

Pleasant Knoll Elementary School

Parent & Student Handbook



PKES Mission Statement:

The mission of Pleasant Knoll Elementary School is to develop and support a sense of community within each child, parent, and faculty member through purposeful learning experiences where all students are successfully reaching their highest potential.

CARING ♦ COLLABORATION ♦ COMMUNICATION ♦ CREATIVITY ♦ CRITICAL THINKING

Pleasant Knoll Elementary School

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Fort Mill School District Vision:

Because children are the future, we use our ingenuity and imagination to challenge and inspire our students to exceed their greatest dreams and create a better community. That is why we place **Children First... Every Day.**

Our Purpose:

In the tradition of excellence, Fort Mill Schools place **Children First . . . Every Day** by providing an innovative and rigorous education that empowers all students to achieve their greatest success.

OUR BELIEFS

We believe that all students have the right to a safe and nurturing learning environment.

We believe that students, faculty, staff, and parents must work together to enhance learning.

We believe a child's home, school, and community should share the responsibility for the success of the child.

We believe that excellence is the result of high expectations and purposeful learning.

We believe that all children can learn and should be provided with the necessary learning opportunities to meet their potential.

STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK

Welcome to Pleasant Knoll Elementary School! The information in this student handbook has been presented with the hope that it will help you know and understand our school and become an integral part of it. Pleasant Knoll Elementary School follows all policies and procedures outlined by the Fort Mill School District Board Policy Manual, which can be accessed on the district website.

We encourage you to support our Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) and to become involved with your child's school. Our school website will be updated frequently to inform you of important events going on in the school. In addition, please look for notes and news from your child's teacher and graded work coming home on Tuesdays. You can also stay up-to-date by checking the class website on a regular basis.

We look forward to working with you to create a fun and exciting learning environment for your child!

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ATTENDANCE

THE SCHOOL DAY

7:10 am - Building Opens

7:30 am - 1st bell rings; Students enter the classroom

7:35 am - Breakfast starts (in classroom)

7:40 am - **SCHOOL STARTS** – Students are tardy if they arrive after 7:40am.

2:25 pm - Student Dismissal

ABSENCES

Good attendance is essential to the academic success of students **and** all students are expected to be in attendance each day school is in session. Each year, we have excellent attendance by our students. This is a tribute to each family's efforts to have their child at school daily. We appreciate this effort! See the [FMSD Attendance Policy](#) for more details.

LAWFUL ABSENCES

According to SC Code of Laws 59-65-10, the following types of absences are the only ones considered lawful:

1. Serious, chronic, or extended illness of the student. (If your child has a chronic illness or is hospitalized for an extended period of time, please submit medical verification to the principal.)
2. Serious illness or death in the immediate family.
3. Recognized religious holiday for the students of the particular religious faith when pre-arranged.
4. Pre-arranged absences for other reasons and/or extreme hardships at the discretion of the principal.

Parents must provide the school with a note identifying the reason for the absence within three (3) days of their child returning to school.

Within three (3) days of returning to school, parents must provide the school with a written note stating the date(s) of the absence(s), the reason for the absence(s), and the parent's signature. If we do not receive a note explaining the child's absence then it will be coded as unlawful. The school will only accept a parent written excuse for five total days of absences when the student is ill or absent for another lawful reason. Notes are kept on file by the attendance clerk.

UNLAWFUL ABSENCES

Any absence by a student with or without the knowledge of the parent not meeting one of the conditions for a lawful absence as defined above will count toward the cumulative limit of absences. Written notification will be sent by the school for accumulated absences. A call will be made by the attendance clerk after 3 consecutive absences. When a child accumulates 5 absences that are unlawful or not excused by a medical note, the parents will be required to attend an attendance intervention (truancy) conference and assist the principal or his/her designee in the development of an attendance intervention plan which will be valid in any SC school district. Excessive absences and failure to adhere to guidelines of an intervention plan could result in a family court referral. The school will only accept a **parent-written note for five days of absence.** Following those days, doctor's excuses are required. All vacations and trips are unlawful reasons for a student to miss school, and will be considered unexcused.

MAKE-UP WORK FOR ABSENCES

Assignments and class work missed may be made up if a student is absent from school. **This is the responsibility of the student.** Should assignments not be available for the entire period of the absence, the student is responsible for getting them upon his/her return in order to cover the material missed. Remember that experiments, discussions, group activities, etc. may be difficult to replicate. No graded work done or tests taken by the class while the student is absent will be made up; therefore, the student will have fewer grades at the end of the grading period. Additionally, for any tests given after the student returns, the student will be responsible for the material covered in class while he/she was absent. If any work is not made up, it may affect the student's grade. The work needs to be made up within two days of the absence or at the teacher's discretion. If the student is absent, the parent may call and request to pick up assignments **after school** in the office. Please do not expect the teacher to provide assignments during the school day.

PERFECT ATTENDANCE

The school recognizes students who have perfect attendance. Recognition for perfect attendance for the year will accompany the final report card.

