WATERGRASS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PARENT AND STUDENT HANDBOOK

Welcome to Watergrass Elementary, home of the Owls! We are excited to welcome our families to a new school year. Our goal is to help all of our students have a positive learning experience every day!

Please review this handbook, the Code of Student Conduct, and other information in your registration packet. They contain important information that can assist you and your child in having a very rewarding school year.

ABC PROGRAM

The Assist, Believe, & Care program is designed to match community individuals and groups with needy children in order to provide the basic essentials which will ensure that all our children have equal opportunities to achieve success in school. ABC is voluntary for both school and community members. All names will be kept confidential. An ABC committee at the school prioritizes students' needs and matches them to available sponsors. Any purchase will be made in accordance with school board guidelines. Participant and sponsor applications will be available during registration or may be obtained throughout the year in the office.

ACCESS TO RECORDS

Parents have the right to inspect and review all educational records directly related to their children. In the case of legal separation or divorce, either parent can access their child's educational record unless a court order to the contrary has been filed with the school. Parents wishing to review and inspect educational records must make a request to the principal. Compliance with such a request will be made as quickly as possible. If a parent requests copies of a student's record, the copies will be provided at a cost of $0.10 per page.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

If you plan to drive your child to school, please remember that school hours are 9:40 AM to 3:50 PM. Supervision will be available for students after 9:25 AM. Information about the PLACE Program, which provides before and after school supervision at WGES, is available in the school office or by calling 813-346-0692.

If the regular arrival/departure routine is changed, please inform the school in writing. Verbal changes from students will not be honored. A note to the teacher will prevent any confusion. An emergency might warrant a call to the school to change procedures for a child going. Last minute transportation changes must be called in by 3:00 PM.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance at school is an important factor in your child's success. When you know your child will be absent from school, please call our Attendance Line at (813) 346-0611 to provide information about the absence. If you are unable to contact us through the Attendance Line send a note explaining the absence when your child returns to school.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Students learn best in an orderly, structured environment. Our discipline program is proactive in nature and encompasses social skills and problem-solving techniques. In order to create a positive learning environment, we want students to meet the following expectations, at all times and in all situations:

Be Ready

Be Respectful

Be Responsible

Please talk about these expectations at home to help students be successful.

Each team will set its rules, consequences, and rewards. Teachers will send home copies of the plan shortly after school opens. Copies of office referrals will be sent home to parents.

The Code of Student Conduct from the District School Board is distributed to all students early in the school year and should be reviewed by students and parents.

During the school year students will be recognized for their positive behavior through our Outstanding Owls Club. Ask your children to keep you informed about their Outstanding Owl tickets.

CAR PICKUP/DROP OFF AREA

Parents who transport children back and forth to school should pull into the front parking lot loop. Drivers are to follow the traffic lanes to the front and pick-up or release children at the area designated. Please do not park in any portion of the roadway on the bus drive or bus loop. Please be alert to directions from the Crossing Guard at the school entrance. PLACE parents may not access the bus loop between 9:00 AM and 4:30 PM.

We are requesting that drivers follow the listed directions:

* Drive slowly through the student pick-up area.
* Stay in your car and proceed to the pick-up area in a single file line.
* Children will be released to cars only at the designated area. When your car moves into the designated area your child will be released to safely enter your car. You must have an official Student Pickup Card with your child's name on it to have your child released. If not, you will be required to show ID in the front office. This applies to walk-up parents, as well. Pickup Cards will be distributed at registration and are available in the office.
* While you are in line waiting, please pull up when a space opens up in front of you. After your child has loaded into your car, carefully pull out into the left lane and slowly leave the parking lot.
* Do not leave your car unattended in the line.

There will always be Watergrass staff members at the car pickup loop to assist drivers and students. Please follow their instructions. Student safety is our priority.

CELEBRATIONS / BIRTHDAYS

Teachers will occasionally plan celebrations and your assistance is always welcome! Treats supplied to the school need to be commercially prepackaged. However, birthdays are not celebrated at school. Nor should private party invitations be distributed at school. Please help us protect our instructional time.

