions to this policy cannot be made for extracurricular activities, minor illnesses, fatigue, etc.

While homework is an essential part of learning, we consider it to be practice for concepts that have been introduced and studied in class. Parents are essential in developing routines that will establish good study habits. Parents are encouraged to:

- Become interested in their child's homework by inviting him/her to share the assignment. Parental interest will reinforce the importance of homework and academic progress.

- Remember that homework is the child's responsibility. **Children must be permitted to make mistakes in order to learn from them.** If a child is experiencing consistent difficulty with an assignment, please contact the teacher.
- Establish a regular homework time each day and give it a priority in the family schedule.
- Provide a quiet, well-stocked place to work.

Ultimately, homework is the responsibility of the student. Students in Years 1-4 may need guidance and support in completing assignments. Once a child is in Years 5-9, however, we encourage parents to discuss and review homework, but not to correct or help the child complete it. Finding an alternative activity nearby is a good idea for parents. In this way, they are available to help or answer questions if a child needs assistance, but are not sending the message that they are completing the work with the child. If a child has excessive difficulty with an assignment or shows a high level of frustration, please email the classroom teacher who assigned the homework.

Homework is not intended to take an inordinate amount of time each evening. The number and length of assignments may vary from day to day. In general, students will be given more than one night to complete regular homework assignments (this does not include incomplete classwork, which must be submitted the next day). If your child is spending an excessive amount of time each day on homework, please contact the teacher.

Assessments

On-going assessment is crucial to the progress of each individual child. Teachers assess students both informally and formally to determine what skills they possess, what skills are developing, and what skills need to be taught. Students are taught to approach assessment as part of their learning, not as an end.

North Carroll Community School does not require the administration of standardized tests for its students. We feel that these tests do not necessarily reflect the abilities and skills possessed by our students. We will be happy to discuss this philosophy with parents if they wish. Even so, we feel that children need to be prepared to enter the greater community with a knowledge and understanding of formal testing procedures. Therefore, we teach test-taking and preparation strategies and administer formal assessments at the end of units of study so that children, parents, and teachers are able to evaluate growth in various subject areas. We do not, however, use these assessments as the only indicators of growth.

Additionally, we offer the Iowa Test of Basic Skills to students in particular classrooms. Students are not required to participate in testing; however, we do use the results from these assessments to guide our instruction and evaluate our curriculum. Many parents are also interested in seeing how their children compare to their same-aged peers in other educational settings. In the spring, you will receive an email about this test if your child's class will be participating.

Student Make-Up Work

If a student is absent from class instruction, be it for illness or a preplanned event (trip, doctor's appointment, graduation, etc.), make-up work will be provided once the student returns to school. If students are scheduled to miss extended time, it is recommended that they continue reading independently, working on long-term assignments that have been previously given, journaling their experiences, and practicing math facts and previous concepts. Students will be given as many days to complete missed assignments as days missed.

from school. Please understand that due to the “hands-on” nature of many activities and assignments, not all missed lessons are able to be made up. In this case, students will be excused from the assignments, but not from ownership of concepts.

Progress Reports

Reporting student progress is an important aspect of learning. Each student will receive a progress report two times a year. Formal Progress Reports will be completed at the conclusion of each semester. Please see the school calendar for the dates on which student progress reports will be sent home and conferences held.

That said, we pride ourselves on our communication with parents about student learning. Our teachers are available by e-mail at any time and will also schedule conferences throughout the school year – whether at their request or the request of parents. Parents are encouraged to communicate with the staff regularly about the progress of their children.

Second-Chance Learning

As a school, North Carroll Community School implements a second-chance learning opportunity for performance-based grades. Second-chance learning is based on teacher discretion and is not guaranteed for each and every performance assignment. Teachers and administrators reserve the right to deny students a second chance learning opportunity if they feel that students were not responsible in their preparation of the original assignment, did not put forth their best effort on the original assignment, or were found to be cheating or being dishonest in the completion of said assignment or assessment. The right to deny students second chance learning opportunities is not limited to the aforementioned instances and is fully up to the discretion of the teacher and/or administrator.

In the event that students have a second chance learning opportunity, this new assessment or assignment shall be different from the original assignment in terms of questions, numbers, or figures, but still assess or measure the same concepts or understandings as the original assignment. Accordingly, answer corrections or redoing problems independently on the original assignment does not constitute a second-chance learning opportunity.

Once a student has completed the second chance learning assignment or assessment, the second grade earned will be averaged with the original grade earned in order to create a new grade. This new grade will replace the previously reported grade.

Extra Credit

North Carroll Community School has adopted a no extra credit policy. Because student grades are reflections of student growth and progress over the semester and year, extra credit undermines the effectiveness in reporting or showing this progress, as it inflates, or pads, grades.

Eligibility Policy

Our staff holds differentiated high expectations for all of our students. With that in mind, we have established an Eligibility Policy to maintain a high level of work ethic and quality for our students.

For all students, an attendance rate of 90% or better must be maintained to participate in special activities, including, but not limited to, Interest Learning, after-school Ignite activities, Rec Nights, Field Day, special events, RLC Trip, and outings. In addition, students may not have more than one major or two minor disciplinary offenses in order to be eligible for the special activities listed above. If a student has **any** disciplinary offense within the two weeks prior to a special activity, the executive and administrative directors reserve the right to withhold participation in any upcoming activity. Finally, students who have a pattern of late, missing, or incomplete work may not be allowed to participate in special activities.

