

Apex Elementary School 2022 - 2023 Parent Handbook



The Peak of Good Learning!

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Apex Elementary Front Office	919-387-2150
Apex Elementary Fax Machine	919-589-6168
Principal - Katie Caggia	kcaggia@wcpss.net
Assistant Principal - Sarah Chi	schi@wcpss.net
Apex Bus Transportation	919-805-3030
Kraft Family YMCA - Office	919-657-9622
Cafeteria Manager - Umecca Marshall-Turner	Extension: 23083
• Lunch Money	
• Menu Questions	
Data Manager - Tonya Oliver	Extension: 23072
• Registration, Power School ID	
• Change of Address, Educational Leave	
Counselor- Alison Bowman	Extension: 23084
Social Worker- Christina Barksdale	Extension: 23085
Nurse- Andria Zawistowski	919-414-1108

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Attendance:

How do I inform the school if my child is going to be absent?

Please contact your students' teacher that your child is going to be absent or is home due to illness. When the student returns to school please send a written note explaining the absence within two days.

How do I get an absence approved for educational reasons?

These forms are available [online](#) and from our front office and must be submitted **two weeks** prior to the absence for Principal review.

Arriving at school:

If I am late coming to school can I just walk in?

No, please ring the front doorbell and wait for a staff member to assist you. Students arriving after 9:15 must be accompanied and checked in by a parent or guardian.

Can I walk my child to class?

At this time, **for safety and security**, parents and guardians may not walk their students to class regularly. We know there may be special circumstances in which your student may need your escort. Please communicate your needs to the front office so that we can accommodate your family's needs. All campus visitors must sign in. No one can be on campus without signing in at the front office.

Communication with Teacher:

What is the procedure for visiting my child's classroom?

Send a note/email asking for an appointment to visit the classroom. Unless parents are volunteers, they are not permitted to visit the classroom during instructional time.

How can I get in touch with my child's teacher?

Send a note in with your child or email the teacher. Our staff directory which includes all staff email addresses, can be found [here](#). Teachers generally return the communication within 24 hours. Teachers will share their preferred form of communication with you.

Dismissal Procedures:

What do I do if I need to check my child out early for a medical appointment?

Ring the front door bell and bring your government issued ID to ask for your child. Office personnel will call for your child via an intercom classroom phone. Please arrive before 3:15 PM to ensure we are able to get your child in a timely manner. If you sign your child out after 12:30 they will be counted as present on a regular school day.

At the end of the day can I pick up my child in the classroom?

Please follow our dismissal guidelines so that we ensure the safest departure from school for all children.

How are students dismissed at the end of the day?

Students are dismissed via announcement over the intercom. Staff is on hand to assist students, particularly younger students, in getting to the right place whether they are bus riders, carpool, daycare van riders, or walkers. Additionally, all student backpacks will be tagged with a color-coded and labeled tag that indicates how they are going home.. Please leave this tag on your child's backpack.

Early Arrival/After School Program

Do you have an early arrival/after school program?

Yes, our early arrival/after school program is currently managed by the Kraft Family YMCA office. The program's hours are 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM. <https://www.ymcatriangle.org/programs/school-programs/after-school-programs>

Transportation:

What is the procedure for changing the way my child will go home?

If you find that you will need to change your child's method of transportation home, please write a note to the teacher and send it in with your child that morning. Occasionally a situation arises where a parent may need to change their child's method

of transportation home after the child has already come to school. In these specific cases, all such requests must be made by 2:45 P.M. If this situation occurs, call the main office at 919-387-2150. Permanent transportation change requests must be made in writing. Email communication is not a reliable method of reaching your child's teacher during the school day as they are teaching students and may not receive it before dismissal.

What if my child misses the bus or van?

The office will contact the parent concerning transportation home. It is important that contact information is complete and current.

Can my child go home with a friend on the bus?

