

Union Hall Elementary School Student/Parent Handbook 2023-2024

Home of the Hornets!



100 Union Hall Elementary Circle
Chatham, VA 24531
Phone (434) 724-7010
Fax (434) 724-1850

Amy B. Emond, Principal

The back page of this booklet must be signed and returned to school.

Students and Parents,

Welcome to Union Hall Elementary! This handbook is prepared as a guide and general reference to provide information on school practices and procedures for Union Hall Elementary School. It is also a supplement to any materials from the Pittsylvania County School Board and the Department of Education. We are honored to have your child(ren) attend our school! We take our roles as educators very seriously, and we strive to create a learning environment that encourages students to do their best. Please do not hesitate to seek assistance or ask questions.

Sincerely,

Amy B. Emond, Principal

MISSION STATEMENT

Union Hall's mission is to provide a quality education to all students in a caring and supportive environment.

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is academic excellence for all students.

SCHOOL COLORS

Yellow, Green, White, Black

MASCOT

Hornet

DAILY SCHEUDLE

8:00 AM-4:00 PM....Office Hours
7:50 AM.....Bus Riders Begin Unloading
7:50 AM.....Car Riders Begin Unloading
7:50 AM-8:05 AM ...Homeroom/Breakfast
8:05 AM.....Tardy Bell - Students are tardy if they arrival after 8:05 AM.
8:05 AM-8:15 AM....Attendance/Collection of Money, etc.
8:15 AM.....Instructional Day Begins
2:50 PM.....Car/Van Riders Dismissed
3:00 PM.....Bus Loading Begins
3:15 PM.....Teachers Leave
4:00 PM..... Office Closes

School Practices and Procedures

ATTENDANCE

The United States Department of Education, the Virginia Department of Education, Pittsylvania County Schools, and Union Hall Elementary are very closely monitoring attendance for chronic absenteeism. Chronic absenteeism is defined as any student missing 10% of the days enrolled.

- Students who are successful in school are those in regular attendance and are prepared for their classes daily. Students are expected to be in school the entire day.
- Parents are encouraged to arrange appointments, trips, and other activities so their children do not miss instructional time. Sometimes family schedules or emergencies dictate an absence from school. Please notify the teacher and the principal in advance, if possible.
- Students are required to make up work that is missed due to any absence from school. This work will be given to the student on the day he/she returns to school.
- Students are excused for personal illness, a death in the immediate family, medical or dental appointments, court appearances, religious holidays, illness in the immediate family, or emergencies which require that the student be absent.
- A written excuse giving the date of absence, the reason for the absence, and the parent's signature is expected within two days of the student's return to school. **Students are allowed 7 written excuses (often referred to as "mommy notes") per year.** All other absences will be marked unexcused unless a doctor's note or court documentation is received.
- Excessive absences will result in a referral to the Home School Coordinator. The Home School Coordinator will work with the family to improve attendance and may refer the family to the Truancy Intervention Program (TIP) in which the family meets with the judge in the Juvenile and Domestic Courtroom in Chatham.
- Five (5) days of unexcused absences will be turned in to the Home School Coordinator, who will set up a meeting with the parents to create a Truancy Corrective Plan. If the absences continue, the student becomes truant, and the matter is then presented to the proper authorities.
- **Vacation**
 - Families are strongly encouraged to schedule all vacations during breaks from school, so students do not miss important instruction.
 - **Educational opportunities must be approved in advance by the principal.** Parents may acquire an Educational Opportunities form from the office and return one week prior to the time away from school. Students are expected to complete work missed during their absence. *Please note that these days will be considered part of the 7 written excuses ("mommy notes") accepted per year, and any student who is chronically absent from school (missed approximately 10% of the school year) at the time this form is turned in will be denied. The resulting days absent will be coded as unexcused, and the Home School Coordinator may be notified.*
 - Students missing standardized testing due to a family vacation may not have the opportunity to take a re-test. If you are planning a vacation, please check testing schedules in advance.

