



# 2024-2025 Student Handbook

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[www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/atk](http://www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/atk)

<https://x.com/AtkinsonElem>

<https://www.instagram.com/atkinsoncougars/>

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 academic and social growth opportunities.

Please carefully read the information in this handbook and discuss it 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

## HCPS Attendance Policy 4400

According to the HCPS Attendance Policy 4400, elementary students may only have a maximum combined total of fourteen (14) excused and unexcused absences in a school year. To review the Attendance Board Policy 4400, visit [https://www.boardpolicyonline.com/bl/?b=henderson\\_county#&&hs=523324](https://www.boardpolicyonline.com/bl/?b=henderson_county#&&hs=523324)

## Excused Absences

When a student must miss school, a written excuse signed by the parent or guardian must be presented to the student's teacher on the day the student returns after an absence. The note should be dated, and the reason for the absence should be specified. An absence may be excused for any of the following reasons:

- personal illness or injury that makes the student physically unable to attend school;
- isolation ordered by the local health officer or the State Board of Health or isolation or quarantine that is a required state or local control measure;
- death in the immediate family;
- medical or dental appointment;
- attendance at the proceedings of a court or administrative tribunal if the student is party to the action or under subpoena as a witness;

- a minimum of two days each academic year for observance of an event required or suggested by the religion of the student or the student's parent or legal guardian;
- participation in a valid educational opportunity, such as travel or service as a legislative or Governor's page, with prior approval from the principal;
- pregnancy and related conditions or parenting, when medically necessary;
- a minimum of two days each academic year for visitation with the student's parent or legal guardian if the student is not identified as at risk of academic failure because of unexcused absences and the student's parent or legal guardian (a) is an active duty or inactive member of the uniformed services as defined by policy 4050, Children of Military Families, and (b) has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting; or
- any other reason as approved by the board in a board resolution.

### **Illness - Fever**

If your child has a fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, they should not attend school. A child must be free from fever (without using fever-reducing medication) for 24 hours before returning to school.

### **Chronic Illness or Hospitalization**

If your child has a chronic illness or has been hospitalized for an extended period, submit medical verification to the school principal.

### **Unexcused Absences**

An unexcused absence is a student's willful absence from school, with or without the knowledge of the parent/guardian, for any reason other than absences defined as excused. The principal shall notify parents and take all other steps required by the NC General Statute (GS:115C-378) for excessive, unexcused absences.

Please avoid planning vacations during the school year, as vacations do not qualify as excused absences. PowerSchool allows you to monitor your student's attendance and more. You can access PowerSchool by visiting <https://hcps.powerschool.com/public/> or using the PowerSchool for Parents app on your mobile device.

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

### **Tardies**

Parents or guardians must sign in students arriving after 8:00 a.m. at the office. Tardiness can negatively impact your student's valuable educational instruction and disrupt the learning process for other students. Repetitive tardiness may result in a referral to the Henderson County Public Schools' attendance interventionist and require attendance at required conferences.

### **Early Pick-up (Checking Out Early)**

Parents or guardians should avoid picking up their children 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 of a day of instruction, they will be marked absent for the entire day. Attending any portion of the day benefits the child's learning. Please schedule appointments after school and provide the school with medical appointment notes when necessary.

### **Authorized Pickup**

Only approved adults listed on the student's information sheet can sign out students for early dismissal. This procedure prioritizes the safety and well-being of your child. Please ensure that your contact information is current to facilitate this process, particularly during emergencies or in case of early weather-related school closures. Students will only be called to the office after your arrival, as we must verify your identification before contacting the child to come to the office.

# School Transportation Procedures

## **Carline Dropoff**

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 by 7:55 a.m. For car riders, it is advisable to arrive at school between 7:30 a.m. and 7:55 a.m. Students eating school breakfast should arrive by 7:45.

When dropping off, please unload your student from the vehicle's passenger side by the curb in the designated unloading spaces at the front of the building, not from the parking lot. Your student should be prepared to exit the vehicle quickly. Encourage your child to develop independence by walking to class alone as soon as they are ready. Staff monitoring the front door and hallways will assist if needed.

Visitor parking is limited, and parking in the bus parking lot is prohibited as it interferes with bus operations. All students and visitors should enter through the front doors for safety and security.

