2026-2027 Student Handbook

2510 Old Kanuga Road
Hendersonville, North Carolina 28739
PHONE: (828) 697-4755 FAX: (828) 698-6120

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

Welcome to Atkinson Elementary School. We are honored that you have chosen to partner with us in your child's education. Our highest priority is the well-being, growth, and success of every student. We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and engaging learning environment where children feel valued, supported, and challenged to do their best. Each school year brings meaningful and rewarding opportunities for students to learn, grow, and develop academically, socially, and emotionally. By working together with our Atkinson families, we can ensure that every child is treated with dignity and respect and provided with opportunities to thrive.

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

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.

NC General Statute GS:115C-738 (e) states that the principal or the principal's designee shall notify the parent, guardian, or custodian of his or her child's excessive absences after the child has accumulated three unexcused absences in a school year. After not more than six unexcused absences, the principal or the principal's designee shall notify the parent, guardian, or custodian by mail that he or she may be in violation of the Compulsory Attendance Law and may be prosecuted if the absences cannot be justified under the established attendance policies of the State and local boards of education. Once the parents are notified, the school attendance counselor shall work with the child and the child's family to analyze the causes of the absences and determine steps, including adjustment of the school program or obtaining supplemental services, to eliminate the problem. The attendance counselor may request that a law enforcement officer accompany him or her if the attendance counselor believes that a home visit is necessary.

Please avoid planning vacations during the school year, as vacations do not qualify as excused absences.

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 child departing but also for their peers. 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 may sign students out for early dismissal. This procedure prioritizes the safety and well-being of your child. Please ensure your contact information is up to date to facilitate this process, particularly during emergencies or early weather-related school closures. Students will only be called to the office after your arrival, as we must verify your identification.

School Transportation Procedures

Carline Dropoff
Considering the heavy traffic on Old Kanuga Road in the mornings and afternoons, it is crucial to plan your departure time from home accordingly to ensure 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 no later than 7:40.

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 and safely. 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 be available to 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 are required to enter through the front doors for safety and security.

Breakfast costs $1.75. If your child is a car rider and plans to eat at school, please ensure they arrive before 7:40 a.m. to have enough time to enjoy their meal. Also, students arriving before 7:30 a.m. need to sign up for PSAM (Morning Childcare).

Carline Dismissal
Upon arriving on campus, cars should form two lines around the parking lot to minimize the number of 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 after 2:45 unless it is an emergency. Doing so can disrupt our dismissal procedures.

Parents who enter the building for end-of-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 3:20. Please plan to arrive by then to pick up your student. Students needing to be picked up after 3:20 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 remove them only when they have reached their designated stop or are instructed by the driver.

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

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

Persistent misbehavior may result in suspension from the bus. 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 school
- Wear a 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 questions about your child's bus route or if you'd like for your child to start riding the bus. If you need to make a permanent change to your stop, notify the school office in advance so that the necessary adjustments can be made to the route. Our transportation department designs bus routes with an emphasis on fuel efficiency and safety.

Bus Stop Location
Contact the school if you have questions 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 around the listed stop time for your designated location. Please note that ridership may fluctuate during the first few weeks of school, on early dismissal days, and before holidays, which could result in changes to stop times.

Bus Drivers and Route Cancellations
Bus drivers may be absent at times, and we try to find a substitute driver. Although uncommon, there may be times when we need to cancel a bus route.

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

Teachers may not receive electronic messages (such as via apps, email, or SMS) during the school day, so please contact our 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 their respective notes. 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, as well as through our automated messaging 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 refer to these resources for dismissal information and avoid contacting the school directly. At the beginning of each school year, we provide families with a form to assist with early dismissal planning. Please make advance arrangements in accordance with the instructions on this form and communicate any changes directly to the office.

Scheduled Early Dismissals
The school calendar includes a few days with noon dismissals, typically the day before Christmas break and on the last day of school. 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.

