



Family Handbook 2023-2024 School Year

Welcome to the 2023-24 School Year!

Families,

Welcome to a new school year at the Bridges Program! We value our partnerships with our students' families, guardians, families and other members of our school community and look forward to working together to help our students succeed. Please take a few minutes to review this family handbook in order to familiarize yourself with our policies and procedures. You may also visit our website (www.wcpss.net/bridgesprogram) and follow us on Twitter (@bridgesprogram) for more information and updates.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide families with basic information that can be helpful to understanding policies and procedures at Bridges. We ask that you take a few moments to learn about this important information.. Any questions you may have can be directed to your student's teacher. More specific policies and information can be found in the WCPSS Student/Parent Handbook.. (<https://www.wcpss.net/handbook>)

We consider families our educational partners and look forward to working closely with you as we enter this new school year. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions.

Best,

Heather Boling, Director of Bridges Program



WCPSS 2022-23 Calendar and Important Dates

BRIDGES follows Wake County Schools traditional calendar along with Wake County's policy for inclement weather. [2023-24 Traditional Calendar](#)

Below are some important dates specific to Briges to add to your calendar. More information about these events will come closer to the dates. Additional events could also be communicated throughout the year.

- October **TBD**- Fall Title 1 Night/Open House/Family Conferences
- March **TBD**- Spring Parent Night/Family Conferences
- June **7**-Super Kids Day
- June **12**- End of Year Ceremony and 5th Grade Promotion

Student Arrival and Departure

- Students may enter the building at 8:00 a.m.
- Students are tardy after 8:30 a.m.
- Dismissal begins at 2:55 p.m.
- If dropping your student off after 8:30, please escort your student to the front door. Ring the doorbell and someone will meet you at the door to get your student.
- Please call the office if you are picking up your child early. The office number is (919) 233-4046 (Option 2). A staff member will assist you in signing your student out
- If you are picking up your student after 2:30pm, please wait in the carpool line and your student will be dismissed at 2:55 pm





Attendance

Regular school attendance is necessary for students to learn and be successful. Bridges follows Wake County Schools attendance policies, rules, and regulations. If your student is absent, a written excuse must be submitted for the absence to be marked excused in Powerschool. An email or written note to the teacher is acceptable as an excuse note. If a note is not received within 5 school days of the absence, it will be recorded as "unexcused." If you are concerned about your student's attendance you are welcome to reach out to your student's teacher or the school social worker for support.

Communication

Each student's Glows & Grows sheet will be sent home on a daily basis so that families/guardians will be informed about the student's day and progress toward their personal goals. Families are asked to review the sheet with their student. Families should contact their student's teacher if they want a copy of the STAR sheet which provides a more detailed description of your student's day. As always, please reach out to your student's teacher if you have any questions. Teachers will communicate with families through phone calls, emails or Talking Points. WCPSS policy prohibits teachers from texting families with their personal phones. Teachers will respond to families within 24 hours and/or the next business day.



Birthdays

At Bridges we believe in celebrating our students on their birthdays. Parents/guardians are encouraged to send in store-bought cupcakes or small treats for their class. Contact your student's teacher to make arrangements and to obtain class size.

School Meals & Cafeteria Expectations

School staff will walk students to the cafeteria every day. IAs and other support staff will stay in the cafeteria to eat with the students and ensure supervision.

Students will be served a well-balanced breakfast and lunch every day. Meals are provided through Wake County Schools and menus are printed on the WCPSS website. Students are **NOT allowed to bring soda/caffeinated drinks or candy to school**. Snacks are provided by Bridges but if a classroom teacher allows a student to bring a snack, that snack must be something like fruit or crackers, **no candy or cookies** or other kinds of sweets. Please do not send in large/family sized portions.



Dress Code

Students are expected to adhere to standards of dress and appearance as outlined in the WCPSS Parent/Student Handbook..

Our guiding principles for the student dress code that attire should further the health and safety of students and staff, enables the educational process, and facilitates the operations of the school.

To promote these goals, students may **not** wear or carry clothing, jewelry, book bags, or other personal articles that:

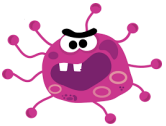
- Depict profanity, vulgarity, obscenity, or violence

- Promote the use or abuse of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs
- Are prohibited under Policy 4309 III-2 (Gang and Gang Related Activity) or any other provision of the Code of Student Conduct
- Threaten the health or safety of staff or students
- Are reasonably likely to create a substantial disruption of the educational process or operations of the school.