TARDIES

Our school day begins at 7:40am. Students arriving after **7:40 a.m.** are tardy and must report to the office and be signed in by their parent for admittance to class. Tardies cost your child valuable educational instruction. Tardies also interrupt the learning process for other students. Be considerate of other students' education. Excessive tardies may result in an intervention meeting for development of an attendance plan which will remain in the child's record and transfer to any receiving school.

INCLEMENT WEATHER INFORMATION

The decision to close or delay schools will be made by 6:00am. Announcements will be made via **SCHOOL MESSENGER**[®], and on WRHI AM radio, CN2, and Charlotte TV stations (WSOC, WBTV, WSOC). Delays and closings will be posted on the district website www.fortmillschools.org and available at the district office phone number 548-2527. Information will be listed for FORT MILL SCHOOL DISTRICT #4, not York County_Schools. No breakfast will be served if school is delayed. When weather is threatening, please be sure your child and the teacher know how he/she is to get home if school is dismissed early. The **SCHOOL MESSENGER**[®] phone system (803-548-8379) will leave messages about changes of schedules. In order for you to receive these messages, we must have your up-to-date phone number and e-mail address in our database. It is the parent's responsibility to contact after-school care to learn about their procedures.

In the event of inclement weather causing school delays or cancellations, the following informational resources are provided to parents:

1. Cancellations or delays will be posted on the district's and schools' website homepage.
2. Cancellations or delays will be communicated to parents/guardians via the SchoolMessenger System to their phone number, email address, SMS Text (if opted-in) of record. Should a call or an email not be received, please contact your child's school to update your contact information.
3. Cancellations or delays will be communicated to local radio and news services.

**** If hazardous weather conditions develop during the school day, a decision to close schools early will be communicated to parents/guardians via the SchoolMessenger system as soon as the decision is made.** The same protocol as noted above will be followed.

It is very important for parents to have a plan in place in the event school is canceled during school hours. Bus services will be in operation. Onsite after-school care will be canceled, so having a plan in place and having your child understand that plan greatly reduces confusion when adjustments to the school day are made due to inclement weather.

TRANSPORTATION

Safety is our top priority. We need your help to ensure that students are not in dangerous situations. By following the guidelines below, we can work together to make sure our children get to school and leave safely.

CAR RIDERS

For the safety of our students we must follow a plan for loading and unloading cars. In both the morning drop off and afternoon pick up, all children are to be unloaded and loaded into cars in the front of the building. All cars should stay in one line of traffic. Parents are reminded that for safety reasons, students will not be allowed to cross lines of traffic to waiting cars; therefore please do not park across from the loading area to get your child.

Your student must enter your car from the passenger side, and may not travel around the car to enter from the driver's side. Please arrange car and booster seats accordingly. If the right side entry is not their permanent seating arrangement, then you may pull into the parking lot to change their seating.

At dismissal, you **MUST** have your blue car rider tag prominently displayed on your dash. If you do not have a car rider tag, then you will need to park and go into the school to obtain one, at which time you will need to show your driver's license so we can verify that you are an approved designee. We will not dismiss a student to a car without a car rider tag. You will be directed to a specific cone to pick up your student, as they are called individually from our cafeteria.

BUS PARKING LOT

(Back of the School)

State law requires separation of car and bus pick up areas. **Only school district buses are allowed to park in the back parking lot.** Employees have parking spaces in the bus lot. It is dangerous for our students to be allowed to walk around buses to get to or from cars. The buses must not be blocked as they have many routes to run.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

(ALSO REFER TO INFORMATION FROM THE [TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT](#))

Administrators, parents, bus drivers, and students share the responsibility for safe transportation of students. **Riding a bus is a privilege and must not be abused.** Action will be taken by district and school officials to ensure that all students conduct themselves properly. Where there is evidence of misconduct by any student, action will be taken to correct the situation.

It is important to review the bus rules and expectations set forth by our district transportation department prior to riding on a school bus. A complete list of school bus rules, policies and procedures can be found through the [Fort Mill School District Transportation website](#).

To ensure a safe environment on each bus, the school fully supports the driver in maintaining safe bus habits. Anyone who violates these safety standards will be subject to disciplinary action by school officials; when necessary, bus transportation will be denied. The driver will report to the school authorities any offenses committed by the students on the bus. When a student is reported for an

infraction of the bus rules, the school administrator will investigate the incident and take necessary disciplinary action. A copy of the incident report will be mailed to the parents. When a student is suspended from riding a bus, he/she cannot ride another bus during the suspension period.

Students are assigned to buses at the beginning of the year, and any variation must be approved by the Director of Transportation. If your child needs to ride a different bus home than the one that picks him/her up, then a special request must be made to the district Director of Transportation. Students will be allowed to ride a different bus only as room allows. Forms for making these requests are available in the school office.

It is the desire of the Fort Mill School District that all students arrive at school and home safely. We appreciate your help ensuring student safety.

PETS

Pets are not allowed on school property as a violation of health code, and as a courtesy to students and staff who may have allergies or anxieties related to animals. If you should choose to bring your pet through the car rider line, then they must remain calmly in their car. We have had small ones afraid of the loud barking of the dog, and dogs have jumped out of cars. We all love our pets, and we must remember that the primary purpose of the car rider line is to have students enter safely and happily into the school. Designated service dogs may be on school property.