Childcare - PSAM/PSPM

Two childcare programs are available at Atkinson to meet the needs of our families:

PSAM (Before School Supervision): PSAM 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m.

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

Registration is required for both programs. You can pick up a registration form from the school office or visit the HCPS Childcare website at www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/child-care.

Parents are responsible for paying a registration fee and a participation fee for each child enrolled in these childcare programs. For more information or questions, please call 697-4936.

School Communication

Henderson County Public Schools uses a notification system to stay in touch with families. The district and individual schools can send phone, email, and SMS alerts. Phone calls from HCPS will come from (xxx) xxx-xxxx, so it's a good idea to save this number to easily recognize calls from the district and your child's school. Emails will be sent from hcps@hcpsnc.org.

Change of Contact Information
To ensure effective communication between the school and home, please notify the school of any changes to your telephone number, email address, physical address, or other vital information. We need updated information to facilitate communication. When you call to add or remove any details, we will verify that we are speaking to an approved person for security reasons.

Custody Agreements
If you have a custody agreement for your child, please ensure we have the most recent version on 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 first communicate with your student's teacher. If you require further assistance, please contact the principal or counselor.

When scheduling conferences, please arrange them outside of 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.

Infinite Campus
With Infinite Campus, you can stay updated on your student's grades, attendance, assignments, and more. Contact our data manager if you need help with getting access to the parent portal.

Bloomz Communication App
Atkinson Elementary uses the app Bloomz for parent-teacher communication, enhancing parental engagement by connecting everyone through a single, 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 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 providing well-planned and nutritious meals in our cafeteria. Parents are welcome to join us and share meals with their children. We encourage you to communicate with your child's teacher, be mindful about bringing outside food, and avoid taking another student's seat. Sitting at the overflow table may be the best option to ensure a smooth dining experience for all students.

Breakfast and Lunch Prices
2026-2027

Breakfast:	$1.75
Lunch:	$4.50

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/. This system allows you to securely manage and add funds to your child's account.

Food Allergies
If your child has any food allergies, it is essential to notify both 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 foodborne illnesses, we have implemented a policy prohibiting the use of home-produced items at 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 following the USDA Smart Snack guidelines, available at

https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/guide-smart-snacks-school. These guidelines offer valuable guidance on selecting nutritious and suitable snacks for school events.

Birthday Treats
We aim to relieve some of the stress on your shoulders while making sure your student feels truly special on their birthday. At Atkinson, each student will receive a free ice cream coupon on their birthday. With this approach, you can say goodbye to worrying about bringing cupcakes to school. We understand that cupcakes can be very tempting for some, but we kindly ask that, if you bring treats, you choose simple options and, most importantly, communicate with your student's teacher the day prior. Unsurprisingly, birthday cupcakes can be distracting and often create a mess. Let us help by ensuring these celebrations are fair and enjoyable for everyone. Additionally, this method helps us better manage food allergies, reducing risks and concerns associated with different ingredients. Your cooperation and understanding are greatly appreciated as we work to create a safe and fun environment for all students. Again, any food items brought to school as a shared treat must be store-bought and have their ingredients listed to ensure transparency and the safety of all students.

Water, Sodas, Energy Drinks, and Water Sweeteners
Please give your student a personalized water bottle with a screw-top lid. Water bottles should be plastic and no larger than 32 oz. We ask that metal water bottles, sodas, energy drinks, and water sweeteners be left at home.

Medical

School Nurse
Atkinson Elementary has a school nurse employed by the Henderson County Health Department. The school nurse is an excellent resource for any questions or concerns regarding medical issues, medication, immunizations, or health assessments. Please feel free to contact our school nurse by calling the school. They will be happy to help you.

Health Assessment Requirement
State law requires that every child entering public schools in N.C. for the first time receive a health assessment. The medical provider, parent, or guardian must provide a completed health assessment form to the school on or before the child's first day of attendance.

