

A Message from the Principal

Dear Families,

On behalf of the faculty and staff, I would like to welcome you to the start of the 2011-2012 school year. We are very excited to have another rewarding year here at John C. Calhoun Elementary and are looking forward to educating and inspiring the young people in this community. Our school has a rich tradition of combining academic excellence, with a sense of community responsibility and service, which is second to none. The continuation of this tradition is the goal of everyone connected to our school.

We ask that you please read through this handbook and familiarize yourself with our schools procedures, rules and policies that will impact your child's success in our school. These guidelines apply to every student at our school and are designed to ensure a positive, safe, learning environment for the students, staff and faculty. Reading and understanding the information in this handbook will answer most of the questions that may arise during the school year.

Every student who walks through our doors is expected to do his or her best in academics and behavior. All students are expected to represent their homes and families in a positive manner. Our school provides each student with limitless possibilities in education and we are confident that through the joint efforts provided by the school, parents and community that everyone will have a successful year.

Parent involvement is a key factor in the success of a child's education. No student will achieve what he or she is capable of without parent involvement. Parents are encouraged to have a working relationship and open communication with their child's teachers, staff and principal. Our faculty and staff are always eager to discuss our plans in the education and discipline of your child and we encourage you to support our plans at school, as well as, at home. There are several opportunities for volunteer involvement of community members and parents in our school and we welcome your interest in these situations. Please contact the school if you would like to volunteer your time and/or services.

Every decision that I make will reflect my top priority – the advancement and education of our students. With everyone cooperating and working for the benefit of the children we will ensure a safe and nurturing environment that will provide our students with the best possible education offered in our state.

**Sincerely,
David Nixon
Principal**

Mission Statement

The mission of John C. Calhoun Elementary is to provide appropriate and challenging learning experiences that give students the opportunity to succeed both academically and in life.

Philosophy and Beliefs

Our philosophy of education is guided by the following beliefs:

- Every child has a right to a quality education that meets the student's individual needs.
- Education is the foundation of the community.
- Quality education depends on involvement and shared responsibility of parents, students, educators, and community.
- Community and school should provide a safe, nurturing, and motivational learning environment.
- Lifelong learning is the key to the future.
- Discipline is a vital part of education.
- Effective teachers are essential for student success.
- All individuals have worth and dignity.
- Every student is capable of learning and can experience success.
- Respect for all should be modeled and encouraged.

Daily Procedures

Arrival

In the morning, bus duty teachers arrive at 7:15 A.M. The first bus arrives at school around 7:20 A.M. **No student should be dropped off at school before this time.**

Breakfast is served in the cafeteria from 7:25 until 7:50 A.M. Students who want to eat breakfast must arrive at school during this time. Students arriving at school after the breakfast period will not be able to eat breakfast in the cafeteria.

Students will report to their assigned areas upon arriving at school and begin reading while awaiting the beginning of classes. At 7:55 A.M., students will report to their classes with their teachers. Attendance will be checked in the classroom.

Tardiness

Official school tardy time is 8:00 A.M. Instructional periods begin at 8:00 A.M. Students arriving at school at 8:00 A.M. will be considered tardy. Students arriving after 8:00 A.M. should report to the office to obtain a pass to class. Parents of tardy students must accompany their children into the school office to sign them in and record the reason for the tardy. A child is allowed two unexcused tardies per nine weeks and will be given detention on the third and subsequent unexcused tardies.

Departure

All students will be dismissed at 2:40 P.M. Car riders will be picked up at the covered walkway next to the parking lot.

Early Dismissal

When a child is dismissed early, the child must be signed out in the office by the parent or guardian. A sign-out sheet is located on the counter in the office.

If a child is dismissed early and will return to school that same day, the parent or guardian must sign the child out and back in again in the office. A child must be present for at least one-half school day (3 ½ hours) to be counted present for that day.

Health and Safety

A registered nurse will be on call at JCCE at designated times. This LPN will be able to assist school personnel with the health needs of the students and the dispensing of medication.

Change of Address/Telephone Number

It is vitally important that the school has on file a current, correct address and telephone number for each child. At the beginning of the year, student information cards will be sent home. These cards should be completed with the current, accurate information. If your address or telephone number changes at any time during the school year, please notify the school office so that our records can be updated.

Telephone Use

Use of the telephone by students is limited to emergency calls and school business calls only. Calls for permission to attend movies, to attend field trips, to ride buses with friends, etc. will not be permitted. These matters should be addressed at home.

Classroom Parties

Classroom party plans are under the control of the school/school district. Special classroom parties are held twice a year, once at Christmas and at another holiday. Your child's teacher will inform you about party plans. The passing out of invitations to private parties is strongly discouraged and is permissible only if each student in the class is given an invitation.

