

DEER CROSSING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Family Handbook 2019-2020



**10601 Finn Drive
New Market, MD 21774
Phone 240-236-5900
Fax 240-236-5901
<http://www.fcps.org>**

Mission Statement

Deer Crossing Elementary School is committed to developing the skills, character and potential of all students by providing the highest quality educational experience.

Welcome

Welcome to the 2019-2020 school year at Deer Crossing Elementary! This handbook is a ready reference of information about our school.

You are welcome to visit your child's class upon making an appointment with the teacher, attend your child's programs, become an active participant in our wonderful PTA volunteer programs and the School Improvement Process.

We look forward to a very exciting year of learning for your child! We are excited to continue existing collaborative relationships and build new ones with the incredible families at Deer Crossing. Please don't hesitate to reach out to staff as needed. We are happy to be a part of your child's team!

Mrs. Amy Routzahn
Principal

Dr. Janice O'Hara
Assistant Principal

Important School Phone Numbers

Front Office: 240-236-5900
Guidance: 240-236-5953
Health Room: 240-236-5907

DCES Cafeteria: 240-236-5918
Reading Specialist: 240-236-5944
Media Center: 240-236-5935

FCPS Calendar Handbook

Every September, each student receives a copy of the Frederick County School System's Calendar Handbook. This calendar handbook contains many useful and important facts about the school system's policies, procedures, programs, services, student rights and responsibilities, important phone numbers as well as a complete school system directory. It should be used as a reference if questions arise during the school year.

Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards

Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards are a set of expectations that outline what students learn in language arts and mathematics at each grade level PK-12. Maryland adopted these standards in 2010.

Assessment

Throughout the school year, informal and formal assessments are used to measure a child's success and needs. The purpose is to evaluate learning, so that instruction can be adjusted to meet student needs and improve learning. Assessments also demonstrate whether schools, teachers, and students have met the objectives outlined in the curriculum. Assessments mirror instruction in the classroom and emphasize tasks students do in real life. They are kept by the classroom teacher in each child's portfolio and are available for your review during a parent-teacher conference. State assessments will also be given each year, which include English Language Arts and Math for grades 3, 4, and 5, and Science MISA for grade 5. Please be advised of testing windows/dates that will be communicated by your child's teacher before making doctor appointments and planning vacations during these scheduled times.

Homework

Homework provides opportunities for your child to practice skills learned in the classroom. Your child's teacher will communicate classroom expectations. These expectations may differ between grade levels, teachers, and students. Homework is differentiated based on each student's need for practice.

Per FCPS Regulation number [500-15](#):

- Grades 1 - 2 will have a maximum of 15 minutes.
- Grade 3 will have a maximum of 30 minutes.
- Grades 4 - 5 will have a maximum of 45 minutes of homework.

You can help at home by developing routines to establish good study habits, as follows:

- Show an interest in your child's homework by inviting him/her to share the assignment with you.

Your interest will reinforce the importance of homework and of academic progress.

- Establish a regular homework time each day and a quiet place to work.
- Homework is your child's responsibility. Your child must be permitted to make a mistake in order to learn from it. If your child is consistently demonstrating a lack of understanding with assignments, please contact their teacher.

Technology

We are very excited about the use of technology for both student learning and home/school communication at Deer Crossing. Students will access computers in the classroom, media center, and in our two computer labs. Students will be given many opportunities to utilize technology in order to demonstrate, synthesize, and apply skills they have learned. Staff and students are instructed on the regulation for acceptable use of computers: [Reg. 400-73](#).

Grading

Grading decisions at all levels are criterion-based, reflecting county standards and expectations established by the classroom teacher in the following areas: product quality, independent application, progress, participation, and announced deadlines. The relative importance of these factors will vary. Students who have more than five unexcused absences in any marking period may be assigned a failing grade in that class.

School Cash Online

This online system is an easy way for you to pay for your students' fees. It is available 24/7 and secure payments can be made in the comfort of your home. These electronic payments avoid your child carrying cash or checks to school. This practice saves front office staff time in processing payments and accounts. Please consider paying for your child's field trips and other fees using School Cash Online.

