

Otter River Elementary School

Family Handbook

2023-2024



Building Lifelong Learners

The School Board Policies that appear in this handbook are periodically updated in response to changes in the law and other circumstances; therefore, there may have been changes to the documents in the Handbook since it was originally created during the summer break. You may access all current BCPS School Board policies at <http://bedford.sharpschool.net/> by clicking on “Quick Links” and selecting “Board Docs”.

This *Family Handbook* and the *Bedford County Schools’ Code of Student Conduct* should be used together. The Code gives detailed information that is not included here.

Otter River Elementary School

Quick Reference

Contact Information

Address: 1044 Otter River Drive, Goode, Virginia, 24556

Phone System: 540-586-9210

Office Fax: 540-586-7635

Website: <http://bedfordORES.sharpschool.net/>

Office Hours

7:20 AM - 4:00 PM

Daily School Schedule

7:45 AM - 2:15 PM

Students may enter the school building starting at 7:20 a.m. The tardy bell rings and classes begin at 7:45 a.m. Students who eat breakfast at school should be dropped off early enough to check in with their homeroom teacher, complete their meal, and be in class when the tardy bell rings at 7:45 a.m. Students who arrive tardy (after the 7:45 a.m. bell) must have a parent/responsible adult sign them in at the front office computer.

Students are dismissed at 2:15 p.m. each afternoon. For safety and security reasons, all adults must provide a government-issued I.D. card when picking up a child early from school and when visiting the building during school hours (i.e., to eat lunch with a child).

Daily Schedule

7:20 AM: Students arrive

7:20- 7:45 AM: Breakfast is served

7:45 AM: Tardy bell rings/classes begin

2:15 PM: Dismissal begins

Faculty and Staff 2023-2024

Instructional Staff

Pre-K

Marsha Cooper

Kindergarten

Donna Carnley

Gina Hogan

First Grade

Hannah Speake

Second Grade

Kelsey Beno

Third Grade

Christina McAlister

Fourth Grade

Kelli Arrington

Jennifer Mitchell

Fifth Grade

Barbara Harvey

Mandy Johnson

Resource

Lynn Doss- Library

Renee Dolfini- Music

Sally O'Donnell- Art

Jacob Heidorn- PE

Suzanne Coleman- Gifted

Student Services

Katie Appleby- Special
Education

Bethany Lyle- Guidance
Counselor

Yolonda Mosley- Speech
Pathologist

Lisa Taylor- Reading
Specialist/ SCT

Reggie Tyree- School
Psychologist

Paraprofessionals

Beth Burnette

Marie Castello

Kim Collins

Angie Francis

Virginia Lowe

Jamie Schultz

Marla Trosper

Cafeteria

Kathy Overstreet, Manager

Hazel Burnette

Geraldine O'Connell

Shirley Witt

School Resource Officer

Deputy Andy Watkins

Office Staff

Krista Moore, Principal

Carol Broesamle, Secretary

Donna Newcomb,

Bookkeeper

Amy Gelles, Nurse

Transportation

Melanie Howard- #9

Andy Eppley- #29

Karen Stanley- #48

Wanda Reid- #58

Shannon Mack- #60

Jill Busch- #138

Ron Brumble- #216

Laura Robinson- #220

Vision and Mission

Vision Statement

Otter River Elementary is dedicated to teaching all students the essential skills which enable them to reason critically, utilize technology effectively, and contribute to their school, community, and world.

Mission Statement

Otter River Elementary School is a place where all students receive a quality education in a safe and supportive learning environment.

Accreditation Status

Otter River Elementary School is fully accredited by the Virginia Department of Education as a result of meeting or exceeding the criteria in all areas for “Full Accreditation” status.

Policies and Procedures

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- **Age** - A child may enter kindergarten if he/she has reached age five on or before September 30, 2023. Children who are six years old by September 30, 2023 must be enrolled in school.
- **Immunizations** - A parent or guardian must present evidence of each child’s immunization against communicable diseases for which vaccinations are required by state law. Children must also be vaccinated against varicella or Chicken Pox. Students who are not fully vaccinated will not be allowed to enter school.
- **Physical Examination** - Children entering school for the first time must have a comprehensive physical examination performed within the twelve months prior to enrollment. The parent or guardian shall furnish the school with the physician’s report.

