



2023-2024 Student Handbook

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Name _____

Teacher _____ Grade _____

Atkinson Elementary

“Great Leaders Start Here”

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Welcome

We sincerely appreciate your decision to entrust your child to our care at Atkinson Elementary School. Our utmost priority is the well-being and development of each student, and we are committed to providing them with stimulating and enriching education. Every school year is filled with meaningful, captivating, and rewarding learning experiences designed for the benefit of all children. By working closely with our Atkinson families, we aim to create a positive learning environment where children feel secure, nurtured, and valued. Our approach is rooted in treating every child with dignity and respect, while offering equal opportunities for academic and social growth.

We kindly request that you carefully read through the information presented in this handbook and engage in discussions with your child. It serves as a guiding document for all of us, helping us maintain our focus on our vision statement: "Children who attend Atkinson Elementary School will thrive as lifelong learners."

Atkinson Elementary Mission Statement

The staff at Atkinson Elementary will work together to provide a safe, nurturing environment in which each child has the opportunity to successfully develop the academic and social-emotional skills necessary to contribute to an increasingly diverse society.

Atkinson Elementary Beliefs

- Student learning is the chief priority of the school.
- Each student is a valued individual with unique physical, social-emotional, and intellectual needs.
- Teachers, administrators, parents, and the community share the responsibility for advancing the school's mission.
- Exceptional students are provided with appropriate special services and resources.
- A safe and nurturing environment promotes student learning.
- Students learn in different ways and will be provided with various instructional approaches to support their learning.

School Attendance

Atkinson Elementary is known for its consistently excellent attendance, which can be attributed to the dedicated daily efforts of each family to ensure their child attends school.

Maintaining good attendance is crucial for students to achieve academic success. As per the HCPS Attendance Policy 4400, elementary students must attend a minimum of 164 days to be eligible for promotion to the next grade.

Attendance holds utmost importance throughout the entire school year. In order for a child to perform their best, it is essential for them to be present at school. **It is advised not to plan vacations during the school year, as vacations do not qualify as lawful absences.**

We understand that when your child has a fever, it is not expected for them to attend school. However, please make every possible effort to have them in school whenever they are able. **It is important not to send your child to school if their temperature is 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.** Remember, a child must be free from fever (without the use of fever-reducing medication) for 24 hours before returning to school.

1. Submit medical verification to the school principal if your child has a chronic illness or has been hospitalized for an extended period.
2. Parents must provide the school with a note identifying the reason for the absence within three (3) days of their child returning to school. Absences are considered unlawful without an excuse note. The note should be dated and specify the reason for the absence.

An **unlawful absence** is defined as a student's willful absence from school without the knowledge of the parent/guardian or the student's absence for any reason other than illness or injury, quarantine, death in the immediate family, medical or dental appointments, court or administrative proceedings, or religious observances.

According to NC General Statute (GS:115C-378e), if unlawful absences (10 in all) cannot be justified, the principal is required to investigate and further notify the District Attorney of suspected truancy or file a complaint with the juvenile intake counselor.

Attendance Violations:

Providing after-school student attendance recovery can incur expenses for the school. It is important to note that attendance recovery does not substitute for the instruction missed during regular school sessions.

In order to maintain proper attendance records, students who have been absent for more than 16 days without appropriate documentation will be required to furnish specific medical excuse notes in subsequent years while enrolled at Atkinson. These excuse notes must clearly mention the school day on which the student was absent.

Students with ten or more unexcused absences will be referred to our district attendance interventionist for further assistance. Continued excessive unexcused absences may result in a criminal summons for attendance violation. If this policy applies, the administration will reach out to the student's family to address the situation.

You can monitor your student's attendance and more by using PowerSchool. Access PowerSchool by visiting <https://hcps.powerschool.com/public/> or using the PowerSchool for Parents App available for your mobile device.

There is a correlation between elementary school attendance and high school success.



Tardies:

If students arrive after 8:00 a.m., it is necessary for parents or guardians to sign them in at the office. Tardiness can have a negative impact on your student's valuable educational instruction. It also disrupts the learning process for other students. It is important to be considerate of the education of all students.

Repeated instances of tardiness may lead to a referral to the Henderson County Public Schools' attendance interventionist and necessitate attendance at required conferences.

Early Pick-up (Checking Out Early):

We kindly request that parents or guardians avoid picking up their child before the regular dismissal time. Early dismissals can disrupt the educational process, not only for the departing child but also for other students. If a child misses half a day of instruction and does not return, they will be marked absent for the entire day. However, attending any portion of the day is beneficial for the child's learning. Whenever possible, please schedule appointments after school and provide the school with medical appointment notes when necessary.

