

GARRISON MILL ELEMENTARY

School Handbook

2025-26 School Year



Vision

Garrison Mill is a community dedicated to creating a positive environment where all students are inspired to do their personal best.

Mission

We engage. We inspire. We educate.

Garrison Mill Elementary is a Kindergarten through Fifth Grade elementary school that strives to offer each student the optimum opportunity to develop academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. Each student and staff member will work together in an educational environment characterized by competence, confidence, understanding, respect, and mutual trust.

Enhancing this instructional program will be the Support Personnel in the areas of Media, Speech, Early Intervention Program, Target, Accelerated Content, Physical Education, Music, Art, Special Education, Pre-K Special Education, STEM Lab, ESOL, and Guidance.

Parents will be invited to review progress during the October conference or upon request. Progress reports will be sent home at the halfway point each quarter as necessary. Kindergarten through fifth grade report cards will be posted in ParentVUE at the end of each quarter. The total instructional program will be presented during the Family Orientation.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Please review Cobb County Board of Education Policies and Cobb County School District Administrative Rules. Rules governing student behavior and/or school procedures can be accessed online at the Cobb County Website, www.cobbk12.org, under Board of Education, then “Board Policy Manual.” The following policies and procedures represent general reference areas but are not inclusive of all rules or local school policies. Please review these carefully:

ABSENCES: Instructional time in an elementary school is structured sequentially. Family vacations should be planned with the school calendar in mind to prevent children from missing essential skills. When a student is absent, the enrolling adult should provide a written explanation for the absence within three days of the student returning to school. This written explanation should be sent via the link received in the automated absence message sent to the enrolling adult. It is the principal's responsibility to monitor student attendance, and excessive absences will be addressed. (GA Code Section 20-2-690-1(b); [CCSD Policy JB-R](#))

ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL GROUNDS: Children may not leave the school grounds during regular school hours unless called for by the office. Children will be released only to individuals approved by the enrolling adult in ParentVUE. (Please refer to the section "Excuses" for more information.)

ARRIVAL TIME: *Students should not arrive prior to 7:15 A.M. without special permission, as there is no one to supervise them.* Students who do arrive prior to 7:15 A.M. are not the responsibility of the Garrison Mill Elementary staff and are **not to report to classrooms until the 7:15 A.M. bell rings**. School will begin following the 7:50 A.M. announcements. Students arriving in the classroom after 7:50 A.M. are considered "tardy." Please plan enough time to help your student arrive in class before the bell with time to be ready to learn.

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM (ASP): The Afterschool Program (ASP) will begin on the first day of school. The hours are 2:20–6:00 P.M. Monday through Friday. ASP will operate as an extension of the instructional day for Garrison Mill students and will function under the guidelines established by the Cobb County School District.

All students **must** be registered before attending ASP. There is a \$20 registration fee per child. The fee for attending ASP is \$10.00 a day for each child (fees are subject to change). Registration for ASP and payments are through ELEYO (details can be found at <https://www.cobbk12.org/garrisonmill/page/17251/after-school-program>). **Any account two (2) weeks past due will result in termination from ASP.**

Activities are planned by staff members, and a snack is provided daily. However, on occasion ASP may plan a special program for your child for which an additional fee may be requested.

Behavior expectations are the same as during the school day. For ASP, students receiving three (3) behavior referrals in an academic year may not be allowed to return.

We are happy to offer after school care to our families who need this service. We will continually work to modify and improve our program to meet the needs of our children at Garrison Mill.

ATTENDANCE: Regular school attendance is required by Georgia law (20-2-690-1) for all children between the ages of six and sixteen. Regular attendance means actual

attendance of a pupil during the entire day of school. We solicit your cooperation in planning appointments that do not interrupt school hours. [Current School Year Calendars](#) can be found on the Cobb County Webpage to assist in planning. A student who attends a half day or more of school is counted present (e.g. 7:50 A.M. to 11:10 A.M. is a half day). ***A student arriving in the classroom after 7:50 A.M. is counted tardy.*** Excessive student absences may warrant a letter from administration and/or a social worker visit. Students with excessive absences may be required to provide physician notes for future absences.