CLINIC

The classroom teacher may refer students who feel ill to the clinic. The clinic assistant will contact the parents, if necessary, and provide first aid. Medication will be given to students based on Pasco County Schools General Guidelines for Administration of Medication at School:

1. Administration of medication during school hours should occur only when medication schedules cannot be adjusted to provide administration at home.
2. Medication will be administered by personnel trained by the registered professional school nurse, or other medical professionals, as permitted by law.
3. Medication must be brought to school by the parent/guardian in the original prescription container with the original prescription label containing the following information:
4. Student's name
5. Name of medication (only regulated medications will be administered at school).
6. Dosage prescribed (if the dosage changes, a new prescription bottle must be provided)
7. Time of day to be taken
8. Physician's name
9. Special instructions
10. Date of prescription (current, within one year)
11. No more than one month's supply of medication should be brought to school at one time.
12. Medication must be counted by at least two trained staff (additional signature from parent preferred). The amount and date received is to be recorded on the individual Student Medication Administration Record.
13. An Authorization for Medication Administration form must be completed by the parent / guardian, granting the school permission to assist in the administration of such medication and which shall explain the necessity for such medication to be provided during the school day, including any occasion when the student is away from school property on official school business. Parents may not need to complete this form if authorization is provided via student’s Medical Management Plan.
    1. \*Note: It is preferred that the parent/guardian of a student obtain the needed dose(s) of medication for field trips in a separate, appropriately labeled prescription container. If that is not possible, the entire bottle of medication may be sent with a trained person to be administered on the field trip. Under no circumstances may medication be transferred from one container to another by anyone other than a registered pharmacist (i.e.: no pills are to be placed in envelopes or baggies).
14. Regulated, non-prescription medication will not be administered at school, unless accompanied by a physician's statement, dated within the current school year (exception: Healthy Student Program). Over-the-counter medications must be brought to school in the original, unopened container.
15. Students will be allowed to carry metered-dose asthma inhalers, pancreatic enzyme supplements, and epinephrine auto-injectors and/or diabetic supplies, medication, and equipment with written authorization from their parent/guardian and physician. (F.S.1002.20 (3) (h), (i), (k) and/or (j)).
16. No prescription analgesic narcotics will be administered at school.
17. Parental and healthcare provider authorization for the administration of medications and treatments is required annually.
18. All medications must be removed from the school premises one week after the expiration date, upon appropriate notification of medication being discontinued, or at the end of the school year. If not retrieved by a parent, guardian or designee, unused and unclaimed medication will be destroyed following proper disposal procedures.

All medications in the clinic need to be picked up on or before the last day of school. If the medications are not picked up the school nurse and/or clinic assistant will properly dispose of them.

Please let us know if your child has any unusual health problems. Knowing these problems will help us to be prepared to handle an emergency situation. It is important that we are able to reach you. Please make certain that we have home, work, and emergency phone numbers on file in the office. A card will be included in the registration packet at the beginning of the year requesting this information.

Payment of medical costs for accidental injuries at school is the responsibility of parents. Please consider purchasing school insurance if this is a concern. Neither the school nor district are affiliated with the school insurance program.

EARLY CHECKOUT PROCEDURES

The safety of our students is a primary concern at Watergrass Elementary. Parents should not habitually sign their children out early as this causes a disruption in the learning environment.

Children will not be dismissed between 3:15 - 3:50. If parents wish to have a child dismissed early, they must come to the office to sign the child out. To protect our students, proof of identity will be required when children are checked out. If the child is to be released to a person other than the parent or guardian, we must have written permission signed by the parent or guardian. A note will be needed for each occasion.

Students will be released to either parent unless a copy of a court order denying parental rights is filed with the school.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

The office maintains information about your child's address, phone number, and emergency contacts. To help us ensure that our information is up-to-date, please notify the office immediately if you have a change. It is critical that we have a working phone number to reach someone in case of an emergency.