Delivery of Flowers and Gifts for Students

Due to a county-wide policy related to school bus safety, no deliveries to students can be accepted by the school for distribution during the school day.

School Pictures

School pictures are taken in the fall and in the spring. Information will be sent home in advance of each school picture day. Kindergarten graduation pictures will also be taken in the spring. Our school pictures are taken by qualified photographers and satisfaction is guaranteed.

Financial Information

School Fees

The School Board has set the school materials fee at \$12.00 per student. The school materials fee is used to purchase materials and supplies that are used by the students in the classroom. Fees may be paid in quarterly installments of \$3.00 per nine weeks. If a child receives free or reduced priced meals, the parent may request and receive a waiver of school fees.

Cafeteria Meals: Breakfast and Lunch

JCCE offers both breakfast and lunch meals to students. Cafeteria meals can be purchased at the school. Parents can also apply for free or reduced meals by completing an application showing the family's level of income. Applications are approved/disapproved based on the number of family members and the level of income. Since the district is using a new family application, all children in your family can be qualified by completing a single application.

Breakfast

JCCE will offer breakfast at no cost to all students. Breakfast is served from 7:25 until 7:50 A.M. **If your child is a car rider, you will want to have him/her arrive at school by 7:40 A.M. so he/she may eat before class begins.** The cafeteria will stop serving breakfast at 7:50 A.M. so they can prepare for lunch.

Lunch

Students may pay for lunch on a daily basis or they may buy meal tickets good for a two-week (10-day) period. The cost for lunch for full-pay students is \$1.75 per day. For students receiving reduced-price meals, the cost is \$0.40 per day or \$4.00 for two weeks. An adult lunch costs \$3.25 per meal. Extra milk can also be purchased on the serving line for \$0.35. Lunch money will be accepted daily. **The district policy states that there will be no charged lunches.**

Students have the option of eating school lunch or bringing their lunch. No child eating the lunches provided at school will be allowed to bring additional drinks or food into the cafeteria unless it is required due to food allergies. Medical documentation must be provided to the school nurse if accommodations must be made. No child bringing their lunch will be provided a lunch through the school.

Lost and Found: Textbooks and Library Books

When a student is issued a textbook or a library book, the student assumes the responsibility for maintaining the textbook or library book in good condition and for returning it to the school at the appropriate time. Students are responsible for the costs of lost textbooks and library books. State law prohibits schools from issuing new textbooks to students before they pay for their lost or damaged textbooks.

Money Brought to School

For safety factors, students should not bring large amounts of money to school. As a general rule of thumb, no student should have more than 5 dollars at any time unless the student is bringing a payment for meals or a field trip.

Outstanding Debts

Outstanding debts, such as unpaid school fees, unpaid picture costs, unpaid breakfast and lunch tickets, unpaid money collected for PTO sales, unpaid lost or damaged library books, and unpaid lost or damaged textbooks, adversely affect the school's ability to provide materials for all students. **Grades will not be issued to students at the end of the school year who have not turned in all their books and have outstanding debts at the school.**

Homebound Instruction

If a student has to be absent for an extended time due to medical reasons, the student can apply for homebound instruction. You can call the guidance counselor for further details regarding the procedures for applying for homebound instruction.

Perfect Attendance

To qualify for perfect attendance, a student must be present at school each day of the year. Students who are not present at school because of illness, suspension, or some other reason do not qualify for perfect attendance.

Program Offerings

Regular Education

John C. Calhoun Elementary School is a pre-K through grade 5 school that offers a wide range of regular and special education programs for both students and parents. The 4-year-old child development class is a full-day program that provides readiness activities for qualifying students. The full-day, 5-year-old kindergarten classes provide additional readiness activities for students.

In grades 1 through 5, JCCE offers a standard curriculum of basic educational study: language arts, mathematics, science/health, social studies, art, music, and physical education.

Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI)

Students in kindergarten through grade 3 visit the Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) Lab daily for practice lessons. During this period, students are able to do additional work on reading, math, science, and writing skills. Students in 4th and 5th grade will be able to take lessons between 7:30 and 7:50 each morning.

Special Education Services

A wide range of special services are offered through the speech, resource, and the self-contained classrooms. Students who qualify for these programs receive additional educational support through teachers specially trained for their needs. At JCCE, these services are provided in the regular classroom as much as possible.

Student Support Services

JCCE offers a wide range of student support services to assist students with academic, emotional, and social development. These services include the following:

Guidance - John C. Calhoun Elementary School employs a full-time, certified, guidance counselor to assist students and parents with academic, behavioral, emotional, and social problems. The four components of the comprehensive guidance program include guidance curriculum (class guidance), individual services, system support, and responsive services. Services include classroom instruction, small-group counseling, individual counseling, parenting classes, and consultation.