Specifically:

- Students must wear clothing including both a shirt with pants or skirt, or the equivalent (for example dresses, leggings, or shorts) and shoes.
- Shirts and dresses must have fabric in the front, back, on the sides, under the arms, and extending from chest to thighs.
- Clothing must cover undergarments (waistbands and straps excluded).
- Breasts, genitals and buttocks must be covered with fabric that cannot be seen through.
- Clothing must be suitable for all scheduled classroom activities including physical education, science labs, and other activities where unique hazards exist.
- Head coverings (including hats, hoods, sweatbands, and bandanas) are generally prohibited. However, students may wear head coverings in the classroom as an expression of sincerely held religious belief (e.g., hijabs or yarmulkes) or cultural expression or to reasonably accommodate medical or disability-related issues (e.g., protective helmets).

Illness



Sick children should stay at home to minimize the spreading of illness. Parents should inform Ms. Phillips in the front office if their child has a contagious disease so that the appropriate persons can be notified.

If a child has any symptoms of illness or a fever of 100.4 or greater, families will be required to pick up their child. Parents are expected to pick up a sick child promptly when called by school staff.

A student needs to be free of any symptoms or fever (without fever reducing medication or other medication) for 24 hours before returning to school.

If you have questions about when your child can return to school, you can contact Ms. Phillips in the office.

Medication

Staff that have been certified in medication administration are allowed to administer medication to students at school only when the Parent and Physician Order for Medication form (Form 1702) is completed by the family and physician and present at the school. Form 1702 directions and the prescription bottle directions MUST match exactly. Form 1702 is also available from the school. No medication can be dispensed without a 1702 and a matching prescription. Students are not allowed to bring or take any over-the-counter medication at school without a 1702 being submitted. **DO NOT SEND MEDICATION TO SCHOOL WITH YOUR CHILD AT ANY TIME.**



A new medication form must be completed if there is a change in medication or medication dosing directions.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for monitoring medication expiration dates and replacing medication when expired. The school can only keep a 30-day supply for the student's medication. In the event of a health emergency, the school will call 911 and contact you.



Technology Policy

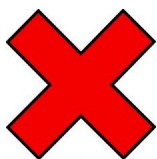
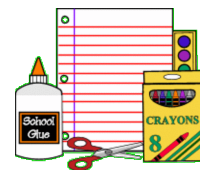
Technology is used in the classroom as a valuable *tool* for learning. WCPSS provides students in grades 2-12 with Chromebooks to be utilized for homework and school projects. Grades K-1 will be provided with Chromebooks to be housed at their schools and for use at school only.

At Bridges we are fortunate to currently have access to Chromebooks in the school for our students' learning. **Therefore, the WCPSS-issued student devices should not be brought to school unless requested by their teacher or school staff.** If a student loses or breaks their home device, families should contact Technology Services at (919) 664-5700.

Cell phones are allowed with the intention that they are used solely in the event of an emergency and should be checked into the office at the beginning of the school day. If students do not follow cell phone expectations, the cell phones will be taken away from the students and families will be asked to pick them up from the office. School personnel are not responsible for lost, stolen, and/or damaged items.

What to Bring to School

Bridges strives to provide our students with learning materials needed for their school day. However, your student's teacher may reach out to you with a request of needed supplies throughout the year. Any supplies students are unable to supply will be provided for them.



What NOT to Bring to School

The school cannot be responsible for lost or damaged personal items like toys, athletic equipment or personal devices. Therefore please do not send these types of items to school.

The following items are prohibited:

- extra/large sums of money (well-exceeds the cost of snack item at lunch)
- valuables (like jewelry)
- CANDY and soda/cafeinated drinks
- any items that could be thought of as a weapon or a facsimile of a weapon (including toys)
- tobacco products and/or paraphernalia
- medications not checked in through the proper WCPSS policies and procedures

Visitors to BRIDGES

From WCPSS: *Starting July 2023, all school visitors will be required to check in using the Verkada Visitor Management System located in each campus' front office. This system will create a uniform security protocol to guest check-ins, as well as logging visits.* When a guest signs in the guest will be welcomed via text and/or email with all inputted information as well as options for signing out. For more information about the new visitor management system, please visit <https://www.wcpss.net/Page/55131>.