AFTER CARE PROGRAMS

Students picked up by off-site aftercares will wait in the gym for their transportation home. Students in the FLYERS on-site after school program will walk to the cafeteria at dismissal. If your child is absent or will not be in attendance for the after school program, please call the aftercare to make them aware.

CHANGE IN TRANSPORTATION

Parents are encouraged to have a consistent mode of transportation for their child to eliminate confusion and the potential for a child going home the incorrect way. However, we realize that there are times when a transportation change needs to be made. In this situation, a written note or email must be sent to the child's teacher. *If you do not get a confirmation from the teacher, please call the office to ensure your request has been received.* **Students will be sent home their usual way if no communication has been received from the parents.**

CUSTODY

A change in custody will require new custody papers and a change of address will require a new proof of residency. If you are separated or divorced, we need to have a copy of your custody papers on file. If at any time you feel that a problem of abduction may occur, we need to have immediate knowledge of this in the school office.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Parents are requested not to pick up a child before the regular dismissal time. This is an interruption of the educational process, not only for your child, but other children as well. A child must be present for at least half of the school day to be considered present as related to perfect attendance. However, any portion of the day a child can attend is to his/her benefit. Please provide verification for medical appointments. Please schedule these as near the beginning or end of the day as possible so your child can be in school.

If parents plan to take a child from school before the close of the day, they should send a note in the morning stating the reason for the early dismissal and the time their child will be picked up. Parents are requested to enter by the front door, come to the school office, and sign out their child. **Students leaving early must be signed out in the office and be dismissed only to a parent or approved family member. This procedure is for your child's protection – please keep information updated to facilitate this function, especially in emergency situations or early weather related school closings.** In an effort to minimize disruption at dismissal time, all early checkouts must occur before 2pm.

The parent, guardian or an adult acting with the consent of the parent or guardian must come to the office and sign out the student for early dismissal. Photo identification is required. **Please be aware that students are not dismissed between 2:00 and 2:25.**

LATE PICKUP

Our school day ends at 2:25. It is important that all students are picked up in a timely manner. While we understand that emergencies can happen, a repetitive late pickup will result in a meeting with a district and/or school administrator to develop a consistent pickup plan for your child.

LUNCH, BREAKFAST, SNACKS

STUDENT MEALS

Our cafeteria staff serve breakfast and lunch at school every school day. Students should either have breakfast at home or purchase breakfast in the cafeteria. Students are required to eat lunch in the cafeteria, either purchasing lunch or bringing lunch from home. Extra milk is available to purchase. ***Students may not bring carbonated drinks to the lunchroom.*** Menus are posted in homerooms and are on the [district website](#). Students may pay for breakfast and lunch daily in the cafeteria as they go through the line. Students are encouraged to pay ahead on Mondays for up to a month at a time. Parents may also add money to a child's account using the internet. This information may be found in the "pay fees" section of the website. This payment can be used for meals and extra milk or snacks. For the child to get snacks, the parent must fill out a form giving permission for extras such as ice cream, Fruit Roll-ups, Sunny D's, water, etc.

All foods served in the cafeteria meet state and federal guidelines. Applications for free and reduced-price meals are available at all times in the school office, in the cafeteria and on the district website. Students must reapply each year. Due to the number of food allergies, homemade or home baked foods are not allowed to be distributed to students within the classroom or applicable classroom setting. Acceptable foods for distribution are those items that were prepared in a commercial and/or licensed kitchen, and most importantly, are packaged with a label clearly listing the contents and ingredients of the food item. This policy is designed to provide consistency and minimize allergy risks in all classrooms, while maintaining a safe and positive learning environment for all students. Some grade levels may choose to prohibit edible treats for birthdays and other celebrations. Birthday treats must be limited to a single item that can be eaten by hand, such as a cookie, cupcake, popsicle, fruit roll up, etc. No cakes or any item that requires plates or utensils may be brought in. If you choose to bring items like a pencil, stickers, etc. (this is encouraged for healthy lifestyles), then this is the one item. To summarize, either one non-food item, or one food item, not both. Please check with your child's teacher to confirm the policy for their specific class. It is important to note that the policy does not apply to a student's personal lunch. However, please join us in encouraging the children not to share food.

For more information, review the [district's policy](#) EF and EF-R on meal accounts and balances.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES/CELEBRATIONS - FOOD GUIDELINES

Homemade or home baked foods are not allowed to be distributed to students within the classroom or applicable classroom setting. Acceptable foods for distribution are those items that were prepared in a commercial and/or licensed kitchen, and most importantly, are packaged with a label clearly listing the contents and ingredients of the food item. With the continued rise in severe and often

life-threatening food allergies, this policy is designed to provide consistency and minimize allergy risks in all classrooms district-wide, while maintaining a safe and positive learning environment for all students. It is important to note that the policy does not apply to a student's personal lunch.

SCHOOL FEES

Students must settle all fees and property owed to the school prior to the end of the school year. This includes library books, textbooks, and teacher materials.