Report Cards/Interim Reports

Report cards are sent home four (4) times during the year in a special envelope. Please ask your child for the envelope on the assigned day and return it to the classroom teacher. Dates of distribution are indicated in the calendar handbook. Snow days or emergency closings may slightly alter the report card and interim schedule, but any changes will be announced. Interim reports may be issued between report cards and at any time throughout the year to notify students and parents about a significant decline/improvement in performance, or to indicate a unique problem that may require attention.

School Hours

Instructional School Hours- 9:00am- 3:30pm

Arrival

Students should be in their classroom and ready for instruction by 9:00 AM. Morning announcements begin promptly at 8:55am. Students should arrive at school no earlier than 8:30 AM.

All car riders arriving between 8:30am and 9:00am must be dropped off at the school using the car rider lane designated by cones. Students should be ready to depart as cars pull into the lane, **parents should not exit their vehicles while in the car rider line.** A single line of traffic must be maintained with no passing allowed. For safety reasons, parents parking in the lot must escort their children across the crosswalk. Students should never be dropped off in the parking lot.

Dismissal

Dismissal begins at 3:30pm. Parents choosing to meet their child as a walker should wait for students at the crosswalk, located on Finn Ct. Parents of car riders should pull into the car rider lane and wait for your child to be called to your car, please do not arrive prior to 3:25 to line up at the car rider line as this blocks the fire lane. As always, we encourage children to utilize transportation provided by FCPS.

Dismissal Changes

We encourage you to try to schedule your child's doctor, dental and other appointments around school hours. If this is not possible, please send a note stating pick-up time and reason. Parents must come to

the office to sign their child out and your child will be called to the foyer. If someone other than the parent signs the child out, that person must have written permission from the parent before the child will be permitted to leave the building. Please contact the front office with any dismissal changes prior to 3:00pm so that we can ensure that the message is delivered to the teacher. We will not be able to process requests for dismissal changes after 3:00.

Attendance

Regular attendance is required by law, and is vital for your child to have success in school. Research shows that student achievement is directly related to attendance. DCES attendance goal mirrors the state goal of 96%; this equates to missing no more than 7 days of school per year. Attendance is carefully monitored and parents are informed when we notice a concern regarding attendance. If your child is reluctant to attend, contact the school so we can work with you in solving the problem. When it comes to your child's education, every day counts. While we certainly understand that circumstances beyond your control arise, we ask that you make every effort to limit your child's absences to those due to illness, and plan family vacations over long weekends and other breaks already built into the school calendar. Please also be aware of scheduling appointments and vacations during testing windows that are published in the FCPS Calendar Handbook.

If your child is not at school OR leaves early, please contact your child's after-school care provider. The school is not responsible for relaying this information, and this often creates confusion and delays during dismissal.

Excusal Notes

State law requires a written excuse any time a child is absent. The excuse note should be received by the school **within two days of the absence** and should include the child's first and last name, date of the absence, the reason for the absence, teacher name, and the signature of the parent/guardian. Without this information, the absence is coded as unlawful. A written excuse note is required when a child arrives at school after the morning bell. A written excuse note from a physician is necessary for a long-range restriction from physical education activities or recess. FCPS Student Attendance Procedure Reg [400-70](#).

Tardiness

Students arriving at school after **9:00 AM** must use the main entrance and report to the office for a late slip. **Your child must be accompanied by a parent to the office.** If a child has been tardy several times, a letter will be sent home to the parent. Remember: Being on time each day will help establish the daily routines necessary for a successful school day. If your child is reluctant to attend school, contact the school so we can work with you in solving the problem.

Request for Make-Up Work

Late Work Policy

- When a student has not completed classwork/homework by the given due date, teachers will accept the work up to five school days past the original due date; with a penalty of one letter grade per day.

For students in the primary grades, the timeframe will reflect the loss of a letter grade every two days. After the 5th day, the work will no longer be accepted and a score of a zero for the given assignment will be reflected in the student's grade average. Students may not complete extra credit at the end of a marking period in order to raise their earned grades.

