2026-2027 Parent Handbook

Mission: One Team. One Goal. Student Success.

Vision: Empowering people to work together to **Learn**, **Serve**, and **Lead** with integrity.

Welcome to the Murdock Mustangs Family!

At Murdock Elementary, we believe that a strong, connected community is the foundation of a thriving school. As proud Mustangs, we work together—families, staff, and students—to create a warm, inclusive environment where every child feels supported and inspired to grow. This handbook is your guide to understanding key operational expectations to make this school year a meaningful and successful one. Thank you for being an essential part of our Mustang community!

2026-2027 CCSD Family Information Guide and Student Code of Conduct

Table of Contents

Section	Page
ABSENCES & TARDIES	2
AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM (ASP)	2
MORNING ARRIVAL PROCEDURES	3-4
AFTERNOON DISMISSAL PROCEDURES	4
BIRTHDAYS	5
CAFETERIA	5
CALENDAR	5
CELL PHONES & SMART WATCHES	5
COMMUNICATION	6
FORGOTTEN ITEMS	7
HEALTH/MEDICAL/ALLERGIES	7
LINKS & APPS	7
PTA & FOUNDATION	8
STAFF MONITORED STUDENT GROUPS	8
VISITORS & CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS	8

ABSENCES & TARDIES

Attendance

- **CTLS Notification:** An automated CTLS message will be sent each day your child is absent. Please reply within **3 school days of returning to school** with your child's name, teacher, date(s) absent, reason, and documentation, if applicable. Failure to respond may result in an unexcused absence. Contact the front office if you receive a notification in error.
- **Excused Absences:** Per state and Cobb County guidelines, excused reasons include **illness, doctor visit, college visit, court, and death/hospitalization in the family.** Documentation is required for doctor and court visits.
- **Attendance Time:** Students arriving after **11:10 a.m.** or leaving before **11:10 a.m.** are counted absent. Students must attend at least half the school day to be considered present.
- **Extended Absences:** Notify the teacher and front office. When possible, schedule medical and dental appointments outside school hours.

Attendance Referrals

- **3 unexcused absences:** Teacher contact
- **5 -** District letter
- **7 -** Possible school social work referral
- **10 consecutive -** Possible withdrawal

Tardies

- Students arriving **after 7:50 a.m.** are tardy and must be signed in by an adult.
- Excessive tardiness may result in a school social work referral.
- **Excused tardies:** Illness, doctor visit*, court*, and death/hospitalization in the family.
- All other reasons are **"unexcused with a note,"** including out-of-town travel, family emergencies, car trouble, non-medical appointments, and power outages.
- *Documentation is required for doctor and court visits.

Supporting a Successful School Day

Regular, on-time attendance helps students begin the day prepared, connect with peers, and maximize learning.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM (ASP)

- ELEYO is the ASP website, and it is not connected to ParentVUE. The enrolling parent must register on ELEYO.
- **A new contract must be completed each year.**
- Registration fee: $20
- Daily fee is $10
- ASP runs from dismissal until 6:00 pm Monday-Friday on the days that school is in session.
- Photo ID is required for student pick up by approved adults on the registration form.
- Late fees accrue at the rate of $1 per minute beginning at 6:00 pm.
- A nutritious snack is provided daily and is included in the fee.

For additional information about the ASP program, please visit the **ASP page on our school website.**

MORNING ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

Morning Arrival: Bus

The bus is the best. Students will never be counted tardy and typically arrive before 7:30. Students get time with their friends on the bus and with their peers in class before the academic day begins. We encourage you to allow your child to ride the bus for these reasons, and to help alleviate congestion in the car line.