FAMILY/ COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Watergrass Elementary has a strong partnership with families and the surrounding community. We invite and encourage parents and community members to be involved in our school. Parent/Community involvement opportunities include: School Advisory Council, PTA, volunteer program, committees, and work groups.

School Advisory Council: The council develops the school's annual school improvement plan and serves to monitor the work toward accomplishment of school-wide goals. This group is composed of parents, teachers, school-related employees, district office representatives, community representatives, and the principal. Meetings are held monthly during the school year.

PTA - Parent Teacher Association: Our parent and teacher association provides support to our school. Fundraisers and activities for teacher appreciation week are two important projects. Meetings are held quarterly during the year. Please join!

GUIDANCE SERVICES

The guidance counselor delivers a developmental guidance program to all children. The guidance program addresses developmental and prevention topics in the areas of personal, social, emotional, and academic support. A student services team composed of a school nurse, school social worker, and school psychologist are available several days each week. Individual and small group counseling is available for students. Parents who would like to meet with the guidance counselor should contact the school to set up an appointment.

HELP: WHO TO CALL

Office 813-346-0600 Guidance Office 813-346-0608

Social Worker 813-346-0600 Psychologist 813-346-0600

Clinic/Nurse 813-346-0605 Cafeteria 813-346-0678

Bus Garage 813-794-0505 Media Center 813-346-0621

Spanish Translation 813-346-0600 Attendance Line 813-346-0611

LATE ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

If your child comes to school after 9:45, please check him/her in through the office as we need an accurate account of student attendance. Please make every effort to have your child arrive on time. Late arrivals interrupt instructional time.

OUTSTANDING OWLS CLUB

It is our expectation that school is a safe, positive place where learning is fostered. Positive Behavioral Supports involve having a whole-school approach to discipline that is primarily positive and proactive. Our desire is to keep students in an instructional setting and keep them learning. With this in mind we will be continuing our Principal’s 200 Club, called the Outstanding Owls Club. The purpose is to focus on positive behavioral change and increase positive interactions between students and staff across the whole-school environment. Staff members who “catch” students following school rules and behaving appropriately will issue them an Outstanding Owl ticket. Students then report to the office where they place their name on the Outstanding Owl Chart and sign the Outstanding Owl Celebrity book. When a row or column is completed, those students are announced on the morning show and receive the Mystery Motivator.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parents are encouraged to stay in regular contact with the school concerning their child's progress. Please call the teacher to arrange a conference in advance so we can make the most productive use of time. When arriving for the conference, please check in at the office.

REPORTING SYSTEM

When families, students, and teachers work together, students learn more. The reporting system for Pasco County Schools is designed to provide for communication to help this happen. The reporting system has several parts.

* Four times a year each student will receive a report form. An E, S, N, and U system will be used for primary students and an A, B, C, D, and U system for intermediate students. The marks on the report form and the teacher comments will summarize the student's work during the nine-week reporting period. In addition to marks in academic areas, student behavior is reported.
* Each student will receive a progress report between the nine-week reporting forms. The progress report is intended to communicate progress to date during the report period.
* Each student has a portfolio with samples of the student's work over time. Parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the teacher to review the portfolio and conference about progress.

SCHOOL MEALS

Parents/guardians are invited to eat lunch with your children. Please sign in at the office before going to the cafeteria. If you bring in food from outside vendors, you will need to eat on the picnic tables in the courtyard.

TELEPHONES

Per School Board policy, students are allowed to bring cell phones to school. However, they are not to be turned on or used during school hours.

VISITORS

Families are welcome to visit the school. Visits for conferences or to observe classrooms must be prearranged. Classroom visits should last no more than 30 minutes to minimize disruptions to the instructional program. Visitors should always come to the office when arriving on campus. They will be given a name badge so school personnel can identify them as welcome visitors.

VOLUNTEERS

Participation as a school volunteer requires the completion of an application and a background check. This process has become easier with an online application at the following website:

<https://webdb.pasco.k12.fl.us/fmi/iwp/cgi?-db=vol_db&-loadframes>