For our middle schoolers, if a student holds a cumulative grade percentage of 69% or less in any academic subject, the executive and administrative directors reserve the right to withhold student participation in any school-sponsored activity. This includes but is not limited to, Interest Learning, after-school Ignite activities, Rec Nights, Field Day, special events, clubs, Real Life Connections trips, and outings. In addition, each family must have satisfied all of their financial obligations to NCCS in order for their student(s) to participate in any special activity.

The administration also reserves the right to withhold student participation for students in all program years based on other circumstances, i.e., financial obligations, a pattern of late or missing assignments, incomplete homework, etc. As noted, all of the above is at the final discretion of the administration.

Graduation Policy

Since NCCS utilizes its own set of graduated standards for learning, students who are with us during their middle school years will graduate from our program when they have completed the year nine standards in our curriculum. It must also be agreed upon by the teachers, administration, and parents, that a child is socially and emotionally ready to progress to a high school program and that doing so is in the best interest of the child. *The teachers and administration may recommend that students complete an additional year in our program if they have not mastered these standards or may not be socially and emotionally ready for the high school environment.*

In order for Year 9 students to participate in our annual graduation ceremony, they must meet the following requirements:

- Have completed Year 9 standards
- Have a final grade (average of both semesters) of 70% or better for the entire year in all classes
- Have been present for a minimum of 90% of the school year
- Have had no out-of-school suspension in the second semester

Behavior & Discipline Policy

At NCCS, our behavioral policy is rooted in the principles of the Responsive Classroom approach which utilizes practices intended to create safe, joyful, and engaging classrooms and school communities. The emphasis is on helping students develop their academic, social, and emotional skills in a learning environment that is developmentally responsive to their strengths and needs. To that end, we utilize seven anchors to guide students' social and emotional development.

Our anchors include:

- Respect
- Responsibility
- Integrity
- Gratitude
- Kindness
- Humility
- Balance

We also have a list of more detailed “NCCS Essentials” that make our expectations in relation to the anchors more explicit.

In the classroom and as a whole school, teachers and staff will begin the year by intentionally working together with students to create a positive learning community. This will be done by developing relationships; teaching, modeling, and practicing the anchors and NCCS Essentials; investing the students in these anchors and essentials; and setting academic and social goals. From there, teachers will work to proactively prevent off-task behavior and misbehavior by regularly modeling, reinforcing, and reminding students of expectations when necessary.

Most misbehavior will result in one redirection followed by a logical consequence if the student does not respond to redirection. These consequences will relate to the infraction and may include loss of a privilege, taking action to correct or repair the damage done, or taking a break from an activity (in most cases, we do not consider taking away recess an appropriate consequence). If a student continues to engage in disruptive behavior after being redirected and given a logical consequence by the teacher, the student will be sent to the administration. In either case, when a student has difficulty with behavior, this will be communicated to parents so that we can work as a team to help the student achieve success in the classroom.

Certain behaviors are considered major offenses and will result in immediate removal from the classroom and the involvement of an Administrative Director. These behaviors include physical violence, refusal to comply with a teacher's request, extreme profanity, sexual harassment (verbal or physical), violations of our bullying and harassment policy, and violations of our technology policy. Most other behavioral offenses are considered minor, but the administration will determine this on a case-by-case basis.

For behaviors that involve an Administrative Director, the following procedure will be used:

- First occurrence: To be determined by the administration. May include logical consequence, lunch detention, or more severe consequence if warranted.
- Second occurrence: To be determined by the administration. This may include a half-day in-school suspension.
- Third occurrence: To be determined by the administration. This may include full-day in-school suspension.

- Fourth: To be determined by the administration. This may include out-of-school suspension or expulsion. (There will be no refund of tuition paid and no forgiveness of tuition owed as per the tuition contract and tuition policy.)

The administration has discretion for consequences and can move between consequences depending on the offense. If a student receives in or out-of-school suspension as a consequence, parents must have a face-to-face conference with the administration before the student may return to class or school. Ultimately administration reserves the right to expel a student for any behavior not in keeping with anchors no matter the instance or number of offenses.

The Executive Director makes the final decision regarding all disciplinary actions toward students as well as the decision for expulsion. They may call for dismissal from the program at any time for any disciplinary violation. Their word is final.

NCCS Life Essentials

1. Put your eyes on the speaker and square your body to them.
2. Use your manners: say please, thank you, you're welcome, pardon, yes (not yeah), and excuse me when appropriate.
3. Greet your teachers and classmates and respond to their greetings using their names. When appropriate, offer a handshake. Ask questions to show interest in others.
4. Not everything you think needs to be said. Body language and tone of voice are as important as the words you use.
5. Follow directions the first time and do your job with a positive attitude.
6. Leave everything better than you found it. If you see something that needs to be done, do it. If you fill it, empty it. If you empty it, fill it.
7. Congratulate others for their accomplishments. If you win, do not brag; if you lose, do not show anger.
8. Be aware of your surroundings.
9. Look for the good.
10. Know when it's time to work and when it's time to play.

NCCS Classroom Essentials

1. Don't raise your hand while others are talking.
2. Don't ask for treats, rewards, or seconds.
3. Hats and hoods are for outside.
4. Write your first and last name on all your work. If you're in Year 4 or above, write the full date on all work. Answer questions in complete sentences (Year 4+).
5. Stay in your seat while a teacher is instructing or a classmate is sharing and during lunch and performances.
6. If you don't make time to do it correctly and neatly, you will have to make time to do it over.
7. When something comes easily to you, don't say, "This is easy." If something is challenging, don't say, "It's too hard; I can't do it."
8. Always have the correct materials for class. Be prepared!
9. Ask permission before using others' materials. Return borrowed items in the same condition.
10. Keep right in the hallways when walking. Travel in a silent line. Before entering a room, allow others to exit.