Only approved parents or guardians listed on the student's information sheet are allowed to sign out students for early dismissal. This procedure is in place to prioritize the safety and well-being of your child. Please ensure that your contact information is up to date to facilitate this process, particularly during emergencies or in case of early weather-related school closures. Students will not be called to the office before your arrival as we are required to verify your identification before contacting the child to come to the office.

Arrival process

Considering the heavy traffic on Old Kanuga Road during mornings and afternoons, it is crucial to plan your departure time from home accordingly, ensuring that your student arrives at the building no later than 7:55 a.m. For car riders, it is advisable to arrive at school between 7:30 a.m. and 7:55 a.m. When dropping off, please make sure to unload your student from the passenger side of the vehicle by the curb in the circle at the front of the building, rather than from the parking lot.

Please only unload your student when you are in one of the designated unloading spaces and be prepared to do so promptly. Please note that visitor parking is limited, and it is strictly prohibited to park in the bus parking lot as it is unlawful and interferes with bus operations. For the safety and security of everyone, all students and visitors should enter through the front doors.

To maintain a safe environment, please refrain from parking in the driveway or on Old Kanuga Road as it creates unsafe situations. Encourage your student to develop independence by walking to class alone as soon as they are ready. Adults monitoring the front door and hallways will be available to provide assistance if needed.

Breakfast is available for all students at no cost. If your child is a car rider and intends to have breakfast at school, please ensure they arrive before 7:45 a.m. to allow sufficient time for them to enjoy their meal. Additionally, students arriving before 7:30 a.m. will need to enroll in PSAM (Pre-School and Morning Supervision).

Dismissal process

To ensure student safety during car rider dismissal, we have established a dismissal procedure. We greatly appreciate your ongoing cooperation in keeping our students safe. Upon arriving on campus, cars should form two lines around the parking lot to minimize vehicles stopping on Old Kanuga Road.

We will announce student names as listed on the car tags provided by the office. If you do not have a car tag, your child can be dismissed from the office with proper identification. Please contact the school if you need additional car tags for your family.

As cars approach the traffic circle at the front of the school, they should merge into one line. Once all cars have come to a complete stop, we will direct students to load into the vehicles. After you have loaded your student and the car in front of you has left, you may slowly and safely leave the campus.

We kindly request that you refrain from signing out your child during the last 15 minutes of the school day, unless it is an emergency. Doing so can disrupt our dismissal procedures.

For parents who walk into the building for end-of-the-school day dismissal, please present a photo ID.

Visitor parking is limited, and it is strictly prohibited to park in the bus parking lot due to its unlawfulness and interference with bus operations. Please avoid parking in the driveway or on Old Kanuga Road as it creates unsafe situations.

All students should be picked up by 3:25. Please plan to arrive by then to pick up your student. Students picked up after 3:25 should enroll in PSPM (Post-School Program and Supervision).

We deeply appreciate your cooperation as we continue to prioritize student safety and seek ways to enhance our monitoring efforts!



Bus Transportation

All bus riders are expected to follow the authority of the bus driver and adhere to the bus rules. Safety is our top priority on school buses. We utilize cameras for periodic monitoring of bus activity.

Our buses are equipped with seat belts, and all passengers are required to wear them until the bus comes to a complete stop. Students may only remove their seat belts when they have reached their designated stop or when directed by the driver.

While on the bus, students should refrain from talking loudly or yelling in order to maintain a peaceful environment.

Students are expected to get off at the same location every day. If there is a need to permanently change your stop, please contact the school office in advance so that we can make the necessary adjustments to the bus route.

Our buses operate at near-full capacity, and students have assigned seats. Please do not use bus transportation to facilitate after-school friend get-togethers. Students can either be car riders or parents can arrange to meet after school hours. We appreciate your understanding in this matter.

Persistent misbehavior may result in bus suspension. During the suspension period, it is the guardian's responsibility to provide transportation for the student. It is important to note that staying out of school during a suspension period constitutes an unlawful absence.

School Bus Expectations:

- Observe the same expectations as in the school
- Wear seat belt
- Sit and remain in assigned seat
- Be courteous; use no profane language
- Do not eat or drink on the bus
- Keep the bus clean
- Cooperate with the bus driver
- Do not be destructive
- Keep head, hands, feet and all items inside the bus

Bus Routes

If you have any inquiries regarding your child's bus route or if you wish for your child to start riding the bus, please don't hesitate to contact the school. In the event that you need to make a permanent change to your stop, kindly reach out to the school office in advance so that necessary adjustments can be made to the route. It's important to note that the district's transportation department designs bus routes with a focus on fuel efficiency.

Bus Stop Location

If you have any inquiries about your child's bus stop time, please do not hesitate to contact the school for assistance. It is important to note that bus stop times in our rural mountain area can vary significantly due to ridership. Students are required to disembark at the same location every day. To ensure a smooth experience, we recommend allowing a 15-minute window from the provided stop time for your designated location. Please be aware that there may be fluctuations in ridership during the initial weeks of the school year, which can result in changes to stop times.