NC DPI Health Assessment Form: https://www.ncdhhs.gov/health-assessmentpdf/open

Immunization Compliance
According to North Carolina law (G.S. 130A-155), students who haven't met immunization requirements must be excluded from school until they provide the necessary documentation, starting 30 calendar days after enrollment (or any extended period).

Immunization Requirements: https://www.dph.ncdhhs.gov/programs/epidemiology/immunization/schools/k-12

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, allowing us to administer them as needed. You can obtain both forms at http://www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/student-health/forms/ or from our school office.

Student Illnesses
If your child has a fever of 100 ℉ or higher, pinkeye, or any other contagious illness, they should not be sent to school. A child must be fever-free and have not used any fever-reducing medication for 24 hours before returning.

If your child feels unwell or shows symptoms of illness, our staff will take their temperature. If a fever is detected, we will contact you to pick up your child. Please ensure we have current contact information so we can reach you in case of an emergency.

Medical Attention
Our school keeps basic first aid supplies for minor scratches and scrapes. But, in case of a serious injury or illness, we will contact parents to ask them to make decisions about their child's health.

School Insurance
Accidents can happen, especially during active play and school activities. To assist parents, the district offers an affordable accidental insurance policy for students.

For more detailed information about the school insurance program, including enrollment procedures and coverage details, visit the HCPS website at http://www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/parents/. Insurance coverage can be purchased at any time during the school year.

We encourage parents to consider this insurance option to provide extra financial protection for their children while at school.

Personal Property

To reduce distractions in the learning environment, we strongly recommend that students leave personal items not needed for school activities at home. Bringing valuables to school is discouraged because the school cannot be responsible for lost or damaged items.

Certain items, such as electronic games, laser pointers, trading cards, toys, fidgets, and music players, are not allowed 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 teacher.

Lost and Found
Our Lost and Found area is near the office. To improve the chances of lost items being returned to their owners, please clearly label all of your student's belongings. This simple step makes it easier to identify and return lost items to their rightful owners. Any unclaimed items will be donated.

Office Phone:
The school office phone is available to students for emergencies such as illness or injury.

Student Cell Phones and Smart Devices
In North Carolina, public schools are mandated to prohibit cell phone use during instructional periods. Unless authorized by a teacher for educational reasons, during emergencies, or for students with documented medical conditions, IEPs, or 504 plans. This 2025 regulation aims to minimize distractions and foster a safer, more effective learning environment. It applies to cell phones, smartwatches, tablets, and other wearable communication devices. During the school day, students are required to turn off all communication devices and store them in their backpacks while on school property.

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: any medication (medication must be administered by office staff or the school nurse, with proper forms completed by a parent or physician); knives, razor-type items, or other sharp items; weapons of any kind; and toys, including toy guns or other 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, pose a danger, or disrupt 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 or skirts should be at least fingertip length. Caps and hats must be stored away in backpacks during school. Tennis shoes with wheels are not permitted.

Party Invitations
Only send party invitations to be handed out at school if every child in the class gets one. This avoids hurt feelings and fosters a positive classroom atmosphere.

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, i-Ready Math, Discovery Education, and CKLA curricula, all of which are 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 curricula, please visit:
https://www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/elementary-education/for-parents/

Technology

Chromebooks
Each student receives a Chromebook for educational purposes, allowing access to curricula, materials, and assessments. At Atkinson Elementary, students will keep their devices and chargers at school. With parental permission, 4th- and 5th-graders may take their Chromebooks home if necessary.

Students will learn proper use of technology, including internet safety and rules. Not following these guidelines could result in disciplinary action or charges for damage or loss, according to school policies.

User Agreement
All students and parents must sign the annual HCPS Account Consent & Chromebook user agreement before the first day of school; otherwise, their Google accounts will be disabled. Forms submitted after the deadline will be activated during the next Google account sync, which happens daily around 6:45 am and 12:45 pm.