Lunch Essentials

1. We wait until everyone is seated and served before eating.
2. Do not save seats or change seats after someone else sits down.
3. Raise your hand if you need anything.
4. Speak in a 6-inch voice to those next to you. Do not shout across the room.
5. Do not play with your food, share food, or throw away food that can be resealed and taken home.
6. Stay in your seat unless you have permission to do otherwise.
7. We only throw trash away at the end of lunch when instructed to do so.
8. Before you raise your hand to ask for help, ask a friend.

Dress Policy

We view school as a child's work and, therefore, expect that students will dress in a manner that is both safe and appropriate. Students should wear comfortable, modest clothes that allow for active play and movement.

Tennis shoes **must** be worn on physical education instruction days. If tennis shoes are not worn for physical education, an alternative, physical activity will be assigned to the student with their safety in mind. Tennis shoes must be of an athletic variety. Additionally, boots, Hey Dudes, Crocs, sandals, and flip-flops may not be worn during times of physical activity. Students who choose to wear these types of shoes may be prohibited from participating in certain activities during recess. Students may not wear high-heeled shoes, "Heelies" (or other shoes with wheels – even with the wheels removed) at any time.

Hats, hoods, and sunglasses are prohibited from being worn inside the building. Hats, gloves, sunglasses, or clothing/accessories with inappropriate language or pictures are prohibited on campus. Any jewelry or accessories that may interfere with learning or the learning environment is also prohibited.

We require that all students refrain from wearing "spaghetti strap" tops or any top with straps less than two inches wide, halter tops, tops with necklines lower than the armpits, or tops that do not cover the midriff as well as articles of clothing intended to be pajamas (except on special occasions such as pancake breakfast). In addition, all clothing must cover undergarments at all times during all ranges of movement and motion. Shorts, skirts, and dresses for all students should be of an appropriate length. Appropriate length is defined as being as long as or longer than the student's closed fist when holding arms directly at their sides. Also, shorts, skirts, and dresses must be longer than top garments and must be visible if and when wearing oversized tops.

Clothing should be neat and in good repair so that each student displays a presentable appearance. Any clothing with excessive rips and/or tears should not be worn to school. In addition, body paint or other articles of clothing that can be interpreted to interfere with the learning environment will not be permitted.

In the event that a student violates the dress code policy, they will be required to wear school-provided clothing that meets the dress code policy. Parents will be notified of the dress code violation via email.

We require that students wear North Carroll Community School logo clothing, as appropriate, for trips outside of school. Exceptions would be those occasions where more formal dress is required.

We will go outdoors to play each day unless it is precipitating or extremely cold. With this in mind, we ask that students arrive at school dressed appropriately for changing outdoor weather conditions. It is highly advisable that students have raincoats and rain boots for outdoor play. In the absence of these items, each child **MUST** have a change of clothes and shoes available in his/her book bag. A season-appropriate change of clothing should always be available for students in preschool through Year 4.

Lunches

Students in our preschool program may bring a lunch that needs to be refrigerated. Students in Program Years 1-9 should bring a non-refrigerated lunch to school each day. (An insulated lunchbox with an ice pack is an excellent choice.)

As Balance is one of our school anchors, we encourage students to practice healthy eating and food choices. ***We do not allow soda. Gum is not permitted.***

On some school days, we do offer a hot lunch service provided by several local restaurants. These lunch orders are placed through ParentsWeb/FACTS. Please be mindful of ordering deadlines. To order lunches online, you will need to add funds to your user account via the Family Portal. There must be a \$10 minimum balance to begin. At the end of the year, any balance above \$10 will be refunded to families while any balance below will be forfeited.

Due to health concerns and family differences in eating habits, we do not allow students to share or exchange food. ***It is imperative that you notify us about any food allergies that your child may have.***

While in the past we have been able to accommodate heat-up lunches, we find we are no longer able to accommodate this practice. The volume of heat-ups, as well as the need for cafeteria personnel to monitor the children rather than heat up meals, has caused us to change our policy. Please consider purchasing a quality thermos and heating up foods at home if your child enjoys a hot lunch. In addition, we have several buy-out programs that afford opportunities for hot lunches.

In the event that a child forgets his/her lunch, we make every attempt to contact a parent or other caregiver. In the event that we are not able to reach the parent or caregiver, we will serve the child a lunch of a sandwich or other prepared food. **There is a charge for this lunch, as we use the funds to replace the lunch items eaten.** You will receive an invoice for \$5.00 in order to pay for the lunch.

PLEASE be sensitive to our budget by providing utensils, napkins, and condiments with your child's packed lunch. Additionally, we are trying to be mindful of the environment and create as little trash as possible. Whenever possible, please use non-disposable lunch bags, snack bags, and containers. We will formally be working with the children on recycling and composting lunch materials.

Snacks and Water Bottles

We believe that a healthy snack is an important part of our instructional day. With this in mind, per law, we will be supplying two snacks to students per day for our preschool students. The snack schedule will be provided to families via a monthly calendar. For students with food allergies or sensitivities, please circle the items that students are not to have and return a copy of the calendar so that our staff knows to make alternative arrangements.