Find bus stop, morning pick-up, and afternoon drop-off times

Edulog Parent Portal: New Bus Tracking App

Morning Arrival: Car

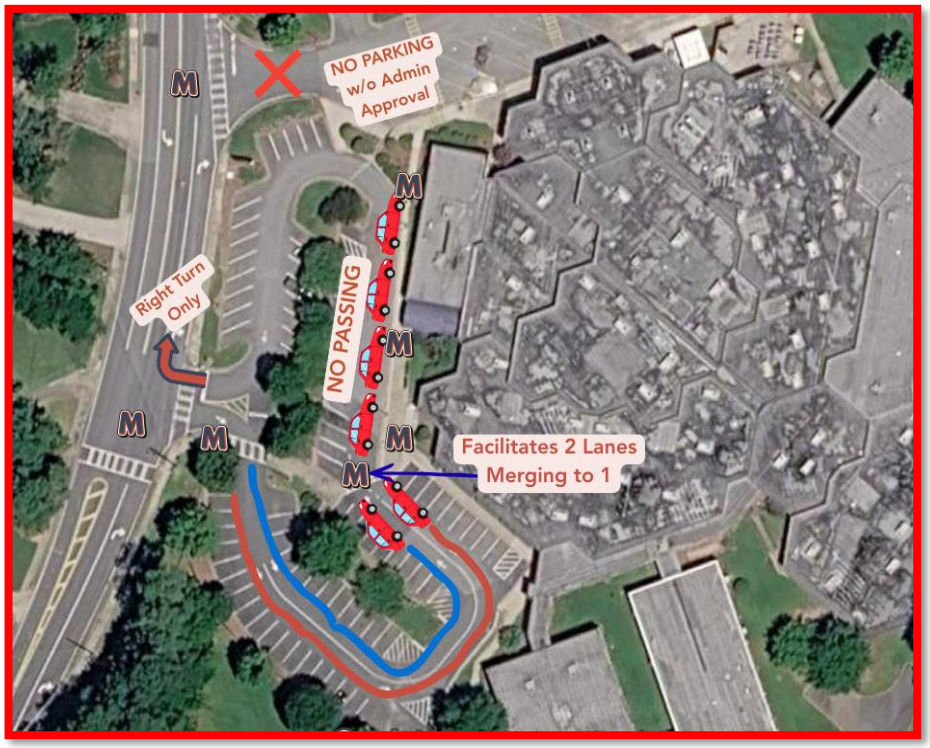
At 7:15 am, the front doors open. Students should remain in the car and may not enter the building until that time.

All car riders must use the main entrance. **Drop off in the bus port is reserved for those with prior approval from administration. Avoiding a tardy is not an excuse to use the bus port to drop off. This is a matter of student safety.** There are no staff members in this area once buses depart.

Students entering the building after 7:50 are considered tardy. If you arrive late and there are no adults outside, we ask that you park and walk your student inside.

Logistics of the Line

- Two lines merge into one using an alternate lane system.
- There is a staff member to direct this process and to ensure the crosswalk is safe for students.
- All cars pictured are in the 'drop-off zone.'
- **NO PASSING** is permitted in the car line. We wait for all students to exit safely, then the line moves forward.
- RIGHT TURN ONLY when exiting
- Morning carpool ends at 7:50 and Murdock staff members must head inside to begin the academic day.



Best Practices for Efficiency

- Help your student be ready to exit when approaching the drop off area.
- Students should be prepared to exit the vehicle on their own once in the drop-off area. Staff members (**M**) move throughout the line assisting when needed.
- Students should exit on the right side of the car.
- Always pull as far forward as possible to drop off your student.

Morning Arrival: Walkers/Bike Riders

All walkers/bike riders should enter through the front doors. The bus port is not staffed after 7:30 and there is not an accessible door.

AFTERNOON DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Normal Dismissal Times	Early Release Dismissal Times
• 2:10 – All ASP, Club + Walkers	• 12:20 – All ASP, Club, Walkers
• 2:13 – 4/5 Bus + K-5 Car	• 12:22 – 4/5 Bus + K-5 Car
• 2:16 – 2/3 Bus	• 12:24 – 2/3 Bus
• 2:19 – K/1 Bus	• 12:26 – K/1 Bus
• 2:23 – Clubs to Rooms/Buses Roll	• 12:30 – Clubs to Rooms/Buses Roll

Afternoon Dismissal: Car Line

- Please do not line up for the afternoon car line until 1:30 or later.
- Have your barcode (PVUE - Student Information – Dismissal Changes) ready – either phone or paper.
- If you have more than one child to pick up, you will need to display a barcode for each child.
- RIGHT TURN ONLY when exiting the school parking lot.
- Parents should alternate entry into the parking lot from Murdock Rd - one from the right turn, one from the left turn lane. Cooperation is essential to the efficiency of the line.

