

**HICKORY CREEK  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
235 HICKORY CREEK TRAIL  
ST. JOHNS, FL 32259**

**HICKORY CREEK ELEMENTARY  
STUDENT AND PARENT HANDBOOK  
2023-2024**



**OFFICE HOURS: 7:55AM-3:45PM  
SCHOOL HOURS: 8:25AM-2:45PM (M, T, TH, F)  
8:25AM-1:45PM (WEDNESDAYS)**

**YVETTE CUBERO-GONZALEZ, PRINCIPAL  
DONNA GARY-DONOVAN, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL  
TIFFANY LO, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**

### Access to our School

All adults must be registered volunteers to enter the school building during school hours. You must complete the district's Volunteer Application if you wish to volunteer in a classroom, participate in any class activities, chaperone/attend a field study, eat with your student, participate in a conference, or attend any performance or event during school hours. Please follow the link on the Hickory Creek website or St. Johns County School District websites to apply: <https://stjohns.keepntrack.com/apply/>.

Once registered as a volunteer, all visitors will sign-in at the front desk and present a valid state identification in order to receive a Volunteer Badge that must be worn in while in the building.

### Address and Telephone Number Changes

Please notify our computer operator, Lizeth Antonetti, immediately if there is a change in your address, telephone number, or emergency contact information. This information is very important in case your child becomes ill or injured. If your address has changed, please bring in three proofs of residency reflecting the updated information.

### Arrival Procedures

Parents will not be able to walk students in the building on the first day of school. We understand that many of our students are new and do not know exactly where to go on the first day. We have a number of staff members stationed all along the entrances and hallways to assist our students. Staff members will have class lists and room numbers to help them get where they need to go. In addition, all students will receive a backpack tag to place on their backpack at the Meet Your Teacher event. The tag will state their name, grade, and teacher's name. **This tag should remain on your child's backpack all year.** The Meet Your Teacher event is a perfect time to have students practice walking to their classroom.

Kindergarten students – will follow staggered start the first four days. Families will sign up for a staggered start date at the Meet Your Teacher event. Kindergarten parents can arrive at 8:45AM (after car line is over), park (we will also have the additional overflow lot open to give more space) and walk their child up to their classroom during staggered start days only. For our instructional day to begin on time we ask that drop be brief. *After staggered start, kindergarten students are expected to walk to their classrooms.* Please note that we will have escorts to assist our kindergarten students get to their destination safely.

PreK students – will arrive in the regular car line anytime between 8:00AM-8:25AM. Our PreK teachers

will be stationed outside during the first week of school to help get PreK students out of car seats and safely into the building. After the first week, our PreK paraprofessionals will help with this process. **\*\*PreK parents – please have your BRIGHT PINK car tag visible for quicker recognition.\*\***

All other students – School Bus Riders and Daycare Van/Bus riders will be assisted by Ms. Gary-Donovan (Assistant Principal) and select staff. Bikers and Walkers will be directed to enter the building through the car line loop. Car Line students will be assisted by Ms. Lo (Assistant Principal) and select staff.

Car Line Protocol for arrival: Students will exit the car on the passenger side only. This is very important to ensure the safety of everyone. Car line student vehicles need to travel all the way down Hickory Creek Trail, go around the cul-de-sac and back up into the school entrance gate. There will be safety cones set out to assist with this traffic pattern. Please **STAY IN THE CAR LINE** once your child(ren) has/have safely exited the vehicle, continue to stay in line until you are through the car loop and out the other gate.

### Attendance

The importance of regular attendance cannot be emphasized enough. All students should be in school every day that they are physically able. It is extremely difficult to successfully keep up with class work and/or intervention if attendance is irregular.

**Excused absences include:** Personal illness, quarantine due to COVID, family emergency, death in the family, religious holidays of the student's established religious faith, required court or law agency appearances, public functions, state competitions, scheduled doctor or dentist appointments.

**Unexcused absences include:** shopping trips, pleasure trips (vacations), suspension from school, appointments without prior approval except in case of emergency, truancy. Refer to [The Student Code of Conduct](#) for more details.

**When Absent:** Parents must notify the teacher of a child's absence. Any student who has been absent from school shall bring a note from a parent or guardian within forty-eight (48) hours of returning to school stating the cause of the absence. Notes and emails should include the following information: full name, teacher, and specific reason for the absence. *Failure to bring in a note will result in an automatic unexcused absence.* If your child is absent for two or more days, contact your child's teacher to arrange for the schoolwork your child has missed. For other absences exceeding 5 days, please notify the principal in writing prior to the absence.

**Tardiness:** School begins at 8:25AM. Any student reporting to school after that time is tardy. *Any tardy student must be accompanied by a parent or guardian to the front office to receive an admittance slip before going to the classroom.* Tardiness is disruptive to the learning environment and has a negative impact on student achievement.

**Early dismissal:** Children will be released **only** to their parents or guardian. **Remember a photo ID is required.** *Students may not be checked out later than 2:00PM. each day and 1:00PM on Wednesdays.*

### **Before and After School Care**

The Hickory Creek Extended Day is a community service for students in grades K-5 who attend the school. Extended day information is available through a link on the Hickory Creek Website.

