

2017 – 2018

Student/Parent Handbook



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Rhonda P. Roach, Principal
Rebecca Beier, School Counselor

*“Together Living Above
the Line”*

WELCOME

The faculty and staff at George A Whitten Elementary welcome you to “Warrior Country” and a new school year.

We look forward to welcoming your child into our “Warrior Family.” As your principal, I will make every effort to ensure a quality education, a safe and orderly environment, and an enjoyable atmosphere for children.

The staff and I will be available to you; and together we will provide your child with an exciting and challenging learning experience. When parents and teachers work together in a child’s educational experience, success is achieved at higher levels in both a child’s academic and social growth. We are committed to this goal at Whitten Elementary School.

Please familiarize yourself with the student/parent handbook. Let’s take an active role in support of your child’s educational experience at George A Whitten Elementary!

Let’s get busy learning!!

Rhonda P. Roach
Principal
rhonda.roach@sumnerschools.org

George A. Whitten Elementary

Mission Statement

We will provide a safe environment that is emotionally secure, academically challenging, and fosters social responsibility.

Beliefs

1. We believe that students learn best in a nurturing, positive, disciplined, and safe environment.
2. We believe that effective education is a student-centered effort including the home, school, and community.
3. We believe that students actively engaged in a variety of instructional strategies will reach their fullest potential.

Positive Behavior Plan

“Together Living Above the Line”

“The Warrior Way”

We will be SAFE
We will be RESPONSIBLE
We will be RESPECTFUL
WE will be our BEST!!!

School-wide Behavior Plan

Each classroom teacher will teach and model for the students HOW to be SAFE, RESPONSIBLE, & RESPECTFUL in each environment the student will experience throughout the school day. Regular education, related arts, and special education teachers communicate through the use of school-wide incentives and discipline forms. You can expect written or verbal communication if a pattern of misconduct occurs.

SCS Grading Scale 2016 – 2017

- Students in Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, & 3rd grades will be graded using a "Standards Based Report Card". This type report card continually assesses student mastery throughout the quarter as soon as students have had sufficient practice with the standard being taught.
- Students in grades 4-5 will be graded using the following scale:

A	93 – 100
B	85 – 92
C	75 – 84
D	70 – 74
F.....	69 & Below

Report Cards are sent home in a timely manner following the ending of the nine weeks. Progress reports are sent home mid-nine weeks. Student grades may also be monitored throughout the school year via Information Now online program. Contact the school office for information necessary to access the iNow parent portal.

Sumner County Schools Contact Information (Central Office)

Board of Education Address.....
695 E. Main St., Gallatin, TN;
Primary Phone Number – 615-451-5200

The Sumner County School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability,

or age in its programs or activities; and provides equal access to all programs and youth groups. The following individuals have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

- *Selena Elmore... Section 504 District Coordinator – 615-451-6598
- *Norma Dam.....ADA Coordinator
- *Frankie SkinnerInstructional Coordinator
- *Julie DanielSpecial Education Coordinator
- *Katie BrownTitle IX Safe & Healthy Schools Coordinator: 615-451-6500
- *Naomi AtchisonTitle IX Coordinator, Asst. Dir. For Human Resources: 615-451-5226

School Visitors

ALL visitors to GWE must report to the office before proceeding to any other part of the building to sign-in and obtain a visitor badge. Visitors MAY be asked to provide identification.

Visitors may not go to the classroom during instruction time. Parents eating lunch with their child should report to the cafeteria until the class arrives for lunch, rather than going to the classroom. Likewise, we ask that parents not walk back to the classroom following lunch time. *(Per SCS Policy ONLY parents/legal guardians are allowed to eat lunch with students in the cafeteria AND are prohibited from interacting to other students.)*

Dress Code

We will make every effort to allow the students to be comfortable in school. For your convenience and ours at school, the following dress code will be used during the school hours, including field trips and school events.. The dress code is to promote an atmosphere conducive to instruction and safety for your child. The following shall NOT be worn to school:

- Biker shorts or cut-off jeans that are frayed or pockets showing
- Saggy-Sagging pants
- Spandex or body shirts
- Leggings and leotards unless worn with an appropriate length top, dress, or shorts covering the derriere