Fort Mill School District has implemented an online payment process. Our goal is to keep cash and checks out of the schools and classrooms. The online system is set up to accept payment for registration fees, lunch accounts, activity fees (i.e. field trips) and classroom fees (i.e. class t-shirts, Kindergarten snack, magazine subscriptions and yearbooks).

- Click on '\$ Pay Fees' on the school home page or go to <https://www.studentquickpay.com/fort-mill/> and you will be able to see current fees and your child's lunch account. If you have not created an account and need your child's student ID, please call the school office.

MEDICATION & FIRST AID

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

All students in grades Pre-kindergarten through 12 are required to furnish a valid South Carolina Certificate of Immunization prior to enrollment. School officials shall record the immunization data on the student's health record and/or attach a copy of the certificate to the health record.

HEALTH SERVICES

Parents will be notified if a student becomes ill or is injured during school. When it is necessary for the student to leave school, a parent, guardian, or designated alternate must sign the student out in the office.

If a student brings medication to school, the following requirements must be met:

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION

1. The Medication Consent Form must be completed and turned in with the medication. The form must be signed by the doctor and the parent.
2. Prescription medicines must be in the pharmacy container with your child's name on it. (Ask your pharmacist for an extra bottle in order to divide the prescription between home and school.)
3. Parents must deliver all medications to school.

4. The medication must carry a prescription label with the following information:
 - a. Child's name
 - b. Name of drug
 - c. dosage instructions
 - d. doctor name
 - e. CURRENT prescription date
5. Medication will be kept in a locked cabinet in the office at all times.
6. School personnel will give medication only with a completed form signed by the parent and the doctor.
7. Medication must not be sent with a child on the bus or with a child walking to school.

OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATION

1. The Medication Consent Form must be completed, signed by the parent and turned in with the medication when the parent brings it to the office.
2. The over-the-counter medication must be in the original container or box (not in a plastic bag).
3. The following items will be available in the health room for first aid treatment of your child during the school day: Saline eye wash, Vaseline, Hydrocortisone 1% cream, and Aloe Vera. If you do not wish for your child to be treated with these items, please send a written note to the nurse including your child's name, the teacher's name, the date, and your signature.
4. **NO** other medications are supplied by the school.

NOTE: ASPIRIN OR PRODUCTS CONTAINING ASPIRIN CANNOT BE GIVEN OUT WITHOUT A DOCTOR'S PRESCRIPTION.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

Students with contagious diseases are not allowed to attend school. Children should be kept at home if they have experienced vomiting or fever during the night. Students should be fever free for 24 hours without using medicine to bring the temperature down before returning to school.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

If medical emergencies arise, the school nurse and school administrator will enact medical care deemed appropriate to the student (i.e. call 911 or transport the student to the hospital). In these cases, the schools will make every attempt to contact the parent/guardian. Please be sure to keep your student's emergency information updated with correct phone numbers. **If a parent/guardian is out of town and has left their child in the care of another adult, written documentation should be on file with the school. This documentation will authorize the school to contact the alternate person in case of illness or a medical emergency.**

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education is required by the state for all students unless the student has an excuse from a physician due to a physical disability. If a child must be excused for a temporary illness, a note from a parent or doctor must be sent with the child. Any illness extending more than a week must be excused by a doctor. Children must wear athletic shoes to participate in Physical Education.

HOMEBOUND

Students who experience extended illness or injuries that result in long term absence from school may apply for homebound instruction. Information concerning homebound may be obtained from our school counselors.

RISK ASSESSMENTS

The safety and security of all students is of the utmost importance to our faculty and staff. Should a concern arise about a student being a danger to him/herself or others, District protocols for conducting a risk assessment (suicide and/or threat) will be followed to the extent appropriate. These assessments may include interviews with students and staff, a review of student records, and consultation with district mental health staff, local law enforcement, or other community agencies that help support our schools and students. If, as part of its assessment and response, the District determines there is an articulated and significant threat to the health or safety of a student or other individuals, it may disclose personally identifiable information from education records to any person whose knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

RESTRAINT

For the purposes of these guidelines, physical restraint is defined as a personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces the ability of an individual to move his or her arms, legs, or head freely. This definition encompasses mechanical restraints, further defined as a device that restricts the movement or function of a child or a portion of a child's body.

Restraint, as defined, by these guidelines, does not include the following:

1. temporarily holding an individual to help him or her participate in education or daily living activities;
2. escorting techniques, where a student is provided limited physical encouragement to help him or her move from one location to another without rising to the level of physically forcing compliance (e.g., hand on the back or a hand on the elbow);
3. chemical restraints (medication for safety or behavioral supports) determined by medical personnel;
4. appropriate use of adaptive equipment or products, provided they are used in accordance with manufacturers' recommended usage.
 - a. Adaptive equipment may include, but is not limited to, adaptive seating products or therapeutically prescribed devices such as weighted vests.
 - b. If adaptive equipment, such as Rifton chair or weighted vest is used for the purpose of limiting mobility or as a punitive measure, its use constitutes restraint.