Afternoon Dismissal: Walkers/Bike Riders

- Walkers require a barcode for dismissal (PVUE - Student Information – Dismissal Changes) as well.
- **If your child is 9 or older, and you'd like them to walk/ride home on their own, the enrolling parent must complete this form:** 26-27 Murdock Independent Walker Form

Enrichment Clubs

- Clubs are not directly affiliated with CCSD or Murdock ES. If you enroll your student in a club, please ensure PVUE is updated with correct dismissal information for the duration of the club. ASP registration and fees are still applicable if your child needs to attend ASP before or after a club. There are never clubs on early release days, and any changes to club schedules (e.g. cancellations) will come directly from the club itself.
- Students must attend school on the day of his or her club in order to attend the club.
- Dismissal FROM clubs is handled directly with that club and not connected to PVUE or the school.
- Club Information on the Murdock Website

Dismissal Changes

- A dismissal change can only be submitted through **ParentVue and must be done before 1:30.**
- You are welcome to call the front office to confirm any change you attempted to make.
- Remember, transportation decisions are made by the enrolling parent and *only* communicated through ParentVue. **Emails or CTLS messages to teachers or the front office regarding dismissal changes will not be accepted.**
- We cannot take the word of the student in any circumstance. We always adhere to PVUE.

Early Check-Out

- Student checkouts must be completed by 1:45 PM and 11:45 AM on early release days.
- It is important that these deadlines are enforced as the front office begins dismissal procedures then.
- Identification will be checked for all student dismissals.
- Students will be released only to those authorized in PVUE, and this is managed by the enrolling adult.

Emergency Dismissal/Inclement Weather

Make sure to complete this portion of dismissal information in PVUE.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthday Treats*: If these are not purchased through the cafeteria, the teacher MUST be notified to account for allergy awareness.*

- Birthday treats for a class should be purchased through the cafeteria. This is the safest way to approach this and it also supports our self-sustaining cafeteria. Email our cafeteria manager, with as much advanced notice as possible to arrange this. More information about options can be found here: Classroom Celebrations
- We kindly ask that birthday celebrations are limited to treats only at school. Balloons, goodie bags, candles, etc. can be disruptive, and we ask that you save those ideas for outside of school.
- To join your child for lunch to celebrate their birthday, you still need to sign up for a lunch visit via the weekly newsletter.
- If you choose to provide your own treats, they must be store-bought with a visible or known ingredient list and should be ready to serve – either individually wrapped or pre-cut into the number needed. This procedure is in place out of abundance of caution for students' food allergies. Donuts and cupcakes are examples that meet these criteria.
- Treats without ingredient labels are not permitted.
- **Birthday treats of any kind CANNOT be shared with other classes.**

Teachers can pass out Birthday invitations ONLY if one is provided for all students.

- Birthday Book Club (PTA)
- Birthday Marquee (MESF)

CAFETERIA

- Lunch cost: $3.75 for students and $5.25 for guests.
- Families in need of free or reduced lunch pricing can complete a Family Meal Application.
- Lunch visits are by sign-up only due to space limitations.
- The sign-up link can be found in each edition of the Murdock Weekly sent by the principal.
- Visitor lunch tables are indicated in the cafeteria.
- Visitors may not invite additional students to join them at these tables.

Extras at Lunch

Students are allowed to buy extras each time they go through the lunch line. To regulate the type or frequency of extras purchased, the enrolling parent should discuss expectations with the child and monitor the spending on the account. Alternatively, the enrolling parent can email our cafeteria manager to set parameters for the student.

Breakfast

The Murdock cafeteria does not provide breakfast.

CALENDAR: Murdock Calendar

Follow the instructions to subscribe to this calendar on your phone. This is the best place to keep track of events and happenings at Murdock.

CELL PHONES & SMART WATCHES

Cell phones and smart watches must be turned off and, in a backpack if brought to school.

COMMUNICATION

Our front office staff is here to assist you in any way we can. Please refer to the **calendar on the website** for important dates and scheduled events. You are able to subscribe to our calendar directly.

If you would like to get in touch with your child's teacher, the best way is via CTLS Parent. You should always hear back within 24 hours, and please feel free to reach out to the school if you do not.

Contacts

When determining who to reach out to, please know that it is **always** acceptable to begin your correspondence with the teacher. Teachers know how and when to route questions/concerns/feedback to the right destination. This is just a brief list with some common, broad topics. In turn, any member of administration is always willing to meet or speak on the phone about any topic.