Students in Years 1-9 are permitted to bring two small snacks each day, except for Wednesdays as the day does not lend itself to snack time. Examples might include carrot sticks, pretzels, fresh fruit, granola bars, or dry cereal. **We do not consider cookies, candy, snack cakes, or potato chips healthful snacks and ask that you do not send these items for snack time. Students with these types of items for snack time will be**

asked to choose a healthier snack from their lunches or asked to forgo snack time. It is helpful for younger students to have their snacks packed separately from their lunches in order to avoid confusion. Please make sure that your child's snack is something that he/she can open and manage by him/herself and something that does not require utensils. It is advisable to pack the snack in a separate container from the rest of your child's lunch.

In addition, each student should bring a filled water bottle with him/her each day. This allows students to have a drink as it is needed during the course of work or play. **Please do not send drinks other than water.** Water bottles may be refilled at our water fountain during the course of the day. **Please do not send water bottles that have a misting or squirting function. These types of water bottles are prohibited.**

Occasionally, the students will prepare recipes as part of their learning experience. Students are encouraged, but not required, to try these foods. Please let the nurse know if your student has food allergies. If there are food items you would prefer your student to not consume, please let the classroom teacher know.

Often, young students want to recognize their birthdays at school by sharing a treat with their classmates. If your child wants to bring a birthday snack, please contact his/her teacher several days in advance to be sure that it is appropriate, and that there are no food allergies with which to be concerned.

Photographs

Since we try to provide our students with many unique, hands-on learning opportunities, we often take photographs of our students at work and play. If you do not wish for your child to be photographed, please notify our school office (frontoffice@nccs.school) as soon as possible. If your child has permission to be photographed but is not permitted to have his/her likeness used on social media, please also contact the office. **Please note: We never link names to the images of our students.**

Drills and Safety

The administrators and teachers will conduct and supervise fire drills several times throughout the year. This policy is in accordance with regulations dictated by the State Fire Marshall's Office and MSDE. Additionally, tornado and safety drills will be conducted in order to ensure all community members know what to do in the unlikely event of these emergencies.

At NCCS we operate on a three-tiered system to indicate student safety.

Code Green

- "Normal" day-to-day operations
- As per usual, all doors to the exterior as well as the classroom remain locked

Code Yellow

- The administration will inform teachers of a Code Yellow via walkie-talkie or in-person
- Instruction will continue as planned
- Doors remain locked campus-wide

- Students should not exit the building.
- No outside recess or activities
- After-school academies and activities may be canceled and dismissal modifications may be made

Code Red

- The administration will inform teachers of Code Red via walkie-talkie on Channel 1.
- Instruction will stop
- Teachers will grab any students outside of their classrooms, in close proximity, or in nearby bathrooms or work areas, even if those students are not in their class
- Blinds will be lowered, classroom doors and windows locked, and barricaded.
- Students should huddle and cover themselves in the least exposed corner of their classroom, or hide within the room
- Everyone remains quiet in the classroom until given further information from the administration via the walkie-talkie or emergency personnel

Items from Home

We have many educational toys and games for the students to use during indoor and outdoor play. In order to avoid the loss of items or other disappointment, we ask that students leave special personal belongings, such as toys and games, at home.

Some of our older students have personal cell phones. Under no circumstances are student cell phones to be visible or audible in school. Under the best circumstances, student cell phones should be left at home. **If students, due to after-school activities or arrangements, must bring cell phones to school, they are to be left in backpacks and turned off.** Please see our Bring Your Own Device Policy for specifics regarding electronics at school. The student's family assumes responsibility for the loss of or damage of any personal item brought to school.

Of course in getting to know each other, and in the spirit of community, students sometimes like to bring in items to "share." Some examples of these items might be a souvenir from a recent trip, an important photograph, an interesting collection, or an item that relates to something we're studying in school. If your child wishes to bring in an item to share with his classmates, please make sure that it is marked with his/her name. We will be sure to send the item home again as soon as we're finished with it.

Visitors

While we at North Carroll Community School love having visitors, in order to maintain the integrity of the learning environment, and for safety reasons, **all classroom visitations (other than regularly scheduled volunteer visits) must be arranged with the teacher or an administrator in advance.** If you are in the building for a meeting or to volunteer, it is perfectly fine to say a quick hello to your child; however, you know your child best. If he/she has difficulty with separating, please simply peek in the window to avoid upsetting the child.

All visitors, whether family members, service technicians, or prospective families, must sign in at the front office and wear a visitor badge. Please understand that this policy is for the safety and security of our students and staff.

Student Illness/Medication

If a student becomes ill while at school, he or she will be isolated and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be phoned in the order listed on the emergency contact section of the FamilyPortal. **To protect all of the children, the school reserves the right to judge when a child is to be sent home because of illness.**

We would ask that you do not tell your child that you will come to get him/her if he/she feels ill. In many cases, if a child is ill, there will be signs and symptoms (fever, vomiting, paleness, extreme fatigue, etc.) that you (or we) would observe. Children with severe colds, fever, vomiting, or other communicable illnesses may not be sent to school. **If your child is sent home with a fever, he or she may not return to school until he has been symptom-free for 24 hours. Thus, he may not return the next day.**

The school must be informed immediately of students with communicable diseases or conditions other than colds. These include but are not limited to chickenpox, pink eye, head lice, COVID-19, influenza, and strep throat. **Students diagnosed with any communicable disease or condition may not return to school without a doctor's note stating that they have been treated, are no longer contagious, and may return to school.**

Students who have injuries or illnesses that inhibit their physical activities are required to bring a doctor's note to be excused from P.E. If your child has an injury or illness that may limit his/her physical activity, please send a note describing the condition or concern. In the event that we do not receive a doctor's note, students will be required to participate in P.E., however, activities will be modified in order to accommodate the condition.

