



STUDENT HANDBOOK 2024-2025

Be a BEAR!!!

Be Responsible

Encourage Others

Actively Participate

Respect All





PAW PRIDE

Mission Statement

Providing all children with a challenging, high quality education for their academic and vocational success.

School Hours

Student Hours - 8:45AM – 2:55 PM (Mon-Fri)

Students May Arrive – 8:15 AM

First Bell (enter rooms) - 8:30AM

Tardy Bell - 8:45 AM

Office Hours – 8:00 AM-3:55 PM

Breakfast - 8:15 AM-8:40 AM

NO EARLY RELEASE AFTER 2:15 PM.

****No students allowed on campus before 8:15 AM unless enrolled in the YMCA.**

Important Numbers

Cafeteria - 727-893-1381 Laura Neuman, Manager

YMCA - 727-302-0463

Bus Transportation - (727) 587-2020

School Board of Pinellas County

Kevin Hendrick, Superintendent

Pinellas County Schools Administration Building

301 4th Street SW

Largo, FL 34649-2952

(727) 588-6000

Appointments for Students (Doctor)

Students will be excused during school hours for verified medical/family purposes. Students must be signed out by an individual listed by the parent/guardian on the registration card, office card and Focus Account. Photo identification will be required to remove a student.

NOTE: Parents are encouraged to avoid scheduling appointments for their child when school is in session. Missing instructional time impacts students' success.

Excusal notes can be emailed through the Bear Creek website: <http://www.pcsb.org/bearcreek-es>. Click on the **Report Student Absence** button in the top right corner of the web page.

Agenda Books

Agenda books are used school-wide. These books provide a way for your child to stay organized as well as an excellent method of communication between school and home. The first agenda book is free. ***Replacement books are available in the front office and cost \$5.00 each.**

Attendance/Tardiness

Absences/Tardies are recorded daily. Extended absences may require a medical statement or prior conference with the principal. A note or phone call explaining an absence from school is expected.

A parent or guardian is contacted by school officials when an elementary student has had **three** unexcused absences. If excessive absences continue, the Office of the State Attorney will be notified, and that office will work with the family and school staff to resolve the problem. The Truancy Intervention Program is then initiated.

Students arriving after 8:45 AM will need to report to the front office to obtain a tardy pass to class. Chronic tardiness is reported to the school social worker for investigation.

It is important that all students attend school regularly, arriving and leaving on time. Bear Creek has bell-to-bell instruction, and missing class time means missing instructional time. We want your child to be successful, but in order for that to happen, they have to be here at school learning. Families should try to avoid scheduling vacations when school is in session.

Before/After School Care

YMCA offers their prime-time program on our school grounds from 6:30AM until 6:00PM. For more information, call YMCA 895-9622. **Please consider enrolling your child in the YMCA if you must drop off before 8:15 AM or pick up later than 2:55 PM.**

Birthday Celebrations

Classroom birthday celebrations **will not** be permitted for grades K-5. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to speak with administration.

Breakfast/Lunch

Bear Creek has a universal breakfast, lunch and dinner program, which is free to all students. **However, please go to www.myschoolapps.com to fill out the free lunch application for summer programs.** Monthly lunch menus are located on the Pinellas County Schools home page. Pinellas County School meal programs allow substitutions on a case-by-case basis for the basic meal requirements if a child is unable to consume the required food because of medical or other special dietary needs. All exceptions must be supported by a statement from a recognized medical authority that includes recommended substitute foods. The statement will be maintained on file at the school.

Bicycles/Scooters/Skateboards/Backpacks

School safety patrols caution and assist bike riders and walkers in Bear Creek's Hallways. Bicycles are locked to prevent theft and bike helmets are mandatory. Students will walk bicycles on sidewalks and on school grounds to and from the bike compound. **Scooters and skateboards are not allowed. Rolling backpacks are NOT permitted.**

Bus Transportation

Bus Transportation is available for students living two or more miles from school. Each transported student will receive a set of rules that must be signed and returned to school. Bus safety requires rules be followed to prevent accidents. The bus driver is responsible for the safety and conduct of students riding the bus to and from school. Students should obey the driver at all times. Any student who persists in disorderly conduct on a school bus shall be reported to the principal and may be suspended from riding the bus. Students should know the arrival time of the bus and be ready. Drivers will make every attempt to be on time. **Parents are responsible for the supervision of their children 30 minutes prior to bus pick-up.**

Permission for a student to ride a bus other than the one assigned or to get off at a stop other than the one assigned will not be approved. A written parental request for a bus change must be presented to the office early in the day. The telephone number for Transportation is 587-2020. Please have your child's route number available for faster service if you need to contact Transportation.

