

Parent and Student Handbook

*Chain of Lakes Elementary School
7001 County Road 653
Winter Haven, FL 33884
Phone (863) 326-5388
Fax (863) 326-5391
OFFICE HOURS: 7:30 am to 4:00 pm*

Principal.....Victor Duncan

Assistant Principal.....Suzie Nelson

Assistant Principal.....Beth Ford

Welcome to Chain of Lakes Elementary School. Please use this handbook as a resource to help you learn about policies, procedures, and opportunities at Chain of Lakes Elementary (COLE).

School is a place to provide opportunities for young people to learn and receive the best education possible according to their individual needs. Your cooperation is most important in this endeavor.

MISSION STATEMENT

We believe each child is unique and has potential. We believe it is our responsibility to instill in each child the ability to think critically, work cooperatively, pursue knowledge, respect for themselves, others, and the world around them.

Important Documents for Parents and Students

Go to www.polk-fl.net to find important documents and forms for all Polk County Public Schools. Click on “Parents” in the upper launch bar of the home page, then scroll down and click on “Forms and Documents”.

- **Code of Student Conduct-** At the beginning of the school year, every parent or guardian should review the Code of Student Conduct found online. We will provide students with a copy of the Acknowledgement form that is to be completed by both the student and parents and returned to school.
- **Parent Curriculum Guide**
- Forms available include:
 - Medication Authorization and Medical Treatment Authorization forms
 - Volunteer Application (required to volunteer in all Polk county schools)
 - Field Trip forms
 - Parent request for Web Grade password

School Hours

7:30-7:55 Teachers have planning time or duty. Students may arrive on campus beginning at 7:30 am. *NOTE: No supervision is available before 7:30 am.* Breakfast is available during this time.

7:55 First Bell

8:00 Tardy Bell rings. All tardy students must check in at office. Parent must accompany students to the office.

2:45 Dismissal begins. Students will be called out of classes according to bus arrivals, car rider dismissals, walker dismissals, or Kid Care.

2:45-3:15 Teachers have duty. *Tuesdays are reserved for staff meetings*

Arrival/Dismissal

Car Riders: The car rider drop-off/pick-up area is located on the east side of school. Cars will enter the second entrance of our school located at the south end of grounds on CR653 along east side of Media Center, follow to the covered walkway. Students dropped off in the morning will enter school through the doorway next to the playground. There will be a door monitor/teacher on duty. Parents who need to come to the office before school or at dismissal are asked **to park in a designated parking space**, in order to keep the drop off/pick up area clear for traffic. Additional Visitor parking spaces are located in the main parking lot. All visitors must sign in to the office. Cars picking up students at dismissal will meet staff on duty at the covered walkway. Students will get in the vehicle from the walkway, or will be walked to the vehicle by an adult.

Buses: The bus loading area is on the northwest side of school, beyond the front parking lot, around the circular drive, and under the loading patio. *Please do not park in this area.* Students riding buses, are expected to arrive 10 minutes early at their designated neighborhood bus stop and be ready to board. Students are expected to report immediately to the bus loading area at dismissal every day when their bus is called over the intercom. A student who misses the bus will have to be picked up from the office by an authorized person. Only students who are authorized to ride buses may do so. A note or phone call to the school is not authorization for a student to ride a bus on that day. For more information, contact Polk County School Board Transportation at 863-534-7307.

Walkers/Bike & Scooter Riders: Students will enter campus through the bus gate. Students should not arrive prior to 7:30 as there is no supervision of students until that time. Students will be dismissed via the intercom and report to the walker gate. Students will not enter any vehicles from this location.

Rainy day dismissal is as follows: Walkers and bike riders will report to the cafeteria. They will be kept in the cafeteria until it stops raining and lightning. At that point we will let the children walk home.

Attendance

Florida Statutes state that school attendance is mandatory. Regular attendance is a necessary ingredient for the learning process to be consistent and meaningful. We want your child to reach his/her full potential for learning by being in school daily and on time.

Absences from school will be excusable and lawful for:

- illness of students
- death in the family
- court mandated summons or subpoena

It will be necessary to send a note to the teacher when a child returns stating the reason for the absence. More documentation may be necessary at the request of the principal or her designee.

Pre-arranged absences must be requested in writing for the following:

- Religious holiday
- Educational trips (not school sponsored)
- Trips with parents

Please write a note to the principal requesting a pre-arranged absence. Approval is at the discretion of the principal.

In case of absence due to a communicable disease, a note from the Polk County Health Department or a licensed physician is required. Examples of communicable diseases are: scabies, head lice, or pinkeye. A parent or guardian must check the student in to the clinic between 7:30 and 9:00 am.

