



DORSETT SHOALS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2016-2017 STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

5866 Dorsett Shoals Road, Douglasville, GA 30135

Phone: 770.651.3700

Fax: 770.651.3703

Website: <http://dorsettshoals.dce.schoolinsites.com/>

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Dorsett Shoals Families,

Welcome to another great year of learning at Dorsett Shoals Elementary School, home of the Panthers! I am pleased to be the Principal at Dorsett Shoals Elementary School. I would like to show my commitment by supporting the vision of Dorsett Shoals while maximizing student achievement. Whether you are new to our school, our district, or are returning for another year, please know that we are all dedicated to providing a warm, friendly, rigorous, educational foundation for our students. We know that by partnering with parents, and community members, we can provide an outstanding experience for all students.

The intent of this handbook is to keep you informed of our expectations and procedures of Dorsett Shoals Elementary, as well as the Douglas County School System policies. We highly encourage you to become familiar with the expectations, procedures, and policies of this handbook. In addition, we ask that you support the regulations within the handbook. Only through a collaborative effort can we make this a safe and productive environment that fosters learning for all.

Another effective way to communicate with our school is for you to check out our web site at:

<http://dorsettshoals.dce.schoolinsites.com>. It has plenty of information about upcoming events and activities.

Let's work together to do what's in the best interest of our students. If you have any questions, comments, and/or concerns, please feel free to call or email me at your convenience. I am exciting and looking forward to making this 2016-2017 school year a wonderful learning and growing experience.

Educationally yours,

Mrs. Cher Algarin

Principal

ACCELERATED READER

All of our students have the opportunity to read books on the Accelerated Reader (AR) lists, take computerized tests which measure comprehension, and earn points for their successful responses. Students can "spend" AR points they earn at the PTA sponsored AR stores held several times throughout the school year. AR test lists are also posted on the school website. Students can check out many of the books from the school library media center or public library and complete their testing at school. Students who meet their AR goals are recognized on awards day, with the top two readers in each grade also receiving special recognition.

ACCIDENTS AND ILLNESS AT SCHOOL/ MEDICATION

If a student is hurt on the bus or at school, he/she should report the accident immediately to the supervising adult. First aid for minor accidents will be handled at school. Parents or guardians will be contacted in the event of a serious accident. If a student becomes ill during the school day, i.e. has a temperature (100° or above), is vomiting, or is seriously injured, a parent or guardian will be expected to pick up the child. The school will provide support for the student but may not provide treatment.

The school may not provide any over the counter medications for children. Parents may bring medications such as Tylenol with a doctor's recommendation for administration. No medication can be administered by school staff unless a medication form is completed by parents/guardians. Please do not send medication in with your child.

MORNING ARRIVAL

- Students may arrive at school beginning at 7:20 a.m. when adults are on duty to supervise their safety.

- **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD CHILDREN BE DROPPED OFF AT THE END OF THE BUILDING BEFORE A STAFF MEMBER IS PRESENT TO SUPERVISE THEIR ARRIVAL.**

- We recommend that children arrive at their classrooms by 7:45 a.m. Classes begin promptly at 8:00 a.m.

- Students arriving by car should enter the building by the side parking lot. The front lanes are reserved for bus traffic between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m.

- **Students who arrive by car after 8:00 a.m. should come to the front entrance and must be brought into the building and signed in by the parent.**

- After 5 days, parents are NOT allowed to walk their child to class.

AFTERNOON DISMISSAL

- Students are dismissed from class at 2:45 p.m.

- Buses load in the front of the school. Daycare bus riders are dismissed from the gym. Once all buses are loaded, car riders are dismissed.

- Car riders will be picked up at the side door in the order of the car in line. All Car riders must have the school issued door hanger in order to pick up a child. Be sure to hang the door hanger in the rear view mirror. No student may leave to get in a car without the door hanger. If you do not have a door hanger, you will be asked to go to the front office to check out your child. All car riders should be picked up by 3:00 p.m. Children will not be released to adults in the car rider areas if the adults are not in their vehicles in the pick-up lanes.