ATTENDANCE

Please call the school (540-586-9210) by 9:30 a.m. if your child will be absent that day. When the student returns to school after an absence, **he/she must bring a doctor’s excuse or a written note signed by the parent/guardian explaining when and why the student was absent.** If a written

note is not received, the absence will remain unexcused. If a student is absent for three days or more, contact the school so that work may be sent home. Students who miss 1-2 days for excused absences will have 3 school days to make up the work; those missing 3-5 days for excused absences will have 6 school days; and those missing over 6 days should talk with the teacher to establish a date for the work to be completed. If you know your child will be absent for several days for an excused absence and would like to pick up assignments, please give the school prior notice. If you would like work sent home in the afternoon for a child that is absent that day, please make your request by 8:00 a.m.

Parents will be notified by letter when their child's absences exceed five days. Attendance letters address days absent, days tardy, and days that the student left school early.

To avoid being tardy, students must be **in their classroom** by 7:45 a.m. Students who arrive after 7:45 a.m. must report to the office with a parent/guardian before going to class. **All students must be signed in on the computer in the main office by the adult accompanying them.** Regular attendance is extremely important to a child's academic progress. Please make sure that your child arrives on time and attends daily unless he/she is ill. Please refer to the *Code of Student Conduct* for additional information concerning attendance policies for Bedford County Schools.

BUSES

Children in preschool through third grade must be accompanied to and from bus stops where the bus driver cannot see the parent from the drop off location. **Students will be returned to school if an approved person is not visible to the driver.**

A student riding a bus other than their regular bus must have written parental permission approved in the office. (If it is necessary to call the school to request changes due to an emergency situation, these calls should be made before 12:00 p.m. to allow time for the message to reach the student.) If a student wishes to ride a bus home with another student, both students must have written parental permission approved in the office. If not, both students will go home by their normal methods of transportation. When a student rides a bus to an unscheduled stop (i.e., not with another student), the note must include the address of the stop. Always send a note when there is a change in your child's normal transportation plans.

Bus safety will be reviewed at every grade level. Students are expected to maintain appropriate and safe behavior at all times on the bus and at the bus stop. Specific guidelines and procedures can be found in the *Code of Student Conduct*.

CAFETERIA

The ORES cafeteria provides well-balanced and nutritious breakfast and lunch meals daily. In the event that school opening is delayed, breakfast will be offered to the children as they arrive.

Student Lunch \$2.40	Reduced Lunch \$0.00
Student Breakfast \$1.35	Reduced Breakfast \$0.00
Snacks/Ice Cream \$0.75 each	Adult Lunch \$3.30
Milk/juice \$0.60 each	Adult Breakfast \$1.60

****Prices are subject to change without notice.**

Students may buy extra items when they go through the line.

Students who pack lunches should not bring anything in glass containers, nor should they bring sodas. Nutritious foods and beverages are encouraged. Students may purchase à la carte items without purchasing a full lunch.

CHARGE POLICY: The School Nutrition Program is self-supporting and relies on the funds generated each day in the school cafeteria. In an effort to assist with uncollected breakfast and lunch charges, the school nutrition program does have a meal charge policy. Elementary school students are allowed to charge up to \$7.20, which is the equivalent of three lunches. Students are not allowed to charge extra items such as bottled water or ice cream, only breakfast and lunch meals.

Once a student reaches their charge limit, cafeteria staff will offer the student milk and a sandwich (either peanut butter & jelly or cheese) for lunch. This will ensure that the student receives something to eat and does not go hungry. When parents send in money for their child's account, any charges will be satisfied first and the remainder of the money will be added to the child's account. It is imperative that parents keep track of their children's account balance and keep it in good standing.

The cafeteria staff does not enjoy having to offer a student an alternative meal, but allowing unlimited charging in the school cafeteria hurts the financial status of the program. If you have any questions regarding the meal charge policy, you may speak with the School Nutrition Supervisor, Suzanne Quesenberry at 540-586-1045 ext.#10224 or our ORES Cafeteria Manager, Kathy Overstreet at 540-586-9210 ext.#4.