Student Support Team - Students who are experiencing difficulty in school may be referred to the Student Support Team. The Student Support Team is composed of the guidance counselor, the principal, the district psychologist, and selected teachers. The SST meets as needed to discuss possible ways of providing help for the student. A student can be referred to the SST by the child's teacher, the parent, or other school faculty members. The SST continues to monitor the student and provide additional alternatives as long as needed.

Media Center

The media center is a very important part our school. The basic function of our media center is to help children learn by:

1. Providing books and other media for the school's educational program.
2. Helping students develop an interest in and love for reading.
3. Teaching students how to use the media center and do research.
4. Planning cooperatively with other teachers so students can receive maximum benefit from the media center.

The media center operates on a flexible schedule where students can visit the media center throughout the day.

The media center is open from 7:45 A.M. until 3:00 P.M. We encourage all students to come to the media center anytime during these hours to do reference work, recreational reading, and check out books. There are no overdue fines, but a charge is made for lost or damaged library books.

Music

Students in grades 5K - 5 participate in one period of music each week. Students are able to study the basic elements of music through a variety of types of music. Students learn to appreciate different types of music while learning new songs. Music classes also perform their music for school assemblies and PTO programs.

Art

Students in grades 5K - 5 participate in one period of art each week. In art class, students participate in hands-on activities designed to develop their artistic skills and appreciation for all types of art. At various times, students' work is displayed at school, at the district office, and at the district's annual fine arts festival.

Physical Education

At JCCE, students have the opportunity to develop physical fitness through a comprehensive program of physical education. Students in grades 5K - 5 participate in PE one period weekly. In addition to physical training, students learn teamwork, sportsmanship, problem solving, and conflict resolution through special physical activities and challenges. **Physical Education should be a safe learning environment. Therefore, Tennis Shoes must be worn to participate in Physical Education Class. If a student does not wear tennis shoes to PE Class, they will sit against the wall for their own safety. If there is a financial reason that a child does not have tennis shoes, please contact John C. Calhoun and/or the PE Teacher.**

Educational Field Trips

Education is not confined to the school building; therefore, field trips are an important part in the education of your child. Each year teachers sponsor field trips which complement the school's curriculum and expose the children to the broader world around them. A student must have a permission slip signed by his/her parent/guardian before he/she will be allowed to go on the field trip. The cost of the trip is the responsibility of the parents. The rules and regulations of the school apply as long as the child is under the school's supervision.

Report Cards and Progress Reports

Students will receive computer generated report cards after the end of each nine-week period. Parents will pick up report cards at the school after the 1st and 3rd nine-week periods. Two copies of the report card will be sent home. One copy of the report card will be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to the school. Interim progress reports will be sent home by students near the middle of each nine-week period. Progress reports are to be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to the school.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher conferences are another good way to receive information about your child's progress. Parents are encouraged to make appointments for parent/teacher conferences and to attend the conferences at the scheduled time. Conferences are set up by appointment to allow time for you and the teacher to talk without interruption. Scheduling also helps to prevent interruption of classroom instructional time. You may call the office to arrange an appointment for a conference with your child's teacher.

Honors and Awards

Honor Roll Program

The faculty and staff of John C. Calhoun Elementary believe that recognition for academic development and excellence is vitally important. Qualifying students become part of the Honor Roll at the end of each nine-week period. The two divisions of the Honor Roll Program are as follows:

A and A/B Honor Roll

Students qualifying for the A Honor Roll must have all A's (93 - 100) on their report cards. Students qualifying for the A/B Honor Roll must have a combination of A's and B's (85 - 100) on their report cards.

Honor Roll Recognition

Students on the Honor Roll will be recognized near the close of each nine-week period at an Honor Roll Assembly. Students will also be recognized for displaying the character traits of the month and for perfect attendance.

Awards Day

At the end of each school year, students who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in each subject are recognized at Awards Day. Awards for excellence, most improvement, citizenship, and perfect attendance are presented to qualifying students from each classroom.

Parent Involvement

John C. Calhoun Elementary School recognizes the importance and value of effective parental involvement in enhancing student learning and academic achievement. In order to eliminate barriers to participation and ensure effective parental involvement, the school will sponsor the following opportunities for parental involvement.

Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO)

The PTO is a local organization whose membership is composed of the parents and teachers of John C. Calhoun Elementary School. The PTO is the support group for the local school and an avenue for democratic participation. The PTO is governed by a set of by-laws. All parents are encouraged to become a member of the PTO and attend the meetings.

Back-to-School Night/Open House

The first PTO meeting of the school year, held in August, is designated as “Back-to-School Night/Open House.” This night is set aside for parents to come to the school to meet the teachers and learn about the school rules and procedures and school and classroom activities. All parents and community members are welcome.

