# Greetings Eagle Families,

Welcome to Vandora Springs Elementary School where our eagles SOAR high each day. This parent-student handbook is designed to provide some school specific information for our families. It is not intended to replace the WCPSS Student-Parent Handbook which is also on our website and is sent home at the beginning of each school year. If there is a conflict in information, the WCPSS Student-Parent Handbook takes precedence related to any school board policy.

Welcome and we are glad you are part of the VSES Eagle Family.

\*\*All items in the handbook are subject to change and will be revised as needed to align with district policy, safety, principal discretion, revised practice, etc. New additions to the handbook will be posted on the school website.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

**Our instructional school day is from 8:30 A.M.-3:00 P.M**. The YMCA after school programs operate from 7:00 A.M. to 8:00 A.M. (at Timber Drive Elementary) and from 3:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. on our campus. **Children should not arrive on campus before 8:00 unless** **they are on the Safety Patrol.** **Parents should not drop students off prior to 8:00 and leave them unsupervised, as this is a safety issue. Students who arrive after 8:30 are considered tardy and a parent must bring them to the office to sign in. We do not allow any dismissals after 2:30 to protect the end of the instructional day. We dismiss students in the afternoon at 3:00 for carpool, walkers, buses and YMCA after school.**

**ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES**

1. School attendance is required by state law. Parents must ensure that students attend and remain in school daily. Please read School Board Policy 6000.3 to see the conditions for an excused absence. Please make certain that if your child is absent it is for a valid reason. Parents have to set the standard that school is very important. Just as parents are expected to go to work, students are also expected to attend school.

Excessive absences can have serious academic consequences and may result in grade level failure. Students who are absent 30 days or more will be referred to the district attendance committee who will determine next steps; possible truancy referral. Unexcused absences will be addressed by the school’s attendance committee and the school social worker when absences become excessive.

2. A child will be counted absent if they are checked out prior to or arrive after 11:45 am.

3. If possible, appointments should be made after school hours.

4. If it is necessary for a parent to take his/her child from school during school hours, the parent should come to the office and sign the child out on the computer located in the office area. Office personnel will call your child from the classroom after you arrive. **(Teachers are not permitted to release students directly to parents during the school day, and they will ask the parent to return to the school office for authorization.)** If the student returns to school that day, he/she should report back to the office with his/her parent to be signed in and readmitted to class.

5. When your child returns to school please provide a written note or email regarding the reasoning for the absence. If a note is not received within 2 days of the absence, the absence will be unexcused. The note should include the following information:

● Your child's name

● Your Signature

● Specific cause of absence

● Dates of absence

● Please include a doctor’s note if applicable.

6. If a student is tardy, parents are required to accompany their child to the office to sign them in and their child will be given an admission slip to the classroom.

7. Letters will be sent to parents of students who accumulate excessive absences or who are regularly late to school. Letters are used in an effort to keep parents informed and are based on Wake County Public School Attendance policies. The school social worker will meet and work with parents of students with excessive tardies or absences.

8. Family vacations should be planned during scheduled breaks. Any family vacations or other planned activities scheduled during school instructional time will be considered an unexcused absence.

9. Excused absences​ may be requested for religious reasons and for some educational reasons​. Forms for requesting excused absences for either of these reasons are available on the WCPSS website. These requests must be made in advance and submitted to the principal for review. Excused absences for educational reasons will be granted only if (1) the primary purpose of the trip is educational, (2) the significant event does not occur at another time (e.g.: launching of space shuttle, presidential inauguration), (3) the trip could not occur at times when school is not in session. ​Please note that absences due to trips are very rarely excused and that an excused absence is still an absence.

10. DISMISSALS​: If your child has an appointment, please be sure to check your child out through the office **before** 2:30 pm​. Please send the teacher a note if you are aware that your child will need to be signed out early. If an unexpected appointment arises, students will be called to the office once their parent has arrived at the school. Students are expected to remain in school for the entire day unless they have a medical/dental appointment or family emergency. Instruction occurs in every classroom until the bell rings. Excessive early dismissals will be recorded, and parents will receive a written notice and/or visit from the school’s social worker. All dismissals after 2:30pm are handled through carpool, which begins at 3:00pm. Thank you in advance for getting in the carpool line to pick up your child(ren) when arriving after 2:30pm.