WCPSS Transportation policy requires that every student be registered to a bus and bus stop in order to receive bus transportation service. Students are unable to be let off at any stop other than that which is their permanent bus stop, even if it is a different stop on the same route. Please also note that the school has no control over the functioning of the "Here Comes the Bus" App.

Can I have lunch with my child?

In order to allow your student time to acclimate to school, beginning second quarter, you can have lunch with your child. You will need to sign in as a visitor at the front office when you arrive on campus.

Volunteering:

What is the procedure for volunteering?

To volunteer, parents must register per the instructions below:

Current Volunteers

- **Current volunteers who were approved for the 2021-22 school year do not have to register again this year.**
- You can check with Ms. Andrade, to confirm that a current volunteer is on the list of eligible volunteers.

New Volunteers for 2022-2023

All new volunteer applicants must [register](#) and have an approved criminal record check prior to engaging in volunteer work.

- New volunteer applicants may go to any WCPSS work site and register through wcpss.net by selecting the **Community tab**, and then selecting **Volunteer**.
- **Once you have completed this step, you will receive an additional email with a link to an additional form that you must complete prior to being approved.**
- Applicants who are not approved will receive notice from Employee Relations.
- Please allow at least 2-3 weeks for the background check to be completed by WCPSS security.

Registration Process for WCPSS Employees Who Want to Volunteer

Although WCPSS employees do not have to go through a criminal record check to volunteer, they do need to [register](#).

Additional FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can I take homework, projects, lunches, money and other 'forgotten' items to my child's classroom?

We all need to help children become responsible citizens. Please encourage your child to organize his/her materials and become responsible for homework, projects, lunches and snacks. Lunch and snacks are the only items that will be distributed to students during the school day in order to protect the integrity of the teaching/learning time. Lunch can be brought to the main office and will be retrieved by the classroom teacher at lunch time. The front office is unable to accept money for any classroom. Please ring our front bell for service upon arrival to campus.

What attire is appropriate for school?

To help keep our students focused on learning without distractions, we expect each student to dress appropriately. Our [WCPSS student dress code](#) prohibits disruptive, provocative, revealing, profane, vulgar, offensive, obscene or unsafe clothing or bodily appearances. Shirts and blouses must cover the stomach. Caps, hats, or scarves may not be worn indoors except for religious or other cultural custom requirements. See-through clothing, excessively short or tight clothing, exposed underwear, inappropriate slogans (lewd/vulgar messages or clothing that advertises products or services illegal to minors), any slogans on the seats of students' pants are not permitted. Skate shoes are not permitted at school at any time. For safety reasons, tennis shoes, sneakers, or some type of rubber-soled shoes must be worn for physical education classes, and recess each day. Students who wear flip-flops, clogs, etc., will not be permitted to participate in recess or physical education activities.

ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL ON TIME/SCHOOL HOURS

Our first bell rings at 8:50 AM, when students may report to their classrooms. Students may not be dropped off at school before 8:50 AM unless they are enrolled in the YMCA Early Arrival Program. Students who are not enrolled in the YMCA Early Arrival program should remain in their cars with their parents until the 8:50 AM bell. Students who walk or ride bicycles to school should not arrive before 8:50 AM.



Breakfast begins at 8:50 AM. Students should be in their classrooms by 9:15 AM. Students who arrive after 9:15 AM are tardy. After 9:15 AM parents should bring their child to the front door to check in and receive an admittance slip. It is best for students to arrive at school before 9:10 AM so that they can be seated before the bell rings. Late arrival into the classroom, after the tardy bell, puts children at a disadvantage because they miss classroom instruction. Teachers lose time from scheduled learning activities when they must stop to repeat instructions for children who are late. We appreciate your efforts in ensuring that your child arrives at school on time.