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 to enjoy their meal. Additionally, students arriving before 7:30 a.m. must enroll in PSAM (Morning Childcare).

## **Carline Dismissal**

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 in the order their names were called. Once all vehicles have stopped, 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.

Please 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.

Parents who walk into the building for end-of-the-school day dismissal must present a photo ID or the student's car tag.

Parking in the bus parking lot is prohibited.

All students should be picked up by 3:25. Please plan to arrive by then to pick up your student. Students needing to be picked up after 3:25 should enroll in PSPM (Afterschool Childcare).

## **Bus Transportation**

All bus riders are expected to obey the bus driver's authority and follow the bus rules.

Our buses are equipped with seat belts, and students may only remove them when they have reached their designated stop or when directed by the driver.

Students should refrain from talking loudly or yelling while on the bus.

Our buses operate at near-full capacity, and students have assigned seats. Bus transportation can not be used to facilitate after-school friend get-togethers.

Persistent misbehavior may result in bus suspension. During the suspension period, it is the guardian's responsibility to provide transportation for the student. Absences due to a bus suspension are unexcused.

### **School Bus Expectations**

- Observe the same expectations as in the school
- Wear seat belt
- Sit and remain in your 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**

Please contact the school if you have any inquiries regarding your child's bus route or if you wish for your child to start riding the bus. If you need to make a permanent change to your stop, alert the school office in advance so that necessary adjustments can be made to the route. Our transportation department designs bus routes focusing on fuel efficiency and safety.

### **Bus Stop Location**

Contact the school if you have inquiries about your child's bus stop. Stop times in rural mountain areas can vary significantly due to ridership. We recommend allowing a 10-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. Also, students are required to disembark at the same location every day.

### **Bus Drivers and Route Cancellations**

Bus drivers may occasionally be absent, and we try to secure a substitute driver. Although it is rare, there may be instances where we have to cancel a bus route.

### **Transportation Changes**

If your student's after-school transportation arrangements change, please send a clear and precise note to the teacher providing specific details about the new arrangements.

Teachers may not receive electronic messages (such as through apps, email, or SMS) during the school day, so please communicate with our front office for any last-minute transportation changes before 2:00 PM.

When your child is going home with another student, please alert your child's teacher. All parties involved should also send respective notes. Again, bus transportation can not be used to facilitate after-school friend get-togethers.

### **School Closings - Inclement Weather or Emergency Early Dismissal**

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

Please rely on these resources for dismissal information and refrain from calling the school directly. At the beginning of each school year we provide an early dismissal plan form to families to assist with early dismissal planning. Please make advance arrangements based on the instructions indicated on this form and communicate any changes directly to the front office.

## **Scheduled Early Dismissals**

The school calendar includes a few noon dismissal days. The specific dates are listed on the calendar, which is subject to change in the event of inclement weather. For the most up-to-date information, please visit the HCPS website at [www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org](http://www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org).

## **Childcare - PSAM/PSPM**

Two childcare programs are offered at Atkinson to support the needs of our families:

PSAM (Pre-School and Morning Supervision): PSAM provides childcare services from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m.

PSPM (After-School Childcare Program): PSPM operates from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on regular school days.

Registration for both programs is required. You can obtain a registration form from the school office or visit the HCPS Childcare website at [www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/child-care](http://www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/child-care).

Parents are responsible for paying a registration and participation fee for each child who attends these childcare programs. For additional information and any inquiries, please call 697-4936.

## **School Communication**

### **SchoolMessenger**

Henderson County Public Schools uses a notification system called SchoolMessenger. This system is designed to keep in contact with your family.

With SchoolMessenger, the district and individual schools can send phone, email, and SMS messages. Phone calls from HCPS will come from (888) 289-7758, so you may want to save this number to easily recognize calls from the district and your child's school. You can also call this number anytime to listen to messages sent to you. Emails will come from [hcps@hcpsnc.org](mailto:hcps@hcpsnc.org).

### **SchoolMessenger Text Messages**

SchoolMessenger also sends text messages with important information about events, school closings, safety alerts, and more. To participate in this free service, simply text "Y" or "Yes" to 67587.