Car Riders

PLEASE use our designated car circle located at 3rd Avenue South to drop off and pick up your child each day. Cars should enter our car circle by making a right turn from 61st Street. **DO NOT** park along 61st Street or 3rd Ave South, and **DO NOT** use 5th Ave South or the parking lot for drop off or pickup. Our students' safety is our top priority, and we need your help in providing this safe environment during arrival and dismissal.

Students must be picked up on time at the car circle. Students not picked up will be brought to the office and will have to be signed out. Students who are chronically being picked up late will be reported to the school social worker. Students left at school longer than 30 minutes past dismissal, may be reported to the school resource officer. **If you cannot pick up your student by 2:55 PM you should consider enrollment in the YMCA.**

Cafeteria Expectations

Cafeteria and school staff will assume responsibility for supervision of students during lunch periods. The expectations listed below help make the lunch period pleasant, relaxed and safe. Students will be required to follow the posted rules in the cafeteria.

1. Stay seated
2. Face your food
3. Raise your hand for help
4. Use level 2 voices

Cell Phones And Other Electronic Devices

A student may possess a cell phone and other electronic devices in school, on school property, at school-related functions, provided these items are powered off and concealed from view while school is in session.

- ❖ Parents are advised that the best way to get in touch with their child during the school day is by calling the child's school office.
- ❖ Pinellas County Schools recognizes the ever-increasing importance of technology in students' lives and the beneficial role it can play for student education and communication when used responsibly. The possession and use of such devices should not interfere with academic instruction, student safety or a positive school climate.
- ❖ At no point should an electronic device be used in a manner which infringes on the privacy rights of any other person; disrupts the educational process, school programs or activities; or violates Board Policy or federal/state law including but not limited to cyberbullying, sexual harassment, threats or cheating on tests or assignments.
- ❖ **Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action and/or confiscation of the cell phone or electronic device. If the cell phone or electronic device is confiscated, it will be released/returned to a parent unless an alternative arrangement is agreed to by the principal (or designee).**

Change of Address/Telephone

Parents MUST report any change of address or telephone number to the office within five days. All parents must have two working telephone numbers where they can be reached during the school day.

Conferences

Please contact the teacher via the agenda, email, or phone to schedule a conference. Cooperation from both parents and teachers is necessary for conferences to be an effective means of communication.

Discipline

Discipline guidelines are fully explained in the Code of Student Conduct, which is sent home with all students on the first day of school.

The School Board has adopted a policy that requires mandatory expulsion for any student who brings a gun or other weapon to school. Toy guns are also prohibited and may be dealt with as serious misconduct leading to a suspension from school. Acceptable and appropriate behavior is expected at all times.

All teachers develop and publish a classroom discipline plan with their students and make it available to parents. Discipline plans will reflect the school's mission statement, goals and rules, which are posted in the classroom. The following steps may be followed before a student is sent to the office:

- Time-out in classroom
- Time-out in another classroom
- Action Plan
- Contact Parent
- Child may be immediately sent to office if serious disruption occurs



All students are expected to follow the **Guidelines for Success**

Be a BEAR

- Be Responsible
- Encourage Others
- Actively Participate
- Respect All

Dress and Grooming

Mandatory Uniform Policy

➤ **Shirts**

- Collared **solid** color in navy, light blue or white
- School t-shirts can be worn on any day
- Must be tucked in at all times

➤ **Bottoms**

- Khaki or navy-blue shorts, slacks, skirts, skorts, capris, or jumpers
- No jeans, sweatpants, cargo pants or baggy clothing
- Pants must be worn at waistline. If not, a belt must be worn or zip-ties will be used

➤ **Winter Wear**

- Solid color sweatshirts, sweaters, and jackets in navy, light blue or white
- No printing or designs allowed on outerwear
- Hoods may not be worn inside