- Suggestive slogans, pictures, or advertisements for tobacco or alcohol products on clothes
- Caps, hats, scarves, or bandanas
- Strapless or spaghetti strap dresses or blouses
- Bare midriff, halters or tank tops
- Skirts and shorts must be at fingertip length when standing straight (even when wearing leggings)
- Backless shoes or shoes with cleats or rollers (Sandals with a back strap are permitted Clothing related to gangs
- Extreme hair color, make-up, or body piercing (other than earrings)
- **Tattoos (washable or permanent)** –includes those drawn in ink or permanent marker
- **No extreme hair Cuts/colors/styles- ie: Mohawks, designs, or names cut in the hair. etc.**
- No large holes in clothes allowing skin to show. Mesh may be worn with T-shirts underneath. Garments must cover the shoulders.
- Jewelry must not be distracting/disruptive or unsafe.
- In addition, any clothing that interferes with good order and discipline in school, such as clothing with sexually explicit or violence inciting slogans may **not** be worn.
- Administration has the right to make decisions on any other clothing or inappropriate attire that may be distracting the learning of other students.

Penalties: Change or go home per SCS standardized dress code for elementary. Persistent violations will be handled through the standard discipline plan.

School Day

The school day starts at 7:15 a.m. and ends at 2:15 p.m. No student is to arrive at school before 6:30 a.m. and all students should be picked up by 2:30 p.m. Afternoon childcare is available through the YMCA. No early morning childcare is available. All applications for afternoon childcare should be completed through the YMCA.

Morning Arrival

The school doors will be open for your child at 6:30 a.m. Bus duty personnel will be provided at that time and not

earlier. No students should be brought to school and dropped off before 6:30, as we are not responsible for your child until 6:30 a.m. If your child is a "car-rider", you must go through the "car-rider" line. This is for the safety of all students. **Do not drop children off in parking area to walk across the cross-walk.**

In Your Child's Best Interest

Helping your child develop active self-reliance and responsibility is one of the most healthful and constructive gifts a parent can give. From an early school experience, children must learn self-reliance in a safe, familiar, secure environment. The school provides such a place. To help inspire a child's self-reliance and to help facilitate the understanding that school is the child's responsibility, it is in the best interest of the child that the following be observed:

The first full week of school, if the parent desires, walk your child to his/her classroom.

The second full week of school, walk your child to the end of the hall and watch your child proceed alone to their classroom.

The third full week of school, let your child out at the school's car rider entrance and watch while he/she enters the school building. Getting materials ready for the school day and putting things away to go home is part of the child's responsibility.

Tardy

Students arriving at school after the 7:15 a.m. bell, which is our official start time set by the County, must report to the front office with an adult in order to be signed in. The child will then be admitted to class. The child and adult must follow this procedure. Tardiness should be avoided in order to prevent interruption of class time and attendance concerns.

Absences

When a student is absent from school, a note from the parent/guardian or doctor must be provided within 2 days of returning to school. **All absences will be recorded as unexcused until a note is provided.** The note should contain the following information:

- Date of absence
- Child's name
- Child's teacher

- Reason for absence
- Signature of parent/guardian
- Phone number

When a child is absent for three or more days consecutively, the parent should call the school. For the students accumulating 5 unexcused absences, an attendance referral will be made to the attendance department. **This is Board policy.** Students absent more than 24 days may be subject to retention for the year.

Dismissal

We realize that dismissal may be longer than you would like to wait and that you would like to get ahead of the crowd by coming in to pick up your child. **Please** understand that the process will go much smoother and faster if you follow the school's procedure. Teachers are still providing instruction and the office staff is very busy trying to finish up the day's activities. We realize that afternoon dismissal is a potentially dangerous time due to the large numbers of people and vehicles that move through the school campus in a short period of time.

Early Dismissal/Leaving School Grounds

If your child needs to be dismissed before 2:15 p.m., it is required that the parent, guardian, or authorized person sign the student out in the office. Please try to schedule doctor and dentist appointments after school hours if at all possible. No student is to leave the school grounds without permission from the principal or designee. Do not ask a student to meet you outside.

Going Home Differently From the Normal Procedure:

We know unexpected circumstances arise, but we ask that changes be kept to minimum. Anytime and every time your child is to go home a different way than usual, the parent or guardian **must** send a note specifying what the new procedure is for that day. We need your help and cooperation with our dismissal procedure. **We will not be making any changes in the dismissal procedure according to what the student tells us. We must have a note from the parent/guardian or receive a phone call from the parent/guardian before 1:30 P.M. before we can allow a child to change his/her way of going home.**

When you have to call school to make a change in dismissal, please provide all the necessary information to the office personnel. For instance, if a child is to ride the bus, please know the number and the address to which the child is to go. A change in transportation form must be completed before a child can ride the bus. Please call as soon as possible, no later than 1:00 P.M., since this takes extra time that the office personnel doesn't have at the end of the day. Please do not call and instruct the school to tell a child to ride the bus to his cousin "Timmy's" house. The child may not know "Timmy's" bus number or "Timmy's" address and "Timmy" may not even be at school that day. Bus drivers are not to transport students without the proper procedure (change in transportation form stating all the necessary information). If we have to help the parent by trying to find out this information, we may delay the dismissal process and this throws everyone off schedule. We ask that you plan ahead for early dismissal and follow the procedures to ensure an orderly dismissal.