- Parents or authorized persons who walk to the building to pick up children must report to the office to sign out the children. Children will be called to the office to meet the person signing them out. Please wait in the office for your child.

- Students will be sent home their usual way (as established on the first day of school) unless the parent/guardian has sent a written note to the teacher, indicating there is a change.

- Verbal messages brought by the children will not be accepted. Without a written note from parent/guardian, we will follow the last written instructions we have received for the child.

- Any telephone requests by parent/guardian to change afternoon transportation for a child must be received by 1:00 p.m. in order to give office staff adequate time to communicate the change to other staff members. Please limit your calls to the office concerning your child's transportation to emergencies only.

- Decide before your child leaves home in the morning how he/she will get home. If there is a change, send a written note to the office or the child's teacher. Please do not call the office to request that a message be given to your child unless emergency circumstances require a last minute change.

- We must reduce the number of calls coming in to the office so that we can guarantee that emergency calls can be handled efficiently.

- No children will be called to the office for check-out between 2:30 and 2:45. The intercom system must be available for staff to coordinate the safe dismissal of students in the afternoon.

All procedures exist for the safety of our children. We ask your patience and cooperation in complying with them. Identification may be requested of any adult picking up children. The safety of our students is our primary concern.

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Dorset Shoals Elementary offers an after-school program to help meet the safety needs of some of our students. The program is available any day that school is in session. Students are provided supervision, recreation, snacks, and assistance with homework. Prior registration is required. Additional information is available by contacting the after-school program staff at 770-651-3722. Drop-in service is not available to non-registered students.

ATTENDANCE/TARDIES

- The compulsory school attendance law requires that parents have their children attend school daily. Please read carefully the policy on attendance that is included in the county policies section of this handbook. Students with a contagious illness or fever should be kept at home.

- Upon returning to school after any absence, a written excuse should be given to the teacher. Absences are recorded as excused or unexcused.

- Students should be on time each day. Students who are tardy miss valuable instruction and disrupt the class upon arrival. If a student is tardy, she/he must report to the office for a tardy pass before going to class. The parent must sign the child in and indicate the reason for the tardiness. If someone other than the parent signs the child in, it will be necessary for parents to send a note as to the reason for the tardy. Tardies are recorded as excused or unexcused. Students are tardy after 8:00A.M.

- Students who check out before half their instructional day is completed are counted absent for the day. Any student who is tardy (arrives after 8:00 a.m.) or checks out early will not be eligible for the perfect attendance award.

BREAKFAST/LUNCH

- Students are encouraged to participate in the school food service programs. Nutritionally balanced breakfasts and lunches are available to all students. Menus are sent home monthly.

- Breakfast is served from 7:20 - 7:45 a.m. Check with your child's teacher for his/her lunch time.

- Breakfast cost is \$1.25(\$.30 for those who meet federal/state criteria for reduced meals). Lunches cost \$2.10 each day. Reduced price lunches are \$.40 for those who qualify. Students may order an extra entrée at lunchtime for \$1.25.

- Free meals are available for families that meet federal/state criteria. Parents/guardians will be given a meal application form on which they may make application for free or reduced-price meals for their children. Notification of eligibility will be made within ten (10) days. These records are confidential.

- Students are encouraged to pay in advance for meals to eliminate the necessity of bringing money daily. They may pay by the week, month, or semester. The school cafeteria manager can provide information about student account balances at any time. Students may purchase ice cream with cash only. The cost of ice cream is \$.75.

- A countywide policy has been established that restricts the amount of meal charges a student can accumulate. No one will be allowed to accumulate more than \$5.00 in charges. Once that amount has been reached, students who are unable to pay will be offered a sandwich and beverage. Students who bring their lunch from home may not bring canned soft drinks. Students may purchase milk for \$.60, juice for \$.60 (4 oz).

- We welcome parents for lunch. The cost for adults and non-DSE students is \$3.50. Our management system for noise control in the lunchroom includes five minutes of soft conversational time followed by five minutes of quiet. When the music is playing, all students are expected to eat their lunch in silence. This includes students who have adult visitors. Thank you for supporting our lunchroom management program.