Unexcused Absence: An unexcused absence is defined as an absence that does not have the approval of the school. Ordinarily, school assignments missed because of an unexcused absence may not be made up by the student for credit.

Tardiness: Students must be in their classroom and seated by the 8:00 am. When tardiness is unavoidable, students must obtain a tardy slip from the office before going to class.

Checkouts: All Students must be signed out from the office. The office will call your child from the classroom. The criteria for determining an excused check-out shall be the same as for excused absences.

A student will not be allowed to leave school without proper authorization. Students will be released only to a person properly authorized on the emergency card. School personnel must rely on the information recorded on the emergency information card at the time of enrollment unless otherwise properly notified per the principal's instructions.

Individuals authorized to check students out of school must report to the school office. Anyone checking out a student must have proper identification (valid state driver license, state identification card, U.S. military identification card, passport, etc.).

Please do not check out your student after 2:15 pm. Not only is this a safety and security issue, but the end of school is an important time for students to complete their day and prepare and gather assignments and information.

Note: Three unexcused tardies and/or check-outs will equal one absence.

Cafeteria Services

Chain of Lakes Elementary provides a well-balanced meal for students. The school participates in the free breakfast and lunch program for students. Supplemental food items are available for purchase. Prices are subject to change.

Some important points to know:

- a. Lunch money should be deposited into lunch accounts before 7:55 a.m. in the cafeteria.
- b. Breakfast is served daily 7:30 to 7:50 A.M. Students who do not eat breakfast will be directed to an area upon arrival where adult supervision will be provided. Students will be dismissed to their class at 7:55 A.M.
- c. Students bringing a bag lunch will eat with other students and may purchase milk.
- d. NO SOFT DRINKS, PLEASE.
- e. No food or drinks will be consumed on school grounds outside of the cafeteria without teacher or administration permission.
- f. Parents who wish to eat with their students must check in at the office. If a parent brings food or drink for their student from an outside source, only their student may consume that food or drink. Please do not share food with other students without administration approval.

Change of Address/Telephone Number:

Parents/Guardians are requested to notify the office of change of address or telephone number. **Two proofs of residence are required.**

Dress Code Guidelines (Section 2.06 of the Code of Student Conduct)

Students are expected to dress in compliance with the Polk County School Board dress code. Shirts must be tucked in and a belt worn at all times (with pants with belt loops). The parent will be notified if the child does not follow guidelines.

The Dress Code does *not* allow for clothing with colored trim, stripes, embroidery, decoration, etc. It also does *not* provide for overalls (overalls with pants or shorts), sweat pants, knit pants/skirts, leggings, etc.

EXAMPLES OF UNACCEPTABLE ATTIRE:

Students are **not** allowed to wear clothing, jewelry, buttons, haircuts, or other attire or markings, which are offensive, suggestive, indecent, or disruptive to the educational process. These include, but are not limited to, the following issues:

1. Make-up: students are not allowed to wear make-up at any time.
2. Baggy pants and baggy jeans are not allowed.
3. Sweatshirts and any jacket without zippers must not have symbols or decorative patterns larger than the size of a quarter dollar coin.
4. No jelly bracelets.
5. Shoes with open toes or heel straps are not allowed. Shoestrings must be tied to make sure that the shoes are adequately secured to the student's feet.
6. No "Heelys" or "Wheelies" are allowed (shoes with retractable heel skates).

Repeated violations of the dress code shall be treated as disruptive behavior and/or minor infraction as set forth in Section 4.03 of the Code of Conduct.

Discipline

The Polk County Code of Student Conduct will be followed in all disciplinary measures. Teachers also have in-class discipline procedures depending on the grade level and the expectations of that teacher. Please make sure that the student is aware of these procedures and expectations.

Field Trips

Approved volunteers only are permitted to ride on school buses to and from field trips. Parents/Guardians must provide written notice prior to field trip departure to transport their own children home from the field trip destination and must "sign-out" their child on a school sign-out form. Parents/Guardians who are not approved volunteers must drive their own vehicle and may not be assigned a group of students to monitor. Contact the teacher concerning specific field trip rules.

Gifts or Food for Students

Birthday balloons, flowers, gifts, or holiday items, which might be delivered to the school for a student, will be given to the student at the end of the instructional day. Parties and/or food items for an individual student or a holiday event must be requested through the student's teacher and approved by administration.

If approved, all food items must be commercially prepared and individually wrapped by a commercial supplier. Please pre-arrange these details to minimize distractions in the class.