Free and Reduced-Price Meals are available to families who qualify. To apply, please complete a "**Free and Reduced Meal Price Application Form**." The forms can be obtained and returned (completed) to any school office. The fastest way to apply is online; go to the MySchoolApps.com website. You will be notified by mail of your child's status. Until notification you must provide your child with a lunch or lunch money. **Only complete one application per family.** The information you

give will be used to determine or prove your child's eligibility for free or reduced-priced meals. This information may also be used for other state or federally funded school benefits.

Factors considered in the application process are household size and total household income. HOUSEHOLD SIZE is considered all persons, related or unrelated: Including parents, children, grandparents who live in your home and share living expenses. The TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME is the income each household member received last month before taxes - this includes wages, social security, pension, unemployment, welfare, child support, alimony, and any other cash income.

Foster children are categorically eligible for free meal benefits. An application is not needed, yet there does need to be documentation of status by a state or local entity familiar with the child's status. Foster children may be included in the household application as part of the household size.

CANCELLATION OF SCHOOL

Cancellation of school takes place only during special circumstances such as extreme weather, equipment failure, or crisis situations. The best way to receive alerts about weather-related closings & delays is by **downloading the free Bedford County Public Schools App for iPhone/Android from the App Store. This will also push notifications to your phone as they are released!**

The next place the County will post alerts, closings, or delays is on Facebook. On Facebook, "Like" the BCPS page to stay informed: <https://www.facebook.com/bedfordcountyps/>

Other, less timely, methods about BCPS alerts are **local television** or **radio**.

Schools are not contacted directly in the morning about closings/delays. Our staff must monitor the above listed sources of information to learn about school closings and take action for each situation. Calling the school is not the quickest way to receive the latest information.

CAR RIDER POLICY

In order to ensure the safety of all children and ORES staff, we ask that all parents/caregivers who drop off/pick up children before/after school adhere to the following policies:

IN THE MORNING

- Students may be dropped off in the car rider lines from 7:20-7:45 a.m.
- At 7:45 a.m., the tardy bell rings. Students should be in their classrooms at this time. Students who aren't in their classrooms when the tardy bell rings are considered tardy and **MUST BE SIGNED IN AT THE FRONT OFFICE BY A PARENT/GUARDIAN.** If students are eating breakfast at school, they should be dropped off as close to 7:20 as possible in order

to get to the cafeteria, go through the line, and finish breakfast in time to get to class before the tardy bell rings.

IN THE AFTERNOON

- If a child will be an afternoon car rider on a regular basis, parents/guardians must sign up the student at the front office as a car rider and receive a car rider number. The student will get a card with the number on it to clip to their backpack; parents/guardians will get a sign with the same number on it to display in the car windshield at pick-up time.
- If your child has an early dismissal due to a medical appointment, etc., you must sign them out in the front office before 2:00 p.m. After 2:00 p.m., please use the car rider line.

IN THE AFTERNOON CAR RIDER LINE

- The car rider line is intended to move quickly. Please adhere to the following guidelines:
 - Make sure your car rider number is clearly visible through your windshield. (The numbers are easier to read if they are flush against the glass or are hung from the rearview mirror; many drivers use plastic pants hangers for this purpose. Numbers may be difficult to read when they are laid flat on the dashboard.)
 - In the car line, drivers/parents should remain in their vehicles. Do not leave your car parked in the line to enter the school; do not walk around your car to try to help your child get into the vehicle. ORES staff members will be there to help students.
 - Students should enter the vehicle on the passenger side. Please have any necessary child safety seats accessible from the passenger side.
 - As soon as vehicles in the line have been loaded, school staff will signal the lead cars to exit.
 - If your child requires your assistance to buckle up (seat belts, booster seats, etc.), please do so quickly; do NOT block the car rider line. You may also move your vehicle to the nearest open parking space to assist your child.
- Students will not be delivered to parents who are parked in the parking lot. Students will only be loaded into vehicles in the car rider line.
- If there is any uncertainty about who is supposed to be picking up the student, the student will be escorted to the main office for pick up. The driver will be required to scan his/her driver's license to sign out the student on the computer in the office.
- If any driver displays reckless behavior (i.e., passing other vehicles in the car rider line/parking lot, by-passing traffic cones or staff members, etc.) they will be required to meet with school administration.
- **It is the responsibility of all parents/guardians to share these guidelines with everyone who drops off/picks up their children from this school.**