In order for students to receive medication while in school, a signed doctor's note, including dosage information, must be on file with the school nurse. **No medication, whether prescription or non-prescription, will be administered without the following information:**

- Signed physician orders including the name of the drug, reason for giving drug, dosage, time, and dates of administration
- Medication order form, signed by a parent
- Precautions or possible side effects

All medication must be in the original container or prescription bottle and clearly labeled with the child's name. Under no circumstances will unlabeled medication be given. All medication must be brought to the school office by a parent. All medications, both prescription and over-the-counter, will be returned to parents at the conclusion of the school year, and a new medication order form will need to be completed at the beginning of the school year.

It is imperative that your child's health records are up to date and that you have listed all allergies or chronic conditions, current daily medications, or anything of which the staff should be aware. Please list all medicines that your child takes on a regular basis, **even those which are not administered at school.**

All staff members are extremely vigilant in watching the children at work and play. Occasionally, however, students may obtain a bump or scrape, especially when playing outdoors. In the event that your child

experiences an accident, the staff member in charge will treat him/her immediately. We keep first aid items and ice packs ready for minor bumps, cuts, and scrapes.

When a child has an accident, we will treat the injury first, then determine if an immediate call to a parent is necessary. If a child is seen for medical attention (illness or injury) during the day, the parent will be notified of the nature of the attention and the outcome. For minor issues, parents will be notified via an email notification via FACTS. For more serious issues, parents will receive a phone call from the nurse. If you have questions or concerns about this policy, please do not hesitate to ask.



NORTH CARROLL
COMMUNITY
SCHOOL

Technology Policies

Bring Your Own Device Policy for Students

NCCS prohibits the use of smartphones, cell phones, or small personal electronic devices (iPods, hand-held game systems, etc.). Students may not use these devices at any point before, after, or during the instructional day, during Before or After Care, or while on school grounds. Additionally, the use of these devices is prohibited during field trips, after-school activities, or school-sponsored events, unless permitted by the adult in charge. Smartwatches may be worn but students must put them in airplane mode during the school day and may not receive notifications or send messages during the day. If they become a distraction, students may be asked by the teacher or an administrator to refrain from wearing their watches at school.

Year 7, 8, and 9 students will be issued a Chromebook for their use. The computer is the property of the school and must be returned if a child withdraws during or after a school year. In addition, parents and students must sign an acknowledgment of responsibility for negligence with regard to the care of the computer.

Misuse of tablets, netbooks, and laptops is covered under the acceptable use policy. If a student is seen with a smartphone, cell phone, or small personal device, at any point before, after, or during the school day, the device will be confiscated and must be claimed by a parent or guardian. The Administrative Directors and Executive Director reserves the right to implement additional consequences for continued and repeated violations of the Bring Your Own Device Policy.

Technology Acceptable Use Policy for Students

Students should use technology and information access in a way that promotes understanding and learning. **Students may only access websites and information found through classroom-based websites that have been previously inspected and selected by teachers.** Students are not permitted to openly search and access online material without teacher supervision and consent. Chromebook histories will be checked periodically throughout the school year. Students found to be in violation of this policy will need to leave their Chromebook with their teacher and will be required to check it out when needed, as well as leave it at school overnight.

While many devices have recording and photography capabilities, unless directly supervised by a teacher for use with instruction, cameras, and recording devices are prohibited within the grounds of NCCS. Students are also prohibited from using any apps on their devices unless the apps are educational and have been approved IN ADVANCE by the teacher.

The use of social media within the school day and on school grounds is prohibited. There may be no social media posts from students that show school property, classroom activities, or school events. While NCCS cannot monitor any and all social media occurrences that occur outside of school, we reserve the right to take action against any potential posts or contact that may harm and threaten students, or disrupt learning within the school.

Additionally, the NCCS logo or likeness may not be used by students online for any purpose without the consent of the Executive Director. This includes but is not limited to student email profile pictures, social media postings outside of school, or in any platform or outlet that may disparage the school.

Violation of the acceptable use policy and any of the above policies will result in disciplinary consequences. The Administrative Directors and the Executive Director reserve the right to differentiate consequences based on the severity of the infraction

Preschool Electronic Devices and Screen Time

NCCS prohibits preschool students from bringing any and all electronic devices. In accordance with our educational philosophy and MSDE Office of Child Care, students will have no more than thirty minutes of screen time a week while in the classroom. Occasionally, especially in Technology & Makerspace class, students may use the mobile computer lab or an informational video to emphasize a learning point or expose students to something outside of the classroom. Again, this will be limited to a maximum of thirty minutes per week.



NORTH CARROLL
COMMUNITY
SCHOOL

Procedural Policies and Operational Structures

Absences & Tardiness

Maximum student learning requires regular attendance at school. Sometimes, however, illnesses or other family situations require that students be absent from school. **When a student is going to be absent, please email attendance@nccs.school to let us know.** If a child is ill, please contact the nurse and refer to the “Student Illness” section of this handbook for guidelines on when they may return to school and when a doctor’s note is required for return.

Please be aware that excessive absences affect the continuity of a child’s learning and must be reported to the Maryland State Department of Education. In addition, excessive absences, tardiness, or early dismissal may jeopardize a student’s ability to continue in our program or progress to the next classroom. In order to progress to the next classroom in the following year, students must have an attendance rate of 90% or better, which equates to missing 17 days. It is the policy of NCCS to categorize 3 tardies or early dismissals as one day of absence. Parents of students who have a large number of absences will be required to meet with an administrator in order to discuss the problem and make a plan for its resolution. Students may not participate in extracurricular or evening school programs if they have been absent during the instructional day, or were sent home by the nurse for illness and could not complete the instructional day.