### **Change of Contact Information**

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. We must have updated information to facilitate communication. When you call to add or remove any information, we will verify that we speak to an approved person for security purposes.

### **Custody Agreements**

If there is a custody agreement for your child, please ensure we have the most recent file. Without custody documentation, we follow the information provided on the birth certificate.

### **Teacher Conferences**

We 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. During teacher conferences, parents will be informed of their child's academic and social growth and progress.

If any issues arise during the school year, we encourage you to communicate with your student's teacher to resolve them first. If further assistance is required, please contact the principal or counselor.

When scheduling conferences, please arrange them before or after school hours. Wednesday afternoons are typically unavailable due to staff meeting days.



Occasionally, a teacher can return your phone call during their planning time. However, please do not request a teacher leave the classroom to take a phone call. If you leave a message, the teacher will return your call as soon as possible.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in making appointments to speak with school staff.

### **PowerSchool**

Through PowerSchool, you can stay informed about your 3rd-5th grade student's grades, attendance, assignments, and more—access PowerSchool by visiting <https://hcps.powerschool.com/public/> or downloading the PowerSchool for Parents App on your mobile device.

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

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

### **Bloomz Communication App**

Atkinson Elementary uses an app called Bloomz for parent-teacher communication, enhancing parental engagement by connecting everyone with one easy-to-use tool. We recommend that at least one family member connect to their student's Bloomz classroom. At the beginning of the year, you will receive an email invitation to connect to your child's teacher's Bloomz classroom, sent to the email address you provided during enrollment (PowerSchool). If you would like to change or add an additional account at any time, please contact our office. For troubleshooting, the company recommends the following steps: (1) ensure the app is updated, (2) restart your device, and (3) uninstall and reinstall the app.

## **Student Health**

### **Child Nutrition**

#### **Food Service**

We take pride in offering 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, be considerate about bringing outside food, and not take another student's seat. Sitting at the overflow table may be best to ensure a smooth dining experience for all students.

#### **Breakfast and Lunch Prices**

2024-2025

Breakfast:	Free - "Universal Breakfast"
Lunch:	\$3.50

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

#### **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.

## **Foods Sent to the Classrooms/School**

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

Please communicate with your student's teacher to coordinate celebrations involving snacks or food. We recommend you follow the USDA Smart Snack guidelines, found at <https://goo.gl/7gj5nz>. These guidelines provide helpful information on selecting nutritious and suitable snacks for school events.

## **Birthday Treats**

We aim to alleviate some stress from your shoulders while ensuring your student feels truly special on their birthday. At Atkinson, each student will receive a complimentary ice cream coupon on their birthday. With this approach, you can bid farewell to the days of worrying about bringing cupcakes to school. We understand that the allure of cupcakes is undeniable for some, yet we humbly request that if you choose to bring treats, please opt for simplicity. Not Surprisingly, birthday cupcakes can be a source of distraction and, often, a very messy affair. Let us assist you by ensuring that these celebrations remain equal and harmonious for all students. Moreover, this approach significantly aids us in managing food allergies, as it minimizes the potential risks and concerns associated with varying ingredients. Your cooperation and understanding are greatly appreciated as we strive to create a safe and enjoyable environment for every student. Again, any food items brought to school as a shared treat must be store-bought, with ingredients listed, to ensure transparency and the well-being of all students.

## **Water, Sodas, Energy Drinks, and Water Sweeteners**

Please give your student a personalized water bottle with a screw-top lid. Students are allowed to have water in the classrooms. We request that sodas, energy drinks, and water sweeteners be saved for consumption at home.

## **Medical**

### **School Nurse**

Atkinson Elementary does have a school nurse employed by the Henderson County Health Department. The school nurse is a great resource for any questions or concerns regarding medical matters, medication, immunizations, or health assessments. Please do not hesitate to contact our school nurse by calling the school. They will be happy to assist you.

### **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 a prescription bottle or packet with the label intact. Please do not send medication to school with your student. The parent or an adult is responsible for bringing the required forms and medication to the school office. Additionally, a form is 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.

### **Student Illnesses**

If your child has a fever of 100 °F or higher, has pinkeye, or any other contagious illness, they should not be sent to school. A child must be fever-free without using fever-reducing medication for 24 hours before returning to school.