CELEBRATIONS

- **CLASS PARTIES:** There are two class parties scheduled each year. Room mothers contact parents to assist with donations and plans for the parties. Parties celebrating other events are not permitted. Parents of children wishing to celebrate birthdays may bring a store bought treat to be enjoyed during the children's regular lunch time.

- **PARTY INVITATIONS:** Teachers will distribute party invitations at school only if every student in the class receives one. Should the guest list be restricted to less than the entire class, arrangements will have to be made to distribute the invitations outside school. School personnel are not permitted to distribute names and addresses of students.

- **BIRTHDAY TREATS:** When bringing store bought cupcakes, cookies or other treats for lunch for a birthday celebration or any other special day, please distribute them to every student in your child's class. If you provide a birthday treat we require you to serve them in the cafeteria during your child's lunch. Please remember to send in serving gloves to ensure the safe handling of these treats. Friends in other classes who may also be sitting in the lunchroom may not receive the special treat. This procedure attempts to prevent hurt feelings on the part of those who would not receive the treat.

- **FLOWER AND BALLOON BOUQUETS:** Parents are asked not to have bouquets of balloons or flowers sent to school or brought to school for students. Such deliveries disrupt the instructional day. Students will not be called out of class to receive deliveries. Such items cannot be transported home on the school bus.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

State law requires that all public schools offer a character education program. Please help enhance this program by including these words and behaviors as part of your family discussions each week. A copy of the character traits that will be taught during the school year is included at the end of this section of the handbook.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

State law requires that schools conduct drills for emergencies such as fire and severe weather. Fire drills are held each month. We also practice lockdown drills and evacuation drills so that our students will be well prepared for any emergency. Should it be necessary to evacuate our school, our students will be transported to Alexander High School.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students at Dorsett Shoals have the opportunity to be involved in several extracurricular activities. The Dorsett Shoals Student Council, composed of third, fourth, and fifth graders, is the student leadership group which works with staff members for school improvement. The Safety Patrol, composed of fifth graders, concentrates on making the school a safe place during the movement of students before school. The Panther Chorus, composed of fourth and fifth graders, entertains at school and community functions, under the direction of the music teacher. The Panther Broadcasting Club writes, produces and records the morning announcements that are broadcast over the video distribution system in the school. Other clubs and activities may be offered pending suitability and availability. Each of these activities will be sponsored by members of the faculty. These positions will be named at the beginning of each school year.

GUIDANCE /COUNSELING SERVICES

- In Douglas County, the elementary school guidance program is designed to help students by assisting them in making decisions and changing behavior. The purpose of guidance and counseling is to impact specific skills and learning opportunities in a productive and preventive manner which ensures that all students can achieve school success through academic, career, and personal/social development.

- Guidance is defined as the help all students receive to assist them in making appropriate educational and career choices. Counseling is defined as the help some students receive from a professionally trained counselor to help overcome personal and social problems, which may interfere with learning.

- The lessons taught in classroom or small group guidance provides a link to define student competencies. These standards are included in the guidance curriculum. Counselors coordinate and implement delivery of guidance lessons in the areas of academic, personal/social and career development. Lessons can incorporate study skills, test taking skills, problem solving, decision-making, self-knowledge, life skills, personal safety, and career planning. All of which will help facilitate your child's academic achievement.

- Small group counseling may address specific needs such as understanding-self and interpersonal skills or help students dealing in crisis situations, such as divorce or death in a child's life. Students may participate in these small groups as a result of referrals from parents, teachers or themselves. This counseling relationship with students will be treated as confidential except when a student poses an imminent danger to themselves or others; or when the student reveals matters that by state law must be reported. The Douglas County Board of Education provides all students the opportunity for counseling services.

- The elementary school counselor consults and collaborates with parents, guardians, teachers, and significant others such as school psychologist, special education personnel, school social workers, and medical professionals in the community. They are also involved with classroom performance and behavior, childhood growth and development, a positive school climate, identification of exceptional children, interpretations of test results, psychological reports and other relevant data and communication between home and school.