Day Care Procedures

If your child attends an after-school day-care center, please notify them each day your child is absent or picked up early from school. When they are unaware that your child is absent, they often get caught waiting in the bus or car traffic until they send word in to the office or the teacher. We would appreciate your thoughtfulness in calling the daycare center on the days your child will not be picked up.

Snow Days

There will be a snow letter kept on file in the classroom for each student explaining the procedure the parent wants the child to follow concerning early dismissal. Information concerning school closings will be reported on all local news media. **If there is a 2-hour delay, school hours will be from 9:15-2:15. Breakfast will not be served.**

Telephone

The office phones are for school business and may be used by students only in the case of an emergency. Please leave messages for your child with school personnel and it will be relayed to your child.

Field Trips

During the school year, field trips may be taken to various places to enhance the educational program of your children. A permission slip must be signed and returned to school for your child to go on the school sponsored trip. We will NOT accept phone permission for a student to leave the GWE campus. All students will be transported on the bus with the class to and from the field trip destination. **No students will be permitted to ride with their parents in private vehicles per Board policy.** Siblings are not allowed to attend field trips, since this is a school day and a school trip.

Bus Rules

School bus transportation is a privilege that may be withdrawn for inappropriate behavior. The bus driver is in complete charge of the bus and occupants at all times. Students riding the bus must comply with requests of the driver and must obey all safety regulations. These rules should be followed at all times:

- Obey and do not disturb the driver.
- Sit properly with your back against the seat, bottom on the seat, facing the front of the bus, and feet under the seat or on the floor.
- Keep hands, feet, objects, and negative comments to yourself, and keep all body parts inside the bus.
- Do not throw/propel things inside/outside the bus.
- Do not bring food or beverages on the bus.
- Do not write on, damage, or leave trash on the bus.
- Do not bring on the bus: sharp items, animals, tobacco products, balloons, fireworks, drugs, alcohol or weapons of any nature as described by the board's Zero Tolerance Policy.
- Get on and off the bus only at the student's assigned bus stop. When crossing the road, look both ways and cross several steps in front of the bus. Use appropriate language and gestures.

Inappropriate bus behavior may involve but is not limited to the following:

- Verbal reprimand/warning
- Phone call to parent/guardian
- Loss of bus privileges

Lunch/Cafeteria Guidelines

- ✓ "Outside food", such as McDonald's, Subway, etc. may not be brought into the cafeteria due to federal cafeteria guidelines.
- ✓ Per school policy, visitors of children are not allowed to interact with other students – definitely no personal contact.
- ✓ Photographing other students is prohibited. If you feel the need to take a picture of your child, please make sure no other students are in the picture.
- ✓ Parents/guardians eating with their child/children must eat at a separate designated table. ***We ask that parents limit additional guests to 2 per visit to save space for other guests.***
- ✓ ***NEW: Students are allowed visitors twice per week.***
- ✓ Once your child's class has lined up, please proceed to the office to sign out. Please do not walk them back to class, as this may interrupt the start of instruction time.

Registration Requirements

In accordance with standards and policies of the State Department of Public Health as approved by the State Commissioner of Education, children entering kindergarten or first grade for the first time must have a complete medical examination along with pertinent immunizations as follows:

Registration Requirements

Rubella, Rubeola, Mumps (M.M.R.) – 2 doses
Polio – 4 doses
Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus (D.P.T.) – 4 doses
Hepatitis B – 2 or 3 doses
Varicella (Chickenpox) – 1 dose (Kindergarten Only)

1. Effective July 1, 1998, proof of immunization with two doses of the Measles, Mumps, and Rubella vaccines will be required for admission into grades K, 4, 8, and 12. By July 1, 2001, this second dose must appear on all K-12 records.
2. Effective July 1, 1999, proof of adequate Immunization against Hepatitis B will be required for admission into kindergarten.

