

Virginia Cross Elementary Parent/Guardian Handbook



234 Cross School Road
Siler City, NC 27344

Principal: Sarah Chicchi
Assistant Principal: Nikki Murchison

**Virginia Cross Elementary Parent/Guardian Handbook
2019-20**

We encourage all families to read Chatham County's Students' Rights & Responsibilities District Handbook. At VCE we uphold the policies and procedures found in the district handbook and board policies. This VCE handbook details policies and procedures specific to our school.

We strive to provide the best education possible for the children entrusted to our care. Please see school administration should you require clarification for situations which may arise. We know that this will be an exciting and rewarding year for all of us at VCE and that we will continue to have high expectations for our students.

Arrival:

The school building is open for students to eat breakfast as early as 7am. At 7:30am students may go to their classrooms. The late bell rings at 7:55am. Students arriving after 7:55am will be marked tardy. Students may be dropped off in the car rider circle. Families wishing to come for breakfast or to walk their student to class must park in the parking lot and get a visitor's badge in the office before proceeding into the rest of the school building.

Bullying Incidents:

VCE is committed to making our school a safe and caring place for all students. We will treat each other with respect, and we refuse to tolerate bullying in any form at our school.

Chatham County Schools' board policy defines bullying as follows:

Harassment or bullying behavior is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication that:

- 1) places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or
- 2) creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits.

https://boardpolicyonline.com/bl/?b=chatham_nc#&&hs=136231

https://boardpolicyonline.com/bl/?b=chatham_nc#&&hs=136019

Report suspected bullying or harassment to school administration as soon as possible so an investigation can be conducted.

Cafeteria:

Families are welcome to eat breakfast or lunch with their student in the cafeteria. They are also allowed to bring outside food into the cafeteria. However, families are not allowed to purchase snacks or share food with any student other than their own due to allergies and other health risks.

Changes in Transportation:

Changes in transportation must be made in writing to the child's teacher. If emergencies arise please call the office prior to 1:30 so we can ensure that the change is made. Teachers do not have time to check voicemails, emails, or texts frequently throughout the day so always contact the office to make transportation changes.

Child Custody/Court Orders:

If a parent or legal guardian wishes to deny the other parent/guardian the right to visit the child at school or to take the child from school, there must be a copy of the most recent court order placed in the child's school record. The principal or designee will notify teachers and the office administrative staff of the conditions of the court order.

School staff can only honor custody requests and parent/guardian rights that are supported by legal documentation. School personnel will exercise extreme care with regard to child custody issues.

Classroom Discipline:

Teachers will make every effort to handle routine classroom discipline problems by explicitly and routinely teaching the [VCE PBIS Expectations](#), conferring with the student, contacting parents, and referring the student to the counselor when appropriate. If a serious violation of school rules has occurred, the student will be referred to administration. See the district's Student Code of Conduct for more details.

Classroom Placement:

VCE assigns students to their next year's class through collaborative efforts of their current classroom teacher, counselor, assistant principal and principal. When applicable, special education teachers and/or intervention specialists also provide input. Many factors are considered in the process of creating balanced classroom groups, including learning styles, demographics, academic achievement level, behavior, study work habits and peer relations. Parent requests for specific classroom teachers are not accepted. However, some parents may like to offer input as to their children's learning needs in writing to Ms. Chicchi or Mrs. Murchison over the summer.

Classroom Treats:

To protect the health and safety of our children, students may bring pre-packaged treats to school to share with classmates in recognition of birthdays and other celebrations. In order to address any known allergy concerns, a label listing ingredients should be affixed to the package. Homemade treats will not be distributed to students. Due to allergies and other food intolerances, please consult with your classroom teacher before the pre-packaged treats are brought to school.

Daily Schedule:

7:20 - 7:30	Students begin arriving
7:30	Students may go to their classrooms
7:15 - 7:55	Breakfast
7:50	First Bell/Morning Announcements

7:55 Instructional day begins

2:55 Dismissal

Dismissal Procedures:

Parents of car riders must come to the office to receive this year's car rider tag for your student. Those using the car rider line at dismissal must have the current car rider tag on the dashboard when coming through the car rider line each day. Those who do not have a tag will be asked to park and check out in the office to ensure the safety of the children. Families may not park the car in the parking lot at dismissal time and try to take students directly from the car rider line. Families who do this will be asked to go into the office to check the student as a safety protocol.

Field Trips:

Field trips are learning experiences and all students will be included. Financial reasons will not keep any student from going on a trip. Every student must need a permission slip completed by his/her parent/guardian prior to going on the trip.

The field trips will:

- Relate to a particular aspect of the ongoing classroom instruction and the standard curriculum of the grade-level and CCS.
- Provide students with a meaningful learning experience that cannot be provided them in a traditional classroom setting.
- Provide activities suitable to the age/academic level of the students.

Field Trip Volunteers/Chaperones:

All adults who attend field trips will be required to complete an online volunteer application/criminal background check. Parents/guardian may access the volunteer application on our school website. The applications must be renewed by the volunteer every school year and may take up to two weeks to process.

Grading:

Teachers will have a sufficient number of grades to allow multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery. Student mastery of subject matter may be assessed in a variety of ways. It is not necessary for all grades to have as their source written

paper work, nor is it always necessary to receive a grade for every paper produced. Although the teacher will monitor and provide feedback to students for any activity, which they assign, the feedback does not always need to be in the form of a grade. Assessment should always follow a period of guided practice and/or independent practice.