Area of Responsibility	Contact	Example
K-2 Administrator	CAREY.CALLAHAN@COBBK12.ORG	Testing, Busses, ASP, Unresolved Classroom Issues, Clubs, Advanced Content
3-5 Administrator	CHRISTINA.MILLS@COBBK12.ORG	
CCSD Counseling Program: *Academic and Personal Growth*	**K-2:** ALLY.MARTIN@COBBK12.ORG **3-5:** ANASTASIA.WEST@COBBK12.ORG	Family Changes, Support at Home, Social/Emotional Well-being, 504s
Front Office	AMIE.FRAGALA@COBBK12.ORG CAROLYN.PATEL@COBBK12.ORG	Attendance, Records, PVUE, Registration/Withdrawal
Gifted	LESLIE.GILBERT@COBBK12.ORG	Qualification, Program Format, Acceleration
Health/Medical	KRISTEN.BRATTON@COBBK12.ORG	Medicine, Medical Conditions, Allergies, Injuries/Limitations
Lunch	WENDY.POPHAM@COBBK12.ORG	Extras for Purchase, Birthday Treats
Special Education	OSMAN.KHAN@COBBK12.ORG	IEPs, Suspected Disabilities

Communication	Purpose	Frequency
Website	To answer any parent question and help prospective parents get a sense for our school community	Updated as needed – We welcome and need suggestions on improving this resource
Murdock Weekly	To provide a glimpse into Murdock Elementary and prepare the school community for the week ahead	Every Thursday @ 6pm
CTLS Posts: Class Newsletter	Prepare parents and students for the week ahead, while providing conversation points and for material already covered. Use templates/studio editor to avoid attachments	Shared on the same day and time weekly
CTLS Posts: Counselors, Library, Specialists	To provide updates from staff/departments that your child interacts with frequently and keep communication channels to all staff for parents	Varies: 1x/month, 1x/quarter, as needed
CTLS Messages	1:1 communication with the teacher or staff member that should be responded to within 24 hours	As needed
CTLS Texts/Voice Calls	To provide timely reminders or inform of late changes	As needed
Instagram/Facebook	Share the fun and exciting things happening at Murdock. Not typically information or reminders – just positive moments from the school	3x week

FORGOTTEN ITEMS

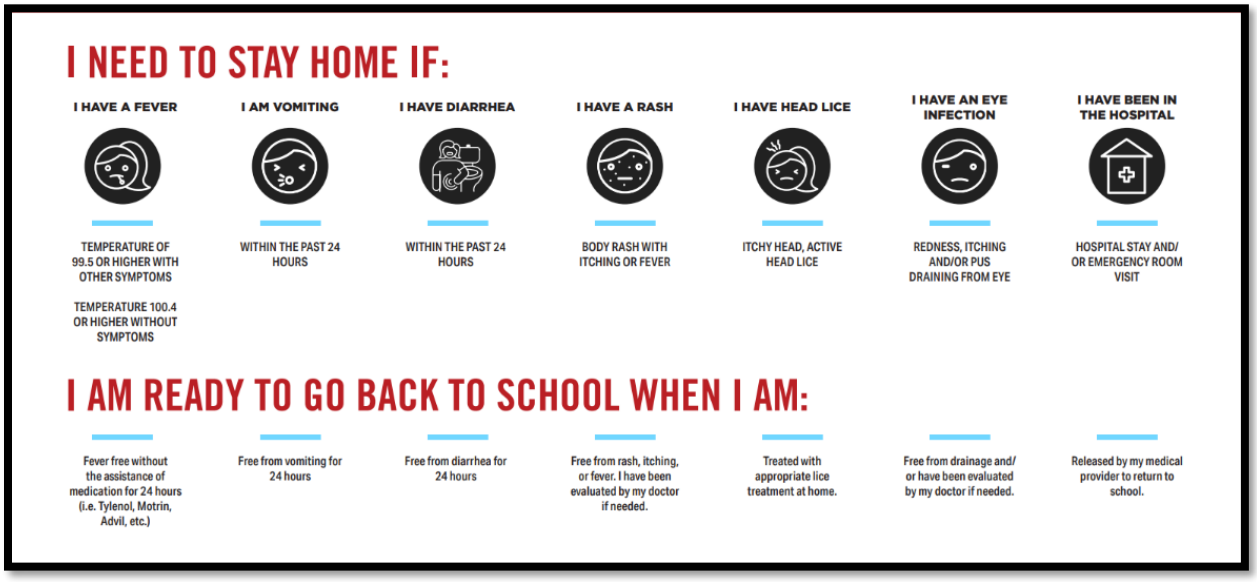
You are welcome to drop off school related items to the front office up until school begins at 7:50. After that, no late assignments or personal items will be accepted except the following: glasses, lunches, coats and medicine. This policy allows us to protect classroom instruction time and limit unnecessary interruptions.

