

GARRISON MILL ELEMENTARY

School Handbook

2019-2020 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, Target, Physical Education, Music, Art, Special Education, Pre-K Special Education, and Guidance.

Parents will be invited to review progress during the October conference or upon request. If required, progress reports will be sent at the halfway point. Kindergarten through fifth grade report cards will be sent home every nine weeks. The total instructional program will be presented during the August Open House. Please check the calendar for these dates.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Parents: 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 Web Site, 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 policy. 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, he/she must bring in a written, signed excuse upon returning to school. It is the principal's responsibility to monitor student attendance, and excessive absences will be addressed. (GA Code Section 20-2-690-1(b); [Cobb County School District Administrative Rule Student Conduct: Attendance 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 their parents unless the school has been notified in writing concerning other arrangements. (Please refer to the section "Excuses" for more information.)

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 drugs must be maintained in their original container. Prescription drugs 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 am to 2:30 pm 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.

ARRIVAL TIME: *Students should not arrive prior to 7:15 am without special permission as there is no one to supervise them.* Students who do arrive prior to 7:20 am are not the responsibility of the Garrison Mill Elementary staff and are ***not to report to classrooms until the 7:15 am bell rings.*** School will begin following the 7:50 am announcements. Students arriving in the classroom after 7:50 am are considered "tardy."

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM (ASP): The After School Program (ASP) will begin on the first day of school. The hours are 2:15 pm–6:00 pm Monday through Friday. The 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 children **must** be registered before attending ASP. There is a \$10 registration fee per child. Please obtain a registration form from the school office or from your child's classroom teacher. ASP is a pay in advance program. The fees are \$35.00 a week or \$7.00 a day for each child (fees are subject to change). Payment is due the first day a child attends each week. There is an ASP box in the lobby to drop off payment envelopes. ***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. This is included in your fee. 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. Students receiving three (3) behavior referrals in our academic year will 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 am to 11:10 am is a half day). ***A student arriving in the classroom after 7:50 am is counted tardy.*** Excessive student absences may warrant a letter from administration or a social worker visit. Perfect Yearlong Attendance recognition is based on the criteria of NO absences and NO tardies.

BOOKS: Textbooks for the children 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 textbooks must be paid in order to issue replacements or transfer records to other systems. All textbooks issued to children will be their responsibility should the books be lost, damaged, or stolen.

CUSTODY OF CHILDREN: School personnel are bound by law to release children to either of their natural parents unless we have on file a copy of a court order which grants custody to one parent or the other, or to a third party. Therefore, if you are divorced or separated, and the custody of your children has been awarded you by the court, a copy of the court order **must** be on file in our office. It is your responsibility as custodial parent or guardian to provide this information to the school. Custodial parents may be contacted should the school feel that court guidelines have been altered by the non-custodial parent. Joint custody situations and specifications should also be made known to the school.

DISCIPLINE: All discipline actions at Garrison Mill will be in keeping with the Cobb County Elementary Student Code of Conduct. [See Policy JCDA-R \(Elementary\)](#), 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 are 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 finger tips at his 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 or chests should show. 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 fall out of. **Flat, rubber-soled shoes are required for all PE activities.**

EARLY DISMISSALS AND TRANSPORTATION CHANGES: For students' safety, please attempt to keep telephone transportation changes to a minimum. All transportation changes should be in writing.

We do not make transportation changes after 1:45 PM, If you do change your child's usual means of going home, *the teacher must have a note from you stating this* (for example: bus rider to car rider, or ASP to car rider, etc.) . Because teachers are not constantly monitoring their email accounts, please do not email the teacher for a transportation change on the same day. If you must make a last minute change for your child, send in a hand-written note to the teacher or contact the front office for further guidance.

Please make every effort to schedule appointments for students after school hours, so as to not disrupt the instructional day. We do realize, however, some appointments are unavoidable. If you plan to pick up your child some time during the school day (for a doctor's appointment, etc.), please send the teacher a note so your child can be prepared to leave. Students are not dismissed between 1:45 PM and 2:20 PM (regular dismissal time) unless you have an emergency. Students are not allowed to go on a different bus than their own unless it is for child care purposes. A bus pass must be completed and brought into the front office for approval. The bus pass can be found on our school's website.

EMERGENCIES: Should there be an emergency and you need to pick up your child prior to regular dismissal, you *must* come by the school office. There is a sign-out form for you to complete. *Do not go directly to the class, as teachers will not release students in this manner.* Your child’s protection is our concern, and we solicit your cooperation in following this procedure. Please establish a family “Emergency Plan” so that students and teachers will know how your child will go home should the school close for an emergency (ex.: inclement weather). The teacher will request this information at the beginning of the year.

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 the link on the Garrison Mill web page.

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. 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**.

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. Donations may be requested to defray trip costs. No student is denied a field trip because of a parent’s inability or unwillingness to donate funds; however, if enough funds are not donated the trip may be cancelled and refunds will be provided. 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. *Students will not be permitted to attend a field trip without parent/guardian permission.*

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 in” to the classrooms to visit, nor arrive at the child’s classroom for early dismissal. If a teacher conference is needed, please call, email, or come by the school office for an appointment. 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.