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

Damages
Students are responsible for taking care of their assigned Chromebooks. Students may be held responsible for damage to Chromebooks, whether accidental or intentional. It is important for students to report any damage to their teacher as soon as it occurs, especially when Chromebooks are assigned at the beginning of the school year.

Several times throughout the year, teachers will inspect Chromebooks for damage. Fees for Chromebook repairs or replacement parts can be found on the district website.

Screen Time
Many families find that evenings often involve everyone being glued to digital devices. While excessive screen time can be detrimental, promoting responsible technology use is crucial. At Atkinson, we are deeply concerned about both the cognitive and emotional effects of screen time. By teaching digital literacy to K–12 students, we help them develop responsible habits with technology.

Research shows that different types of screen time have varying effects. Though excessive screen time can cause emotional instability, educational screen time generally provides significant benefits, enhancing children's perseverance and academic success without major health risks.

Let's work together to educate students about appropriate technology use and reduce passive screen time. Feel free to contact your child's teacher to learn more about the educational activities your child will participate in and their duration.

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 address the unique challenges students face 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 holds 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 their development and use, fostering personal growth and success.

- Change starts with me: This paradigm emphasizes personal accountability, encouraging 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 fostering a collaborative, 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 equip students with the skills, mindset, and support they need 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 fosters a culture where everyone is treated with dignity, courtesy, and respect. 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 set high behavior expectations for all students to foster a productive learning environment. We expect students to show respect for themselves, their peers, teachers, and staff members. This includes following classroom rules, actively participating in learning activities, and engaging positively with others.

PBIS - Positive Behavior Interventions and Support
The PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) model in our school is designed to recognize and reinforce students' positive behavior daily. It is based on clear expectations that are consistently and fairly enforced throughout the school.

To encourage good behavior, we use individual and class incentives to reward students who meet expectations and demonstrate responsible behavior. These rewards acknowledge their efforts and help create a positive learning atmosphere.

When students fail to meet behavioral expectations, various interventions are employed, including verbal warnings, checklists, mediation, loss of privileges, parent contact or conferences, and occasionally, out-of-school suspensions. These interventions are tailored to meet each student's specific needs.

Students are encouraged to report conflicts or problems with peers immediately and are expected not to retaliate. We stress resolving conflicts peacefully and responsibly. Any disruptive behavior, regardless of who started it, will result in consequences.

Parents will be informed of any recurring or serious behavioral issues to promote open communication and joint efforts to address these challenges.

Along with the PAWS expectations—our school-wide behavior guidelines—individual classroom rules may also be established. Students should always make good choices and show responsible behavior.

By implementing PBIS and maintaining consistent standards, we strive to create a positive and supportive school environment that promotes student growth, fosters respectful interactions, and encourages responsible decision-making.

Practice Responsibility **A**lways Kind **W**ith Respect **S**afely

Settings Expectations	Cafeteria	Hallways	Playgrounds	Bathrooms	Bus	Assemblies	Specials
Practice Responsibility	Follow directions. Leave no trace of food.	Watch where you are going. Keep your bookbag on your back.	Take care of equipment. Take in what you bring out!	Flush toilet after using. Keep bathrooms clean.	Follow the directions given by your bus driver. Enter and Exit with all your belongings.	Maintain self-control. Be a good listener.	Clean up after yourself. Use materials correctly.
Always Kind	Keep hands and feet to self. Help others.	Keep hands and feet to self. Help others.	Keep hands and feet to self. Take turns.	Keep hands and feet to self. Take turns without fighting.	Keep hands and feet to self. Share your seat.	Keep hands and feet to self. Allow others to enjoy the presentation.	Keep hands and feet to self. Help others.
With Respect	Use inside voice Practice good manners.	Be silent. Hands by your side, not on walls.	Listen and follow directions. Be a good sport.	Respect everyone's privacy. Use inside voice.	Obey the bus driver. Use appropriate language and conversation	Give presenter full attention. Give appropriate applause.	Listen and follow directions. Practice good manners.
Safely	Sit properly on your rear, in your seat. Follow the traffic pattern.	Stay to your right. Walk only.	Use equipment properly. Leave chips, rocks, and sticks on the ground.	Get in and get out! Wash and dry hands.	Stay in your seat and face forward. Use inside voices.	Enter and exit in an orderly manner. Sit on your bottom.	Enter and exit in an orderly manner. Wait for directions before using the equipment.
Teacher Expectations	ACTIVELY supervise students. Reteach expected behaviors as needed.	ACTIVELY supervise students. Reteach expected behaviors as needed.	ACTIVELY supervise students. Reteach expected behaviors as needed.	ACTIVELY supervise students. Reteach expected behaviors as needed.	ACTIVELY supervise students. Reteach expected behaviors as needed.	ACTIVELY supervise students. Reteach expected behaviors as needed.	ACTIVELY supervise students. Reteach expected behaviors as needed.