CAFETERIA

- All students are expected to eat in the school cafeteria including those bringing lunches from home. The students are under the supervision of the teacher aides/staff. They are expected to use good manners and to leave the table and area clean for the next class.
- The USDA and the Virginia Department of Education regulations state no one is allowed to sell, give away, or make available to students, foods that compete with breakfast or lunch program. **According to school nutrition guidelines, outside food and drink items such as Burger King, McDonalds, Hardees, etc. cannot be brought into the cafeteria.** Students are also not allowed to trade or give food to other students.
- All students at Union Hall Elementary will receive free breakfast and lunch during the 2023-2024 school year. Students may purchase a la carte items ('extras') during lunch time. The cafeteria will supply each family with a list of a la carte item prices. If your child will be purchasing these items, please send your check in a sealed envelope with your child's name, the teacher's name, and the amount enclosed. If paying for more than one child, list each child's name, teacher, and the amount. **Please do not include ice cream money in a check to pay for a la carte items.**
- **Cafeteria Rules:**
 - Students are expected to practice good manners and respect the rights and property of each other.
 - Students are expected to talk quietly to the person next to him/her. Yelling and excessive loudness is not permitted.
 - Seats in the cafeteria will be assigned for each class.
 - All students (including students who bring their lunch) will go through the cafeteria line.
 - Talking is discouraged until most students have finished their lunch.

CELL PHONES/ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Unauthorized use of cell phones and other electronic devices by students is prohibited during the school day.

CHECK OUT PROCEDURES

- A parent must come to the office to checkout a student during the school day.
- Buses arrive in the afternoon around 2:15 PM. If you are checking out a student through the office, please do so by 2:30 PM.
- A computer is located on the counter in the office for parents/guardians to check out students or check in students coming to school late. The student's individual 5 digit identification number is needed for check out and check in.
- Written permission must be given when picking up a student by anyone other than the parents, legal guardians, or persons whose names appear on the Emergency Information Form. Identification will be required.

CHECK WRITING

Checks may be written to the school and cafeteria.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

School officials are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.

CLASSROOM PARTIES

- Classes are allowed two parties per school year: winter & spring.
- Students may have treats on various occasions at the teacher's discretion. Due to food allergies, homemade treats/goodies are not allowed.
- Please consult with the classroom teacher in advance before providing any type of treats.

COMMUNICATION (School/Home)

- We will try to send notices of any pertinent information home on Thursdays in the communication folders. However, please check your child's folder daily for communications to and from the school.
- Students are expected to carry home all school notices that are handed out in class and give them to parents/guardians.
- Please visit the school's webpage on the school system website for a look at current events.
- School calendars and lunch menus are sent home each month. Parents are encouraged to refer to these daily in order to be aware of school events and meals served in the cafeteria.

CUSTODY ISSUES

- If your child has custody concerns, please contact the office.
- The school is obligated to follow the most recent court documents on file at the school; therefore, it is imperative the office is provided with the most current documentation.
- Noncustodial parents may request a copy of their child's report card. A signed letter which includes noncustodial parent's name, address, and phone number must be provided to the office.

DRESS CODE

The primary responsibility for students' dress lies with the parents; however, the school must see that the dress is appropriate for the tasks of the day and the safety of the students.

- Shoes must be worn at all times on school grounds. Students are required to wear sneakers for gym and outdoor physical activities.
- Head coverings of all types are to be removed upon entering the building. Hoods and bandanas are not to be worn.
- Pajama tops and/or bottoms and loungewear are only allowed on "Pajama Day" as designated by the principal.
- Tops or dresses with no straps or straps of fewer than 2 inches in width are prohibited unless covered by a jacket or top.
- Tops or dresses that reveal bare midribs or the back cut out are not allowed.
- Mesh or see-through clothing is prohibited.
- Tops with large openings for the arms or that are split below the arms are prohibited.

- Students are not to wear clothing with language, symbols or pictures that are offensive or suggestive, promote violence, are gang related, advertise weapons, tobacco, or alcohol.
- Shorts, skirts, skorts, and dresses can be no shorter than 4 inches above the knee, both in the front and back.
- Pants must be worn at the waist. No undergarments should be visible at any time.
- **We ask visitors to observe the same dress guidelines as students.**

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

- **Crisis Response**
 - Every precaution is taken to insure the safety of your child during normal school hours. Every classroom in our school has an **Emergency Procedures** pamphlet which provides directions on responding to a variety of emergencies that may be encountered at the school.
 - Students regularly participate in various emergency drills (fire, tornado, lockdown, etc.) as a precautionary measure.
 - In the event of an emergency or disaster situation in which students need to be evacuated from the school, parents will be notified.
- **Emergency Drills**
 - Fire drills are conducted weekly during the first month of school and monthly thereafter. Building evacuation plans are posted in each classroom and in other areas of the school. Students are taught the correct procedures for use during drills.
 - School bus emergency exit drills are practiced by all students twice each year, with the first drill occurring during the first 30 instructional days of school.
 - Tornado drills are held on a periodic basis and a procedure is in place to protect students and staff from unwelcome intruders.
 - The school also has specific plans for emergency evacuation and relocation should an evacuation of the building for an extended period of time be necessary.
- **Emergency Information Form**

Notify the office immediately if your address or home or work number changes. We must be able to contact you or your designee at all times!