The use of restraint is limited to emergency situations where the behavior of the student poses a threat of imminent, serious, physical harm to self and/or others and the student has the ability to cause such harm. Restraint may be used only as a last resort after proper positive behavioral interventions and de-escalation techniques have failed to de-escalate the risk of injury.

Restraint should never be used: 1. as punishment; 2. to force compliance or address non-compliance; 3. as a substitute for appropriate educational support; 4. in response to property destruction; 5. in response to a student's flight, escape, or running away, unless there is imminent risk of injury related to the escape; 6. in response to verbal threats and profanity that do not rise to the level of physical harm unless the student demonstrates a means of carrying out the threats; 7. longer than needed to resolve the risk of actual harm.

The use of prone restraints (face down on stomach) with the exception of approved Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) endorsed floor restraints, supine restraints (face up on the back), or any hold or maneuver that places pressure or weight on the student's chest, lungs, sternum, diaphragm, back, neck, or throat are strictly forbidden. Moreover, the degree of force used must not exceed what is necessary to protect the student or others from imminent bodily injury.

Necessary Documentation & Review: The use of restraint in the school setting triggers the district's obligation to create and maintain specific documentation regarding the incident. Documentation must include:

1. actions attempted prior to the restraint in an effort to manage or de-escalate the situation;
2. a clear description of the safety concerns posed to the student or others;
3. student's behavior before, during, and after restraint;
4. location of the restraint;
5. amount of time in restraint;
6. a description of the physical restraint techniques used and training personnel received prior to implementing restraint;
7. names and position titles of personnel involved with the incident;
8. date and time the administrator was notified;
9. date and time the parents were notified and by whom;
10. name and position of person(s) completing the documentation.

Training: Restraint training must be provided, and reviewed, at least annually, by a credentialed trainer through a nationally recognized, externally developed professional training program. The training must include the following components:

1. prevention of behavior problems through a positive behavioral supports climate;
2. conflict prevention and conflict management skills;
3. de-escalation skills that enable staff members to respond to students in ways more likely to calm, rather than escalate, the situation;
4. information on physical and emotional risks of escalation and restraint;
5. instruction on personal safety skills for staff who work with students who are more likely to present safety concerns;
6. prohibition on the use of prone restraints (face down on stomach) with the exception of approved Crisis Prevention Institute

(CPI) endorsed floor restraints, supine restraints (face up on the back), or any hold or maneuver that places pressure or weight on the student's chest, lungs, sternum, diaphragm, back, neck, or throat.

The training program used must include some method of assessment that ensures appropriate skills are in place. The program must also provide documentation that a participant has successfully completed the training, either through a certificate or other credential. Fort Mill Schools must keep a list of those who have completed training, including a description of the content of the training, on file. The school district retains discretion as to which personnel should receive restraint training. However, training must be provided to enough staff members that the school district can ensure a sufficient number of staff is available if restraint is used.

REHABILITATIVE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

A mental health worker from Rehabilitative Behavioral Health Services sees children on-site that qualify for the services of that agency. Teachers or parents may refer children. Parent permission is required for service.

GRADING / ASSESSMENTS

PROGRESS REPORTS AND CONFERENCES

Academic achievement will be graded using a numerical grading scale to denote respectively, excellent, good, average, poor, and failing. The numerical ranges for grades will be as follows:

A= 100-90

B= 89-80

C= 79-70

D= 69-60

F= 59 or below

The letter S-satisfactory or N-needs improvement will be used to denote participation in certain related arts classes.

Progress reports will ONLY be printed and issued to parents of 2nd-5th grade students IF the parents/guardians request a paper copy. Otherwise, please access your child's grades using Parent Portal. Kindergarten and first grade will be using a Standards Based Report Card. All K-5 grades will be issued report cards on a 9 weeks grading period as an indication of their progress and confirmation of their achievement and are expected to take them home to share with their parents. Schools in Fort Mill use a computer program called [PARENT PORTAL](#) to post grades. By logging on to

this secure program, parents will be able to check the grades of their students in grades 2-5. Teachers will post grades within 2 weeks of the due date of the task.

A parent-teacher conference day will be scheduled in October. These conferences are an opportunity to learn about your child's strengths and areas needing improvement. You need to make an appointment with the teacher to discuss your child's progress. Teachers are also available to meet with you before or after school if you make an appointment. Additional conferences may be requested by families or school personnel.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

Every parent and teacher would like for students to move along successfully through each grade. Our goal is to take each child, evaluate their skills at the beginning of the year, and provide instruction to ensure academic growth throughout the year. Please examine student work that is returned for your review because it will help you to see how your child is progressing. Parent conferences in October will provide you with another opportunity to discuss your child's progress.