CELEBRATIONS

A limited number of classroom celebration activities will be permitted at the discretion of the teacher. **Personal invitations to parties will not be distributed at school or sent home from school.** Each teacher will maintain a Student Directory that will include the students' names, phone numbers, and addresses from the class. This directory may be used by parents to mail invitations or to ask questions about projects/assignments when they are unable to contact the teacher, misplace a Monday memo, etc. **Participation in the Student Directory is optional.** Classroom teachers will provide forms, and it is the responsibility of the parent/student to return the form to be included in the directory. Any student who is not listed in the directory will not be provided any student information. **Student parties will not be held at school nor will students be dismissed during school hours to attend student parties.**

CHECKS

The Bedford County School Board has contracted with Envision for the electronic collection of checks returned for insufficient funds (NSF). The school will gladly accept your checks; however, in the event your check is returned, your account will be debited electronically for the face amount and fees allowed by the state of Virginia. Please include the following on your check:

- Driver's License number
- Full Name
- Street Address
- Phone numbers

Checks written to the school or to the cafeteria that are returned for insufficient funds are sent directly to Envision for collection and are no longer handled by the school.

CONFERENCES

Parent/Teacher Conferences are an important communication tool in reporting the progress of each child. Parents are encouraged to communicate with teachers throughout the year regarding the progress of their child. Each teacher will send work home from the previous week in a weekly folder. This will assist parents in monitoring their child's progress.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF HIV AND DRUG/ALCOHOL TREATMENT RECORDS

The Bedford County Public Schools shall comply with the confidentiality requirements of sections 32.1-36.1 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, providing for confidentiality of records related to any test for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). In addition, the school division shall maintain confidentiality of drug and alcohol treatment records as required by federal and state law.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Otter River Elementary School maintains an Emergency Operations Plan to address potential crisis situations. This helps to establish a coordinated response to minimize stress and disruptions to the school community. There are certain security measures that we ask of visitors in the building:

1. **EVERYONE** must check-in on the computer at the front desk by scanning their state-issued identification card/driver's license.
2. All visitors must display a visitor's badge at all times while on school grounds.
3. Visitors must enter the school building through the front entrance.
4. Students will not be dismissed by a teacher unless first notified by the office.

A school crisis team will review situations and drills periodically to prepare for emergencies. Students will be given instructions and perform practice drills for fires, tornadoes, intruders, earthquakes, and bus evacuations.

CUSTODY

If you have custody concerns for your child, be sure that the school has a copy of the most current applicable pages of your custody agreement. Current law mandates that non-custodial parents be allowed to participate in school-related activities (examples: eating lunch with the child, attending parent conferences) unless there is a court order to the contrary. If there is such an order, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to supply the school with a copy.

DISCIPLINE

Otter River Elementary encourages self-discipline for every student. Respectful and safe behavior is expected from all students. With this in mind, we have three school rules that are posted in every classroom and throughout the building.

School Rules:

1. Work hard.
2. Show respect.
3. Take care of our school.

Positive reinforcement is used throughout our school. Students who exhibit unacceptable behavior will be administered a logical consequence. Examples of consequences include in-school suspension, after-school detention, and silent lunch. Refer to the Code of Student Conduct for specific policies concerning minimum expectations and responsibilities of all students enrolled in Bedford County Public Schools.

DRESS

In order to promote an orderly and safe learning environment while preparing students for success in the world of work, dress guidelines have been established. Students are expected to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to dress appropriately for school. This means that a student's dress, grooming, and appearance (including hairstyle, jewelry, and makeup) shall be safe, appropriate, and not disruptive or interfere with the educational process. Administrators will determine the appropriateness of student dress. Dress that is disruptive, distracting, revealing, or interferes with the students' education will not be acceptable. See the Bedford County Code of Student Conduct for specific guidelines.

Since every ORES student is scheduled to have physical education class and/or recess every day, we encourage all students to wear athletic shoes to school. Flip-flops and backless shoes are not allowed to be worn by elementary school students.