The staff of NCCS values family time and the opportunity for students to learn and grow from experiences that come with family trips. We also feel, however, that excessive absences due to family vacations may be detrimental to a child’s progress. Please help your child by limiting absences from school due to family outings to those designed to be educational in nature only, and then only when absolutely necessary and approved in advance.

Due to a variety of factors, including traffic, weather, and other family concerns, occasionally a student is late to school. We ask that parents and caregivers allow themselves plenty of time to arrive at school by 8:20 a.m. Chronic lateness affects a child’s ability to ready him/herself for the day and disrupts the learning experience. **Students who arrive after 8:20 a.m. will be considered tardy.** A parent or caregiver must escort a student into the building and sign the log in the office when bringing a child to school late.

If a student is absent from class instruction, be it for illness or a pre-planned event (trip, doctor appointment, graduation, etc.), makeup work will be provided once the student returns to school. If students are scheduled to miss extended time, it is recommended that they continue reading independently, working on long-term assignments that have been previously given, journaling their experiences, and practicing math facts and previous concepts. Students will be given as many days to complete missed classwork assignments as days missed from school. This does not apply to long-term assignments, ongoing weekly assignments, or deadlines given prior to the absence. Please understand that due to the “hands-on” nature of many activities and assignments, not all missed lessons are able to be made up. In this case, students will be excused from the assignment, but not from ownership of concepts.

Parent-Teacher-Student Conferences

The school calendar includes two dates, one in the fall and one in the spring, for students, parents, and teachers to conference about student progress. Families and/or teachers may, however, request conferences at any point in the year.

We believe strongly in the power of student participation in conferences. Students are taught to lead their own conferences and to share their insights about progress with their families and teachers. Students also learn to evaluate their own work and discuss its significance to their progress. Conferences include time for parents to speak with teachers without the student present if they so desire.

Parent Drop-Off

Students may be dropped off for school between 8:00 a.m. and 8:20 a.m. Parents may drop students at the front doors of the school via the carpool loop. *Please be considerate of other families who are dropping off children and do not leave your vehicle while in the loop. Please ensure that your child has all belongings and is ready to exit the vehicle upon joining the car line.* **For the safety of the students, under no circumstances will children be permitted to walk in the parking lot, or around the outside of the building, unescorted by a parent or other caregiver. When walking, please use the sidewalk to enter and exit the building. Cutting through the car line is unsafe and strictly prohibited.**

With the exception of staff children who are supervised by a parent, **please understand that unless special arrangements have been made with an administrator, students may not enter the building before 8:00 a.m.** Prior to 8:00, teachers and staff members are busy preparing for the day and are not available to supervise students. Therefore, for safety reasons, we ask that families adhere to this policy. In the event that students arrive after 8:20 a.m. (once the front doors are locked for the day), **a parent must escort them into the building and sign them in with the receptionist in the office. Teachers have been instructed not to allow students into class without a “late slip” from the office.**

Parent Pick-Up

Students can be picked up from school at 3:30 p.m., but we encourage you to come as close to 3:45 as possible. The dismissal will be conducted as a “pick-up line.” Parents or other caregivers should pull up to the building in their vehicles, via the carpool loop and wait in their vehicles. At 3:30, staff members will bring students to their caregivers’ vehicles. A staff member will “walk” the carpool line and notify staff inside the building of the order of students being picked up. Please be patient during the first several days of school as we streamline the pick-up process. **Please note: Parents and other caregivers must drive through the pick-up line. You may only park and come into the building for a previously scheduled appointment or volunteer obligation. This is for the safety and security of all of our students and staff. In addition, only persons listed on a student’s emergency card may remove that student from school, unless a parent or guardian issues a signed note to the school stating otherwise.** This policy includes carpools. If you are utilizing an NCCS-established carpool, and we have copies of the arrangement on record, it will be assumed that you give the other members of your carpool permission to remove your child(ren) from school. Those persons not

recognized by the staff of NCCS will be asked to show photo identification. **If you're arriving earlier than 3:30, please park in the lower lot and wait to be dismissed into the pick-up loop by an administrator.**

Please note, that except for emergencies, we cannot accept phone calls for dismissal. If a student is to be picked up by a person other than a parent or guardian, we must have a written note sent to the school with the student. Those persons listed on a child's emergency contact list are excluded from this policy, although we would appreciate a note or e-mail to notify us that an alternate pick-up person is expected. In cases where it is not possible to contact us with an alternate pick-up arrangement, please send an e-mail to the school. This is for the safety of your child.

If a student is to be dismissed earlier than 3:30 p.m., a parent or guardian must enter the building and sign out the student at the front desk. We realize that from time to time traffic, appointments, and the like, force parents or caregivers to be a few minutes late in picking up students. In the event that an emergency or unexpected delay arises, please phone the school to make us aware that you will be late. **Please understand that students who are routinely not picked up from school by 3:45 p.m. will be sent to ABC AfterCare and charged according to their fee schedule.**

Parent Organization

Each NCCS parent or guardian is automatically enrolled in the Parent Organization. Annual dues are set at \$30.00/enrolled child and go toward funding special events and activities for the students, as well as family outings. **Please note: Parent Organization dues must be paid to the Parent Organization directly by the specified due date.** Questions about the organization or its charter can be e-mailed to parents@nccschool.info.