### **Birthdays**

Families can bring in birthday treats that are pre-packaged, store bought, and/or boxed items. Please contact the teacher 24 hours prior to bringing in any treats. The treat must be pre-approved by the teacher for potential allergens. The safety and health of all students is a priority. The treat will be served during snack time or recess time. Helium balloons are NOT permitted on buses or inside the building.

### **Bus Regulations**

Students are given the privilege of using the services of the St. Johns County School District for transportation to and from school as well as to and from field trips. Standards of discipline must be maintained at all times in order to satisfy safety requirements. Whenever a driver must direct his/her full attention away from the road, danger exists. No student will be allowed to endanger the other students on the bus. Cell phones and other digital devices are not to be used and must remain in the off position to and from school. Parents are not to board the bus at any time. A complete list of bus regulations is available in the [Student Code of Conduct](#). In addition, a Hickory Creek Bus Guideline Form must be signed and returned to school.

### **Cafeteria Prices/Payment**

“Week at the Creek” will be published weekly and will state the menu for the week. General Information about Food and Nutrition Services can be found at:

<http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/food/guide/>

**Prices:** Breakfast \$1.75; Lunch \$3.25

**Food Allergies:** If your child has food allergies, please provide the school nurse with a physician’s note indicating the allergies and appropriate medical attention required. The form can be found on our Clinic Page.

### **Cell phones and other wireless devices\***

Page 26 on [the Student Code of Conduct](#) states:

*Students may possess cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices at school, on buses, and at school functions. However, they must be turned off, stored in student’s backpack, purse, locker or vehicle. The device shall not be used during the school day without administrative approval or on school buses to and from school. Upon administrative approval, use is limited between classes and during lunch only. Students may not use a wireless communication device during instructional time, except when expressly directed by a teacher solely for educational purposes. Failure to comply may result in the device being confiscated. Repeated failure to comply will be considered defiance of school rules.*

\*Wireless devices include smart watches. All smart watches should be on Airplane Mode. Texting, making, or receiving calls, and/or recordings are not allowed. *Failure to comply may result in the device being confiscated.*

### **Character Counts!**

At Hickory Creek Elementary, the St. Johns County Pillars of Character are considered to be vitally important to our students’ development. Incorporating these practices within our school environment and curriculum helps students become caring contributors to society and equips them for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

★ Citizenship ★ Responsibility  
★ Fairness ★ Caring  
★ Trustworthiness ★ Respect

### **Dismissal Procedures**

**Times:** Students are dismissed at 2:45PM. all days except Wednesday. On Wednesdays, students are dismissed at 1:45PM.

Dismissal will be a work in progress for the first two weeks as we learn everyone’s regular mode of dismissal and transportation. We ask that your student begin the school year following their regular, daily mode of dismissal.

**Car Line** – Please have your car tag clearly visible (for those who did not get one at Meet Your Teacher, they should receive one from their teacher sometime during the first week). Please drive all the way down to the cul-de-sac and back up into the property. Students will be released from their classroom to come to the car line. We have a number of staff on duty throughout the hallways to keep them heading in the right direction. Please make sure the car line is visible to staff members helping load students in cars. **PLEASE BE PATIENT** as this process will take a bit of time initially to learn a new

routine. **PLEASE DO NOT SKIP IN LINE OR DRIVE AROUND** a stopped car, unless directed to do so by one of our car line staff members. These directions also pertain to PreK and Kindergarten students.

**Bus-** Bus students will be dismissed by grade level to load the buses. Kindergarten is always dismissed first in order to seat the kindergarten students at the front of the bus. It is very important that students follow the directions given to them by the bus driver.

**Biker and Walkers-** Students will be walked out by staff members at about 2:40PM. It is important that bikers follow Bicycle Safety, please take a moment and review some safety tips with your child. View these videos: [Pedestrian Safety](#) and [Bicycle Safety](#).

**Extended Day-** Staff will follow the procedures shared with families. Students will meet their team lead at the specified location after school. Students will have a snack and then will work on their home learning (about 20-30 minutes). Students will also attend recess, weather permitting.

**Please note:** Once dismissed, a student cannot come back on campus to retrieve personal items. Please talk to your child about retrieving all their belongings BEFORE leaving their classroom. Anything left behind will be there the next morning.

### **Dress Code**

The primary responsibility for a student's attire resides with the student and their parent(s) or guardian(s). The St. Johns County School District expects students to dress in a way that is appropriate for the school day or any school sponsored event. Student dress code requirements reflect fair, equitable, and consistent practices for all students, while contributing to a safe and positive school climate.

Hickory Creek Elementary follows the school district's dress code guidelines explained in [the Student Code of Conduct](#). Of most importance to our elementary students are:

- Students must wear shoes that are safe and appropriate for the learning environment. All shoes and sandals must have a back or strap on the heel.
- Head gear, including but not limited to, caps, hats, bandanas and/or sunglasses shall not be worn indoors on campus unless permitted by school administration for religious or medical reasons. Students may wear sunglasses, hats, or other sun-protective wear while outdoors during school hours.