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. We must be able to reach someone in an emergency, so please ensure we have current contact information where someone can be easily reached.

### **Medical Attention**

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 ask them to assume responsibility for making decisions regarding their child's health.

## **School Insurance**

Accidents can occur, especially during active play and school-related activities. To support parents, we offer an affordable accidental insurance policy for students.

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/>. Insurance coverage can be purchased anytime during the school year.

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

## **Personal Property**

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

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 prohibited 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.

## **Lost and Found**

Our Lost and Found area is located near the office. To increase the chances of lost items being returned to their rightful owners, please clearly label all materials belonging to your student. This simple step makes identifying and returning lost items to their proper owners easier. Any items not claimed will be donated.

## **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.

## **Student cell phones**

Students are prohibited from using cellular data and calls during the school day to minimize distractions and maintain a productive learning environment. This includes cell phones, smartwatches, tablets, and other wearable communication devices.

Students must turn off their cell phones and other communication devices and store them in their backpacks while on school grounds during the school day.

## **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.

## **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 or weapons. Any items advertising drugs, alcohol, tobacco, acts or perceptions of violence, or any disruptive message are not allowed. 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/>.

Any items or behaviors that may cause harm, danger, or disruption to the educational process are prohibited.

## **Dress Code**

School dress should be appropriate and suitable for the school environment. Spaghetti straps, muscle shirts, crop tops, exposed midriff, short shorts/skirts, holes or cuts above knees, and any clothing advertising drugs, alcohol, tobacco, acts or perceptions of violence, 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 must be stored away in backpacks during school. Tennis shoes with wheels are not permitted.

## **Party Invitations**

Please only send party invitations to be distributed at school if every child in the class will receive one. This helps to prevent hurt feelings and maintains a positive classroom environment.

## **Gifts/Flowers**

Please avoid bringing or sending gifts or flowers to school for your child. Such items can interrupt the instructional day and are best handled at home.

# **Curriculum**

## **North Carolina Standard Course of Study**

All educators in North Carolina public schools adhere to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study when developing lesson plans. Visit <https://ncdpi.instructure.com/courses/11379> for more information about the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

## **Curriculum**

Our district implements the Letterland, iReady Math, Discovery Education, and CKLA curriculums, all aligned with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Additionally, we use Language for Learning, Second Step, and Numberworlds for interventions and specialized small group instruction. For more information about our district-adopted curriculums, please visit:

<https://www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/elementary-education/for-parents/>

# **Technology**

## **Chromebooks**

All students are assigned a Chromebook as an educational tool. These Chromebooks are used to access various curriculums, educational materials, and for local and state assessments. Students at Atkinson Elementary School will keep their Chromebooks and chargers at school. However, with parental permission, 4th and 5th grade students may take their devices home if needed.

Students will be taught appropriate use, including internet safety and guidelines. Failure to follow these expectations may result in disciplinary action per the school discipline policy, or charges for damage or loss of the Chromebook.

To use a Chromebook and access the internet from school, all students and parents must sign the annual HCPS Chromebook User Agreement. Both physical and digital forms are available.

Visit <http://hcpsnc.org/cbform> to complete the HCPS Chromebook User Agreement.

Visit <https://www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/chromebook-insurance/> for optional Chromebook Insurance.

## Screen Time

If you're like most families, a typical evening involves everyone being tethered to a digital device of some sort. Too much screen time can be harmful, so it's essential to promote responsible use of technology. At Atkinson, we are equally concerned about the cognitive and emotional impacts of screen time. By fostering digital literacy in K–12 students, we introduce them to the responsible use of technology.

There is extensive research on the effects of different types of screen time. While excessive screen time can lead to emotional dysregulation, educational screen time offers the most benefits, positively affecting children's persistence and educational outcomes without significantly impacting their health.

Let's work together to educate our students on the proper use of technology and limit excessive passive screen time. Please reach out to your child's teacher to learn more about the types and amount of educational activities your child will be engaging in.

## Leader-in-Me

The Leader in Me is a framework based on 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. It is 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: This paradigm recognizes each student's unique talents and strengths and 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: This paradigm acknowledges the holistic nature of education and focuses on nurturing students' overall well-being, 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

Our school believes 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, and every teacher has the right to teach without interruptions.