EARLY DISMISSALS

Whenever it is necessary for a child to leave school early, the child must have a note signed by the parent or guardian. The note should state the student's first and last name, time leaving, reason, and the name of the person who will pick up the child. **The student must be signed out through the main office computer by the approved adult using their driver's license or government-issued I.D.** Teachers will be notified by intercom or a note from the office that a child has been signed out before the teacher dismisses a student. These procedures help us to ensure student safety.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Schools must have emergency information on file for each child with up-to-date telephone numbers for parents and other adults that may be called in the event of an emergency or illness. This information is supplied by the parent or guardian at the beginning of the year on Infosnap, our online registration program. ***It is crucial that parents help the school keep this information current throughout the school year!*** Call or send a note if this information changes during the school year.

(FERPA) NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER FERPA FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (eligible students) certain rights with respect to the student's scholastic records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's scholastic records within 45 days of the day the school division receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal or his/her designee a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will arrange for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's scholastic records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy under FERPA.

§ Parents or eligible students may ask Bedford County Public Schools to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) contained in the student's education record, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

§ FERPA permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school division as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official includes a volunteer, contractor, or consultant who, while not employed by the school, performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official typically has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

§ Upon request, the school will disclose scholastic records without consent of the parent/guardian or other person having control or charge of the student, to officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. Whenever a student transfers from Bedford County Public Schools, a copy of the scholastic record, including disciplinary records will be transferred to the school division the students transfers to upon request from the receiving school division. Disciplinary records include school records related to disciplinary action taken against a student for violating School Board rules or policies on school property or at school-sponsored events.

§ Reference Bedford County Public Schools Policy JO – Student Records for additional exceptions that FERPA authorizes disclosure of personally identifiable information without consent.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U. S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school division to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U. S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D. C. 20202

NOTICE FOR DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that Bedford County Public Schools (BCPS), with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, BCPS may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the District to the contrary in accordance with District procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the BCPS to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- § School yearbooks;
- § Graduation, theater, athletic, and music programs;
- § Video of performances, school activities, and athletic events;
- § Articles about school activities and events;
- § Lists of those receiving honors, awards, and scholarships;
- § Team rosters and class lists.

BCPS produces and participates in television, video, and audio recordings, websites, and still photograph productions that may use your child's name, likeness, or voice. Your child may be photographed or video recorded by BCPS staff members or by vendors working for BCPS for use within BCPS for BCPS education-related activities, for example, student identification pictures or video recordings of classroom activity used for teacher training or student evaluation purposes. In addition to these internal uses, BCPS may disclose photographs of your child to the public as directory information for such uses as school yearbooks. BCPS also may disclose your child's image, name, or voice in BCPS photographic productions or other BCPS sponsored publicity.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies receiving assistance under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories - names, addresses and telephone listings. Directory information will be released to institutions of higher education that request this information. The high schools will provide a form to parents/students 18 years and older to opt out of disclosure to military and higher institutions if requested.

If you do not want Bedford County Public Schools to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify your child's school principal in writing by September 23, 2023. Bedford County Public Schools has designated the following information as directory information:

- § Student's name, including nickname
- § Name of parent or guardian with whom student lives
- § Address
- § Telephone listing
- § Grade level
- § E-mail address
- § Photographs and other images that feature the student
- § Date and place of birth

§ Major field of study

§ Dates of attendance

§ Participation in officially recognized activities and sports

§ Height and weight of members of athletic teams

§ Degrees, honors, and awards received

§ Most recent educational agency of institution attended

§ Student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used to communicate in electronic systems that cannot be used to access education records without a PIN, password, etc. (A student's SSN, in whole or in part, cannot be used for this purpose.)

NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER THE PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA)

PPRA affords parents and students who are 18 or emancipated minors (“eligible students”) certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”) if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED) –

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of –

1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

Inspect, upon request and before administration or use –

1. Protected information surveys of students;
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

Bedford County Public School District has adopted policies regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes (Reference: BCPS Policy JOB, Administration of Surveys and Questionnaires). Bedford County Public Schools will notify parents and eligible students of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. Bedford County Public Schools will notify parents and eligible students of the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys if the District has identified them at the start of the year. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and will be provided an opportunity to opt their child out. Parents will also

be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. The following are covered under this requirement:

- § Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution;
- § Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED;
- § Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents/eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

FIELD TRIPS & SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The use of field trips to extend the learning opportunities provided in the regular instructional program is a valuable activity. Most field trips occur during regular school hours so that school bus transportation is used. Students who do not have written parental permission cannot be allowed to go on a field trip. **Money collected for a field trip must be turned in to your child's teacher by the set deadline (or at least three days prior to the trip, if no deadline is set).**

FIRE DRILLS/EVACUATION PLANS

In case of fire or other emergency, an evacuation alarm will sound. Fire drills are held once a week for the first month of school and once a month throughout the remainder of the school year. Otter River Elementary School maintains an evacuation plan in case it is necessary to evacuate students and employees to another location.