LUNCHESES: A nutritious and attractive lunch is served daily at Garrison Mill. All students are required to eat in the dining room whether they buy lunch or bring it from home. Menus for the month will be distributed to students to assist in your child's lunch planning. Parents are welcome to join us for lunch. Please pick up a visitor's pass in the front lobby if you are dining with your child (adult lunch - \$4.00, child lunch - \$2.35). **In support of our school lunch program, we politely ask that you do not bring in food from restaurants or fast food.**

The lunchroom phone number is 770-642-5601. We are proud of our wonderful school lunch program and encourage students to participate! (Lunch prices subject to change—please check with the school office.) Lunch menus, class times for lunch and meal-pay may be accessed from the Garrison Mill web site at www.cobbk12.org/garrisonmill and choose the lunch tab at the top of the page.

If a child realizes he/she has forgotten lunch money, we will allow him/her to contact the parents before 8:30 am. Parents can then arrange to bring lunch or lunch money to the school office before lunchtime. Parents may also prepay students' lunches by phone or online at <http://www.cobbk12.org/centraloffice/FoodServices/MPPlus.htm>

Cobb County Lunch Charge Policy: Cobb has a LIMITED charge policy. If a student arrives at school without money, they are allowed up to \$7.05 in charges at elementary school and \$5.20 at middle school. Charges are not allowed for a la carte, adults, or at high school. For elementary and middle schools only, if your child arrives at school without money for lunch and has reached the charge limit, he/she will be provided with an alternate meal (such as a peanut butter sandwich and milk or a cheese sandwich and milk). No alternate meal will be provided at breakfast. (6/26/2017)

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 front office. Please do your part to become more involved in your child's education at Garrison Mill as home/school partnerships build student successes! We invite you to volunteer; we need you! Please contact the school, your child's teacher, or the Garrison Mill PTA to volunteer during the school day.

PARTIES: [Cobb County Board of Education Administrative Rule JHD-R](#) stipulates that only one party is allowed each year. This party is held just prior to the winter holidays.

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 AND CULTURAL 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.*** An extra pair of tennis shoes may be kept in the classroom if the student usually wears boots or sandals. This requirement is strictly enforced for safety reasons and prevention of possible injuries.

POLICIES: Current Cobb County Board of Education policies may be found at the Cobb County School District Website, <http://www.cobbk12.org>, 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 input from teachers, students and parents. **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. Turn to local TV and radio stations for information about school closings or early dismissals. 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 on the Inclement Weather Plan form should we have an occasion to dismiss prior to our regular time.

For the safety and security of our students, please notify the school in writing of updated phone numbers and names of persons who may pick up your children. On cold or rainy days, please allow your child to ride the bus as usual. Driving your child to the bus stop

can avoid having the child stand in the cold or rain. 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 7:55 am. The tardy bell will not be extended because of weather.

SCHOOL COUNCIL: Garrison Mill has a School Council that meets four times each school year. The purpose of this council is to promote positive interaction and communication between school and community. The council is made up of the principal, elected parents, two elected staff members. All meetings are announced through our school calendar and website. The meetings are open to the public.

SCHOOL INSURANCE: School accident insurance will be available to students at the beginning of school. Specific information will be sent home at the beginning of the school year. Contact the front office if you need an additional copy.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: Cobb County School District has an Administrative Rule governing sexual harassment and student, teacher and staff behavior. This information can be found in [Administrative Rule GAEB-R](#) on the district web site.

SUSPENSION: *The power of suspension is vested in the school administration and this action is deemed serious.* In every case involving suspension, parents will be notified. The length of suspension may vary according to the factors/ seriousness of the offense and is an administrative decision based on Board Policy. Proper discipline will be enforced at Garrison Mill, for it is the feeling of the administration and staff that children cannot learn in an environment that lacks order. We expect good manners and behavior at all times, and problems will be dealt with in a consistent manner.

TARDINESS: Tardies, even by just a few minutes, are disruptive. Children who arrive in the classroom after 7:50am are tardy. Please sign your child in at the office where he/she will get an admittance slip to the classroom. Please make an effort to have your children arrive on time each morning. It is the duty of the principal to monitor late arrival of students.

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. *Calls to teachers during school hours will go to their voice mail which is checked daily and your call will be returned within 24 hours.*

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. We also have a safety patrol to provide for the safety of our children both inside and outside the school. Children must respect and obey all safety officers. *Please refrain from dropping off or picking up students on Wesley Chapel Road AND the bus entrance.*

TRANSPORTATION: Transportation has requested that students not ride buses other than their assigned buses. Students must board and depart buses at their assigned stop. All bus changes require this pass which can be downloaded from our school website. All K-2 students must have an adult meet them at the bus stop. Children without an adult will be returned to school. If you choose for your child to be dropped off without an adult, you must notify the school in writing.

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. Use ear buds with electronics.	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.

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. Detailed school district bus behavior policy can be found in [Cobb County Administrative Rule JCDA-R \(Elementary\)](#).

If the bus driver returns the student to the school due to lack of authorized release at bus stop, the student will be taken to ASP. Additionally, this procedure will also apply to student not picked up in the afternoon car line.

VISITOR PASSES: 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 entering the classroom or dining area. We feel that this is imperative in our efforts to keep unauthorized visitors out of the building.

We discourage “drop in” visits to the classrooms. 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.

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 \(Elementary\)](#) regarding weapons.