Students will not be allowed back into the school following dismissal for forgotten items, such as homework, backpacks, etc. **Special circumstances do arise, and the front office will use appropriate discretion at that time.*

HEALTH/MEDICAL/ALLERGIES

Please communicate directly with our school nurse with any concerns or questions. There is a helpful FAQ document on the District's School Health Services page.

- Authorization to Give Medication: This form must be completed by a physician and parent to administer medication to students at school. Students are not permitted to carry their own medication with them.
- What happens if my student is sick or goes to the clinic? Please refer to this CCSD policy and the infographic below for detailed information.



LINKS & APPS: Simplifying Cobb Digital Resources for Families

The link beside the heading is a live version of this very helpful CCSD resource.

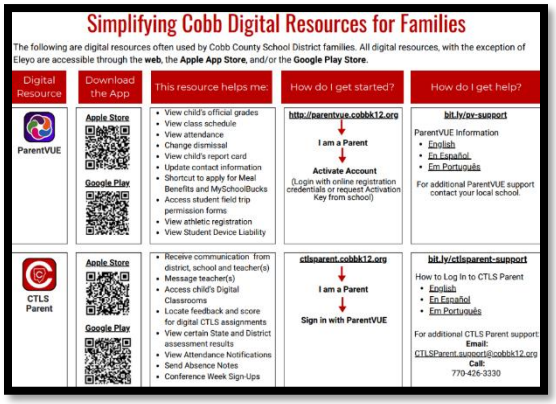
Student ID#

Many apps require the use of your child's 7-digit student ID number. This can be found in the PVUE app.

Additional Apps

Beanstack App (iPhone)

Edulog Parent Portal (Replacing Hear Comes the Bus)



PTA and MURDOCK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FOUNDATION (MESF)

At Murdock Elementary, we are proud of the strong partnership between our families and school through the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and the Murdock School Foundation. These organizations play a vital role in enriching our students' educational experiences by supporting classroom initiatives, organizing events, and funding programs that go beyond the basics. We encourage every Mustang family to get involved—whether by volunteering, attending meetings, or contributing ideas. Your time, energy, and voice help strengthen our school community and ensure every child has the opportunity to thrive. Together, we make Murdock a place where learning is celebrated, and every student feels proud to be a Mustang!

PTA | MESF

STAFF MONITORED STUDENT GROUPS

These are different than clubs as these are sponsored by Murdock staff members. Clubs are outside organizations that essentially 'rent' our building to run their program.

Student Group	Grade Levels	Begins	Typical Meeting Day	Contact
Student Council	3rd – 5th	Fall	AM	Ms. Wasik, Ms. Gilbert
Green Team	3rd – 5th	Fall	AM	Ms. Nanney, Ms. Robbins
Science Olympiad	4th & 5th	Fall	Wednesday PM	Ms. Hong
Reading Bowl	4th & 5th	Fall	Thursday PM	Ms. Valeanu, Ms. Ruggiero
Math Olympiad	4th & 5th	Fall	Friday PM	Ms. Vyas, Ms. Goines
Library VIPs	5th	Fall	AM	Ms. Speir, Ms. Gonzalez
MBC	5th	Spring Prior	AM	Ms. Speir
Chorus	4th & 5th	Fall	M/W PM	Mr. Hydo
Science Fair	1st – 5th	Fall	Ongoing	Ms. Gondek
Safety Patrol	5th	Fall	AM	Ms. Lane, Mr. Bassett

VISITORS & CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS

To maintain a focused learning environment, unscheduled visitors are not permitted during the school day. Volunteers are coordinated through classrooms, PTA, MESF, or other school programs.

- **All visitors, including parents and volunteers, are required to show identification and must check in with the front office.**
- All visitors must wear a visitor or volunteer badge while on school property. This includes our building and outdoor areas.
- If you are here without a badge, a member of the staff will ask you for your identification and purpose for visiting. You will be asked to report to the front office.
- Visitors should only go to the specific areas they are scheduled for.
- Classroom volunteers are still considered 'visitors' to the school and must complete a separate FERPA document each year.
- Pets are not allowed in the building at any time. Please contact the principal if there is an issue surrounding a service or support animal
- Field Trip Volunteers go through a separate vetting process that our office staff assists with.