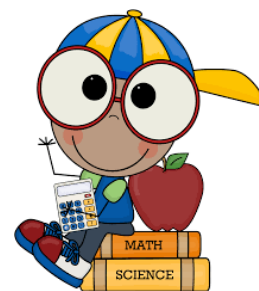
Parents/guardians are welcome to visit Bridges. Please reach out to your student's teacher or the Director to make an appointment. We do not permit parental or third party observations during the instructional school day due to the confidential nature of special education students..

Academic Instruction

Bridges Program follows the NC Standard Course of Study and WCPSS pacing guides, utilizing the same instructional practices as the regular school setting, in addition to addressing students' Individualized Education Plan goals. We also follow the guidelines set forth with standards-based grading.

Language Arts program content taught includes:

- Letterland (1st-3rd)
- Heggerty (1st-2nd)



- Language Comprehension (1st)
- Expeditionary Learning (EL) (2nd-5th)

Math program content taught for all grades includes:

- Grade level content: launch explore discuss teaching model
- Standards of mathematical practice

Science and Social Studies curriculums are also taught following the WCPSS pacing guides.

At Bridges we use dynamic and innovative structures to enhance learning and teaching. We will be continuing with our co-teaching instructional delivery. Your child will be taught by two to three classroom teachers, several Instructional Assistants and our school will have two intervention teachers.

Interim and Report Card dates for 23-24:

Quarter	Interims Go Home	Report Cards & Progress Reports Go Home
1	Sept. 29	Nov. 9
2	Dec. 8	Feb. 2
3	March 1	Apr. 19
4	May 17	June 12



Homework will be assigned at the teachers' discretion and will follow WCPSS policies for homework. Students shall make every effort to complete homework when assigned.

Purpose of Homework:

- To reinforce the curriculum
- To provide independent practice
- To review and practice skills
- To develop responsibility, independence, and self-direction
- To encourage reading engagement and stamina

School board policy supports the following daily homework time for elementary school students:

1st-2nd	20 minutes/day
3rd-5th	50 minutes/day

Behavioral Health Instruction & Intervention

What is it?

Schoolwide Supports

Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports

Positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) is an approach schools use to promote school safety and good behavior. With PBIS, schools teach kids about behavior expectations and strategies. At Bridges we are currently implementing schoolwide expectations and a rewards/incentives program.

STAR Expectations

The team at Bridges has worked to create a clear and concise set of expectations for all areas of our building. We refer to these as STAR expectations (S-Safety, T-Task, A-Accountability, R-Respect). Students



are explicitly taught STAR expectations during the first few weeks of the school year, and teachers review these expectations daily during morning, mid-day, and afternoon meetings. All students are expected to adhere to these expectations throughout their learning day. STAR expectations are the basis of our PBIS system of support at the Bridges Program.

Click [here](#) for a pdf family version of our STAR expectations.

School Store

Students can earn tokens throughout the day for meeting or exceeding STAR expectations, being a good friend, and/or making good choices, taking a Safe Place, completing homework, using a coping/calming strategy, and/or working toward their personal goal. Students then access "School Store" every Friday to purchase items of their choosing: trinkets, bouncy balls, stuffed animals, sports balls, action figures, headphones, time with preferred adults, special lunches, etc....

Star Compliments

Classes can earn Stars to serve as compliments for meeting or exceeding STAR expectations as a whole group. Classes earn predetermined classwide incentives at 50 star intervals.

STAR Sheet/Glows & Grows

Behavioral Health Instruction and Intervention at Bridges encourages students to be responsible for their personal behavior and enhances the development of self-monitoring skills and evaluation. The Glows and Grows and Star Sheet will be printed front to back. The Glows and Grows side will have the student's Personal Goal, a rating scale, and a list of items to be checked off during the afternoon meeting to reflect the things they did well on that day, as well as anything they may need to continue to work on. There is also a spot at the bottom for an overall positive comment for that day. The teacher or instructional assistant can fill that section out.