- In case of emergency, each student is required to have an emergency form in the school office with the following information:
 - Name of parent(s) or guardian(s).
 - Complete, up-to-date address and phone number.
 - Home phone and parents' work phone numbers.
 - Emergency phone number of a friend or relative.
 - Physician's name and phone number.
 - Medical alert information.
- This form should also provide the parent's or guardian's instructions for the child in the event of an emergency or early dismissal. Please keep the school informed of any changes in telephone numbers or the emergency contact person(s).
- Please contact the school nurse with your child's specific health concerns or changes in their health status.
- If students are dismissed early because of adverse weather conditions (snow, emergencies, excessive heat, etc.), buses will be dispatched to take students home

on their regular routes unless you have indicated alternate arrangements on the ***Emergency Information Form***.

FIELD TRIPS

- Students must abide by the rules and regulations of Pittsylvania County Schools Code of Conduct.
- No children are permitted on the trip other than those enrolled in the class. Field trip chaperones (group supervision) must have Level II Clearance. (See section on VOLUNTEERS for further details.)
- Students must ride the bus to and from the destination.

GRADING AND REPORTING

- Teachers in grades 1-5 will use number grades in grade books. Number grades will be issued to determine letter grades to be placed on the report cards and cumulative records.
- Listed below is a numerical scale for determining letter grades in elementary schools:
 - A 90-100
 - B 80-89
 - C 70-79
 - D 60-69
 - F 0-59
- Report cards will be issued at the end of each nine weeks. Students will receive progress reports at approximately the midpoint of each marking period.
- **Parent Teacher Conference Nights are scheduled twice during the school year.** Information about these nights will be provided.
- Please feel free to discuss scholastic or behavioral concerns with your child's teacher at any time through a scheduled conference either during teacher planning or after school. Please make an appointment with your child's teacher or call the school office. **All issues should be discussed with the teacher before talking to the principal.**
- Pittsylvania County School utilizes an internet based program (PowerSchool) which allows parents to access students' grades and attendance through Parent Portal. Parents of new students will be assigned a user ID and password for Parent Portal. This information must be picked up and signed for in the office by the parent/guardian. Should current parents need this information, please contact the office.
- **Retention** may be considered if your child is not making adequate progress. Union Hall Elementary School will follow the guidelines as stated in the Pittsylvania County School Board Policy. The School Board policy manual may be accessed through the Pittsylvania County Schools website.

HEALTH ISSUES

- **Allergies**
Under certain circumstances, it may be necessary for schools to restrict various products such as food items and/or fragrances. To help ensure the safety of all students, it is requested that all food be commercially prepared for any classroom activity. Home baked items are not allowed.
- **Communicable Diseases**

Students will be excluded from school if they have contracted a communicable disease.

- **Immunizations**

Students will be excluded from school if immunizations are not complete.

- **Medication**

- Please try to arrange for your child to take medicine at home before school and when he/she comes home in the afternoons. Should it be necessary for medications to be dispensed at school, you must complete a medication permission form. This can be obtained from the school nurse.
- Please keep in mind that certain medications require a physician's order.
- **For the health and safety of all students, students are not allowed to transport any medicine (prescription or non-prescription) to or from school.**
- Parents or guardians must deliver the medicine to the school clinic or office. They must also pick up any remaining medicine from the clinic or office.
- Students with a temperature of 100 degrees or more should not be sent to school. Parents will be contacted to pick up any student with a fever. In addition, there is a 24 hour waiting period; therefore, students are not allowed to return to school until they have been fever free without the aid of medication for a period of 24 hours.

HOMEWORK

- Homework is an important extension of learning that takes place in school. Homework can provide practice and drill that reinforces classroom learning and can provide opportunities for independent study, research, and creative thinking.
- Parents can help their children by arranging a quiet, comfortable place for their children to work and by seeing that assignments are completed. The amount of homework that a teacher assigns will vary from day to day.
- Students work at different rates, so the time children take to complete homework varies. Please talk to your child's classroom teacher if you have concerns regarding homework.

ICE CREAM

- Students may purchase ice cream for \$0.60 per day or \$3.00 per week.
- All ice cream money should be paid for on Monday if possible. However, money for ice cream will be accepted on other days of the week if necessary.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

- Announcements concerning school closings or delay will be made via local radio or television stations, Pittsylvania County Schools' website posting, and the School Messenger system. **It is imperative to keep contact information current.** Please notify the office of the changes as soon as possible.
- The Superintendent or designee will announce information regarding closings. Please refrain from calling the school. During these times, telephone lines are needed for emergency communication with the School Board Office.
- Early closing may become necessary if weather conditions warrant. We request you have a plan in effect for your child in the event of early dismissal. Stay tuned to local TV/radio should inclement weather occur during the school day.