Bus Drivers and Route Cancellations

Similar to many other schools, Atkinson is currently facing a shortage of licensed school bus drivers. Occasionally, bus drivers may be absent, and we make every effort to secure a substitute driver. Although it is rare, there may be instances where we have to temporarily cancel a bus route until a driver is available. If you are interested in becoming a school bus driver, please contact the school for more information. Your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

Communicating Transportation Changes

To ensure effective communication regarding transportation changes, please be aware that teachers may not receive electronic messages (such as through apps, email, or SMS) during the school day. For any last-minute transportation changes, kindly contact the school office by 2:00 PM.

If there are changes to your student's after-school transportation arrangements, please send a note to the teacher providing specific details about the new arrangements. It is important to be clear and precise in your communication.

When your child is going home with another student, please send a note to your child's teacher. All parties involved should also send their respective notes. Please note that bus transportation cannot be used for accommodating guests.

If you have custody papers for your child, please ensure they are on file with the school. Without proper court documents, we are unable to enforce custody agreements.

Communicating to the school

To ensure effective communication between the school and home, please inform the school promptly of any changes in telephone numbers, email addresses, physical addresses, or other vital information. It is important that we have updated information to facilitate communication. When you call to add or remove any information, we will verify that we are speaking to an approved person for security purposes.

If you have custody papers for your student, please ensure that we have the most recent file. In the absence of custody documentation, we follow the information provided on the birth certificate.

If any issues arise, we encourage you to schedule a conference with your student's teacher to help resolve the problem. If further assistance is required, please feel free to contact the principal or counselor.

When scheduling conferences, please try to arrange them before or after school hours. Whenever possible, kindly schedule conferences in advance. Please note that Wednesdays are typically unavailable due to staff meeting days.

Occasionally, a teacher may be able to return your phone call during their planning time. However, we kindly request that you do not request for a teacher to leave the classroom to take a phone call. If you leave a message, the teacher will return your call as soon as they have available time.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in making appointments to speak with school staff. By working together, we can ensure effective communication and address any concerns or inquiries you may have.

Lastly, please encourage your student to take responsibility for carrying messages back and forth between you and their teachers. This includes important communications such as school notices, teacher notes, and other relevant information. Developing this sense of responsibility will benefit your student's organizational skills and foster effective communication channels.

Emergency drills

Ensuring the safety of our students is a top priority at Atkinson. We maintain a close partnership with local emergency services to create a secure learning environment. Our local officers frequently visit our students, fostering positive relationships and promoting safety awareness. We have implemented multiple safety procedures, which our staff regularly reviews to stay prepared.

Fire drills are conducted once a month to ensure that students and staff are familiar with evacuation procedures in the event of a fire emergency. This regular practice helps to promote a swift and organized response.

In March, we participate in a Statewide Tornado drill. This drill allows us to practice tornado safety procedures and ensure that everyone is well-prepared in the event of severe weather.

Additionally, we conduct school safety drills and emergency procedure drills periodically to further enhance our readiness and response capabilities.

By regularly practicing these drills and procedures, we aim to maintain a safe and secure environment for all students and staff members.



Dismissal: Early or Emergency

In the event of school closings or emergency dismissals, important information will be communicated through various channels. Announcements will be made on local radio and TV stations, as well as through our automated telephone system. You can also find updates on the HCPS website and social media platforms, such as Twitter <https://twitter.com/hcpsnc> and Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/HCPSNC/>.

We kindly request that you rely on these resources for dismissal information and refrain from calling the school directly. To assist with early dismissal planning, we provide an early dismissal plan form at the beginning of each school year. Please make advance arrangements based on the instructions indicated on this form.

Please note that there are designated days when school will dismiss at noon due to staff meetings and professional development. The specific dates for early dismissal can be found on the school calendar, which is subject to change in case of inclement weather. For the most up-to-date information, please visit the HCPS website at www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org.

By utilizing these communication channels and adhering to the provided guidelines, we can ensure a smooth and efficient dismissal process during early or emergency situations.

Student Grades and Progress Reports

You can stay informed about your student's grades, attendance, assignments, and more through PowerSchool. Access PowerSchool by visiting <https://hcp.s.powerschool.com/public/> or by downloading the PowerSchool for Parents App on your mobile device.

We strongly encourage parents or guardians to regularly monitor their student's grades to stay updated on their progress. Throughout the school year, report cards and midterm progress reports for students in grades 3-5 will be available online.

We also encourage all parents to schedule conferences with their child's teacher to discuss their academic progress. These conferences provide valuable opportunities to gain insights into your student's performance and work collaboratively with the teacher to support their educational journey.

By utilizing PowerSchool and engaging in teacher conferences, we can work together to ensure that your student receives the support they need to succeed academically.