Family Mail

Although important notices and papers may occasionally be sent home with the students, we are attempting to use less paper and, therefore, will post important information using ParentsWeb/FACTS. Forms and documents can also be downloaded there. It will be very important for you to check your child(ren)'s class page(s) regularly.

In the event that we have a notice or form that cannot be uploaded, we will send it home via "family mail." The oldest/only child from a given family will be designated as the "carrier." In order to save paper, in many cases, we send paper announcements home with the carrier. Notes and papers for home will be placed in the daily folder. Notes and forms being returned to school from home should also be sent using the daily folder. **Please do not give papers, permissions, payments, etc. to the receptionist in the office. This causes confusion and sometimes lost papers. Please send all correspondence back to school using the daily folder.**

Volunteers and Fundraising Activities

For each of our families, we earmark an additional \$1,000 of tuition that can be eliminated through giving back to our community. Through participation in our fundraising efforts or by volunteering to help our school, we will forgive this \$1,000 according to the guidelines below and our Tuition Policy.

For each fundraising dollar that is raised by families, a dollar comes off of the initial balance owed. Additionally, for each hour that a family gives their time to our school, \$20 is removed from the balance owed. We keep careful track of these dollars and hours and families are always able to check their status within the FamilyPortal.

Families may elect to remove this \$1,000 balance using any combination of fundraising and volunteer hours. Any balance that is left at the end of the school year will be invoiced directly to families.

Volunteer opportunities will be made available to families via an email sign-up. Additional opportunities will be sent via email during the course of the year. Please know that chaperoning field trips are not considered volunteering and will not count toward volunteer hours. **No family member may volunteer (including chaperones for trips) unless he/she has completed a yearly volunteer training provided by the school and submitted a copy of his/her driver's license to the front office, which will run the volunteer's name through the US Department of Justice National Sex Offender Public Website, as well as the judiciary search for volunteer's state of residence.** This policy is for the protection and safety of our students.

This year, we will be holding three fundraisers in which families can participate. Families will be given advance notice of these fundraisers, as well as any others that help to count towards offsetting their balance.

Service Learning

Our school is very invested in having the students reflect on the blessings that they have and being thoughtful of, and helpful to, others. We accomplish this goal by having students participate in various service learning projects. Through community partnerships, students are encouraged to form relationships with others who are different from themselves. Our Middle Grades students may begin to accrue student learning service hours in preparation for graduation from a Maryland Public High School; however, the recording and tracking of these hours is the responsibility of the student.

Field Trips

Field trips are wonderful opportunities to extend learning beyond the confines of the school. They also give students the opportunity to practice interpersonal skills and manners as they venture out into the greater community. Trips for the year have already been scheduled and will be included on the school calendar. As field trip opportunities arise, we will send detailed information home with the students.

We invite parents to accompany us as space, and their schedules, allow. Please realize that we may not be able to accommodate all parents who want to attend a given field trip. In an effort to be fair to all, we will

choose chaperones at random. Once a parent has accompanied us on a field trip, we will ask that they allow other parents to accompany us until all those interested have had a turn. Please understand that space limitations, as well as trip requirements, often make it impossible for siblings to accompany us on field trips. Please check with us if you have questions regarding this policy. From time to time, parents who are not chosen as chaperones on field trips ask if they may accompany us on a trip by following the bus and attending the trip. When the trip is to a public place, such as a museum or park, parents are welcome to meet us and enjoy the experience. In this scenario, parents are requested to pay any admission fees upon arrival at the field trip destination. For programs requiring advance tickets or reserved seating, we are not able to accommodate parents who wish to drive. Please let us know of your intentions in advance so that when we group children we are able to plan for your child to share the experience with you when we form trip groups.

In general, we utilize school-provided transportation to attend field trips. For financial and liability reasons, we have made it our policy that all persons attending school-sponsored trips must utilize the transportation that is provided by the school. **If extenuating circumstances exist, requests for exceptions to this policy will be considered only in advance of the permission date of the trip and with necessary professional documentation.** Thank you for your understanding of this policy.

From time to time, we take a trip that requires the students to be driven in personal vehicles. We are required to obtain proof of insurance for all parent drivers on these trips. Additionally, families, upon registering, give or deny permission for students to travel in a personal vehicle as part of the completion of the enrollment packet. NCCS will make determinations about your student riding in personal vehicles based on your indicated preference in this form.

Real-Life Connections Trips

Each year, NCCS takes those students in Middle School on a Real-Life Connections (RLC) trip, as well as an outdoor education or camping experience. These trips are staff chaperoned. The purpose of these trips is to provide students with an opportunity to apply the knowledge, principles, and anchors that are taught and stressed during the school day, to real-life situations, as well as expose students to a curriculum different than that of the classroom. Additionally, these trips are an opportunity for students to bond and develop social interactions through a common experience.

Both the RLC trip, as well as outdoor education experience, are considered part of the curriculum at North Carroll Community School, and the cost of these trips is included in the yearly tuition. Therefore, participation in both is required of all students who are of age. Participation in both experiences will be acknowledged as a grade book grade in the semester that the trip takes place. **There will be mandatory parent information meetings for any and all RLC Trips. One adult from your family must attend in order for your child to participate. Failure to do so will result in your child not being able to participate.**

Eligibility for RLC Trips will be determined by the eligibility policy that is outlined previously. Please ensure your student understands the parameters of eligibility for attending these experiences.