K-5 AWARDS/STUDENT RECOGNITION

Students will be recognized in the following ways:

- **Perfect Attendance** - recognized each nine weeks and at the end of the school year.
- **Good Conduct** - recognized each nine weeks and at the end of the school year.
- **Principal's List** - All A's and S's (for academic subjects) on report card and is recognized each nine weeks and at the end of the school year.
- **Hornet's List** - A's and B's and all S's (for academic subjects) on report card. Recognition will be given each nine weeks and at the end of the year.
- **Shooting Star Award** - A/B average on the end of year report card and is recognized at the end of the school year.
- **Young Writers** (end of the year) - grade level winners, school level winners, and district winners
- **Music Awards** (end of year) – All County Chorus students
- **SOL Recognition** (end of the year) - Students who receive a perfect score of 600 on an SOL.
- **Fitness Awards** (end of the year) - 5th grade students only.

LOST AND FOUND

- Please label outer clothing and lunch boxes with your child's name so that lost items can be returned. All lost and found items are kept in the lost & found area until claims have been made. Unclaimed items are given to charity during the winter break and at the end of the school year.
- Electronic games, toys, and large amounts of money should not be brought to school. The school will not assume responsibility for these items. If these items are taken from a student, the item(s) will be returned only to the parent.

MAKE-UP WORK

- Any work missed due to a student's absence shall be made up after the first day of returning school. A student who is absent one day will have one day to turn in make-up work. If a student misses two or more days, he will have the same number of days to make up his work as the days missed, unless the absenteeism comes at the end of the marking period. Then the teacher and the principal will decide the best course to pursue. All missed work must be made up within that grading period.
- If your child is going to be absent you may call and request work. However, you may not pick up work before 3:00 PM. This will give the teacher time to get the child's work without interrupting the regular teaching day.
- Attendance is one component considered for promotion and retention. Excessive absences could result in a recommendation for retention.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

The school recognizes a moment of silence and participates in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance each morning. It is requested that all students observe this moment of silence for reflection, prayer, or meditation, as well as the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Visitors are also asked to respectfully observe this time.

RECESS

Recess is considered a part of the elementary curriculum for all students preschool through grade five. It is defined as a teacher-supervised, unstructured break from the teaching and learning routine.

SCHOOL MESSENGER

This is an automated phone system which notifies parents of announcements and school closings. **It is essential that parents notify the office when phone numbers change.**

SCHOOL PICTURES

Individual student pictures will be taken in the fall and spring. Class pictures will be taken in the fall. Preschool “graduation” and fifth grade “promotion” pictures will be taken during the second semester.

STUDENT CONDUCT

- Students are expected to come to school ready to learn. Good behavior is expected at all times. Each student has the right to a safe and healthy environment conducive to learning.
- Pittsylvania County Schools utilizes a Positive Behavior Intervention Support System (PBIS). Our aim is to explicitly teach behavioral expectations and then recognize the positive behaviors shown by students. We hope to reduce school and classroom behavior disruptions and educate all students about acceptable school behaviors. Our PBIS implementation is focused on clearly defined expectations, research-validated practices, supportive administrative systems, and information for problem-solving behaviors.
- Students at Union Hall Elementary School are expected to follow school rules that focus on exerting **self-control**, being **on-task**, showing **achievement**, and being **respectful** to others (**SOAR**). These rules are implemented school-wide in all school settings.
- Students violating school rules may receive consequences such as a conference with the principal, parent contact, loss of a privilege, or suspension from school. Please review Student Conduct in the *PCS Student/Parent Information Booklet* which details specific misconduct and consequences.

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are provided free of charge to students and should be returned in good condition. Students are also expected to pay for school property (including textbooks) which is lost or damaged.

TELEPHONE

- Telephone messages from parents will be delivered to students **only in cases of an emergency**.
- Students are allowed to use the telephone **only** for school related needs.

TOBACCO AND NICOTINE VAPOR PRODUCTS

The possession and/or distribution of tobacco and nicotine vapor products on the school bus, school property, or at an on-site or off-site school sponsored activity is prohibited by Pittsylvania County School Board Policy (GBEC/JFCH/KGC).