Assessments

Throughout the school year, students will engage in both local and state assessments. These assessments serve as important tools to evaluate student progress and ensure that they meet the necessary standards. As a school community, we are dedicated to supporting every child in achieving success.

Accountability is a shared responsibility among students, parents, and educators. By working together, we can create an environment that fosters growth and learning. Each member of our community plays a crucial role in the educational journey of our students.

With the collaborative efforts of students, parents, and educators, we can pave the way for success and help students meet their academic goals. Together, we can achieve great things.

Food Service

We take pride in providing well-planned and nutritious meals in our cafeteria. Parents are welcome to join us and enjoy meals with their children. We encourage you to communicate with your child's teacher and be mindful of bringing outside foods to ensure a smooth dining experience for all students.

2023-2024 lunch and breakfast prices

Breakfast:	Free
Lunch:	\$3.50

There are two options for payment: paying for meals daily or prepaying. To conveniently prepay for meals, you can use the online platform at www.k12paymentcenter.com/. This system allows you to manage and add funds to your child's account securely.

By providing well-balanced meals and fostering a positive dining environment, we aim to support the overall well-being and nutritional needs of our students.

Students may either pay for meals daily or prepay. Prepay for meals online at: www.k12paymentcenter.com/

Food Allergies

If your child has any food allergies, it is crucial to report them to your child's teacher and the school office. This information will be shared with the school nurse and the child nutrition staff. It may be necessary to provide additional documentation, such as an individual medical or nutrition plan, to ensure the appropriate accommodations are in place for your child's safety and well-being.

By promptly informing the school about your child's food allergies, we can take the necessary precautions to prevent exposure and provide appropriate support. Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated as we strive to create a safe and inclusive environment for all students.

Foods Sent to the Classrooms/School

In order to ensure the safety of our students and prevent food allergies and food-borne illnesses, we have implemented a policy that prohibits the use of home-produced items during school-based parties and celebrations. For these events, all foods must be commercially prepared, packaged, and properly labeled.

To coordinate celebrations involving snacks or food, please communicate with your student's teacher. It is recommended to follow the USDA Smart Snack guidelines, which can be found at <https://goo.gl/7gj5nz>. These guidelines provide helpful information on selecting nutritious and suitable snacks for school events.

By adhering to these guidelines and policies, we can create a safer environment for all students and ensure that food-related activities are enjoyable and inclusive. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Water Bottles

Since the installation of our water bottle saver stations in 2021, Atkinson Elementary has successfully saved over 30,000 water bottles. We value the well-being of our students and recognize the importance of staying hydrated. As part of our efforts to promote healthy habits, we would like to remind our ATK families of our water policy:

In the classrooms, students are allowed to have water. We encourage them to bring a personalized screw top lid water bottle. However, during lunchtime, we ask that students consume milk, juice boxes, or water provided by the school. We kindly request that sodas, energy drinks, and water sweeteners be saved for consumption at home.

This policy not only promotes healthy choices but also helps maintain a clean environment within our school by minimizing accidental spills. We appreciate your cooperation in ensuring that your student follows these guidelines.

Lost and Found

Our Lost and Found area is conveniently located just outside the office area. If your student has misplaced any items such as jackets, sweaters, shirts, and more, we encourage them to check the Lost and Found section.

To increase the chances of lost items being returned to their rightful owners, we kindly request that you clearly label all materials belonging to your student. This simple step makes it easier for us to identify and return lost items to their proper owners.

Thank you for your cooperation in ensuring that lost items have the best chance of being reunited with their owners. We appreciate your efforts in keeping track of your student's belongings.

Leader-in-Me

The Leader in Me is a framework based on The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People, designed to teach students essential leadership and life skills for the 21st century. It aims to create a culture of student empowerment, operating on the belief that every student has the potential to become a leader.

The Leader in Me provides elementary schools with a comprehensive model and process that addresses the unique challenges faced by students during their formative years. It acknowledges that parents, educators, and school administrators are invested in their child's overall well-being, encompassing physical, mental, social, and economic aspects that can impact academic success.

At Leader in Me Schools, teachers, staff, and administrators are empowered to support students in these areas by creating a conducive learning environment. This environment is built upon five core paradigms that shape the behavior of the entire school community, including staff, students, and families.

The five core paradigms of Leader in Me are as follows:

Everyone can be a leader: This paradigm promotes the belief that leadership is not limited to a select few but can be cultivated in every individual, empowering students to take on leadership roles and responsibilities.

Everyone has a genius: Recognizing the unique talents and strengths of each student, this paradigm encourages the development and utilization of these strengths to foster personal growth and success.

Change starts with me: Emphasizing personal accountability, this paradigm encourages individuals to take ownership of their actions, attitudes, and contributions, fostering a sense of responsibility and promoting positive change.