CLINIC (ACCIDENTS, ILLNESS and MEDICATIONS): Our clinic nurse is trained to treat minor emergencies and to dispense medications when needed. ***No medications will be dispensed in the classroom.*** A medication form must be completed by parents prior to dispensing of medicines (prescription or non-prescription). Over-the-counter medications must be maintained in their original container. Prescription medications must also be in their original container, bear the name of the patient, the name of the physician prescribing the medication, and the pharmacy filling the prescription.

Authorization forms may be obtained at the school or online (in the **Board Policy Manual**, Section “J” – Students. Find [Administrative Rule JGCD-R](#) (Student Welfare: Medication) and click on the needed form.

Clinic hours are from 7:40 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. daily. It is of utmost importance that we maintain a clinic card on file for reference and that parents keep information current on this card for emergency treatment purposes.

If a child is suspected of having a communicable disease, parents will be called to pick up the child from the school and seek a physician’s diagnosis prior to returning the student to a classroom. This local school procedure is for the safety and best interest of all our students.

PLEASE do not send children to school who feel ill or who have had a temperature over 100 within 24 hours. Please refer to Board Policy Manual, [Section JGC-R](#) for more information.

DEVICES: No personal devices should be used at school or on the school bus. If you choose for your student to have a cell phone, it must be turned off and in the student’s backpack at all times. No student should wear a smartwatch at school. If a student comes to school with a smartwatch on, they will be asked to put it in their backpack, and parents will be notified. Any subsequent use of a cell phone, smartwatch, or other personal device at school will result in the device being brought to administration and must be picked up by a parent/guardian.

School laptops will be available for student use when appropriate. Students are required to only use laptops according to staff directions. No changes should be made to the device, including but not limited to backgrounds, settings, etc. Failure to follow

expectations will result in the loss of the privilege to use the laptop. Laptops are for in school use only and should not be brought home.

DISCIPLINE: All discipline actions at Garrison Mill will be in keeping with the Cobb County Elementary Student Code of Conduct. [See Policy JCDA-R](#), in the **Board Policy Manual**.

DRESS: Every child at Garrison Mill is encouraged to observe a standard of grooming and dress consistent with the level of formality of the school situation. Shoes must always be worn. Clothing or ornamental displaying of illegal substances for minors, or inappropriate language or gestures, is prohibited. ***Hats or caps should not be worn by boys or girls during school hours unless specified by administrators for particular events.***

We ask you to help your child dress appropriately for school so s/he will be able to concentrate on learning:

1. While it may be hot outside, the air conditioning inside the building makes our rooms chilly at times. Dressing in layers helps students address the temperature changes.
2. Your child's extended fingertips at his/her side should touch the hem edge of his/her shorts, with room enough to comfortably bend over, sit, run, and climb playground equipment.
3. **No midriffs/chests/shoulders should show, eliminating spaghetti-strapped, tank, or halter tops. Ask your child to reach above his/her head; if the midriff shows, change clothing.**
4. Shoes should be safe to walk/run in, whether it's P.E. day or not. Flip-flops and slides are too easy to trip over or slip out of. **Flat, rubber-soled shoes are required for all PE activities.**

EARLY DISMISSALS: Please make every effort to schedule appointments for students after school hours and during school breaks, so as not to disrupt the instructional day.

We do realize, however, that some appointments are unavoidable. If you plan to pick up your child sometime during the school day (for a doctor's appointment, etc.), please send the teacher a note so your child can be prepared to leave. Please plan for the time it takes your student to be located and sent your way by keeping in mind the times when they are at lunch, specials, recess, etc. Early dismissal is not available after 1:40 PM.