- Clothing must cover areas from one armpit to the other armpit, down to the mid-thigh. Tops must have shoulder straps and be long enough to adequately cover the waistline and not expose the midriff.
- For special events and occasions, the principal may choose to modify dress code policies. (For example, Pajama Day or Hat Day celebrations.)

### **Emergency Drills**

Emergency drills will be conducted throughout the school year. We will practice drills for the following scenarios: fire, bomb threat/evacuation, inclement weather, AED, active assailant lockdown, and bus emergency evacuation. Safety is of the utmost importance.

### **Home Access Center**

The Home Access Center (HAC), is a web-based application that is part of our Student Information System called eSchoolPlus. Please visit the website below to access or sign up for an account.

<https://homeaccess.stjohns.k12.fl.us>.

This system provides parents and students with a daily summary page, schedule and attendance, discipline information, class work, test scores and course requests for all students in grades 3-5. If you need assistance with your account, please contact our Computer Operator, Lizeth Antonetti.

### **Items Brought to School**

**Animals:** No animals should be brought on to the school campus unless they are an approved service animal.

**Toys:** Toys should not be brought to school. Bringing a toy weapon to school could result in disciplinary action. No fidget toys are allowed on campus, unless stated on a student's 504 or IEP.

### **Lost and Found**

Please put your child's name in all clothing, backpacks, and lunchboxes. In the event that your child does misplace an item, they can check the 'Lost and Found' for lunch boxes and clothing. Articles such as glasses and jewelry will be placed in the front office. Unclaimed articles are periodically donated to organizations that support those in need.

### **Media Center**

The mission of the Hickory Creek Elementary Media Center is to instill a lifelong love of learning while inspiring students to explore, discover, and create through various materials. Our library serves over 800 students! We are open every day, with free checkout times from 8:00AM to 8:30AM and 10:30AM-11:00AM. Classes visit the media center on their Media Lesson and Media Checkout related arts days, but only borrow books on their "Checkout" day. Students can

borrow books for 2 weeks. Checkout limits are as follows:

→ Kindergarten–1 book

→ 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades–2 books

→ 5th grade–3 books

**Please visit our [Media Center website](#) for more information regarding Book Fairs, Instructional Materials, and Library Media.**

### **Medication**

If a child needs to take a prescribed medication during the school day, a parent or guardian must bring the original bottle of medication to the clinic with a completed “Authorization to Assist in the Administration of Medication/Treatment form” signed by a doctor. This form is also required for dispensing over the counter drugs such as Tylenol or cough syrup. If you have any questions, ask our Nurse, Mary Brand.

### **Physical Education/Activities**

To ensure the safety of our children during physical activity, it is highly recommended that every child wear socks and sneakers to school. Children will participate in physical activity. Students will have 20 minutes of Recess, and 30 minutes of PE each day. It is important that they are not wearing crocs, sandals, boots, or flip flops which can present a safety risk during these more rigorous activities. ***Water bottles, hats, and sunscreen are always recommended for outside activities.***

### **PTO**

The PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) provides the school with funds, resources, programs and services that will enrich the educational experience of all HCE students. Your membership is encouraged and is at no cost this school year!

### **School Advisory Council (SAC)**

The School Advisory Council is a state-mandated organization that allows for school-based management and accountability. An improvement plan is developed each year, largely composed of defined areas of growth based on school data. The School Advisory Council is made up of faculty, parents, and other members of the school community. SAC meetings will be posted on our website. All are welcome to attend.

### **School Communication**

There are a variety of ways to communicate with your child’s teacher. Teachers can be reached by phone, emails, and notes in planners. Every Friday, the “School Communication Folder” will be sent home with PTO information, event brochures, and/or important school information. The Week at the Creek Newsletter will be published every Friday and sent via email. Families can

also log on to our school website and find a copy under the tab “Newsletter”.

### **School Messenger**

You may receive a message from the principal or another member of the school or district staff via the School Messenger system. We ask that you listen/read the complete message for this timely information and that you maintain current phone numbers on file so we can make sure these messages are reaching our families in case of urgent or emergency situations.

### **Transportation Changes**

If you need to make a transportation change for your child, please send a **written note** to your child’s teacher that morning or contact Ruth Sherwood at (904) 547-7451.

### **Transportation Waiver Services**

Schools are not authorized to issue bus passes or instruct bus operators regarding bus ridership or stops. The Transportation Department may issue provisional waivers for a specific period of time due to extenuating circumstances. Parents may apply for this waiver via the St. Johns County School District webpage <https://surveys.stjohns.k12.fl.us/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=ptwaiver> . Waivers will not be available from individual schools.

### **Videos, Photographs, Recordings**

Students, parents and visitors are not allowed to videotape, photograph, or make audio recordings while on school premises except for public events (including plays, musicals, fairs, fundraisers, and awards). We ask that videos and photographs containing students other than your own are not posted on social media.