Educators empower students to lead their learning: In this paradigm, educators play a vital role in empowering students to take ownership of their learning journey, fostering a collaborative and student-led approach to education.

Develop the whole person: Acknowledging the holistic nature of education, this paradigm focuses on nurturing the overall well-being of students, encompassing their physical, mental, and social development, to support their growth as well-rounded individuals.

By implementing these core paradigms, the Leader in Me framework aims to provide students with the necessary skills, mindset, and support to thrive academically, personally, and as leaders in the 21st century.

The 7 Habits of the Leader in Me framework that your child will be learning about are

- Habit 1: Be Proactive ®
- Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind ®
- Habit 3: Put First Things First ®
- Habit 4: Think Win-Win ®
- Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood ®
- Habit 6: Synergize ®
- Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw ®

Behavior Expectations

At our school, we believe in fostering a culture where everyone is treated with dignity, courtesy, and respect. We recognize that every student has the right to learn in a positive classroom environment, free from behavioral disruptions. Similarly, every teacher has the right to teach without interruptions.

To create a conducive learning atmosphere, we hold all students to high behavior expectations. We expect students to demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, teachers, and staff members. This includes following classroom rules, actively participating in learning activities, and engaging in positive interactions with others.

By upholding these behavior expectations, we strive to cultivate a supportive and harmonious learning environment for all members of our school community. Together, we can create an atmosphere where everyone can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

PBIS - Positive Behavior Interventions and Support

The Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) model is implemented in our school to recognize and reinforce positive behavior exhibited by students on a daily basis. This program is built upon clearly defined expectations that are consistently and fairly enforced throughout the entire school building.

To promote positive behavior, individual and class incentives are used to reward students who demonstrate good behavior and adhere to the expectations set forth. These incentives serve as recognition for their efforts and reinforce a positive learning environment.

In cases where students do not meet the behavior expectations, a range of interventions may be employed. These interventions can include verbal warnings, checklists, mediation, loss of privileges, parent contact or conference, and in some cases, out-of-school suspensions. It is important to note that the interventions used are tailored to address the specific needs of the student.

Students are encouraged to report any problems or conflicts with other students immediately and are expected not to engage in retaliation. We emphasize the importance of addressing conflicts peacefully and responsibly. Any student involved in disruptive behavior, regardless of who initiated the conflict, will be subject to consequences.

Parents will be notified in the event of repeated or significant behavioral issues to ensure open lines of communication and collaboration in addressing and resolving these challenges.

In addition to the PAWS expectations, which serve as the school-wide behavior guidelines, individual classroom expectations may also be implemented. Students are always expected to make good choices and demonstrate responsible behavior.

By implementing PBIS and maintaining consistent expectations, we aim to create a positive and supportive school environment that promotes student growth, fosters respectful interactions, and enables all students to make responsible decisions.

Report it, Don't ignore it

Taking prompt and consistent action against bullying behavior is crucial in sending the message that such behavior is unacceptable. Research has shown that when adults respond quickly to bullying, it can help put a stop to such behavior over time. Parents, school staff, and adults in the community play a vital role in preventing bullying by openly discussing it, creating a safe school environment, and implementing a community-wide strategy to prevent bullying.

To actively combat bullying, we encourage the following principles:

- I will not bully.
- I will help those who are being bullied.
- I will speak up for those who are being bullied.

If you witness or experience any bullying incidents or have safety concerns, it is important to report them to school staff. Incidents may occur at school, on the bus, or even through social media. Anyone can report bullying or concerns through an anonymous online website or by using the district reporting app. Remember, reporting these incidents is essential—don't ignore them.

For reporting incidents or concerns related to bullying, please visit the following website:
www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/report/

Parents can also find valuable resources on bullying prevention at www.stopbullying.gov. This website serves as a great resource for parents to gain information and guidance on addressing and preventing bullying.

By actively reporting and addressing bullying incidents, we can create a safe and supportive environment where all students can thrive and feel valued. Let's work together to prevent bullying and ensure the well-being of our school community.

School Counseling Services

Our school offers comprehensive counseling services to support the well-being and development of our students. Teachers and parents have the opportunity to refer students for individual and small group counseling by contacting our school counselor. Additionally, upper-grade students may also refer themselves for counseling.

Counseling sessions are tailored to address the specific needs of each student. Our counselor is equipped to address a range of issues, including but not limited to peer relationships, social skills, academic performance, self-confidence, family matters, and emotional challenges such as grief, anxiety, anger, and stress. By providing a supportive and confidential space, our counselor aims to help students navigate these issues and develop effective coping strategies.

In addition to individual and small group counseling, our counselor also delivers classroom guidance lessons to all students. These lessons focus on supporting students' cognitive, social-emotional, and career development. By addressing these areas, we strive to enhance their overall well-being and equip them with important skills for success.