In the event that you wish for your child not to participate in either or both of these trips, please make contact with either the Trip Coordinator, Aubry Mortimer, or an Administrative Director by the deadline to indicate your preference. Please note that choosing to withhold your child from these trips does not reduce the cost of your tuition. Additionally, in the event your child is not participating, alternative assignments and experiences will need to be completed for a participation grade (please see below.) Should you indicate that

your child is attending either trip and then change your mind, there will be a \$250 cancellation fee that is invoiced to families. This is to cover the cost of expenses that have been incurred before the change of heart.

For students not participating in a trip experience that is 1-3 days in length, please complete any 1 of the options below. For students not participating in a trip experience that is 4 or more days in length, please complete 2 of the options below.

- Gather donations and items and send a care package to our troops, or those serving overseas. Upon completion and sending of your care package, write a short 300-500 word reflection providing a description of the items sent, their purpose, the intended recipient, and why you chose to send your care package to this particular person or group.
- Donate a day of your time to a service organization or cause such as a soup kitchen, humane society, boys and girls club, etc. Upon completion of your day, write a short 300-500 word summary explaining what you did and how it affected others.
- Take a day trip to a museum or historical location. Write a short 300-500 word summary explaining what you did, and what you learned as a result of your trip
- Read a classic novel. Upon completing the novel, pick a theme or message of the novel and create a multimedia presentation that clearly shows how details and events from the novel support that central theme or message
- Create a multimedia presentation, or write a 750-1,000 word essay that answers the following question: How has technology changed the world? Be sure to use outside resources to back up your opinion.
- Develop a business plan for a school store that would sell school supplies and materials to students before or after school. Be sure to think about costs, materials, profits, and losses, hours of operation, and staffing. Present your plan through a written portfolio or multimedia presentation.

Inclement Weather Closings

In the event of inclement weather, NCCS makes its own decisions with regard to cancellations and closings. Once a decision to delay or cancel school has been made (typically by 5:45 a.m.), parents whose email addresses are listed in the FamilyPortal will be sent an e-mail announcing the closure or delay. Cancellations and closings are also posted on WBAL, Channel 11, WMAR, Channel 2, WJZ, Channel 13, and WBFF, Fox 45. **PLEASE DO NOT GO BY THE CARROLL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS' DECISION ON DELAYS AND CLOSINGS.** If weather conditions in your neighborhood prohibit safe travel to or from school, please send an e-mail to attendance@nccs.school to let us know of the treacherous conditions.

NCCS has 5 days inclement weather days built into our instructional calendar. Should we need to implement a 6th day or more, the administration may enact asynchronous learning where students would receive instruction at home through virtual means. More details regarding this will be provided after the 4th inclement weather day is used.

Policy Regarding Custodial and Non-Custodial Parents' Access to Students & Student Records

Parents are the natural guardians of their children under the law and both parents have equal rights and responsibilities for their children. These rights may be modified as families become separated and/or divorced. In many cases of separation or divorce, school personnel are asked to make decisions regarding the release of records, school visitations, and the release of the child from school. The following policy has been developed to protect the safety/welfare of the child, maintain neutrality as much as possible regarding parent rights, and provide a safe learning environment for the child.

The Custodial Parent:

- Has the obligation to provide a copy of any court order restricting the rights of the non-custodial parent if related to school matters.
- Is the legal custodian of the child through a court order. The child normally lives with this parent and is sent to school in the morning from his/her home and returns to this home at the end of the school day.
- Receives day-to-day communication, correspondence, report cards, and other school-related information, is welcome to visit the school, observe classroom instruction, and review student records.
- Is notified when the non-custodial parent seeks school-related information

The Non-Custodial Parent:

- Is entitled to receive copies of report cards, school newsletters, interim reports, and other information that pertains to the child's education and which is routinely sent to or available to the parent who has custody. Requests for the information must be made in writing to the administrators and should include the non-custodial parent's name, address, and type of information desired. The custodial parent will be notified when such a request is made.
- Is welcome to visit the school, observe classroom instruction, review student records, and be generally informed about the child's educational progress, unless forbidden by court order provided to the school by the custodial parent.

Notes:

- The non-custodial parent **may not** take the child away from school without the written consent of the custodial parent unless permitted by court order. If the court order provides the non-custodial parent permission to remove the child from school, it can only occur, on any given day, with the knowledge of the custodial parent.
- Court orders granting "reasonable visitation" do not include visitation during the school day and any request to visit with the child at school will not be granted. However, unless the court order otherwise states, the non-custodial parent may observe classroom instruction.
- A non-custodial parent, unless restricted by court order, may participate equally in educational decision-making. If parents are in disagreement, the school will take a neutral position but will expect parents to resolve the issue.

Joint Custody is a situation where both parents have responsibilities for the child. These responsibilities are defined by a court order. Unless specified otherwise in that order, each parent can make

educational and emergency medical decisions, have access to student records, and transport a student to and from school. Unless the court order is on file at the school and states otherwise, the administrators will honor either parent's requests. If parents are in disagreement, the school will take a neutral position but will expect the parents to resolve the issue. Parents who are in a joint custody situation should notify the school, provide copies of the court order whenever possible, and provide directions about how school information and progress reports are to be disseminated.

In the case of **step-parents**, often these individuals, through marriage to a child's natural parents, have contact with school personnel. The school will continue to consider natural parents as the ones to make educational and emergency medical decisions. A step-parent can make emergency medical decisions if listed on the child's emergency card. A step-parent may not register a child for school, nor withdraw the child. A step-parent living with the child is welcome to visit the school and observe classroom instruction.