Missed Work due to Absence Policy

- When a student is absent from school, they may have two (2) school days for every one (1) day of absence in order to make up given assignments. For example, if a student misses two days of instruction, they will have four school days in order to complete missed assignments. If the student is unable to complete the work within the two day allotment, the late work policy noted above will go into effect.

Staff members will supply make up work for absences after the student returns to school. For example, if you are planning on taking a vacation during the school year, make-up will be provided once you return from your trip. This will allow the most accurate representation of classroom instruction as possible

Discipline

The Deer Crossing Elementary School Staff has worked hard to successfully integrate aspects of positive progressive discipline into classroom activities, student displays, group and individual recognition, and the routines of each day. The Oakdale cluster of schools also collaborates during the school year with activities involving positive progressive discipline.

Deer Crossing Elementary School is proud of how our students follow school rules and show outstanding character. This is a compliment to students, staff and parents. It is important that consistent behavioral expectations are clearly communicated and implemented at our school. Therefore, we currently have a school-wide behavior plan with behavioral expectations that apply in all classes and areas throughout our school.

Teachers issue blue slips once they have exhausted classroom behavior systems or if there is a serious student offense. Parents will then be asked to sign and return the blue slips the next day. If a student receives more than one blue slip for the same offense, he/she will receive a referral to administration.

Students will:

- Treat others the way they want to be treated.
 - Do their best work.
 - Respect others.
 - Be responsible for their own actions.
 - Be honest to themselves and to others.
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In addition to our school-wide behavior plan, we also have a school-wide incentive program that rewards students who are showing exceptionally good character. If a student is "caught" showing exceptional character, staff members across the school will be awarding "Star-Buck" stickers. A golden ticket is filled out, identifying the student's name, which enters him/her into a drawing for a special incentive. Ask your child if he/she has earned a "Star-Buck"! In addition to "Star-Bucks" teachers will be using "bucks" as

incentives in their classrooms, another aspect of our school-wide behavior program. Specific, consistent consequences will be also awarded for inappropriate behavior. We hope that by providing consistent expectations and consequences across the school, teachers and students will be speaking and hearing the same language in regards to appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

Bus Conduct

The bus should be viewed as “DCES on Wheels.” The same rules apply on the bus as in school. Riding the bus is a privilege which may be temporarily denied or permanently revoked if the behavior of your child jeopardizes the safety of others on the bus. Please review proper bus conduct with your child. Even if your child does not access bus transportation on a regular basis, we do utilize buses for field trips. At the beginning of the year, bus rider parents will need to complete and return the “Safe Transport Letter” to school. The letter broadens the concept of safe passage to school for all students/parents. It provides tips and useful information not only to our bus riders. It also explains the consequences for poor student behavior on the bus. This form requires a parent signature and should be returned to your child’s bus driver.

Emergency Closing and Delays

Information regarding cancellations, delays, and early closings are announced on local radio stations (WFMD 930 AM and WFRE 99.9 FM) and Frederick cable channel 18. You may also obtain school closing information at www.fcps.org and by signing up for “Find Out First” on the FCPS website. FCPS also notifies regional TV and radio stations.

Parents are encouraged to arrange emergency backup care and to notify students as to where they should go when school closes unexpectedly.

Student Information Cards

The Student Information Card will be sent home at the beginning of the school year. This form will note all addresses and phone numbers currently listed in our information system for your child. Please update this form, making sure all telephone numbers and addresses are accurate and clearly written. Be sure to update or include the name and telephone number of a local person who can be contacted in case you cannot be reached. Please notify the school if you change addresses (proof of residency will be required) or telephone numbers during the year. Current and accurate information is essential if an emergency arises and school must locate the parent due to injury, sickness, or educational issues. If there are any special custodial arrangements, a copy of the legal documents must be filed with the school.

School Counselor

The counseling program is available to help students be successful at school. Our counselor, Deena Michael, provides a variety of services and activities working with individual students, small groups, parents, teachers, and lunch groups. They present classroom lessons supporting the FCPS guidance curriculum. Mrs. Michael also serves as a resource for and provide referral assistance to other programs and services in our community. She can be reached at 240-236-5960 or via email at deena.michael@fcps.org.