Medication and Clinic Services

A clinic is located near the office for students in case of illness or accident. The office will notify parents if a child needs to be picked up. The emergency information card must be filled in completely and returned to school promptly. **The people listed on the emergency card are the only ones who may be allowed to have access to or pick up**

your child. Every parent must provide two phone numbers of responsible adults in the event the parent cannot be notified.

Please note:

- a. The clinic is for temporary use. Continual or habitual visits will require the parent to seek professional assistance from a physician or clinic outside of school.
- b. Only first aid will be given. Serious medical issues must be treated at a doctor's office or the hospital.
- c. Medication will be administered only with a valid Medication Authorization form.

Communicable diseases: Students treated for a communicable disease may be readmitted to school only after being cleared by the office between 7:30 - 9:00 am. Students must have a note from the Polk County Health Department or a licensed physician. A parent or guardian must be with the student for clearance.

Prescribed and Over-the-Counter medication: If your child must have medication of any type given during school hours, including over-the-counter drugs, you have the following choices:

1. You may come to school and give the medication to your child at the appropriate time.
2. You may take a Medication Authorization form to your child's doctor/nurse practitioner and have him/her complete the form by listing the medication, dosage, and number of times per day medication is to be administered. The doctor/nurse practitioner must sign the form. Prescription medicines must be brought to school in a pharmacy-labeled bottle, which contains instructions on how and when the medication is to be given. Over-the-counter drugs must be received in the original container labeled with the child's name, and will be administered according to doctor's/nurse practitioner's written instructions.

Note: All medication will be stored in a locked cabinet with designated responsibility by the school nurse.

Phones

The school phone is for business only. Students will not be called to the phone nor will they be able to use the phone. Pre-arranged planning between child and parents should be understood or should be communicated to the teacher within the Student Agenda. Students are allowed to have cell phones in their possession, but the phone must be turned off and out of sight (backpack or pocket).

Physical Education (P.E.)

Physical education is an important part of the curriculum. If a student cannot participate because of health reasons, a note from the parent is required. If the request is for longer than three days, a note from the doctor is required.

It is important to have the proper shoes for P.E. Please have your student wear shoes every day that are appropriate for P.E. We do not have lockers or storage for a change of clothes or additional shoes.

Safety and Security

The school building and grounds should be considered the responsibility of each student in the school. Every person should share in keeping the building in excellent condition and attractive in appearance. No one should be on the grounds when school is not in session without permission of the principal. All visitors must check in at the office.

Students cannot leave the secured campus area with out being checked out by an authorized adult. A student who leaves campus without permission is in violation of the Code of Student Conduct.

Teacher/Parent Conference

- A. It is preferable that conferences be arranged after **3:00 p.m.** or between **7:30** and **7:55 a.m.** or during planning time. By teacher contract, teachers can request 24 hour notice for a conference; however, the teacher may opt to see you before this time frame.
- B. All visitors and parents must first check in with the office to get a visitor's pass.

Transferring

If your child needs to transfer to another school, you need to contact the office at least **one day in advance**, so that withdrawal papers can be completed by the time of departure. Other Polk County Public schools will not enter a child without this withdrawal form.

Student Progression

- A. Chain of Lakes Elementary will follow the guidelines set forth in the Polk County School Board Student Progression Plan.
- B. Automated (computer-generated) report cards are distributed at the end of each nine weeks grading period. Progress reports are distributed in the interim.
- C. Students who are at-risk for failing will be notified via interim reports, special notes, or by marking the report card. It is very important to communicate with your teacher in the event that your student is not performing to grade level expectations.

Textbooks and Library Books

- A. All books are furnished to the students as part of the school program. The books are issued with the understanding that the student will care for and use them properly.
- B. Lost or damaged books will be charged to the parent/guardian of the student to whom it is assigned. Lost books will incur a replacement cost; damaged book expense is pro-rated.

Opportunities for Parental Involvement

Volunteers: Chain of Lakes Elementary welcomes the parents, guardians and family members of our students on our campus, to help us with a variety of things, including *school sponsored events and field trips, tutoring, reading to students, or teacher assistance*. Accordingly, if you are a frequent visitor to our school and have continual student contact, we consider you to be a volunteer. ***Every school volunteer must be approved by the district.***

Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO): Chain of Lakes Elementary encourages all parents to join in and participate with the PTO. Our PTO is the lifeblood of help for special events and student/teacher assistance. PTO also oversees many of the fundraisers at our school. The PTO board meets monthly; the general meeting of the PTO (school wide) occurs twice a year.

School Advisory Committee (SAC): SAC is the community based leadership group that is responsible for school improvement and continued compliance. Parents are a vital and necessary component to this group, which meets monthly.