In the event of an Early Dismissal due to weather conditions or emergency situations, parents will not be allowed to pick students up in the office 30 minutes prior to dismissal. Parents will also not be allowed in the building 30 minutes prior to dismissal; students will be picked up through carpool.

Please note that carpool will end at different times. These times are based on the weather, traffic, and the number of parents utilizing carpool. It is hard to set a specific time; however, when all cars have gone, students not picked up will be brought to the office. Most days, our dismissal is over by 3:25. When you arrive, you will be requested to sign your child out in the office.

Students who miss their bus will be sent back to the office to call a parent and wait for that parent to pick them up. We appreciate your cooperation with us in ensuring your child's safety, as we try to reduce unsafe pedestrian and car traffic, and limit visitors in the building while students are moving to various dismissal areas.

11. TARDINESS​: Promptness to school is very important. Students are admitted to homeroom class at 8:00 am. All students must report directly to homeroom class upon arrival at school. Students who do not report to homeroom class by 8:30 am will be considered tardy. Teachers are required to keep a record of tardiness. If the problem becomes habitual, a letter will be sent home with the student. Students arriving at school after 8:30 am must have a parent sign them in at the office and pick up a class admittance slip from the office before going to class.

**BELL SCHEDULE**

8:00 – Students may enter the building

8:25 – Warning Bell rings

8:30 - Tardy Bell rings & Instructional day begins

2:50 – Afternoon announcements

3:00 - Dismissal procedures begin

**AFTER SCHOOL ARRANGEMENTS AND TRANSPORTATION**

1. Any changes in transportation will require a note signed by the parent and presented to the office on the day the change is needed. We know that occasionally there are emergencies that require a transportation change. Do not leave a message about a transportation change after 12:00. It may take awhile before the message is received in our school’s voice mailbox.

2. Parents should make sure that their child’s teacher knows their afterschool transportation arrangements and any changes that may occur.

3. If a child needs to go to a regularly scheduled daycare facility, scouting program, etc. after school hours, the parent is required to send written notification to the teacher. **If your child will not be riding his/her daycare van, please notify the daycare center.**

4. If your child is to go home with a classmate after school, both the **hosting** and **visiting** students should bring notes from their parents indicating the planned visit and transportation plans. Both students are to report to the school office on the morning of the planned visit with their notes. **Due to crowding, students will not be allowed to ride a bus other than their normal route, but may be picked up in carpool.**

5. No student will be permitted to ride home, after school hours, with anyone other than his/her parent unless the child brings a note from his/her parent requesting such.

## BUS ROUTES

Riding the bus is a privilege and students must follow the rules discussed at the beginning of the school year or risk losing the service. Bus routes are posted on our website and in the office at the school. **For information or questions about bus service contact the transportation supervisor at 919-805-3030 or complete the online form at https://www.wcpss.net/Page/43. For problems with student behavior you may contact Mrs. Moore-Kerr at Vandora Springs at 919-662-2486.** If you haven’t done so, please download the “Here Comes the Bus” app, so that you can track your child’s bus in real time. The district code is 67500 and your child’s lunch number is their student id#. If you need help registering feel free to stop by the school for assistance or check the county’s website for tutorials.

## CARPOOL

Carpool students arriving for the regular school day or leaving in the afternoon will enter from Vandora Springs Road by the staff and visitors entrance. Please double stack and follow the directions of the adults on duty. If you need to park during carpool, please enter the staff parking lot at the **beginning** of the carpool loop (shortly after your enter the carpool lane) and park in the staff lot. Do not drop off students in the staff lot to avoid the carpool line in the mornings. This is not safe. If you are running late, you may park and walk your child in, crossing at the crosswalk when the adult on duty indicates it is safe to cross. Students should remain in the car until they are dropped off in the front of the school.