School Cafeteria

Breakfast and lunch are served in the school cafeteria. Please check your calendar handbook yearly to obtain the most current prices for breakfast and lunch. Menus are not sent home but can be viewed at www.fcps.org. Some a la carte items available include: milk, juice, snacks, ice cream, and water.

Prepayment of meals eliminates students from handling cash at school. Payment can be made by check payable to DCES, cash, or on-line. Our school policy is to limit snacks and desserts to 2 per lunch.

Parents may request a copy of their child's account that shows individual purchases as a way to monitor what they select. Also, parents have the option of selecting "no snacks" on a child's account by going to the website or indicating it on the check sent to school. Every student receives an application for the Free & Reduced Meal program at the beginning of the school year. Free and reduced price meals are available to every eligible student. If you have any questions, you may reach our cafeteria staff at 240-236-5918.

Good cafeteria manners are very important! Students may not share, give away, or sell food to others. Touching one another's food or playing with it is also prohibited. Neither food nor drink may be taken from the cafeteria.

We ask that parents not drop off fast food meals to the office during the school day for their child's lunch. With the growing number of students who have severe food allergies, it is important that we keep the office a safe place for all students to visit. If you are eating with your child, you may bring any food of your choosing. If your child forgets his/her lunch, and it is brought to school during instructional time, please be sure that the lunch box is clearly labeled with your child's name.

Visitors

Parents/guardians are always welcome to visit our school. Our building is equipped with the "buzzer system" where all visitors will need to push a buzzer to gain access. Once the buzzer is pushed, you will be asked to provide your name and purpose for visiting the school. ID also be requested. Visitors are required to sign in and wear a visitor badge. Your cooperation with this state law is appreciated.

FCPS uses a security sign-in system known as the Raptor System. When visiting school for the first time visitors will be asked for ID which will be scanned into the new system. Subsequent times when folks visit they will need to provide name and date of birth to be signed in by front office staff. Following sign in, visitors will be given a sticker identification which must be worn visibly in the building. Feel free to see front office staff with any questions.

Please do not bring siblings to school events unless the event is open to the public. Strollers are not permitted in the building.

Volunteers

Volunteers are a valuable part of our school program. We encourage you to help in whatever capacity you can. As a volunteer or chaperone, you will need to complete a mandatory annual training in order to receive important information about DCES, safety issues and expectations. Additionally, we ask that you sign in and out of the building each time you volunteer and refrain from using your cell phone unless you are outside of the building.

Parent/Teacher Association (PTA)

The PTA is open to all interested parents and friends. If you've ever thought about your student's school experience and found yourself saying, "Wouldn't it be great if..." we want to hear from you! Please contact the PTA at president@dcespta.org or visit the PTA website to learn more: dcespta.org.

Communications

Several different forms of correspondence are utilized to enhance communication between the school and home. Your child will receive a "**Thursday Folder**," which contains notices and important papers from the school, the community, and the PTA. Please check this folder each day and return to school the following day. You may use the folder to send correspondence to school.

Grade level teams and teachers will communicate often via email throughout the school year. Be sure that your child's teacher has your most up to date email addresses.

It is important that you sign up for **Find Out First**. To minimize our paper use and cost, the PTA and school administration will publish newsletters and reminders using the Find Out First system. You may sign up to receive these alerts via text or email by visiting <http://www.fcps.org/fof>. Find Out First and our school website will help keep you informed of planned school events and other important school information.

Email

Each staff member is available to communicate through email. In general, staff email addresses have been created using first and last name followed by fcps.org. For example: `firstname.lastname@fcps.org`. Please keep in mind that teachers may only be able to check their email during their daily scheduled planning time. If the message is urgent, please contact the front office. Do not email notices about dismissal changes to the child's teacher as they may not receive the email request prior to dismissal. We ask that you respectfully give staff at least 24 hours to respond to your correspondence.

Recess

Weather permitting, students have an outside recess, so please dress them appropriately. Notes from the physician are needed for any child to remain inside. Recess is held outside if the temperature is above 20 degrees, including wind-chill factor.