Morning carpool procedure:

- o All cars should enter into the parking lot at the front of the school off Tingen Road. Carpool will zigzag through this parking lot to unload at the main entrance to Apex Elementary. Morning carpool will begin unloading at 8:50 and shut down at 9:15.
- o For the safety of all children, please do not drop any child off in the parking lot to walk across the lanes of traffic anywhere in the carpool lane on their own. Instead, park (in designated spaces only) and walk with your children all the way to the building using the sidewalk, or you may wait in the carpool lane. These are the safest options for children.
- o Be courteous to pedestrians. If pedestrians are waiting to cross the carpool lane, please stop.
- o For the safety of our students, please do not use cell phones in the carpool lane!

ATTENDANCE

Any child who has been absent from school for 6 days will be notified in writing. Any child that accumulates at least twenty-five absences will be granted an attendance hearing. The parent will be notified of the hearing if it must occur. Attendance at school is essential for student learning. An absence from school is **only** excused for the following seven reasons: illness or injury; quarantine; death in the immediate family; medical or dental appointments; court when a student is under subpoena; religious observances; and participation in a valid educational opportunity.

If your child is absent, please send a note to school when he/she returns. If we don't receive a note explaining that the absence was for one of the reasons listed, we must record the absence as unexcused. To be considered present at school, students must be in attendance at least one-half of the student school day (3 hours and 15 minutes). Every school day is important, so we hope you will schedule your family vacations during your track outs. Teachers will provide students with their make-up work when they return to school.

Students may leave school with a parent for dental or doctor's appointments with prior notice to the child's teacher. Whenever possible, please make these appointments before or after school hours. A student who leaves school for any reason during the day is counted absent for the day unless he or she returns and the combined time in school is equal to one-half the school day (3 hours and 15 minutes). If a student is tardy, a parent must check the child in at the office for an admission slip to the classroom. When a child is tardy, it interrupts the child's routine and the routine of the class.

BIRTHDAYS

If families would like student birthdays to be celebrated at school, they may send in small, store-bought treats to share with their classmates during lunch. Please be mindful that some students may not be able to participate due to food allergies or dietary restrictions. A wonderful alternative for recognizing birthdays is to contact the teacher and ask for ideas for the classroom. In addition, please do not send in birthday invitations unless EVERY student is invited to the party.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Unless we receive written instructions from you to the contrary, we will always send your child home on his or her regular bus. Any transportation changes must be requested in writing by a parent or legal guardian. Please submit these written notes directly to your child's teacher in the morning. If a child will not be riding his/her daycare van, please also notify your daycare provider. **Please don't send an e-mail to the teacher during the school day to request a transportation change. Your email may not be opened until after dismissal or the teacher may be absent that day.**

We are not able to accommodate requests for children to ride the bus home with other children. Students cannot go home on buses other than the one to which they are assigned, and must get off at their assigned bus stop per WCPSS policy. **If a child is going to another student's home after school, please have the**



student's carpool number and make sure that written permission from both parents is provided to the school.

The same behaviors that are appropriate in the classroom are appropriate at the school bus stop and on the school bus. Riding a school bus is a privilege that may be revoked if rules are not obeyed. **Bus drivers will NOT release a Kindergarten or 1st grade student at a bus stop unless a responsible person is present at the stop for that child.**

From time to time buses may break down, get behind schedule due to traffic, or have a substitute driver which may make the bus late. **You can follow our Apex ES Bus Updates Twitter account [Aes_Bus](#) where we will have daily tweets when buses depart from and arrive on campus.** Many times if a bus is running late in the morning we may not be aware of the problem. If a bus has not arrived within 15 minutes of your usual pick up time, calling WCPSS Transportation, 919-805-3030, may give you the information you need.

CAFETERIA MEALS

FOR 2022-23: School meals are \$1.50 for (breakfast and \$3.00 for lunch. [To apply for free or reduced-price meals](#), you can do so online by visiting www.MySchoolApps.com. Menus can be accessed here: <https://www.wcpss.net/Page/1847>

CANDY AND GUM

Candy may be used as an occasional treat, but will not be used as a reward or motivation to learn. Gum should only be used when prior approval is granted by the teacher.