The rationale for double stacking is to allow more cars in the carpool lane, thus getting more traffic off of the street as soon as possible. All drivers should drive slowly and allow ample time for picking up children. **Please refrain from cell phone use when driving in the carpool lane and do not pass other cars because you are in a hurry.** There is no phone conversation important enough to risk injury to a child or adult by a distracted driver. There will be a lot of traffic before and after school and we all must focus on student safety. **Students must be picked up by 3:30 p.m.** If you arrive after 3:30, your child will be taken to the office and you must come in and sign them out.

**WALKERS**

Students living in the designated walk zone are considered “walkers” as they do not qualify for bus service. The walk zone is designated as being within 1.5 miles of the school.

Parents of students who walk need to notify the classroom teacher of any arrangements regarding how their children are to get home if we have inclement weather. (Ex. My child will be picked up in case of rain or My child will walk home, regardless of the weather). Parents should remain outside the front doors of the school. Kindergarten and 1st grade students walkers will be escorted to their parents outside. A walker identification tag will also be given to the parents of Kindergarten and 1st grade students. Please have this tag when picking up your child each day. You must arrive by 3:05 to pick up your child or they will be sent to carpool. This will result in you having to wait until 3:20 to pick up your child after carpool has slowed down.

**ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AT VSES**

## CAFETERIA AND FOOD SERVICE

# Students planning to eat school-prepared food may load money onto their child’s lunch/breakfast/snack account via the “my school bucks” service found on the website, or follow the information below.

With a MySchoolBucks account paying for school meals is easy. Go to [www.MySchoolBucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com/) or call (855) 832-5226 to enroll. You'll need your child's NCWISE ID number, available in your registration materials or at your school.

Lunch Costs for 2018-19: K-5

Student: $ 2.55 $ .40 (reduced rate)

Adult: a la carte Milk: $ .50

Breakfast Costs:

Student: $ 1.25 $ .30 (max. reduced rate – typically this cost is $0.00)

Adults: a la carte

If you pack a bag lunch, please include fruit juice instead of sodas. Also, do not send in any glass containers or bottles as they are safety hazards**.**

Parents are welcome to join their child(ren) for lunch on any school day. There is no need for advance reservations. We will sponsor “Family Breakfasts” and special lunches and will advertise these through newsletters or student folders.

**CLASSROOM INTERRUPTIONS**

In an effort to make the most of the instructional time, the Wake County Board of Education has adopted a policy to reduce interruptions during the regular classroom time. Students can learn best when announcements, unexpected visitors, and messages from the office do not interrupt instructional time. We need your help as we work to give your child the best possible learning experience.

If you would like to volunteer in your child’s classroom, please arrange this with your child’s teacher. All volunteers must complete the WCPSS Volunteer Registration process. If your visit to the classroom is not prearranged, you will have to get permission from the principal or assistant principal. PLEASE DO NOT DISRUPT CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION TO HOLD A PARENT CONFERENCE. Teachers may schedule parent conferences during planning time or before and after the instructional day.

**COMMUNICATION AT VSES:**

Please visit our VSES website for important school information. The principal also sends Eagle Connection voice messages and emails several times/month with information about upcoming events. This year, all classroom teachers are using Class Dojo as another communication portal. Any parent with a smartphone can sign up for Class Dojo and receive text messages about classroom events, reminders and their student. Please make sure that any phone number, address, and email changes are turned into the Data Manager at VSES as soon as possible! We depend on the phone numbers and email addresses for the all call messagesm, communication about emergencies and inclement weather, and illnesses of a child.

**CONFERENCES**

At least two conferences will be scheduled during the school year. However, parents are encouraged to contact the teacher at any time there are questions or concerns. Teachers will send home information about their conference schedule and will schedule those conferences directly with parents. Regular communication between the home and school is critical to student success.

Vandora Springs Elementary values the instructional time for all students; therefore, parents may not make visits to the classroom before or after school unless you have a scheduled conference.​ If you need to talk to the teacher immediately, send a note with your child or send the teacher an email. Every effort will be taken to contact you as soon as possible, within 24 hours (except for week-ends).