All students in Pre-K through 5th grade will wear their uniforms daily, except for the following days:

- ❖ Individual school picture days
- ❖ Special Spirit Days
- ❖ 5th Graders only – Enterprise Village Day & End of Year activities

The following is the minimum dress code standards stated in Pinellas County School's Elementary Code of Conduct book:

- * Closed-Toed shoes shall be worn - no "flip-flop" or "thong" type shoes or CROCS allowed on campus. Boots are not encouraged due to PE activity.
- * No hats will be allowed, except outside during PE class.
- * No midriff blouses or shirts will be worn.
- * Hairstyles and colors and other fashions or styles, which are disruptive to the school environment, are prohibited.

Early Arrival/Late Pick Up

Children are NOT to report to school before 8:15 am. Students should not be on school grounds after 2:55 pm unless involved in an approved after school activity.

Parents are responsible for picking up students on time. NO EARLY RELEASE AFTER 2:15 PM.

Evacuation Drills

Fire drills and other drills such as tornado and lockdown drills are held throughout the school year. Each child has an emergency tag. This tag must have the child's legal guardian or parents name, correct address, home phone number and parent work number. Please make sure the school has up to date contact information in case of emergencies.

Field Trips

A signed Pinellas County Field Trip permission form is required for all children to go on field trips. **Verbal permission via telephone call and handwritten slips are not permitted or accepted. Permission slips and field trip money (CASH only) must be turned in by the due date.**

Field trips are an extension of classroom learning. The goal is for every student to participate. However, if a student displays repeated poor behavior choices at school, the parent of the student will be asked to accompany the student on the trip.

First Aid/Medication

School employees seek to prevent accidents. If a minor accident occurs, the staff will administer first aid. In case of serious accidents, parents are telephoned and EMS is called. It is very important that phone numbers on file stay updated for this reason.

Children cannot take medicine at school unless the parent has completed the medication authorization card on file at the school. **Medication must be in the original container, whether it is prescription or over the counter, and must include the following:**

- Name of the medicine
- Amount of dosage
- Specific Administration Time
- Purpose of the medicine.
- Students' name on label
- Date filled

Head Lice

Pinellas County Schools have a No-Nit Policy that calls for the exclusion of a student from school until the removal of all lice, eggs and nits has been accomplished. A parent must accompany the child when they return to school after being treated. Students must be nit-free to return to class.

Homework

Parents will receive homework policy information before or during Open House, including frequency of assignments and procedure for collection.

Pinellas County Schools Homework Helpline number is 547-7223 and is available Monday - Thursday from 5:00 – 8:00 PM.

Illness at School

Any time a child does not feel well enough to remain in class, a parent will be called to pick up the child. We need to have up-to-date phone numbers to help us contact parents or for emergency care. All parents must provide two working telephone numbers where they can be reached during the school day or other emergency contact information.

Insurance

Student accident insurance is mandatory for certain sports and activities and voluntary for K-12 students who may not otherwise be covered. Please log in to the Pinellas County Schools website and follow the links to Students – Athletics and Extracurricular Activities – Student Accident Insurance for more information.

Lost and Found

All items of clothing should be labeled for easy identification. Lost items are located in the cafeteria.

Media Center

Each child is responsible for the library books they check out. Families are responsible for replacing lost or damaged books.

News and Upcoming Events

Please check the Bear Creek website weekly for pertinent information, including school holidays, activities and upcoming events. Every week the Bear Creek website is updated each week by 6pm on Sunday. You can search the school website. <http://www.pcsb.org/bearcreek-es>

Also, parents can sign up on **Peachjar** to view flyers for Bear Creek. Pinellas County Schools uses digital flyer delivery system as part of its efforts to be more environmentally friendly and to embrace innovative technology. By using the Peachjar e-flyer program, e-flyers are sent directly to parents' email inboxes as well as posted on school websites for easy access. All flyers may be accessed by clicking on the Peachjar logo that is on the school's website. Schools save tons of paper and reduce copy costs with a paperless delivery of school flyers. It removes a significant administrative burden from teachers, office staff, and volunteers. School and school district-approved e-flyers will keep parents informed about upcoming school activities, programs, and events.