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

### **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 daily. This program is built upon clearly defined expectations consistently and fairly enforced throughout the 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 sometimes out-of-school suspensions. It is important to note the interventions used are tailored to address the student's specific needs.

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

Parents will be notified in the event of repeated or significant behavioral issues to ensure open 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 communicating that such behavior is unacceptable. Research has shown 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 bullying 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 website or 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/](http://www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/report/)

Parents can also find valuable resources on bullying prevention at [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov). This website is a great resource for parents to gain information and guidance on addressing and preventing bullying.

## School Counseling Services

Our school offers comprehensive counseling services to support the well-being and development of our students. Teachers and parents can 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. Our counselor aims to help students navigate these issues and develop effective coping strategies by providing a supportive and confidential space.

In addition to individual and small group counseling, our counselor delivers classroom guidance lessons to all students. These lessons support 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.

Please don't hesitate to contact 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 growth and success.

## School Social Worker

School Social Workers support students, families, schools, and communities. They specialize in providing services that address social, emotional, and life adjustments 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.

## **Parent and Community Involvement**

### **PTO**

The Atkinson PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization) is a vital link between parents and teachers at Atkinson Elementary. We aim to provide our children with the best educational and social experiences possible. 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 actively participating 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. Through the collective efforts of our strong foundation, our PTO can thrive and continue to impact our school community positively.

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

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers play a crucial role in Atkinson Elementary School's success. We wholeheartedly welcome and encourage parent and community involvement in our school community. Volunteers' 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.

Please contact the school if you need further assistance or want to inquire about specific volunteer opportunities at our school. Our dedicated staff will happily provide you with the necessary information and help you get involved.

## Safety and Security

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

- **Office Entrance:** All visitors must enter the school through the designated office entrance. This helps us monitor and control access to the premises.
- **Identification and Visitor's Badge:** All visitors must present identification and sign in at the office. Upon sign-in, visitors are issued a visitor's badge to wear in the school. Teachers are instructed to request that individuals without a badge return to the office for proper sign-in.
- **Appointment Courtesy:** We kindly request 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.
- **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.
- **Door Security:** All interior and exterior doors will be kept closed and locked to enhance security. This measure helps maintain a controlled-access environment.

### Emergency Services

We have close partnerships with local emergency services to create a secure learning environment. Our local officers frequently visit our students, fostering positive relationships and promoting safety awareness. Valley Hill Fire Department frequently visits to not only check our campus for safety concerns, but to also educate our staff and students. We also have multiple visits from the fire marshal and health inspectors. Collectively, emergency services with the leadership of the Henderson County Emergency Management reviews protocols and emergency procedures with school administrators and leaders.

### Emergency drills

We have implemented multiple safety procedures, which our staff regularly reviews to stay prepared.

Fire drills are conducted once a month to ensure 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 periodically discuss and conduct school safety response protocols to enhance our readiness and response capabilities with students.

Learn detailed information about our Standard Response Protocol by visiting our district website at <https://www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/parents/enhanced-standard-response-protocol/>

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

## **Student 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 inspecting, reviewing, and controlling access to these records.

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

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 contact our school administration.

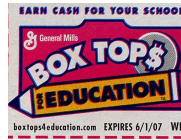
## **Yearbooks and School Portraits**

**Yearbooks:** Our school yearbooks are available in late spring, providing students with memories from the academic year. Payment for yearbooks is collected in the fall. Students will receive brochures containing yearbook information, including pricing and ordering instructions. We only order a limited number of extra yearbooks for later sales, but availability may be limited, and the cost may be higher.

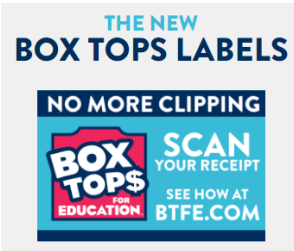
**Portraits:** We schedule portrait sessions for students twice during the school year, once in the fall and again in the spring. The fall portraits are standard, while the spring session offers a more customized picture. A makeup day will be arranged if a student misses the fall portrait day. Before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

Please contact the school office if you have any questions or require further assistance.

# 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**
2023-24	

\*Combined Clipped Labels with new App

\*\*App only

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO A GREAT YEAR TOGETHER!**