TRANSPORTATION

- **School Bus:**
 - o Bus routes and stops are planned and established by the transportation department. Please be reminded that riding a bus is a privilege. Abiding by the bus rules is required. Failure to follow these rules may result in the loss of this privilege. The bus driver will report misbehavior to the principal using a **bus referral** form. The **bus referral** will be issued to any student for any behavior that is detrimental to the safety of other pupils or to the safe operation of the bus. **Suspension of the privilege of riding the bus does not excuse the student from school attendance.** Please review the Student Regulations for School Bus Students found in the *PCS Student/Parent Information Booklet* with your child.
 - An adult should be available and visible at the bus stop in both the morning and afternoon. Bus drivers are instructed not to wait in the morning for student to arrive at the bus stop. In the afternoon, students will not be released unless an adult is visible. In this case, the student will be returned to school. A **waiver form** is available in the office should parents want to allow their child to be dropped off the bus without an adult being present.
 - Parents should not attempt to board a school bus. If you would like to conference with the driver, please contact the school.
- **Car Riders:**
 - Car riders unload between 7:50 and 8:05 AM
 - Students may be dropped off in the morning on the playground side of the building between 7:50 AM and 8:05 AM only. Students may not be dropped off until staff members are on duty and give the students permission to exit the vehicle. Students should exit the vehicle on the **passenger** side. **They should not be dropped off at the main entrance as this area is reserved for buses.**
 - All students need to be in their classrooms by **8:05 AM** for homeroom. If a student reports after 8:05 AM, the student is tardy to class and must report to the office to pick up a tardy pass. An adult should accompany the student to the office and explain why the student is tardy.
 - Students will be dismissed to the same location each afternoon beginning at 2:50 PM. **Car rider cards must be on display at this time throughout the year. There will be no exceptions to this procedure.** If parents need additional car rider cards, please contact the office. The office staff will provide additional cards as needed.
 - Please follow the arrows and pull in as close to other cars as possible in the two rows. **Cars should not be in the road waiting to pick up students as this is a traffic hazard.**
 - Please remain in your vehicle as students are dismissed. **Students are not allowed to leave the sidewalk until their name is called by a staff member.**
- **Day Care Vans:**
 - Parents of day care transportation students are required to complete a *Parental Consent to Release Child to Alternative After-School Transportation Form*. The form

- must be completed and on file in the office before students will be released to day care providers.
- o Please allow Child Care Vans the first place in line so they may leave quickly to get to other schools.
 - **Other Information:**
 - o Changes to the regular dismissal routine must be documented prior to 2:30 PM.
 - o Parents must send a note with the date, an explanation, and signature if someone not listed on the information sheet is to pick up the student or if the normal bus route is to be changed.
 - o Students who wish to go from school to another student's home must bring a note giving permission from parents of both students. Notify the office in advance with your written permission if arrangements of this nature are necessary for your child.
 - o Telephone calls and faxing notes for changing the way a child goes home will NOT be accepted. It is too confusing for teachers and students to rush around because phone calls often come as the students are boarding the bus.

USE OF THE SCHOOL GROUNDS

- The playground and facilities are provided to enhance the educational program for the children. No outside group may use the building or grounds during the school day.
- In order to use the school or school grounds after school hours and/or weekends, a request must be made in writing at least two weeks in advance. Use of the school grounds must receive School Board permission and be scheduled through the school office. This includes the playground area.

VISITORS

- All visitors must report to the office upon arrival at the school.
- All visitors must show a valid driver's license when signing in. Driver's licenses link to our School Pass system which is part of the school division's safety system.
- A computer generated ID badge provided in the office must be worn by all visitors in the building. This safety procedure is required by all Pittsylvania County Schools. Level I and/or Level II clearance is also required.

YOUR FEEDBACK MATTERS

Your feedback matters. Please take time to let us know how we can improve. You can also share concerns, voice opinions, and offer your ideas. We strive to improve as a school and encourage your participation and input.

UNION HALL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

100 UNION HALL ELEMENTARY CIRCLE
CHATHAM, VA 24531
OFFICE (434) 724-7010
FAX (434) 724-1850

HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT

I hereby acknowledge that I have received and read the Union Hall Elementary Student/Parent Handbook. I am aware of the following changes in the handbook for the 2023-2024 school year:

- Students are tardy if they arrive after 8:05. (Page 2)
- Students are allowed 7 written excuses (often referred to as “mommy notes”) per year. (Page 3)
- Dress Code revisions have been made. (Pages 5-6)
- A 10 point grade scale is being used in Pittsylvania County Schools. (Page 7)
- Report Cards and Progress Reports will be issued each nine weeks. (Page 7)

Parent’s Signature _____

Student’s Name _____

Grade _____ Teacher’s Name _____

Date _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO SCHOOL WITHIN FIVE DAYS OF RECEIPT.