### **DRESS CODE POLICY**

Wake County Public Schools adopted a dress code policy for students and staff. To help keep our students focused on learning without distractions, we expect each one to dress appropriately. Our [code of student conduct](https://boardpolicyonline.com/bl/?b=wake_new&s=208219) prohibits disruptive, provocative, revealing, profane, vulgar, offensive, obscene or unsafe clothing or bodily appearances. Here are some examples.

Don't wear:

* + exposed undergarments
  + sagging pants
  + see-through or excessively short, tight or revealing clothes
  + bare midriff or strapless shirts
  + clothing with lewd, indecent or vulgar messages or illustrations
  + clothing that advertises products or services illegal to minors
  + head coverings
  + chains, spikes or other accessories that could be perceived as or used as a weapon
  + clothing that violates the school system's policies against gang and gang-related activities

Principals may use their discretion in implementing the dress code, including making reasonable accommodations on the basis of your student's religious beliefs or medical conditions. The [Wake Young Men's](http://youngmen.wakeacademy.org/school-uniforms/) and [Young Women's](http://girls.wakeacademy.org/) Leadership Academies have specific uniform policies.

For more information, see [Board Policy 4309-G.I-5: Code of Student Conduct](https://boardpolicyonline.com/bl/?b=wake_new&s=208219).

## EARLY ARRIVALS AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Early Arrival at Timber Drive and after school care at Vandora Springs Elementary is provided for registered students by the Poole Road YMCA. These programs provide a safe and stimulating, on site environment for students whose family situation requires child care before and/or after school hours. The after school program will be housed in the cafeteria and gym at Vandora Springs Elementary. Students in the after school care program should be picked up at the cafeteria/main entrance. Information and applications are available by calling the YMCA at 919- 582-9622

## EARLY RELEASE DAYS

Vandora Springs Elementary School will join all WCPSS schools in the Early Release Day Staff Development program again this year. This program offers professional developmment for all teachers in a timely manner during the course of the year. **Students will be released at 12:30 on early release days and must leave campus by 1:00 so that PD may begin. Please make arrangements for your children on these afternoons. The YMCA will open at 12:30 for students normally enrolled in that program.** Thanks for supporting quality staff development for teachers. The early release dates are published on the WCPSS website, as well as the VSES website.

## EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Please give your child’s teacher and the office the name and phone number of a relative, neighbor or friend who can be contacted in case of an emergency when you cannot be reached. If this situation changes during the year, please notify the office and the teacher. **Please keep all phone numbers and addresses up to date in the office in case of emaergency.**

**FIELD TRIPS**

Each grade level at Vandora Springs Elementary plans field trips that are an extension of their North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Since these trips are a part of our school day and a learning experience for the students, siblings are discouraged from accompanying the students or the parents. Parents that choose to take younger siblings on field trips are responsible for the younger sibling.

Every effort will be made to insure both the suitability of any trip away from school and the reasonableness of any cost involved in the trip. Before a student is permitted to attend a field trip, a Wake County permission sheet must be signed by the parent and filed in the office. Verbal permissions and handwritten notes are not accepted.

A field trip is defined as any planned activity that necessitates the student leaving the school grounds during the instructional day. Parents are not able to ride school buses​ on field trips (WCPSS policy).

When parents meet their children at the field trip site, please sign your child out with the classroom teacher if you are taking your child back home in your car. Parents are welcome to transport their own child home from a field trip location with the proper documentation (WCPSS form provided by classroom teacher). If parents are going to transport children other than their own home from a field trip, the proper forms must be completed by both parents and turned in to the office 48 hours prior to the field trip.

**FOOD BROUGHT TO SCHOOL**

Food-related illness caused by improperly prepared food brought in from the community is a public concern. In an effort to reduce the risk of a food-related illness with our students, parents must refrain from bringing in home-prepared foods and/or foods from non-commercial sources. All classes will have a working snack. The snack has to be neat (no Doritos or Cheetos type snacks which result in colored fingers; no muffins that crumble) and it cannot require a spoon (no pudding, applesauce, yogurt). Students may bring breakfast bars, granola bars, crackers, or fruit.