CARPOOL

For the safety of students and adults, all families who drive their children to school should drop their kids off in the carpool lane. Adults should not use cell phones or text while waiting in or moving through carpool. Stay in the right lane and proceed to the designated drop-off area. The carpool line will form at the designated marker. At 8:50 AM, you will be directed to move into the carpool circle to begin morning drop off or afternoon pick up. Please stay in a single line and follow the directions of the adults on duty. As a matter of courtesy do not attempt to drive around or pass cars. Students may only be dropped off or picked up in the carpool area. Please do not enter the building to pick up students in carpool. Staff members will have students ready for pick up. Additionally, please do not park your car in the carpool lane and leave it unattended because this creates a fire safety violation. Morning drop off will begin at 8:50 AM. Students must be picked up in the afternoon by 4:00 PM. After that time, students will need to be picked up from the main office.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS, NAME, OR PHONE NUMBER/EMERGENCY CONTACT

Please notify the school office or your child's teacher any time when you have a change of address or phone number. This is very important so we can reach you in case of an emergency. **Please provide us with the best phone number to reach you between 8 AM - 5 PM each weekday.**

CONFERENCES

Teachers will schedule conferences with you after the first and third reporting periods. Parents should schedule conferences with teachers in advance. Our teachers are committed to planning engaging, challenging lessons for all our students, and we work hard to eliminate unnecessary disruptions to the very important work our students will do during the school day. Therefore, please schedule conferences in advance with your children's teachers. Teachers use the time before students arrive in the morning, their planning periods, and frequently their lunch breaks to plan instruction for their students. On many mornings and afternoons they are also involved in meetings. Scheduling conferences in advance will help your child and all the other children in the class.

Current Face Covering Guidance:

NCDHHS current face covering guidance is that face coverings are optional.

CUSTODY/VISITATION AGREEMENTS

Judges' orders regarding custody and visitation are kept on file in the school office so that staff are aware of who is authorized to pick up a child. **Please make sure that the school receives an official copy of the judge's ruling** as we are not required to honor a parent/guardian's interpretation of a court order. Any changes in court orders should be given to the office as soon as possible.

DELAY OR CLOSING OF SCHOOL/INCLEMENT WEATHER

Information on closing or delay of school due to inclement weather is available at <http://www.wcpss.net/>, on



local television, and on the radio. Make-up days are determined by district officials and can be found on this website [WCPSS Traditional Calendar schedule](#) (see weather make up dates in yellow). The early arrival/after school program will follow the delay or closing schedule as well. **Please do not bring your child to school early (i.e. 8:50 AM) when we have a delayed opening, such as a 1-hour delay or 2-hour delay. The decision to delay school due to severe weather is for the safety of staff as well as students, and no one will be here to supervise your children or to open the building for them.**

DISMISSAL

Unless we receive written instructions from you to the contrary, we will always send a child home his/her usual way. **Any transportation changes must be requested in writing by a parent or legal guardian.** Please send these notes in with your child in the morning. **Please don't send an email to the teacher during the school day to request a transportation change... he or she is busy teaching and might not read your email until after dismissal.**

If a student is to be picked up by someone other than a parent, please send a note to the teacher with your child in the morning stating who will pick the child up. For your child's safety, if we are not familiar with the person who you send to pick up your child, we will ask for identification.

If you find it necessary to check your child out of school early, please do so before 3:15 PM. Because of the large number of students we have preparing for dismissal each day we are unable to accommodate requests for early check-out after 3:20 PM. **Please bring a photo id with you when you arrive to check your child out of school. For the safety of all our students, our office staff will ask to see an ID before releasing a child to anyone.**

If you are picking up your student in the carpool lane, you must display your Apex Elementary numbered carpool tag. A set of two carpool tags will be provided to new families as well as families who have not used carpool previously. Carpool tags should be reused from year to year. If you have misplaced your carpool tags, please come into the office. Due to limited supply, you may be charged for replacement tags. Any vehicle not displaying carpool tags during dismissal will be asked to park and sign out their student along with presenting photo ID, through the main office.