Recess equipment is provided by Deer Crossing and the PTA. We ask that students leave their personal playground equipment at home, unless acquiring permission from the classroom teacher.

Health Room

Our Health Room is staffed by a Health Technician. The technician works under the direction of a registered nurse. Our health staff will assist students in case of an accident or illness. Students leaving early due to illness must sign out with their parent in the main office.

All non-prescription and prescription medications require a written order by a physician or other licensed health care provider. If the medications are to be given at school, the physician and the parent must complete the appropriate form. A Medication Authorization Form is available in the Health Room or on www.fcps.org. Prescription medications must be in a correctly labeled pharmacy bottle. Non-prescription

medicines must be in the original container. **Children may not bring medications to the school. They must be delivered by the parent/guardian.** All medications are kept in the Health Room and are dispensed by the Health Room staff. Hearing and Vision Screenings will take place as mandated by Maryland State Law. Notices will be sent home prior to screening. Parents who do not want students screened should notify the school in writing at that time. All students must have documentation of immunizations in order to comply with State Law. If you have questions about the policies or have health related concerns about your child, contact our health staff at 240-236-5907.

Student Cell Phones

Cell phones must be powered off at all times during the school day. Electronic devices with camera and recording functions may not be used to take or transmit any image at any time on school property. If a student violates this policy, the cell phone will be confiscated and parents will be contacted to pick it up.

Dress Code

Students may not wear clothing which advertise alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and/or clothing that supports or implies violence or sexual activities. Students are not to wear clothing that is unduly revealing. Students are prohibited from wearing clothing or items containing derogatory expressions or language demeaning an identifiable person or group such as based on a person's race, color, gender, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability that could disrupt or materially interfere with school activities. Students are prohibited from wearing head gear unless an exception is provided. Head gear is defined as any article worn on the head including, but not limited to, hats, sunglasses, bandanas, hoods, or visors.

School administrators may grant exceptions to the dress code for disabilities, health reasons or for sincerely held religious beliefs. Exceptions may also be made for spirit week celebrations or for extracurricular and athletic related purposes, as approved by the school administrator.

Students may find it helpful to have available a sweater or sweatshirt on days when the air-conditioning is operating. They are encouraged to wear shoes that tie or fasten in some way.

Birthdays

Due to students with potentially life-threatening food allergies, the importance of promoting a healthy lifestyle, extensive clean-up and other important factors, birthday treats (including goodie bags/gifts) of any kind cannot be distributed. We know that birthdays are very exciting and special; therefore, we announce individual birthdays each day on morning announcements. Children will also be invited to receive a special birthday surprise provided by the administrative staff.

Birthday and other party invitations may not be distributed at school. Because we value equity, we want to avoid hurt feelings when some children receive invitations while others do not; as such, **all private**

party arrangements must be made outside of school. Additionally, passing out invitations at school is distracting to the learning environment. FCPS regulations prohibit schools from releasing private information regarding names, phone numbers or addresses of students. Our PTA publishes a Student Directory that is distributed to families for becoming members of the PTA. This is a great resource for contacting families/classmates.

Food Distribution

At DCES, we take great pride in providing a safe environment for all of our students. Due to the severity and potential life-threatening food allergies that several of our students encounter, we must monitor all food that is being distributed in our school. Please do not send in candy, treats, goodie bags of food, etc. For the PTA sponsored Halloween and Valentine's Parties, homeroom coordinators will facilitate appropriate food choices. All food items will need to be purchased and sent in with a visible label of ingredients. We appreciate your understanding of our policies related to this potentially serious situation.

Lost and Found

If you lose something, you may find it in the "Lost and Found" container located in the cafeteria. Please put your child's name on all clothing, jackets, hats, lunch boxes, etc., that are brought to school. As the amount of unclaimed items increases, items will be donated to organizations in need throughout the year. Communication prior to these donations will be communicated via Find Out First.

Media Center/ Damaged Books

The media center is an exciting place to visit at DCES. We have literally thousands of books to share. Our media specialist, Jeff Abrecht is a great resource for students, staff and parents. Please note the following information about our media center.