State law requires that the school send a letter at the end of the second quarter (usually January) and at the end of the 3rd quarter (usually in March or early April) to alert parents of the possibility of retention for a student. The final decision will be made in May, but the letters give parents a chance to work together with the teacher to make the progress needed to meet state standards for their grade. If you receive a retention letter, it does not mean that your child will be held back because we continue to hope that she/he will improve and be ready for the next grade. Retention can often be prevented by making sure the child completes and turns in all assignments, examining the possibility of health issues which may affect classroom performance, providing a routine time and place for the child to study daily, reading daily with the student, and making sure children have enough sleep. If you are unsure of what your child needs to know to pass, you can visit the state website at <http://www.ed.sc.gov> and search for curriculum standards, or ask your child's teacher or administrator for the information. Many things are taken into account in determining if a child is ready for the next grade: attendance, mastery of state standards, knowledge of the English language, age, physical size, intellectual ability, previous grade placement, behavior, maturity, level of achievement, motivation and disabilities are all considered. A Light's Retention Scale is a normed assessment used by elementary schools in Fort Mill to assist with making this important decision. Review [Board Policy IKE-R Promotion And Retention Of Students](#) for additional information.

STUDENT TESTING

Students at Pleasant Knoll Elementary will participate in testing as one of the methods we use to determine educational progress and to determine the need for special assistance. The following tests will be administered at Pleasant Knoll:

Standardized tests are administered in grades K through 5 as indicated below:

	K	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
KRA	X					
COGAT Ability Test			X	X	X	X
SCREADY State Achievement Test				X	X	X
SCPASS State Achievement Test					X	X
STAR Reading & Math	X	X	X	X	X	X
MAP (Fall and Spring)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Fountas and Pinnell Reading Assessments	X	X	X	X	X	X

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) – A readiness test given individually to kindergarten students within the first 45 days of school.

South Carolina College-and Career-Ready Assessments (SC READY) – State achievement tests in core subject areas during the last 20 days of school.

Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) - These tests measure student performance in reading, math, science, and social studies against “established standards” and are called criterion referenced tests (Grades 4 & 5).

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) – These tests are administered to students in 2nd – 5th grades. MAP is an achievement diagnostic assessment used by your child’s classroom teacher to individualize instruction. Additionally, these tests are used as a baseline to qualify in district and school programs.

Cognitive Ability Test (CogAT) – This test is an ability measure administered to 2nd grade students, as well as 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students that are new to the district. The CogAT is used to determine qualification into district and school programs.

STAR 360 Testing – Reading and Math assessments that provide teachers formative data to guide instructional decisions in the classroom.

Fountas & Pinnell- Reading assessments that provide teachers formative data to guide instructional decisions in the classroom.

The staff and administration of Pleasant Knoll Elementary want to caution all parents about putting too much emphasis on test results. These tests only measure a certain set of skills and a student's performance at a certain point in time. Because of this, we are continuously developing alternate ways of assessing student progress. These assessments offer a much more accurate picture of student performance and provide much greater information concerning needed instructional approaches.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

HOMEWORK SCHOOL POLICY

1. Homework will be reinforcement activities; no new skills or material will be introduced as part of homework.
2. Written homework will be such that it can be completed with a minimum of parental help.
3. Teachers will send home completed classwork/homework for parental review and support.
4. The teacher will check written homework assignments with pre-established consequences for noncompliance.
5. Homework assignments should be such that they can be completed within a reasonable length of time taking into consideration the age and ability level of the children
6. In addition, children are expected to read ***daily*** as part of their homework assignments.

In an effort to reinforce student responsibility, maintain equity, and keep our classrooms safe, students and parents will be prohibited from returning to the classroom after the school day has ended to pick up books or homework left in the room. Exceptions can be made for glasses or coats, but must be approved by administration.

HOMEWORK SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS:

1. Designate a homework spot and time and be available to assist if help is needed.
2. Encourage your child to write down assignments and check on a daily basis to see what homework is due.
3. When assistance is needed, talk your child through the problem or question until he/she can find the solution.
4. Help your child check his homework and discuss specific problem areas.
5. Be observant for signs of problems and if homework becomes too challenging, meet with your child's teacher.

6. Remember to help your child balance household responsibilities, play, and study.
7. Review the classwork that the teacher sends home.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are centered on units of study and feature different activities for different grades. This ensures that students have a wide range of experiences at the ages that they would be most appropriate. Parents are asked to sign permission forms for their child's participation. No child will be allowed to go on a field trip unless this form is signed. Chaperones for off-campus field trips **MUST** first be approved by our district-wide background check. This check typically takes approximately 2 weeks to complete and may be initiated by completing the form found [here](#). Once approved, chaperone status is in effect for 3 years.. Chaperones are expected to attend the entire length of the trip, which includes leaving and arriving back at the school to ensure student safety, following the bus both ways. Chaperones are not permitted to bring younger siblings on a field trip.

ASSEMBLIES AND PERFORMANCES

Our first commitment is to classroom instruction. Assembly programs and performances are sometimes an important part of the educational program. It is expected that an atmosphere of respect will be maintained throughout all assemblies by presenters, participants, and members of the audience. When visitors come to the school, it is expected that they will demonstrate polite behavior and be role models for students by staying for the entire program to avoid disruption. For example, if attending a performance, please do not get up and leave as soon as your child's part is over.