Our counseling services are designed to create a nurturing and inclusive environment where students can thrive academically, emotionally, and socially. We encourage open communication and collaboration between students, parents, and teachers to ensure that the counseling needs of our students are met effectively.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to our school counselor if you have any concerns or if you believe your child could benefit from counseling support. Together, we can help our students overcome challenges, foster resilience, and promote their overall growth and success.

What is a School Social Worker?

A School Social Worker is a highly trained mental health professional with a degree in social work. They specialize in providing services that address social, emotional, and life adjustments of students and families within the school and society. School Social Workers serve as a crucial link between the home, school, and community, offering direct and indirect support to students, families, and school personnel to promote academic and social success.

How can school social workers help you?

Services to Students: School Social Workers provide crisis intervention, social skills development, and counseling to students. They offer support during challenging times, help students build healthy relationships, and assist in managing their emotions and behaviors.

Services to Schools: School Social Workers act as advocates, especially within the realm of special education, behavior management, and addressing child abuse and neglect. They collaborate with school staff to develop strategies that enhance the learning environment and ensure the well-being of students.

Services to Families: School Social Workers assist families in connecting with community resources related to mental health, domestic violence, and basic needs. They provide guidance and support during Child Family Team Meetings, facilitating communication and collaboration among families, schools, and service providers.

Service to School and Community: School Social Workers mobilize community resources and advocate for support from mental health agencies. They serve as liaisons between the school and the community, fostering partnerships and promoting collaboration to address the diverse needs of students and families.

In summary, School Social Workers play a vital role in supporting students, families, schools, and communities. They are dedicated professionals who provide a range of services to ensure the overall well-being and academic success of students.



Student Health & Medications

To ensure the safe administration of medication, whether prescription or over-the-counter, we require a special release form to be completed by a parent and, if applicable, a physician's authorization for prescription medication. Medication must be in its original, unopened packaging for over-the-counter medication, or in a prescription bottle or packet with the label intact. Please do not send medication to school with your student. It is the responsibility of the parent or an adult to bring the required forms and medication to the school office. Additionally, there is a form available for certain over-the-counter medications that may allow us to administer them as needed. You can obtain both of these forms from <http://www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/student-health/forms/> or our school office.

If your child has a fever of 100 °F or higher, is dealing with lice, pinkeye, or any other obvious illness, we kindly request that you do not send them to school. For the safety of all students, a child must be fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medication for a period of 24 hours before returning to school.

Our school maintains basic first aid supplies to address minor scratches and scrapes. However, in the case of a serious injury or illness, we will contact parents to assume responsibility for making decisions regarding their child's health.

If your child does not feel well or exhibits symptoms of illness, our staff will take temperature readings. If a fever is present, we will contact you to come and pick up your child. It is imperative that we are able to reach someone in case of an emergency, so please ensure that we have your current phone numbers where you can be easily reached.

Head lice can be a common issue in elementary school settings. In cases where lice have been reported in a classroom, letters will be sent home to notify the students and their families.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding medical matters, please do not hesitate to contact our school nurse. They will be happy to assist you.

It is important for families to comply with all state laws regarding immunizations and health assessments. We appreciate your cooperation in keeping our school community healthy and safe.



Personal Property

To ensure the safety of personal belongings and minimize distractions in the learning environment, we have guidelines regarding personal property at our school.

We strongly advise students to keep personal items that are not necessary for participation in school activities at home. Bringing valuables to school is discouraged, as the school cannot be held responsible for lost or damaged items.

Certain items, such as electronic games, laser pointers, trading cards, toys, fidgets, and music players, are not permitted on school grounds. However, electronic devices may be brought to school with teacher permission, solely for educational purposes.

Toys should not be brought to school, except on designated "show and tell" days, and only if specifically requested by the individual teacher.

By adhering to these guidelines, we aim to create a focused and productive learning environment for all students. We appreciate your cooperation in ensuring that personal property is appropriately managed and that the school remains a safe and conducive place for learning.

Office Phone:

The office phone at our school is available for students to use in case of emergencies such as illness or injury. If a student needs to contact a parent or guardian due to an emergency, they will be permitted to use the school phone.

It is important to note that arrangements for early dismissals due to inclement weather should be made in advance and communicated to the school. Students will not be able to call for early dismissal; instead, we will follow the information provided on the early dismissal transportation sheet that you will be asked to complete for your student's teacher.

During regular school hours, students will not be called out of class to use the phone unless it is deemed an emergency situation.

By adhering to these guidelines, we ensure that the use of the office phone is reserved for urgent and necessary circumstances, promoting a focused and uninterrupted learning environment for all students.

Student cell phones

To minimize distractions and maintain a productive learning environment, the use of cellular data and calls by students is prohibited during the school day. This includes the use of cell phones, smartwatches, tablets, and other wearable communication devices.

It is important that students keep their cell phones and other communication devices turned off and stored in their backpacks at all times while on school grounds during the school day.