Physical Education

Elementary students are not required to change clothes for PE. All students should wear supportive tennis or running shoes every day during physical education classes. Girls should wear shorts or pants under skirts and dresses.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

Everyone is invited to become a member of our Parent Teacher Association. PTA membership dues are \$6.00. Information will be sent home at the beginning of the school year. The PTA Board meets on the Third Tuesday of each month at 6:00 PM. We encourage you to become involved in your PTA! Strong PTA's create strong schools.

Report Cards

Report cards will be available on the following dates:

Quarter 1 Thursday, October 24th, 2024

Quarter 2 Thursday, January 16th, 2025

Quarter 3 Thursday, April 3rd, 2025

Quarter 4 Thursday, May 29th, 2025

Note: Mid-Term Progress Reports in elementary schools are distributed to students who have a current grade of N, U, D, or F at mid-term, and to students who had an N, U, D, or F on the previous report card. Some schools choose to send Mid-Term Progress Reports to all students. Mid-term grades are not entered into Focus.

School Advisory Council (SAC)

The School Advisory Council is a vehicle for linkage between the school and our community, providing resources to the school and input on the School Improvement Plan. SAC meetings are open to the public. Dates and times will be announced.

Safety Patrol

Students from 4th and/or 5th Grade are selected to be safety patrol members and must maintain good grades and have appropriate behavior to remain a safety patrol. They remind students of safety rules, help out in the car circle and aid other students in crossing intersections.

Security

Bear Creek has security features on campus including cameras, a secured school entryway in the front office, fencing around our campus buildings that includes most gates that remain locked throughout the day. All visitors must enter the school through our front office and use the badge pass system for clearance. A valid state issued ID is required. Bear Creek also has an armed school safety officer available.

Severe Weather

During severe weather conditions, students will not be dismissed to walk or ride bicycles home. Transported students will not leave until authorities let us know it is safe.

Smoking

In accordance with School Board Policy, smoking is prohibited anywhere on the school campus. This includes the parking lots and the car pick-up area.

Student Honors Criteria

Principals List – Students in grades 3-5 who receive all A's in academic subjects and who achieve all E's-V's-S's for conduct, work habits, physical education, art and music shall have their name entered on the Principal's List

Honor Roll – Students in grades 3-5 who receive no grade lower than "B" in the academic subjects and who achieve all E's-V's -S's for conduct, work habits, physical education, art and music shall have their names entered on the honor roll.

Student Records

Please be sure to review the information regarding student records in the Code of Student Conduct book. If you do not want directory information released, you must tell the principal in writing what types of directory information you do not want released. That written notice to the principal must be received no later than September 15 of each year.

Teacher Assignments/Request

Parent requests for specific teachers will not be honored unless there are extenuating circumstances as determined by the principal.

Technology

Students at Bear Creek use technology in their classrooms daily to improve their reading, writing, math and science skills. Our school wide network allows access to the internet for web sites that help with reading and math, and server-based instruction such as Dreambox and IStation.

Trespassing

Students are not permitted on school grounds after school hours or on weekends. The school will not be responsible for students who are on school property without permission. If this becomes a problem, you will be contacted by local authorities. Security checks of the campus are made nightly and on weekends.

Volunteers (Business-Community-Parental)

It would be very difficult for Bear Creek to operate without help from our volunteers. Tutors and mentors are critical to highest student achievement at Bear Creek. All volunteers should record their volunteer hours during the school year on their own computer or my use the computer located in the main office. All persons who volunteer on campus, including field trip drivers, must be pre-approved by Pinellas County Schools. It can take up to two weeks for clearance, so please enroll online at www.pcsb.org/volunteer as soon as possible.

Vandalism

Any persons willfully damaging Bear Creek property will be responsible for the assessed total cost of all replacement or repairs.

Visitors

Pinellas County School Board requires all visitors report to the office before going to any other part of the campus, even for brief visits. Parents must provide teachers with a twenty-four-hour notice in advance before visiting classrooms during instructional times. All visitors will be required to wear a visitor badge. A valid state issued ID is required to enter our campus and all visitor ID's will be scanned for clearance.

Withdrawals and Transfers

Once Bear Creek is officially notified of a withdrawal or transfer, we follow a checkout procedure, which includes checking library and textbook records, as well as completing reports. School records will be sent to the next school once the student is enrolled.