## HOMEWORK

Homework should be a part of the instructional experiences of each student. We feel that it is a purposeful continuation or extension of the instructional program to be accomplished by the student outside the regular classroom setting.

Each student spends a major part of the weekday in class. Because there are other valuable experiences to be gained outside of school, homework shall be carefully planned regarding its purpose, appropriateness, and timeliness.

## ILLNESS AND FEVER

Sick children do not belong at school. The Wake County School system and the Wake County Health Department have developed a handbook regarding illnesses and diseases. Children exhibiting the following symptoms will be sent home (or should remain at home): fever, nausea, vomiting, headaches, diarrhea, red or watery eyes with yellow discharge, or an undiagnosed rash. **Children should be fever free for 24 hours WITHOUT medication before returning to school.**

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

Now is the time to plan with your child what to do in case of early dismissal. Some children become very concerned if their usual patterns are disrupted. We prefer these arrangements be made in advance. We do not have adequate phones to deal with a large number of students that need directions from home.

All school closings, late openings, or early closings will be announced by the radio and television stations. If it begins to snow or sleet or if there appears the possibility of strong wind, please listen to the radio or TV for early school closings. If there is a delayed opening, announcements will be made by 6:00 a.m. on local radio and TV, if not the evening before.

## LOST AND FOUND

**Please put name labels on ALL of your childs’ personal belongings**. These markings will help school personnel to return lost items. Do not allow your child(ren) to bring extra money, valuable items, toys, trading cards, electronics or sports equipment unless prior written approval has been given by the child’s teacher. We will not assume responsibility for the security of such items.

Lost and found is located in the cafeteria for items found on campus. If your child has lost an item, please encourage them to check this area. Clothing and other items not claimed by the end of each grading period will be donated to charity.

## MEDICATION AT SCHOOL

Medication can be distributed in the Health Room only after receiving the proper form (# 1702) from the doctor, signed by the parents. The form may be obtained from our office. Please make sure we have this information prior to the beginning of school if medication is to be administered to your child by staff. All medications must be checked into the school by the parent. All medication must be secured daily. Antibiotic medication may be administered if it remains in the prescription bottle until the contents are used. **Non-prescription medications (including cough drops, cough syrup, and Tylenol) are only allowed with a doctor’s written permission (Form #1702).**

**REPORTING A CHILD’S PROGRESS**

Wake County Public School's method of reporting a student's progress includes the best of several reporting procedures and methods. The report cards reflect a fusion of daily work assignments on your child's instructional level, homework assignments, work habits, attitudes toward learning, and on math, writing, and literacy assessments based on grade 13 level expectations.

Parent conferences are extremely important. During these conferences, please make sure that you understand your child's progress in relation to grade level expectations. Report cards will be issued at the completion of each nine week period. Interim reports will be issued to all students halfway through each quarter. A conference will be held at the end of the first and third quarters.

###### SIBLING EVENTS

During the school year there are various plays, programs and events that occur at each grade level. Parents are invited to participate in these events to watch their children perform. However, due to space constraints and the disruption to the instructional day of others, please do not check siblings out to attend these events. Many parents record these events to replay at home later. We’ll make arrangments whenever possible to record these events to share at home later with siblings.

## STUDENT RECORDS

Student records may be reviewed by parents in the presence of a principal or guidance counselor. If you wish to review your child’s school record you may notify the school and set up an appointment to review the record with the appropriate personnel.

#### VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are a cornerstone of our students’ success in school. We keep track of the volunteer hours during and outside of school. However, volunteers are used in the classroom at the request of the teacher, doing what the teacher needs them to do for the benefit of students in the classroom. If your teacher does not utilize parent volunteers, there are other areas of the school where your services will be used and appreciated. We have developed some guidelines for volunteers to follow when working in the classrooms. We will be asking all volunteers to sign a form that they have received the guidelines and will adhere to these for the well-being of all children. **All volunteers must register yearly in the media center, in order to volunteer in schools or chaperone field trips**. It may take up to 2 weeks to process a volunteer background checks so register if you think you might volunteer or chaperon. At the beginning of the school year, it may take longer than 2 weeks to get approvals back, so plan accordingly.