- Students can look forward to a weekly book exchange. The media center is also open 8:30-8:50am and 3:00-3:20pm each day.
- All students will visit the media center for a lesson planned and prepared by our media specialist. Students are responsible for the safe return of all materials checked out to them. Overdue notices will be sent home on a regular basis so that parents will be aware of materials that need to be returned. Parents are responsible for the replacement cost of lost/damaged textbooks and library books.

Parties/Field Trips

Deer Crossing classrooms will participate in Halloween and Valentines' Day parties. Each teacher will select 5 volunteers to support each party in the classroom the day of the party. Volunteer selection will be communicated by each classroom teacher. There are many, many ways to support these fun days. We are thankful for ALL volunteers both in the classroom and behind the scenes. More specific information regarding these parties will be coming home from your child's teacher.

Each grade level team will organize and schedule all field trips. Permission slips will be sent home prior to the trip and must be signed and returned to school. No child can be allowed to participate in the trip without a signed permission slip. Chaperones will also be organized through the classroom teacher. Adults that are designated as a chaperone must be volunteer trained and will be expected to sign a contract indicating

their responsibilities and expectations. Please refer to FCPS Regulation [400-5](#) for clarification of field trip policies.

Toys

Toys are fun and interesting, *but* they are not allowed at school. Please enjoy toys at home unless there is a special day and you have permission from your teacher. DCES cannot be responsible for any toys lost, stolen or damaged.

Drills and School Safety

Safety of our students and staff are our number one priority. Several types of safety drills are conducted throughout the year: fire drills, lockdown drills, evacuation, active shooter, and severe weather drills. A comprehensive safety plan has also been developed for our school in collaboration with the FCPS Emergency Management team. The school staff that are a part of the DCES Crisis Team are aware of their roles and responsibilities in the event of an emergency. Please be aware that drills may not all be held on pleasant, sunny, warm days.

Tobacco/Drug Free Environment

According to state law, schools are drug-free zones and the use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco is prohibited on school property. The Frederick County Board of Education has adopted a tobacco-free environment policy. The sale or use of tobacco products in any form is prohibited in school buildings at all times. The sale or use of tobacco products in any form is prohibited on school grounds by anyone who uses, leases, or otherwise occupied FCPS property for any purpose, whether or not school is in session. We appreciate your support of this effort to ensure a safer, healthier environment for everyone. **FCPS has a zero tolerance policy so penalties for violations are severe.**

Weapons

The Frederick County Board of Education has adopted a policy regarding weapon possession. Students, parent/guardians, teachers or any visitors are forbidden to have weapons or look-alike weapons on school property. Possession of a firearm, loaded or unloaded, or other weapons including pocket knives can carry severe disciplinary action up to permanent removal from Frederick County Public Schools. Please refer to [Reg. 300-39](#) for more information.

Dogs

Dogs are not allowed on school property during the school day (8:30-4:00pm). For the safety of our students, please do not walk or bring your dog on school property. If you do walk your dog on school grounds after hours, please don't leave their messes behind.

Bike Riders

Bike riding is a privilege for third, fourth and fifth grade students who live in Summerfield. First and second grade students may ride their bikes when accompanied by a parent. Helmets are required and students are encouraged to lock their bikes. Bikes are to be parked in the designated area near the main entrance. Students should be sure that bikes are not left on the sidewalk in front of the doors. Students must walk their bikes on school property.

Questions, Concerns, Compliments

We encourage open, honest, and respectful feedback and appreciate your input and ideas. If you have a concern, we encourage you to first discuss it with your child's teacher. The administrative team is also available as an additional resource. We welcome your comments and suggestions. If you would like to meet with a member of the administrative team, please contact the office to schedule an appointment. This will ensure we are able to give you appropriate and uninterrupted time to address your questions or concerns.



SCHOOL PLEDGE

I pledge to treat others the way I want to be treated.

I will be responsible for my own actions.

I will be honest to myself and to others.

I will do my best work.

I will respect others.

STELLAR SUCCESS AT DCES!