On the backside of this sheet is the STAR sheet. This is used for documentation and data collection purposes only, and will not be sent home with students. The STAR sheet allows teachers to collect student data related to our schoolwide STAR expectations (see above). The STAR sheet also allows for teachers/classroom staff to provide explicit behavioral feedback throughout a student's learning day. Parents may request a copy be emailed to them daily, but it will not be sent home with students.

click images below for full screen view

Name: _____ Date: _____

Goal Check

My Personal Goal: _____

Rocked It!

Keep it up!

Getting closer!

Tomorrow is a new day!

Glows and Grows

Today I...

- ☐ I was a good friend.
- ☐ I shared with others.
- ☐ I wore my mask all day.
- ☐ I worked hard and did all my work.
- ☐ I followed school/class rules.
- ☐ I was helpful to my teachers/classmates.
- ☐ Other _____

Tomorrow I will...

- ☐ I keep my hands/feet to self.
- ☐ I complete work on time.
- ☐ I use my strategies to help deal with my feelings and emotions.
- ☐ I do where I'm supposed to be.
- ☐ I followed school/class rules.
- ☐ I use kind words.
- ☐ I set a good example.
- ☐ Other _____

Note from teacher: _____

*For additional information, please reach out to your child's teacher.

Everyone can be a STAR! 🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟

Name: _____ Date: _____

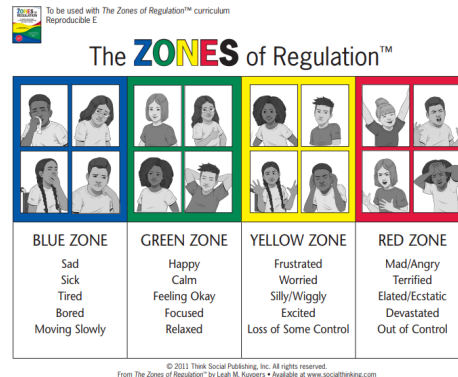
	S	T	A	R	Star Rating (1-5 stars)	Teacher Comments	Parent Comments	Notes
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Personal Goal: _____ Rating: ☆☆☆☆☆

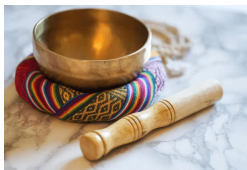
Zones of Regulation

The Zones of Regulation framework and curriculum helps students develop skills to increase awareness of their feelings/emotions and learn strategies for regulation, prosocial behavior, self-care and overall wellness. It provides a common language and compassionate framework to support positive mental health and skill development for all learners. The goal is to help move students toward more independent regulation in a way that serves them best. The Zones of Regulation is the core curriculum for all students at the Bridges Program.

Click [here](#) for a copy of the family handout



Core Practice



Core Practice is a mindfulness practice that teaches students how to regulate their breathing and calm their nervous systems. This helps to prepare the brain and body for learning. Students participate in Core Practice 3xs a day. Students are encouraged to help lead Core Practice for the school via our morning, mid-day and afternoon announcements. Students are not mandated to participate, but are expected to sit quietly to allow for others to participate in a distraction free environment.

Safe Place

Safe Place is an area where students can go to change their inner state from upset to composed in order to optimize learning. We look for signs of dysregulation in our students (frustration, anxiety, upset, big movements, noises, unkind words) and help them access Safe Place through an invitation. Every classroom has a space in their room that is placed away from the group and designed to feel welcoming and safe. Students will find a bean bag, blanket, pillows, and the 5 Steps of Self-Regulation. Safe Place is a proactive intervention intended to prevent unsafe or highly disruptive behavior and teach self-regulation skills. It is not a punishment.



*Conscious Discipline, 2019

"In-Between Rooms"

There is an alternative learning space between every two classrooms. This space may be utilized for the following possible reasons:

- to complete safe place expectations when he/she has been unsuccessful with completing in the classroom
- student asks to work between rooms if they are having trouble focusing
- student is assigned to work in that location
- student is assigned to this space when working their way out of seclusion/isolation for a set amount of time
- in School Suspension
- student can use this space when a staff needs to process with a student in private
- student's preferred activity so as not to disrupt the learning of others in the classroom

Seclusion & Restraint

The use of seclusion and restraint are only used to help students regain control after exhibiting unsafe and/or dangerous behaviors, as is outlined in [North Carolina Legislative Policy GS115C-391.1](#).

Thank you for reviewing the information provided in this handbook. If you have any questions or require further information please reach out to your student's teacher. We look forward to working with you and your student(s)!

-Bridges Staff