FUNDRAISING

At various times during the school year the PTA, SCA, or other school-affiliated organizations may have a fundraiser. At no time shall there be unsupervised door-to-door solicitation by elementary students. **We ask that students not bring outside fundraising materials to the school during the school day. It is not advisable for the children to have large amounts of money with them at school.**

GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Gifted Education Program provides academic services for students in kindergarten through grade twelve. It follows the guidelines found in the *Virginia Plan for the Education of the Gifted* and the *Virginia Standards of Quality*. It is designed to address individual learning styles, needs, and interests that encourage each student to develop to his or her greatest potential.

GRADES AND STUDENT PROGRESS

Grades reflect a student's progress in school based on class work, homework, tests, effort, mastery of material, skill development, participation, and teacher observation. Grades are reported to parents quarterly (every nine weeks period). An interim report will be issued after the fourth week of the grading period. Students who are performing below a "C" (or below a "3" in grades K-2) will receive a second interim after the seventh week of the grading period.

Bedford County Schools utilize an electronic gradebook for grades K-12. In grades 3-12, parents will be able to access their child's grades through the PowerSchool ParentPortal, as well as through quarterly report cards sent home.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PROGRAM

The elementary school counselor has four main areas of responsibility: counseling, classroom guidance, coordinating, and consulting. Bedford County School guidance programs are designed to be both developmental and preventative, assisting children with the normal issues of growing up while also dealing with the concerns they face. The guidance counselor achieves these goals by teaching classroom lessons, seeing children individually and in small groups. A referral can be made by a parent, teacher, or the student. Before a child is seen regularly, either individually or in a small group, parental permission is required. An "Opt-Out Form" will be sent home at the beginning of the school year should a parent desire that their child not participate in the guidance program. Parents are encouraged to call the counselor as needed.

HOMework

Parents are asked to help their child develop good study habits by setting aside a time and place for completing homework and by checking to see that homework is always completed by the child. Daily homework will be assigned at the discretion of the teacher and within county policy. It is an expansion and enrichment of the material taught in the classroom and is a valuable aid in developing independent study habits. Please take the time necessary to help your child develop good homework habits.

Because reading is so important to all aspects of a child's development, we ask that all children read each night. The classroom teacher will send guidelines as to length of time and other suggestions for that grade level.

HONOR ROLL

Academic recognition may be given to students in grades 3-5 each quarter through the Honor Roll. Eligibility for this recognition is based on the student receiving grades of "A, B, or S". No grades of "U" or "N" are acceptable on the Honor Roll. Students who have been suspended out of school during the grading period are not eligible for Honor Roll recognition, regardless of academic grades. Attendance and handwriting are not considered in awarding Honor Roll.

ILLNESS/MEDICATION

In case of illness or injury, the school nurse or a member of the school staff will care for a child temporarily. We have a nurse on staff during school hours each day. School personnel will render first aid treatment only. If emergency medical treatment is necessary, the parents will be contacted. If parents are not available, the child will be taken to the emergency room at the hospital. **Remember: emergency contact information with the phone number where parents/guardians**

can be reached and the name of the student's family doctor must be on file at the school! The school will make every effort to assist parents with administering prescription medication to children when **absolutely necessary**. We appreciate our parents understanding that the school needs to limit the administration of medication to only those children in real need.

Please refer to the procedure governing medication below:

1. Medications prescribed by a doctor for three doses must be given at home (morning, after school, and at night.)
2. The school will dispense prescription medications that must be given during school hours as determined by the doctor. A physician's authorization is required for all prescription medicine.
3. Over the counter medications will be administered as instructed on the box, unless accompanied with a physician's order instructing to do differently. The parent must complete the *Physician/Parent Authorization to Administer Medication* form.
4. All medications must be in the original container with specific directions for administration.
5. See *Physician/Parent Authorization to Administer Medication* form in back of this handbook.