Guidance Program:

The school guidance program focuses on helping students be happy and successful in school through a preventive approach that includes short-term individual counseling, group counseling, and whole class guidance instruction. Students may refer themselves or may be referred by parents, teachers, or administrators. During the school year small groups are conducted for children with needs such as self-esteem, study skills, divorce, and social development. The counselor is also available for parent and teacher consultation and can offer resources in the area of child development.

Homework:

At VCE we emphasize the importance of reading and encourage parents to become involved in the implementation of the school reading program. One way that parents can support is to ensure that their children read daily.

Inclement Weather:

School may be canceled in advance of the next scheduled day. In such cases, local radio (WNCA) and television stations (channels 5, 2, and 11) will broadcast the notice of cancellation. A School Messenger message will be sent to all registered users and information will be posted on the district webpage. In case of cancellation during the school day, we will release buses and car riders at the time designated by the county office.

Instructional Time:

Great value is placed on student learning time. Families should pre-arrange times to meet with teachers so teachers are not pulled away from instructional time with students. Because teachers are teaching most of the day, they may only get to respond to emails and phone messages when students are not in the classroom.

Lost and Found:

Lost and found articles are kept throughout the year in the box by the counselor's office. Periodically throughout the year unclaimed clothing is donated to the PTA Thrift Store.

Medication Policy:

Medication may be administered at school only when the school has received a Chatham County Dispensing of Medication form signed by a physician and the parent and school nurse. The form is available in the office. Parents must turn in the actual medication in at the office along with the Dispensing of Medication form signed by both the parent and the physician. All medication must be provided in the original container or in a pharmacy labeled bottle.

“Medications” refer not only to prescription drugs, but also includes over-the-counter medications such as cough syrup, aspirin, Tylenol, Benadryl, Advil, etc. In keeping with this policy, students must not be in possession of medications other than prescribed emergency medications (e.g. inhalers, Epi pens and diabetic meds/supplies). See the school nurse if you have questions concerning emergency medication.

All medications taken by students at school must be administered by a member of the VCE School Office staff or by the student’s parent. This restriction is enforced with students at all grade levels. Please see the school nurse for questions.

Student’s that require a dose of a prescription drug while away from school on a field trip (that is normally administered at school) will be checked out by the teacher for the day and administered by the teacher.

When children who are subject to unusual health hazards attend school, it is the parent’s/guardian’s responsibility to ensure that the school administration is aware of the situation and prepared to implement emergency measures.

Pick-up List:

For student safety, only adults noted (by the guardian) in PowerSchool will be allowed to pick up students. It is really important that families update who has permission to pick up their student. If the person is not on the pick up list he/she will not be able to come get the student. Please be sure to add anyone the school may need to call in an emergency and remove those who you do not want to pick up your student.

Pets:

Due to the increase of asthma and allergies in adults and students, pets are not allowed on the VCE campus during regular school days or workdays.

Report Cards/Progress Reports and Parent Conferences:

Report cards are given once every nine weeks. Progress reports or interim reports will be given to students at the midpoint of each grading period. Parents/guardians are encouraged to attend the Parent Conference day each fall.

Visitors/Volunteers:

In order to ensure a safe environment we ask visitors to observe the following guidelines:

- Anyone entering the building, other than registered students, must first report to the office to sign in and receive a visitor badge after buzzing in.
- Badges must be displayed at all times. Anyone without a badge will be asked to go to the office to get one.
- Volunteers will need to complete the district's online Volunteer Application (and background check) prior to volunteering.

Visitors for Classroom Observations

At Virginia Cross Elementary we welcome parental involvement, and understand that on occasion parents, guardians, or service providers may wish to observe instruction or a student at school. Per *Board Policy 5020, Visitors in the Classroom*, below are some Virginia Cross Elementary classroom visit guidelines that we are sharing with families who request class visits. These guidelines are designed to minimize our students' instructional time and disruptions in the learning environment. A member of the administrative staff and/or a designee will accompany all observers to the class and remain for the duration of the visit.

Purpose of the Visit and Who May be Observed: At VCE, the purpose of a parent classroom visit is for a parent to observe his/her student and the instructional program being presented.

Duration: To minimize potential interruptions and distractions during the instructional time, class visits are limited to 30 minutes per session. No more than two sessions per visit will be permitted. No visits will be allowed while students are participating in assessments, quizzes or tests. Observers are allowed one visit per nine weeks (unless otherwise approved by the principal).

No Audio, Videotaping, or Taking Pictures while in the Classroom: Video and/or audio recording or taking pictures during the classroom visits by the parent or guardian is prohibited. Electronic devices which could be used to video, audio record, or take pictures should not be visible during the visit. Violation of this guideline can result in dismissal from the classroom visit, and/or school site.

Expectations During Classroom Visits: It's important the observer's entrance and exiting of the classroom does not cause any disruptions to the class' instruction. The teacher will designate an area for observers to sit, generally in the back or to the side of

the classroom. Observers are asked to NOT sit with their student, as this could cause unnecessary disruption. Once the observer is in the classroom and seated, he/she is asked to refrain from engaging or interacting with the students or the teacher and should refrain from moving from the area specified by the teacher.

Observers often may want to follow-up with the teacher after visiting the classroom to clarify expectations or to ask questions. This is understandable and appreciated. If you have questions, please follow up with the classroom teacher in writing to schedule a conference. In addition, any concerns may also be directed to the principal.

Weekly Update:

All families will receive a weekly call and electronic newsletter from our school each Sunday evening. Contact our office if you have not been receiving this information as your contact information may need to be updated.