By enforcing these guidelines, we aim to promote student focus and engagement in the classroom. It allows students and teachers to fully participate in the learning process without unnecessary interruptions.

We appreciate your cooperation in adhering to this policy and ensuring that students understand the importance of limiting their use of cellular devices during school hours.

Parent and Community Involvement

The Atkinson PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization) serves as a vital link between parents and teachers at Atkinson Elementary. Our shared objective is to provide our children with the best possible educational and social experiences. Through collaboration and teamwork, we strive to enhance the learning environment and give our students every advantage in their school journey.

The PTO is committed to being actively involved in various aspects of school life. This includes organizing volunteer opportunities, cultural events, and special programs that foster a sense of community within Atkinson. While fundraising is an important component of our efforts, we also aim to provide volunteers for enriching activities that benefit our school and students.

We value the dedication and commitment of our teachers and staff who consistently demonstrate genuine care, devotion, and love for Atkinson and our children. Your support is essential to the success of the PTO, and we express our heartfelt gratitude for all that you do.

Additionally, we extend our thanks to the parents and community members who generously volunteer their time and contribute to the success of our PTO. It is through the collective efforts of our strong foundation that our PTO can thrive and continue to make a positive impact on our school community.

We invite all parents and community members to join us in making a difference at Atkinson Elementary by becoming involved in our PTO. Together, we can create a nurturing and enriching environment for our students, fostering their growth and success.

Volunteers play a crucial role in the success of Atkinson Elementary School. We wholeheartedly welcome and encourage parent and community involvement in our school community. Your contribution of time and talents can greatly enhance our programs and curriculum, providing valuable support to our students and staff.

If you are interested in volunteering at Atkinson Elementary, we invite you to explore the HCPS volunteer website at <http://www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/human-resources/volunteers/>. This resource provides detailed information about the volunteer process and requirements.

For further assistance or to inquire about specific volunteer opportunities at our school, please feel free to contact the front office. Our dedicated staff will be more than happy to provide you with the necessary information and help you get involved.

We sincerely appreciate your willingness to contribute to our school community as a volunteer. Together, we can make a positive impact on the educational journey of our students and create a thriving learning environment.

Rules and Regulations

To ensure a safe and conducive learning environment for all students, the following rules and regulations must be adhered to at all times:

Prohibited Practices: The following practices are strictly prohibited: use of tobacco products including e-cigarettes, defacing or destroying school property, running in the halls or buildings, fighting, bullying, buying, trading, or selling items during the school day, stealing, tardiness, gambling, cheating, disrespectful or disruptive

behavior, disrespectful or disruptive language, vandalism, and chewing gum. Any items or behaviors that may cause harm, danger, or disruption to the educational process are not allowed.

Prohibited Items: The following items are strictly prohibited: medication of any kind (medication must be administered by office staff or the school nurse with proper forms completed by parent/physician), knives, razor-type or sharp instruments, weapons of any kind, and toys, including toy guns. For further details on prohibited items, please refer to the Henderson County Public Schools Student Code of Conduct at <http://www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/administrative-services/student-code-of-conduct/>.



Dress Code: School dress should be appropriate and suitable for the school environment. Spaghetti straps, muscle shirts, crop tops, short shorts/skirts, and any clothing advertising drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or any disruptive message are not allowed. Tank tops should have a minimum width of two fingers, and shorts/skirts should be at least fingertip length. Caps/hats and book bags must be stored away during class or while inside the building. Tennis shoes with wheels are not permitted.

Personal Belongings: It is important to label your child's name on their jackets/coats, lunch boxes, water bottles, and backpacks to avoid any confusion or loss of belongings.

Water Bottles: Please provide your student with a personalized water bottle with a screw top lid. In the classrooms, students are allowed to have water. We kindly request that sodas, energy drinks, and water sweeteners be saved for consumption at home.

Party Invitations: Please refrain from sending party invitations to be distributed at school unless every child in the class will receive one. This helps to prevent hurt feelings and maintains a positive classroom environment.

Gifts/Flowers: Kindly avoid bringing gifts or flowers for your child to school. Such items can interrupt the instructional day and are best handled at home.

By adhering to these rules and regulations, we create a safe, respectful, and focused learning environment for all students. We appreciate your cooperation and support in ensuring that our school remains a positive and conducive place for education.

Child Care - PSAM/PSPM

We offer two child care programs to support the needs of our families:

PSAM (Pre-School and Morning Supervision): PSAM provides morning child care services from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. This program ensures that students are supervised and cared for before the start of the regular school day.

PSPM (After-School Child Care Program): PSPM operates from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on regular school days in our cafeteria. This program offers a safe and structured environment for students after school hours.

Registration for both programs is required, and you can obtain a registration form from the school office or by visiting the HCPS Child Care website at www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/child-care.