Please **do not** send any medication to school by your child. Students are not to possess any type of medication (including over-the-counter drugs) while under the supervision of the school.

Possession of any medication will result in disciplinary action.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

No student may be enrolled in school without documented proof that the student has been adequately immunized against communicable diseases as outlined in public law 22.1-271.2, *Code of Virginia*. Forms to be taken to the doctor are available in the school office.

LIBRARY

Students visit the library weekly in their resource class, and they check out books during this time. Books can be checked out for a week, and then renewed if there are no holds on the item. The number of books allowed to be checked out depends on grade level. There are no fines for overdue items; however, students are expected to pay the cost to replace any lost or damaged books.

LOST AND FOUND

The best guarantee of finding lost items is to have everything labeled with students' names (lunch boxes, jackets, hats, gloves, etc.). All items are delivered to the Lost and Found rack in the front hallway. Periodically throughout the year, all unclaimed items are donated to charity. Please check

early and frequently when something is missing. To avoid an item being lost or stolen, please have your child refrain from bringing valuable property to school.

MOMENT OF SILENCE/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The 2000 session of the General Assembly amended Section 22.1-203 of the *Code of Virginia* to require daily observation of a moment of silence, not to exceed one minute, in every Virginia classroom. Students are to remain seated and silent and make no distracting displays during this time. They may engage in any silent activity that does not interfere with other students. According to your family's beliefs, parents may want to discuss with their own children the best way to utilize this time.

Section 22.1-202 passed in 2001 states that "all students shall be required to learn the Pledge of Allegiance and to demonstrate such knowledge... schools shall require the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in each classroom of the school division." If the student or parent objects on religious, philosophical, or other grounds to participating, then the student may be exempt from the requirement. Exempted students are to remain quietly standing or sitting at their desks while others recite and are to make no display that disrupts or distracts others. The national motto, "In God We Trust" is displayed in a conspicuous spot in every Virginia public school.

PICTURES/YEARBOOK

School pictures are taken at Otter River Elementary as a service to parents and students. All students will have their pictures taken, but purchasing the pictures is optional. Individual pictures will be taken in the fall; individual and whole-class pictures will be taken in the spring. Yearbooks are also provided as a service. Yearbooks will be ordered for students who choose to purchase one.

PTA

The Otter River Elementary School PTA meets regularly throughout the year. We encourage each family to be active participants in the PTA.

2023--2024 PTA OFFICERS

President: Kelsey Mabes

Vice-President: Victoria Harris

Treasurer: Kathy Thomas

PROPERTY (PERSONAL)

Large sums of money, electronic/mechanical equipment, toys, skateboards, cards, or other personal items not relating to classroom activities should not be brought on the bus or to school. Cell phone usage is not permitted during the instructional day. Students who possess cell phones must place them in their locker or book bag with the phone turned off during the school day. There will be no trading or selling of items between students. Toys should only be brought when requested by the teacher for special events. Toy weapons of any kind **SHOULD NOT** be brought to school. If necessary, school personnel will retrieve any item they deem necessary and submit the item to the office for parent pickup. The school assumes no liability for lost, damaged, or stolen items.

OTTER RIVER RECREATION ASSOCIATION

The Otter River Recreation Association was formed to provide after-school recreational activities for the Otter River community. The school provides the site and supports (but does not sponsor) the activities. The school has no responsibility for any actions of the recreation association. Volunteers and coaches are always welcome to work with the association. Students are not allowed on school grounds without adult supervision at all times, including students who are not participating in a recreational sport but who come to watch them.

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

Proof of residency is required for initial student enrollment. Virginia law permits only students who are residents of Bedford County to enroll and attend on a tuition-free basis. A parent or guardian can be charged with a Class 4 misdemeanor for knowingly making a false statement concerning the residency of a child. All students attending BCPS must live with a parent or legal guardian residing in Bedford County or must reside with a parent or legal guardian who owns property in the county. (*Section 22.1-264.1 Code of Virginia*)

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS

Students have a responsibility:

- to respect the rights of their fellow students and to follow the regulations and policies established by school authorities.

- to treat teachers and other school employees with respect and to obey their directives.
- to join with other members of the school community to establish a climate for learning that will permit every student to achieve his/her maximum potential.