DOGS

When you visit the school grounds during the day, please be sensitive to how some young students continue to be very afraid of dogs. If you bring your dog to school at drop-off or dismissal time, please have him/her wait in your car. There should be **no** dogs waiting with parents on campus. Service animals, of course, are permitted around and inside the building at any time.

EARLY ARRIVALS & AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Early arrival care and after school care is provided for students at Apex Elementary by the Kraft Family YMCA. Information and applications are available by contacting the Kraft Family YMCA at 919-657-9622. Students who are not signed up to participate in the YMCA early arrival program may not be on campus before 8:50 AM.

EVENING & WEEKEND EVENTS

Students may not attend evening or weekend events unless supervised by an adult. (They may not be dropped off and then picked up. A supervising adult must be present, and the student must stay with the adult at all times.) The same expectations for student behavior apply at evening and weekend events as during the school day, including our dress code.

FIELD TRIPS

Parent or legal guardian permission is required for students to participate in field trips. We must have the signed permission slip from a parent before a student can leave school. This is necessary for student safety. It is very disappointing to a student when he or she is left behind, but we have no choice. There are no exceptions to this policy.

To participate as a parent chaperone on a field trip, follow these guidelines:

- Parent chaperones must be cleared as volunteers by the school district.
- Teachers determine how many parents are needed as chaperones, and will notify parents regarding participation.
- Parents who participate in field trips may not bring preschool age siblings or siblings from other classes.
- Students participating in field trips must travel to and from the events with their classmates, unless parents who have volunteered to chaperone on a field trip have received prior approval to take their child home at the conclusion of the trip. In this case, parents should submit a request in writing to the teacher (emailed or hand-written note) at least **24** hours in advance of the trip.

FIRE DRILLS/TORNADO DRILLS

Fire drills are conducted each month during the school year. Evacuation routes are posted in each classroom. Tornado drills are also practiced during the year. In the event of severe weather warnings we require all students and staff members to take shelter in the main building of our school until conditions improve.

FRIDAY FOLDERS

Friday folders are sent home every week and contain information from the school and classroom teacher. It can also contain samples of your child's work, assignment sheets, and other important information about your child's academic progress and needs. In many cases, a signature is required for the folder. Please review all its contents carefully and send it back the next school day.

HOMEWORK POLICY

Homework provides students the opportunity to practice and apply previously taught skills and concepts. Each grade level has a common homework plan. The total approximate time per day for completing all homework by grade level is:

- Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade- 15 minutes
- 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade- 60 minutes (30 min each Math and/or ELA)

If your child is spending considerably more or less time on homework than the times listed, please notify his or her teacher.

INVITATIONS/REQUESTS FOR CLASS LISTS

Teachers and staff members cannot assist with this process. If your child brings party invitations to school, please make sure all children in the class are invited. Otherwise, you will need to make other arrangements to distribute invitations.

LOST & FOUND

Please label your child's personal belongings. This will help teachers and staff members locate lost items. Do not allow your child to bring extra money, valuable items, toys, trading cards, devices, or sports equipment to school unless prior written approval has been communicated directly from a child's teacher. We will not assume responsibility for the security of such items. A lost and found area is located near the school cafeteria. If your child has lost an item, please encourage him or her to check this area. Clothing and other items not claimed by the end of each academic quarter will be donated to charity.

MAKE-UP DAYS

When school is closed due to severe weather, students at Apex Elementary will make the day(s) per the [WCPSS Traditional Calendar schedule](#) (see weather make up dates in yellow).