DRESS CODE

Students are expected to dress in a manner appropriate for the learning environment. Students are expected to dress in clothing that abides the district dress code policy. Logos or clothing that promotes alcohol, drugs, tobacco, racism, hate, gang affiliation, nudity, or profanity is not allowed. No clothing or accessories are allowed to disrupt the educational process. The administration reserves the right to determine what is appropriate for school.

In the interests of health, safety, cleanliness, decency, and decorum, students will follow these guidelines as identified in Board Policy JICA-R.

Grades K through Five

Proper shoes must be worn at all times for safety reasons. Shoes with cleats may not be worn. Logos or clothing that promotes alcohol, drugs, tobacco, racism, hate, gang affiliation, nudity, or profanity is not allowed. No clothing or accessories are allowed to disrupt the educational process. The administration reserves the right to determine what is appropriate for school.

Students may wear shorts, dresses, skirts, etc. which are of appropriate length. Tops must be long enough that they can be tucked into pants or shorts. Basketball jerseys must be worn with an

appropriate garment (i.e. tee shirt). No headwear (hats, caps, hoods, etc.) or sunglasses may be worn in the building.

The following items are not appropriate for school:

- flip flops
- spaghetti straps
- tattered or torn clothing
- underwear that is visible
- tank tops
- muscle shirts
- t-backs and cross-backs

Violations will result in the following:

First and Subsequent Offenses: phone call to parent

BOOK BAGS

Book bags are required at school. However, rolling book bags are not permitted without a written recommendation of a physician.

LOST AND FOUND

Items found at school are turned in to the Lost and Found area in the cafeteria. Parents and students are encouraged to check this area if they are missing any items. Several times a year when the area is overflowing, we take items not claimed to a local clothing closet. Please put your child's name on clothes, lunch boxes, notebooks, etc.

PERSONAL ITEMS IN SCHOOL

Students should not bring personal items from home such as toys, electronic games, MP3 players, chromebooks, iPads, smartwatches, or money not intended for lunch payment unless authorized by school administration. These items are valuable and the school is not responsible for their care. If these items interfere with a child's learning, they will be confiscated and the parents will be contacted to pick up the item(s) at school.

CELL PHONE USAGE

Student cell phones should be kept in a book bag. Electronic devices, including cell phones, must be turned off during the school day and while on the school grounds. A cell phone may not be used during the day to play games or to text message. The student may not use a cell phone to call a parent during the school day without a teacher's permission. This includes devices like a smartwatches or electronic communication devices that serve as telephones.

As noted in School Board Policy JICJ, The school principal or his/her designee will have the authority to limit the use, take disciplinary action and/or confiscate electronic communication devices if the use

or possession of these devices may cause or is causing a disruption to the school and/or event. Unauthorized use of a cell phone or personal electronic device may include, but is not limited to, taking pictures or recording without permission, cheating, harassment or bullying, use during any emergency drill, use during unauthorized time or use for unlawful activities.

FERPA INFORMATION

The Family Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the US Department of Education.

The law requires that student records be managed in a confidential manner. Regulations and procedures for compliance of this act are provided through board policy. For more information about your rights under FERPA, please refer to the district's website.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

All school communications will be sent home on **Tuesdays** in a folder provided to your child. This does not take into account teacher communications or flyers sent via PeachJar. Also, emergency communications may need to be sent home from time to time.

The school and district also use the School Messenger phone messaging system. We have emergency and non-emergency accounts set up for notifications about school events, weather delays, and other pertinent information. If you find that you are not receiving these messages please contact the school so we can update your information in our database. Please be sure to notify the office if you have a change of phone number or email address.

CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION

Messages can be taken for students and teachers, but it is not always possible to deliver them immediately. Parents wishing to confer with teachers on the phone are requested to limit their calls to before or after school hours, as teachers cannot leave their classes for telephone conferences between 7:30am and 2:30pm. Students wishing to call home may use the school phone for health and transportation **EMERGENCIES ONLY**. Forgotten snacks, improper shoes for physical education and assignments left at home do not constitute an emergency.

The main job for our teachers is to provide quality instruction in a safe environment. In addition, all Fort Mill Elementary Schools have a schedule of duties for teachers. Our goal is to respond to emails within 24 hours.

VISITING THE SCHOOL

We are proud of our school and invite you to visit us anytime. **Visitors and volunteers must enter by the front door and stop by the office.** Security doors to other parts of the building will be opened by

an office person after the visitors log in at the computer and scan their driver's license or official government-issued identification. Security procedures require that badges of visitors/volunteers must be visible at all times. Visitors must always sign in at the office and obtain this visitor badge before going to a classroom, lunchroom or school grounds. This ensures all students' safety by letting office and classroom personnel know who is in the building. You are welcome to visit in the cafeteria during your child's lunch time or in the building during special events such as the book fair and classroom programs. To ensure uninterrupted instruction time, parents will be allowed in the classroom only at the request of the teacher. No school-age child, relative or friend may visit in your child's class; however, they are welcome to visit during lunch time. Please be aware that if you visit your child for lunch, only your child is allowed to join you at a visitors' table.