RIGHTS OF STUDENTS

Each student shall be entitled to participate in educational opportunities and school activities for which the student is qualified without discrimination because of sex, race, color, national origin, or religion. Students have a right to be treated as individuals and to expect consistent and just decisions from school employees.

SCA

The Student Council Association (SCA) is a student government group that elects officers from the fourth and fifth grades. Homeroom classes in grades three through five elect representatives who meet regularly to develop service projects for the school. The SCA is also responsible for leading the Pledge of Allegiance at assemblies and promoting school spirit. SCA officers will be elected each school year.

SCHOOL PROPERTY

We are proud of our school! We ask that all students, staff, and visitors help us maintain the building and grounds at all times.

SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY INFORMATION

Pursuant to Virginia Code §[22.1-79.3](#), notice is given that information regarding sex offenders is available in the Sex Offender and Crimes Against Minors Registry and may be accessed on the Internet at <http://sex-offender.vsp.virginia.gov/sor/>.

STATE TESTING PROGRAMS

All students in grades 4-5 are required to take the State Board of Education Physical Fitness Tests in the fall and spring. Students should be encouraged to participate fully in the exercise programs at school and to exercise and play at home after school.

Students in grades 3, 4, and 5 will participate in Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) tests for that grade. **These tests are very important in determining the success of school programs and individual student progress.** Test results become a part of the student's permanent record and are used as a consideration in promotion or retention of the student and in asking the student to attend extra instruction after school or during the summer. Parents should work closely with the teachers in order to ascertain that their child is mastering grade level SOL. Parents may refer to the Virginia Department of Education website for additional information about the Standards of Learning.

The PALS (Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening) is given to pre-kindergarten through fifth grade students as determined by the State. This assessment screens for literacy skills. Second graders will take the Stanford in the spring. This is an achievement test based on national norms that compares our students to those across the country. Second graders also take the OLSAT (a test of cognitive ability) in the spring.

TEXTBOOKS

The school supplies hard copies and/or electronic copies of textbooks for students at no charge to the parents. Students may also bring home novels, trade books, and CDs that are the property of the school. If an item is damaged or lost, we will charge the student the replacement cost. Many of the small individual books used in lower grades can only be purchased in sets. They are costly to replace, so please stress responsibility to your child in taking care of these items. We appreciate your help in maintaining appropriate care of all school materials.

VISITORS

Visitors must sign-in on the computer in the main office by scanning their state-issued identification card/driver's license. They must wear a visitor's badge at all times while on the premises. This is necessary for the security and safety of our students. Visitors should enter the building through the front entrance. Visitors may park in any of the parking lots. **Please do not park in the bus loop at the front of the school at any time during the day.**

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are a wonderful asset to the school and can make a great impact on the quality of education for children. Parents, grandparents, and other community members are invited to help with special school activities. Volunteers should arrange with teachers or school staff to volunteer at a designated time and date. We would like to encourage all parents to be involved in our school community!

WEEKLY FOLDER

In an effort to keep parents well informed about their child's progress as well as school and community activities, a weekly folder will be sent home each Monday. Parents are asked to review all papers with their child. Please sign the folder (if requested) and send it back to school the next day. The weekly folder is an excellent way to maintain communication that is essential to student success and to stay updated on your child's progress.

We receive many requests from outside groups to send documents home. Any items sent home must first be approved through the BCPS Public Information Coordinator, Ryan Edwards, located at the school board office.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

Bedford County Public Schools
310 South Bridge Street
PO Box 748
Bedford, VA 24523

Phone# 540-586-1045

Fax# 540-586-7703

<u>NAME</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
Dr. Marc Bergin	Superintendent
Dr. Karen Woodford	Deputy Superintendent
Mr. Randy Hagler	Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations
Dr. Josh Cornett	Executive Director of School Administration
Dr. LeeAnn Calvert	Executive Director of Human Resources & Talent Development

Otter River Elementary School Board Member: Christopher Daniels, District 7

Bedford County Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in its programs, activities, or employment practices, as required by Title VI, Title IX and Section 504.

The person responsible for the coordination of the school division efforts to meet its obligations under Section 504 and Title IX and their implementing regulations is:

Dr. Marc Bergin, Superintendent
PO Box 748
Bedford, VA 24523
540-586-1045, Ext. 10258