MEALS

Breakfast is served from 8:50 AM – 9:15 AM. Lunch times vary by grade. Snacks will be allowed during instructional time when students are hungry. At this time, visitors are not permitted to be in the building during instructional hours. We do not microwave students' lunches, and students are not permitted to use microwaves in school. No canned or bottled soda drinks are permitted in the cafeteria or for snacks. AES follows all USDA recommended suggestions for Smart Snacks.

MEDICINE

Students who need medications during the school day must first have their parents submit a signed Physician Order for Medication ([Form 1702](#)) from a doctor to the front office. This includes medications such as cough drops, Motrin, and poison ivy creams which must remain in the original container with the original label. 1702 forms are available for parents to obtain in the front office. All medications must be brought to school by an adult and given to the office by a students' parent/guardian.

****Parents: please provide the school with the best phone number to contact you during the hours between 8 AM – 4:30 PM each weekday in the event of student illness. If your phone number changes, please give us updated information.**

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

Apex Elementary parents are encouraged to join the PTA. The PTA provides a great deal of support to the school and its students. The PTA also organizes many of the "extras" that make school fun such as cultural arts assemblies, the school

garden, the science fair, spirit wear, family nights, book fairs, directories for contact information, and visits by guest speakers. Fundraising efforts are led by the PTA and follow all Smart Snack recommendations from the USDA.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Any parent or guardian who does not wish for information such as a student's name, grade, or dates of attendance to be released or who objects to their child being photographed for newsletters and school publications, please notify the school office in writing within 20 school days of the receipt of this notice. Due to confidentiality, we are only able to release information to legal guardians or custodians.

SCHOOL NURSE

Apex Elementary has a school nurse assigned from the Wake County Health Department who is on campus two days each week. The school nurse provides vision and hearing screening for students referred by teachers after a school wide screening is done by a staff member. The school nurse also assists families of students who may require an individual health plan due to medical conditions or severe allergies.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Apex Elementary is a PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Support) model school. We teach students what appropriate behaviors throughout the school look like and motivate students to demonstrate good character and make good choices. We encourage these behaviors by recognizing outstanding individual and class actions. As a community of learners, our students, teachers, staff members, and parent volunteers all deserve an environment that is conducive to learning and teaching. Please refer to our [PAWS Matrix](#) for specific information.

STUDENT CHECK OUT

Parents, please bring a photo ID with you when you arrive to check your child out of school. For the safety of all our students, our office staff will ask to see an ID before releasing a child to anyone. If there is a special event being held in your child's classroom at the end of the day, the teacher will have a sign out log for parents to use to check the child out directly from the classroom. To be considered present at school, students must be in attendance at least one-half of the student school day (3 hours and 15 minutes).

TARDIES

Promptness to school is very important. Students are admitted to class at 8:50 AM. All students arriving to class after 9:15 AM are considered tardy and must report to the office with their parents to pick up a class admittance slip before going to the classroom. Students are considered absent if they arrive at school after 12:30 PM or leave prior to this time.

TOBACCO-FREE SCHOOLS

Wake County Public School System policy is that all school system property is smoke-free. This policy is intended to promote a healthy working and learning environment, and applies to all students, employees, and visitors of the school system.

TOYS/ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Personal items (toys, trading cards, stuffed animals, fidgets) need to be kept at home, unless your child's teacher allows these items in their classroom for rewards, special occasions, etc. The only electronic device that should be brought to school are county assigned Chromebooks.

VANDALISM/PROPERTY DAMAGE

Students who destroy or vandalize school property will be required to pay for the losses and damages. Damage often results from horseplay in the corridors or rooms and students are liable for either accidental or malicious damage.

WEEKLY PRINCIPAL NEWSLETTER

Parents are encouraged to read our *weekly* Principal Newsletter, which will be shared every **Sunday at 3pm**. The newsletter provides information about school-wide events and/or announcements. Additional details about meetings and activities involving the Apex PTA are also provided within the newsletter. This weekly Principal newsletter is a useful complement to the information that parents regularly receive through the communications provided by their child's teacher. The Principal newsletter can also be found [here](#), on the school website.