ENROLLING ADULT: It is the responsibility of the enrolling adult to make certain that their student's records are correct, including which adults outside of the school staff have access to student records, can check out the child, and who can visit the child at school (such as lunch). The enrolling adult should also make certain that all contact information is correct. These records can be updated in ParentVUE.

EXCUSES: When children are absent, we ***must receive a written excuse*** within 3 days of the student's return to school as per Cobb County regulation. This written explanation should be sent via the link received in the automated absence message sent to the enrolling adult. A doctor's excuse can be uploaded or sent to school for the attendance

clerk. Absenteeism due to travel or vacation is not an excused absence. For more information on which absences are excused, see [Administrative Rule JB-R](#) in the **Board Policy Manual**.

FOUNDATION ENRICHMENT AFTER SCHOOL TIME (F.E.A.S.T.)

PROGRAMS: In addition to the After-School Program, the Garrison Mill Educational Foundation sponsors several after school enrichment programs each week. The cost to attend varies by program. For more detailed information, visit the Garrison Mill Education Foundation web page by clicking [HERE](#).

FIELD TRIPS: A field trip is defined as “a planned educational experience directly related to and correlated with a particular unit of study or a specialized function of the school” ([Cobb County School District Administrative Rules IFCB-R](#)). Administrators will approve only those trips that can be shown to have a direct and meaningful relationship to the curriculum. All field trips are determined and scheduled by the teachers and administrators.

Field trip participation is not mandatory, nor is it reflective on pupil grades. Payments are required to cover the cost of the field trip. If you need assistance with the cost of the field trip, please contact your child’s teacher. Field trips are considered to be a privilege and not a right. The administration reserves the right to deny field trip participation if, based on the student’s previous behavior, participation is not in the best interest of the student or his or her classmates. Field trip planning and coordination is a function of the Garrison Mill instructional staff. Field trip permission slips can be signed, and payment information will be sent in ParentVUE. ***Students will not be permitted to attend a field trip without parent/guardian permission.***

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES: Textbooks and other instructional resources for the students are provided through county and state funds without cost to the child’s parents or guardians. In compliance with the textbook policy, all charges for lost or damaged instructional resources must be paid in order to issue replacements or transfer records to other systems. All instructional resources issued to students will be their responsibility should they be lost, damaged, or stolen.

INSTRUCTIONAL TIME: The cooperative goal of home and school is to provide the best educational experience possible. Therefore, we solicit your cooperation in guarding valuable instructional time. Please do not drop by to visit the classroom. If a teacher conference is needed, please send a CTLS message to the appropriate staff member. Teachers will respond to parent communication within a twenty-four-hour time period during the school week.

INVITATIONS: Invitations for private parties or events (birthday parties, etc) are allowed to be sent home only if **all** students in the class are invited. Teachers cannot send home invitations for selected students from a child’s classroom.

LOST AND FOUND: We strongly suggest that you tag or write your child's name in the clothing he or she wears to school. Garrison Mill will hold lost items for a reasonable length of time and then will donate leftover items to a local charity. Please feel free to look in our Lost and Found whenever the need arises. Donations to charity are made at least quarterly.

LUNCHES: A nutritious and attractive lunch is served daily at Garrison Mill. All students are required to eat in the dining room, whether they receive a school lunch or bring it from home. Menus for the month will be posted to the [CCSD Food & Nutrition Website](#) to assist in your child's lunch planning. Parents are welcome to join us for lunch starting after Labor Day. Find current pricing of meals [HERE](#). Carbonated drinks are not allowed in our school dining room. **In support of our school lunch program, we politely ask that you do not bring in food from restaurants or fast food.**

The cafeteria manager's phone number is 770-642-5601. We are proud of our wonderful school lunch program and encourage students to participate!

Parents are allowed to place money on a student's lunch account to purchase extras (chips, cookies, ice cream, etc.). Parents may send in money to the cafeteria OR deposit money online at [MySchoolBucks](#)

PARENTVUE: ParentVUE information should be up to date. You can update contacts, rights given to contacts listed (visitor, contact, checkout), medical information, address, view report cards, etc. For further assistance, troubleshooting issues, or questions regarding ParentVUE please contact our ParentVue Coordinator in the Front Office.