Parent Education Program

A parent education program is offered in cooperation with Adult Education, Parenting/Family Literacy, Even Start, the Department of Social Services, and the Department of Juvenile Justice. Periodic classes on various topics related to the interests and needs of parents are offered. Parents are also able to work in the computer lab and brush up on their basic skills while becoming familiar with computers. If you are interested in joining this group of involved parents, contact the school office for more information.

School Improvement Council (SIC)

The School Improvement Council is a group of elected and appointed parents and teachers who meet periodically to discuss ways of improving the school. The SIC helps to develop and monitor the School Renewal Plan which guides the school over a five-year period. Election of

members is held in September of each year and members' terms are staggered to ensure that some members are familiar with the ongoing process.

School Volunteer Program

With the wide range of activities that take place at school, there are a large number of opportunities for parents and community members to volunteer at the school. Volunteers can read to classes of students, work on bulletin boards, tutor individual students, etc. The list of different opportunities for volunteers goes on and on. This year we hope to work on teacher-made materials to assist in reading instruction. If you would be interested in volunteering at the school, talk with your child's teacher or call or stop by the school to find out how you can become a volunteer.

Home-School Communications

Effective communications between home and school is vital to the smooth operation of the school. The following methods will be used to communicate with parents.

- Report Cards and Progress Reports will be the formal method of communicating a student's academic, behavioral, and social progress.
- "Good News" Postcards, teacher notes sent home by students, PTO Meetings/Open House/Back-to-School Night, School Improvement Council meetings, teacher and principal telephone calls, parent/teacher conferences, and Report Card Pick-Up Day for parents at the end of 1st nine weeks will be the informal methods of communicating a student's academic, behavioral, and social progress.
- Notes/Fliers sent home with students, monthly calendars of events and activities, weekly assignment sheets sent home by teachers, articles in the local newspaper, messages on the school sign, and the school newsletter, will be methods of communicating information about school events and activities.

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John C. Calhoun Elementary School

2011-2012 Parent-Student-Teacher Compact

John C. Calhoun Elementary and the parents of the students participating in activities, services, and programs funded by Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (participating children), agree that this compact outlines how the parents, the entire school staff, and the students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership that will help children achieve the State's high standards.

Teachers

Education is the foundation of the community. Schools, parents, and the community have the responsibility of providing a safe, nurturing, motivational learning environment in which each child can participate in quality, educational, standards based experiences, experience academic success, and build a foundation for lifelong learning. As a professional teacher, I pledge to be guided by the belief that every student is capable of learning and can experience success. Because all individuals have worth and dignity, I will strive to model respect toward each child and his/her family. I will conduct myself so that I am a positive model of character and good manners. I will strive to provide an environment which will enable each student to grow to his/her fullest potential by coming to class prepared to teach, using special activities to make learning enjoyable, enforcing school and classroom rules fairly and consistently, and rewarding and recognizing good behavior. I will actively seek ways to involve parents and will maintain open lines of communication with parents concerning their child's school performance. Frequent reports will be provided on MAP scores, student progress reports, report cards and PASS Scores. I will be available through phone conferences, notes and will be available for any conference that is scheduled in advance during any non-instructional time during the day. I will also call to schedule a conference for all students who are failing, or are in danger of failing. The school will also provide opportunities for parents to participate in their child class and the school through PTO, School Leadership Team, and our parent volunteer coordinator will have activities that will include any parent who confirms that they are interested in volunteering on our survey at the beginning of the year.

Parents (Guardians)

Involvement in my child's school is of paramount importance to improved learning and student conduct. Therefore, as a parent (guardian), I pledge that I will be actively involved in my child's learning. I will see that my child attends school regularly and on time with the necessary materials and supplies. I will also set aside time for study and will insist that all homework assignments are completed on time. I will encourage my child to read at home and to limit TV viewing. I will communicate regularly with my child's teacher and attend conferences to discuss my child's performance and progress. I will support the school in developing positive behaviors by showing respect for my child, the teacher, and the school; by communicating positive values to my child; and by modeling honesty, trust, integrity, good manners, compassion, and fairness. I will support school programs through regular attendance at PTO meetings and other school functions, when possible. I further pledge to provide a supportive home environment that has high academic expectations and encourages my child to learn.

Students

Success in life, as well as in school, depends upon the development of positive attitudes, habits, and a desire for continued learning and personal improvement. Therefore, I pledge to believe in myself and my ability to learn. I will set high goals for myself and always try to do my best in my work. I will follow the school and bus rules and will accept responsibility for my actions. I will show respect for myself, my school, and others; seek to develop a trustworthy character; strive to be kind and helpful to others while showing good manners; and work cooperatively with my classmates. I will come to school regularly prepared to work and ready to learn, and will complete and return assignments on time. At all times, I will strive to be a good citizen.