DELIVERIES

The school will not accept nor deliver to students any items before, during, or after school unless they are of an educational nature/value or medically necessary. When sending balloons or flowers to a child, please use his/her home address. Do not send these items to the school. District procedures do not allow these items on a bus. Please do not bring balloons or other items to celebrate birthdays.

VOLUNTEERS

Parent volunteers are WELCOME and NEEDED! Your assistance can help us improve the overall quality of our school program. Please talk with your child's classroom teacher about volunteer opportunities he/she may have. Volunteering for your child(ren)'s teacher means that you are in an instructional environment, or in an environment with equipment that may not be safe for young children. In order to provide a learning environment free from distractions, we ask that volunteers dress in a manner appropriate for the classroom, make other arrangements for younger siblings, check in at the office, turn off cell phones, and avoid unscheduled conferences. Volunteers may be asked to attend volunteer orientation. Because the maintenance of copying machines can be expensive, we require that volunteers be trained by an Pleasant Knoll staff member before using any school machines.

Parents are considered members of our community, and are not alone with children when they are in our building. Volunteers who are parents or family members will need to swipe their driver's license. If you do not have a child in the building, then we may require a full background check which the school requests.

PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

Our school encourages your participation in PTO sponsored activities during this year. Our PTO is an extension of the school family, and is dedicated to the support of instructional programs, teaching/learning, and safety. In addition, the PTO needs volunteers to help with special programs

and serve on committees. Please consider volunteering your time to assist this organization in helping all classrooms, teachers, and students through their many beneficial projects.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL

All elementary schools have a School Improvement Council made up of teachers, parents, and administrators that will help to facilitate communications between the community and the school. Officers of the PTO may be elected to serve on the School Improvement Council. Additional members will be elected later in the fall.

FIRE, TORNADO, EARTHQUAKE & LOCKDOWN DRILLS

Safety of our students and staff is an extremely important priority for us here at Pleasant Knoll Elementary. We work closely with local law enforcement and first responders to create a safe learning environment for each individual.

1. Fire drills are held at least once a month.
2. Tornado drills are held periodically.
3. Lock down and emergency procedure drills also will take place periodically.

INVITATIONS

Parents/students cannot hand out invitations to out-of-school birthday parties or get-togethers unless every child in the class receives an invitation.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES/CELEBRATIONS

Homemade or home baked foods are not allowed to be distributed to students within the classroom or applicable classroom setting. Acceptable foods for distribution are those items that were prepared in a commercial and/or licensed kitchen, and most importantly, are packaged with a label clearly listing the contents and ingredients of the food item. With the continued rise in severe and often life-threatening food allergies, this policy is designed to provide consistency and minimize allergy risks in all classrooms district-wide, while maintaining a safe and positive learning environment for all students. It is important to note that the policy does not apply to a student's personal lunch.

DISCIPLINE

In order for students to have a positive school experience, an atmosphere of good behavior must be maintained. We expect our children to behave properly. While each child is responsible for his or her own behavior, we encourage parental support of the school rules.

In the event that a student is sent to the office for a discipline referral, a copy of that referral will be sent home for the parent/guardian to sign and return. Depending upon the nature of the problem,

some possible consequences for inappropriate actions include parent conferences, denial of privileges, isolation, and in-school or out-of-school suspension. In each incident, the consequences will be as appropriate for the infraction as possible.

Student actions that materially disrupt class work, involve substantial disorder, or invade the rights of others could be a basis for out-of-school suspension or expulsion. Examples of these student actions or major offenses are: theft, fighting, possession of weapons, damage to school property, assault of school personnel, defiance of school authority, profanity, obscene literature, distribution of unauthorized materials, possession of drugs and alcohol, blackmail/threats/intimidation, student disorder, and possession of fireworks.

PARENT RESOURCES

The school counselors are available as a parent resource. You may want to consult the counselor when you have concerns about your child's academic achievement or you are worried about behavioral changes. Please call when you have information about your child you that would like the school to know or if you have concerns or would like more information about the guidance program.

BULLYING

While every effort will be made to shape behavior through positive reinforcement, we must all keep in mind that every child should have the right to study, participate in class, and work in a safe environment. Name calling, intimidation, threats, and disrespectful attitudes toward classmates, volunteers, school staff members, or visitors is not acceptable. Bullying is intentional aggressive behavior. It can take the form of physical or verbal harassment and involves an imbalance of power. It is not acceptable for a child to draw, write, or make threatening statements online or in person. **Bullying is also an ongoing pattern of behavior, not a one-time occurrence.** This behavior will be addressed through disciplinary action at the discretion of the school administrator, as per [FMSD Board Policy JICFAA](#).

Please be aware that School Board policy and South Carolina Code 59-24-60 require school officials to contact law enforcement officers when a student engages in any activity that *may or does result in injury or serious threat of injury to a person or property*.

Parents are asked to support the schools in their effort to maintain discipline and high standards of conduct. At the beginning of each school year teachers and administrators discuss with students behavior expectations, but parents are requested to discuss with children the importance and the need for good behavior and a positive attitude at school, too. Children must learn self-discipline in order to become effective learners and good citizens. With home-school cooperation, an environment in which all students are safe, secure, and able to learn can be created and maintained.