PARENT VOLUNTEER PROGRAM: There are a number of areas in which parents may give their time to better our school, such as special program assistance, front lobby desk greeter, the Media Center, and the STEM Lab. Please do your part to become more involved in your child's education at Garrison Mill as home/school partnerships build student success! We invite you to volunteer; we need you! Please contact the school, your child's teacher, the [Garrison Mill PTA](#), or the [Garrison Mill Education Foundation](#) to volunteer during the school day. If you are here to volunteer, please refrain from stopping by classrooms or other areas, as it distracts the students during instruction.

PARTIES: [Cobb County Board of Education Administrative Rule JHD-R](#) stipulates that only one party is allowed each year. Please do not request parties at other times of the year. Administrative Rule JHD-R also prohibits delivering or bringing of flowers or bringing balloon arrangements to students at school.

PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAM: We will see a variety of cultural arts programs throughout the school year. A specified donation from parents covers the cost of the programs.

PERSONAL ITEMS: Students are not to bring any personal playthings, novelties, pets, equipment, etc., to school unless given permission by a member of the staff.

PERSONAL REFLECTION: A state law requires public school students be offered the opportunity for a moment of quiet reflection each school day. This opportunity will be afforded to Garrison Mill students daily during morning announcements.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION: Physical Education instruction is required by Georgia law, and participation is *mandatory* except for health reasons. A written note from a physician or parent explaining the nature of the illness or injury must be presented to the physical education instructor, and state specifically the length of restricted time before normal participation can be resumed. Everyday school dress is acceptable for participating in physical education activities. *Flat, rubber-soled shoes are required for all PE activities.* This requirement is strictly enforced for safety reasons and the prevention of possible injuries.

POLICIES: Current Cobb County Board of Education policies may be found [HERE](#) for your review. The link to Board Education, Board Policy Manual contains information on the district's instructional program, as well as student activities and conduct. Should you need clarification of any rule, please contact an administrator. Local school policy is contained in this *Handbook* and is based on CCSD policy and tailored to the specific needs of Garrison Mill. **Please read each section carefully and discuss these policies with your children.**

SCHOOL CLOSINGS/INCLEMENT WEATHER: Please do not call the school regarding school closings. Cobb County Schools will use CTLS Parent to communicate with families (text, posts, and/or calls). Plan ahead with your children so they will know where to go should the school close before you can get home. Have a friend, neighbor, or relative available to supervise children who are delivered home by the bus at an earlier time than usual. Remember, **all K-2 students must be met at the bus stop.** (See Transportation for more information.) If you normally pick up your child by car in the afternoon, please have a "backup" plan ahead of time. Teachers will follow instructions given to them by you in ParentVUE for emergency dismissal should we have an occasion to dismiss prior to our regular time.

For the safety and security of our students, please keep ParentVUE updated with phone numbers and names of persons who may pick up your student. On cold or rainy days, please plan for your child to ride the bus as usual. If you choose to bring your child to school on a rainy day, please allow sufficient time so that your child will arrive in the classroom prior to 7:50 am. The tardy bell will not be extended because of weather.

TARDIES: Tardies, even by just a few minutes, are disruptive. Children who arrive in the classroom after 7:50 am are tardy. If your child is tardy, please park and sign them in on the computer in the front lobby. Please make an effort to have your children arrive on time each morning.

TELEPHONE MESSAGES/STUDENT CALLS HOME: Please be sure your child has all the instructions and necessary materials for the day prior to leaving for school. Out-going calls by students must be approved. Teachers are unable to receive calls during

their instructional day. If you would like to speak with your child's teacher, we encourage all families to communicate with the staff using CTLS Parent to request a phone call.