School Counseling Services

Our school provides comprehensive counseling services to promote students' well-being and development. Teachers and parents can refer students for one-on-one or small-group counseling by contacting our school counselor. Upper-grade students may also self-refer for counseling.

Counseling sessions are customized to meet each student's specific needs. Our counselor can address various issues, including peer relationships, social skills, academic challenges, self-confidence, family concerns, and emotional difficulties such as grief, anxiety, anger, and stress. The counselor offers a supportive, confidential environment to help students cope and develop effective strategies.

Beyond individual and small group sessions, the counselor conducts classroom guidance lessons for all students. These lessons focus on cognitive, social-emotional, and career development, aiming to improve overall well-being and equip students with essential skills for success.

Please contact our school counselor if you have concerns or believe your child could benefit from counseling. Together, we can support students in overcoming obstacles, building resilience, and achieving 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. 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 in special education, behavior management, and the prevention and response to child abuse and neglect. They collaborate with school staff to develop strategies that enhance the learning environment and ensure students' well-being.

- 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 (Parent Volunteers)
The Atkinson PTO connects parents and teachers to enhance our children's educational and social experiences through collaboration, volunteering, and community events. While fundraising is key, we also focus on enriching

activities. We thank our dedicated teachers, staff, parents, and community volunteers whose support is vital. We invite everyone to join us in creating a supportive environment for our students' 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 would like to inquire about specific volunteer opportunities. Our dedicated staff will be happy to 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 are required to present identification and sign in at the office. Upon signing in, visitors are given a visitor badge to wear during their visit to the school. Teachers are instructed to ask individuals without a badge to return to the office to sign in.

- 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.

- 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 not only to check our campus for safety concerns but also to educate our staff and students. We also have multiple visits from the Fire Marshal and Health Inspectors. Collectively, emergency services, under the leadership of Henderson County Emergency Management, review 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 monthly 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 everyone is well prepared for 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

We adhere to the guidelines established by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). This act ensures the privacy and confidentiality of student education records. As a parent or authorized individual, you have certain rights to inspect, review, and control access to these records.

Within 45 days of the request, parents (and school officials with a legitimate educational interest) may access and review their child's academic records. However, access to student records by others is restricted and may be released only 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

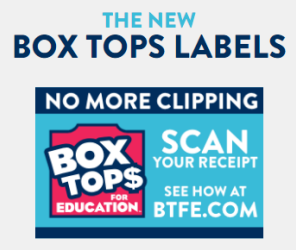
Yearbooks: Our school yearbooks are available in late spring, providing students with a keepsake of the academic year. Payment for yearbooks is collected in the fall. Students will receive brochures containing yearbook information, including pricing and ordering instructions. We only order a limited 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 with your Ingles Advantage Card or Harris Teeter VIC Card, those stores will donate a portion of the sales to our school. Please ensure your cards are linked 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.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO A GREAT YEAR TOGETHER!