The following items are required to enroll a student:

- A Tennessee School Immunization Certificate, signed by the health provider
- A birth certificate
- 2 Proofs of Residence in the Whitten school zone

Age Requirements

Any student entering kindergarten must be five years old on or before **August 15**. T.C.A. 49-6-201(b)(3)

GWE Homework Policy

Our school feels that a reasonable amount of homework plays an important part of your child's learning. In order to teach responsibility, the following policy has been implemented: One demerit will be issued for any homework not completed or turned in on time. Homework must be completed. The acceptance of a '0' will not be permitted. ***Upon receiving the 4th demerit, the student must serve a detention.*** Demerits are cleared after each grading period. Please make every effort to encourage your student's homework effort through the proper support, parent expectations, and a peaceful home environment for homework completion.

Guidance and Counseling Program

The guidance and counseling program is a comprehensive, developmental program for students in grades K – 5. This program consists primarily of classroom activities, small groups, and individual counseling. The counselor is available to all students, parents, faculty, and staff. Early aid in development of a healthy self-concept and respect for the feelings of others will help children become successful learners in the school environment.

Counseling Referrals

Parents may refer by calling the counselor or sending a note to the classroom teacher. Teachers /Administrators may refer students. Counseling is a voluntary and confidential service. GWE also offers Centerstone school-based counselling services.

Promotion/ Retention

The goal at GWE is for every student to be successful and achieve to their best ability. We recognize that all students have areas of strength and areas of focus. We recognize that all students have varying abilities and come to GWE Elementary with varying educational backgrounds. It is important that all students from kindergarten to fifth grade understand that there are academic standards that must be met to proceed to the next grade level. From the first day of school, parents must help students to be academically accountable. There is no summer school for elementary students in Sumner County. Students must demonstrate through classwork, homework, projects, and assessments that they are meeting the academic standards for that grade level on a daily basis. The time a student is in the classroom will greatly impact their level of success in a grade level.

Attendance is a factor that effects promotion and retention of a student from one grade level to another. As stated in Board Policy, excessive absences- (i.e. more than 24 days.) will subject students to possible retention. When promotion or retention is considered, parent input is necessary with the final decision resting with the school's principal and the student's teacher.

Parent Conferences

Sumner County provides a day/days for parent conferences. Please see the school calendar for this date. Teachers may call for intervening conferences. If you want to set up an additional conference, teachers will be happy to do so. Be sure to send a note or call the office to schedule these appointments. Please do not drop by "For Just A Minute" during the school day or in the morning. This puts the teacher in a most uncomfortable position. While trying to have a conference with you, instruction has stopped for all the other children in the room. If you have a problem needing immediate attention, contact the office for assistance.

Student Cell Phone/Smart Watch Policy

We do understand that students may need to use a cell phone or smart watch to communicate with their

parents/guardian for transportation needs before and after school. Therefore, we will adhere to the following policy regarding student cell phones. Cell phones/smart watches MUST remain turned off and in the student's backpack at all times and must not be used during the school day. The following will occur if a cell phone/smart watch is visible or used during the school day.

- **1st Offense – Removal of phone/watch for the day, minor issued, and parent phone call.**
- **2nd Offense – Removal of phone/watch for parent to retrieve and major issued.**

Clinic/Medicine

GWE has a school nurse part-time. Our school only provides basic first aid. If your child shows symptoms of illness, please keep him/her home. Should your child become ill at school, has a temperature of 100 or over, vomits, or has diarrhea, you will be contacted to pick up your child. Students must be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school. Students taking medication administered 3 times a day should take the medication before school, after school, and before bedtime due to a lack of refrigeration facilities.

School Clubs

Being a member of a student club is an honor with certain responsibilities. Students participating in clubs, such as the Art Club, Music Chorale, Running Club, Drama Club, and any other GWE club must behave "Above the Line" at all times. Each GWE club has requirements and guidelines which must be followed to continue participating. Misbehaviors resulting in demerits, minors, and/or majors **MAY** cause club probation or expulsion.

Money

All money should be sent to school in an envelope with the student's name, teacher's name, and purpose.

- **DO NOT ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO BRING EXCESSIVE AMOUNTS OF MONEY TO SCHOOL.**

- ***Print your child's name and teacher's name on all checks.**
- **If your child comes home with money that is not his/hers, please contact the teacher.**

Regarding Parties/Birthdays, etc.

- GWE students will have two (2) parties per school year. The events celebrated will be prior to Winter Break and an End-of-the-Year celebrations.
- Students may not receive deliveries of flowers, candy, balloons, etc. at school
- Party invitations may not be distributed at school.
- Due to an increase in food allergies among our student population, birthday cupcakes, cookies, etc., may no longer be brought to school.

Other

- Students may not bring live animals to school.