TRAFFIC SAFETY: All precautions are taken at the school to ensure safe crossing, and there is currently a safety officer available for assistance on Wesley Chapel Road. Safety rules should be enforced both at home and in school. Children must respect and obey all safety officers.

TRANSPORTATION (to and from school):

- A. **BUSES:** CCSD Transportation has requested that students not ride buses other than their assigned buses. Students must board and depart buses at their assigned stop. All K-2 students must have an adult meet them at the bus stop. K-2 children without an adult waiting at the bus stop will be returned to school. If you choose for your child to be dropped off without an adult, you must notify your bus driver in writing on the Safe Rider Form.

All bus changes require a [bus pass](#), which can be downloaded from our school website. Bus changes are only approved for childcare reasons. Buss passes and a temporary dismissal change with an accurate note in ParetenVUE must be completed for a change to be approved.

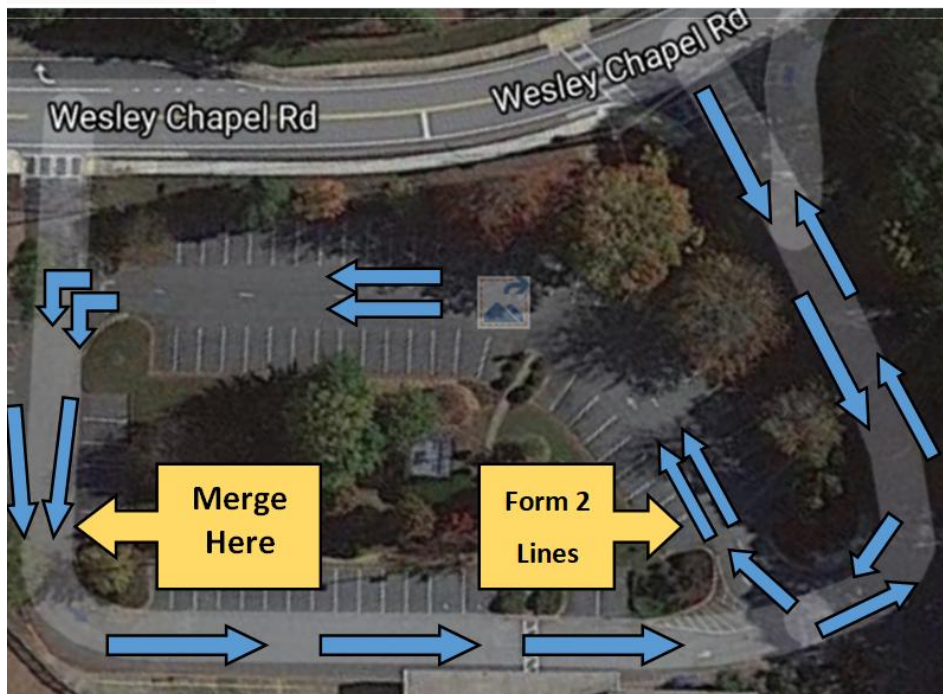
Safety rules and regulations have been developed for all bus riders. Each student who rides the bus is expected to obey these rules. When rules are broken, the privilege of riding the bus will be interrupted. We encourage parents to help instill the rules of conduct to bring about an atmosphere of respect and safety for one another. The behavior of students on school buses is considered an extension of classroom behavior. Maintaining proper conduct while on the bus shall be the joint responsibility of the student, parent, bus driver, and school officials. Students must show proper respect to the driver at all times and obey all driver instructions. A detailed school district bus behavior policy can be found in Cobb County Administrative Rule JCDA-R.

If the bus driver returns the student to the school due to a lack of authorized release at the bus stop, the student will check into ASP. Registration and/or daily fee payment will be expected when the student is picked up. ASP closes at 6 pm.