Please note that parents are responsible for paying a fee for each child who attends these child care programs. For additional information and any inquiries, please call 697-4936.

We understand the importance of providing reliable and convenient child care options, and we strive to ensure the well-being and supervision of our students during these extended hours.

Safety and Security

Ensuring student safety is our top priority. To maintain a secure environment, we have established the following protocols:

1. **Office Entrance:** All visitors must enter the school through the designated office entrance. This helps us monitor and control access to the premises.
2. **Identification and Visitor's Badge:** All visitors are required to present identification and sign in at the office. Upon sign-in, visitors will be issued a visitor's badge to wear during their time in the school. Teachers are instructed to request that individuals without a badge return to the office for proper sign-in.
3. **Appointment Courtesy:** We kindly request that you make an appointment if you plan to visit or observe during the instructional day. This allows us to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made and minimize disruptions.
4. **Lunchtime Visits:** If you intend to join your child for lunch, please notify the teacher by sending a note. This helps us prepare for your visit and ensure a smooth lunchtime experience.
5. **Door Security:** To enhance security, all interior and exterior doors will be kept closed and locked at all times. This measure helps maintain a controlled access environment.

By implementing these safety measures, we aim to create a secure and focused learning environment for all students. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding in following these protocols.

School Insurance

We understand that accidents can occur, especially during active play and school-related activities. To provide additional support to parents, we offer an affordable accidental insurance policy for students.

To enroll in the insurance program, parents can obtain an enrollment form by mail directly from the insurance company. Please note that insurance payments should not be sent to the school. Premiums are to be paid directly to the insurance company.

It is important to highlight that insurance coverage can be purchased at any time during the school year, ensuring that students have the necessary protection in case of accidents.

For more detailed information about the school insurance program, including enrollment procedures and coverage details, you can visit the HCPS website at <http://www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/parents/>. This resource will provide you with additional information and answer any questions you may have.

We encourage parents to consider this insurance option to provide an added layer of financial protection for their children while at school.

Student Records

Confidentiality and Access to Records

At Henderson County Public Schools, we adhere to the guidelines set forth by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1971 (FERPA). This act ensures the privacy and confidentiality of student education records. As a parent or authorized individual, you have certain rights regarding the inspection, review, and control of access to these records.

Within 45 days, parents, eligible students (those 18 years of age or older or attending a post-secondary institution), and school officials with a legitimate educational interest may access and review student education records. It is important to note that access to student records by others is restricted and can only be released in accordance with established legal guidelines.

If you wish to obtain a complete copy of the policy regarding confidentiality and access to student records, you can request it from any Henderson County Public School or the office of the Superintendent. Additionally, if you have concerns or believe there has been a failure to comply with FERPA, complaints can be brought to the attention of the Office of the Secretary, Department of Education in Washington, DC.

We prioritize the privacy and protection of student information and strive to ensure compliance with FERPA regulations. Should you have any questions or require further clarification regarding student records, please don't hesitate to reach out to our school administration.

Yearbooks and School Portraits

We offer school yearbooks and portrait packages for our students. Here are some important details regarding their availability and ordering process:

Yearbooks: Our school yearbooks are typically available in late spring, providing students with a collection of memories from the academic year. Payment for yearbooks is typically collected in the fall. Students will receive brochures containing information about yearbooks, including pricing and ordering instructions. It is important to note that we order a limited number of extra yearbooks for later sales, but availability may be limited, and the cost may be higher.

Portraits: We schedule portrait sessions for students twice during the school year, once in the fall and again in the spring. The fall portraits serve as the standard portraits, while the spring session offers a more customized picture. In case a student misses the fall portrait day, a makeup day will be arranged. Prior to each picture day, students will receive information about various portrait package options, including pricing and ordering details.

We encourage parents and students to take advantage of these opportunities to capture memories and preserve them for years to come. Additional information and specific instructions will be sent home regarding yearbooks and portrait sessions.

Should you have any questions or require further assistance, please reach out to the school office.

Ways to Help Our School



When you make purchases using your [Ingles Advantage Card](#), [Harris Teeter VIC Card](#), or as a [Publix Partner](#), those grocery stores will give back to the school a portion of those sales. Please be sure to link your cards to our school.



If you see this label, use the [Box Tops app](#) to scan your receipt. The app will find participating products purchased at any store and instantly add cash to your school's earnings online. Be sure to link your account to Atkinson Elementary School in Hendersonville, NC.

YEAR	Amount From Box Tops
2015-16	\$2180
2016-17	\$1784
2017-18	\$1532
2018-19	\$1052*
2019-20	\$635*
2020-21	\$56.40**
2021-22	\$34.90**
2022-23	\$25.00**

*Combined Clipped Labels with new App

**App only

WE LOOK FORWARD TO A GREAT YEAR TOGETHER!