Cobb County Bus Rider Expectations

EXPECTATIONS	ON THE BUS	LOADING AND UNLOADING
“BE SAFE”	Stay seated – back to back and bottom to bottom. Backpack on your lap. Body parts and objects must remain inside the bus. Always walk and use the handrail. Follow driver’s instructions the FIRST time.	Remain 6 giant steps away from the bus when waiting at the bus stop. Wait for driver’s signal before crossing the street/loading bus. Put electronics away.
“BE RESPONSIBLE”	Place all items in backpack and out of the aisle. Refrain from eating and drinking on the bus for safety and to keep the bus clean. Report any inappropriate or illegal behaviors to the driver.	Get on and off the bus at your assigned stop. Arrive 5 minutes early to your assigned bus stop. When boarding the bus, go directly to your assigned seat. When exiting the bus, go directly to your home.
“BE RESPECTFUL”	Keep all body parts and other objects to yourself. Follow driver’s instruction the FIRST time. Respect the bus by not marking or poking holes in seats.	Keep the bus stop clean. Board the bus one-at-a-time. Respect others around you, including other’s property.
“BE PEACEFUL”	Refrain from fighting, horseplay, and pretend fighting. Speak in a calm, soft voice and refrain from inappropriate gestures and language, threats, and bullying.	Wait quietly and orderly for the bus. Keep your body parts and other objects to yourself. Follow the Golden Rule – Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.

B. CAR RIDERS:



Please note the double line and merge points on the map. The car line is single file in the drop-off zone along the front of the building. Please follow the directions of the staff members to expedite the process.

Morning Drop Off – Families will only drop off a child in the designated drop-off zone in front of the school. Please pull all the way forward, and when the line stops, if you are along the sidewalk, have your student exit the vehicle from the right-hand side. Please utilize the entire sidewalk, even on rainy days, to keep the line moving. Please ensure your student is ready to exit the car before you get to the merge, so you do not create a delay.

Afternoon Pick up – Student dismissal barcodes found in ParentVUE will be required for students being picked up as car riders. Afternoon car riders will be called to their vehicle in the order they arrive. We have a large number of afternoon car riders. We ask for your patience. Additionally, any student not picked up on time in carpool will be checked into ASP. Registration and/or daily fee payment will be expected when the student is picked up. ASP closes at 6 pm.

- C. **WALKERS:** Student dismissal barcodes found in ParentVUE will be required for students being picked up as walkers. Afternoon walkers will be called in the order the barcodes are scanned. We have a large number of afternoon walkers. We ask for your patience. Additionally, any student not picked up on time will be checked into ASP. Registration and/or daily fee payment will be expected when the student is picked up. ASP closes at 6 pm.

Parents will not be allowed to park and pick up their students as a “walker.” Walkers should truly be walking home. A parent may walk to school and escort their child home. A Garrison Mill staff member will be responsible for ensuring students are picked up by an adult.

VISITORS: Two of our primary goals at Garrison Mill are to provide a safe and secure environment for all students and to ensure that students have the uninterrupted instructional time to which they are entitled. To help us achieve these two goals, we are asking that each visitor obtain a visitor badge before leaving the front lobby. All visitors will be required to check in using a driver’s license or photo identification. We feel that this is imperative in our efforts to keep unauthorized visitors out of the building.

“Drop in” visits to the classrooms are not allowed. We **DO ENCOURAGE** scheduled conferences and welcome your role as a Garrison Mill volunteer! We believe that home/school communication helps create a positive educational environment. This can best be accomplished during non-instructional time.

If you choose to join your student during their lunchtime, we have a limited number of seats reserved for your visit. You and your student should sit in this area. No other

students may join you. **We ask that when you visit, you do not bring outside food or drink with you.** When the class lunchtime is over and it is time for the class to line up, please check out in the front lobby; do not go with the class to their next stop or engage the teacher in a discussion. *The cafeteria will not be open for visitors until after Labor Day.* This will allow the students and staff time to establish a routine and ensure an enjoyable experience for students and visitors alike.

WEAPONS: Knives, weapons, or look-alikes of any sort are strictly prohibited by the Cobb County School District Administrative Rules. Please review [Administrative Rule JCDA-R](#) regarding weapons.