Students in 1st and 3rd grades will be taught the GOOD-TOUCH/BAD-TOUCH program. GOOD-TOUCH/BAD-TOUCH is a body safety program, which teaches children in a very comfortable way to talk about a very sensitive problem. Unfortunately, every year more than 100,000 children are sexually abused in our country. Informing children of the following concepts helps to lessen their vulnerability to abuse.

1. Touch can be good, and/or confusing.
2. Children are special and they have the right to know all the safety rules.
3. Children can say no to inappropriate touches.
4. Children should tell a trusted adult if they ever have a problem with bad or confusing touches.
5. Sexual Abuse is never the child's fault.

Professionals from the University of Georgia have validated this program as being effective. The Douglas County Board of Education has approved this program and is very pleased and excited to be involved. Dr. Lella Weathers, our school counselor, will be teaching this program. She has received special training from The Prevention and Motivation Programs, Inc. You may contact her at 770-651-3724, if you would like to preview this program. If you have any questions or concerns about your child's involvement in any guidance or counseling group activity, please call your school counselor.

HOMEWORK

Students in grades 2-5 have agenda books that have the daily homework assignments. Parents are required to check this book each night and sign the agenda book when the student has completed the assignments.

Please read carefully the Homework Policy included in the Douglas County Schools policies section of this handbook. If homework appears to be excessive for an individual student, parents are encouraged to talk with the child's teacher. Modifications can be made for students who have a genuine need.

PARENT CONFERENCES

- Parents are encouraged to come to school to talk with their child's teacher(s). Appointments may be scheduled during the teacher's planning period, before school, or after school. Conference days are also scheduled during the year. A minimum of two conferences per child will be scheduled during the year. Parents will be notified if additional conferences are needed.

- We do not permit parents to "drop in" during the instructional day to talk with teachers. The teacher cannot interrupt her supervision of the class to give a parent the appropriate attention a conference requires. Scheduling a conference ahead of time allows the teachers to prepare appropriate information for the parent.

- When you call during the day, please be aware that we cannot call teachers from the classroom to talk with you. We will gladly take messages to which the teacher can respond at the end of the instructional day. Teachers will provide you with their voice mail numbers and email addresses at the beginning of the year.

- Parent concerns should be addressed initially with the child's teacher. If an issue is not resolved, the principal or assistant principal may be contacted.

SCHOOL PROPERTY/TEXTBOOKS

The building and the equipment it contains are provided at great expense by the people of Douglas County. A conscious effort should be made to encourage good citizenship and the development of pride in keeping the building clean and the furniture in good repair. Students will have to pay for damage to the building and equipment when it is determined that such was caused by intentional actions, carelessness or neglect.

Students are furnished free textbooks. The books are issued by the classroom teacher who keeps a record of the condition of each book. Students are responsible for the care of their issued textbooks. Students will be assessed for lost or damaged textbooks or library books. At the end of the school year, report cards will be held for students who do not return textbooks or library books.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Testing will be administered according to state and local guidelines. Parents will be notified of testing dates and procedures.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

All schools in Georgia use response to intervention to identify and offer alternative strategies for students having academic or social problems. The team may consist of the teachers who work with the student, along with the principal, assistant principal, counselor, other teachers, and/or special education teachers. Every effort is made to provide for academic and social success in school. The referral of a student for special education is initiated through the response to intervention and significant others such as school psychologists, special education personnel, school social workers, and medical specialists. They are also involved with classroom performance and behavior, child growth and development, a positive school climate, identification of exceptional children, interpretation of test results, psychological reports and other relevant data, and communication between home and school.

TELEPHONE

Students will be allowed to use the telephone only in emergencies. Arrangements for transportation and all after school activities should be made before coming to school. Should a child forget to bring his/her lunch to school, we will gladly allow them to charge their lunch that day. Students are not permitted to bring cell phones to school.

VISITORS

For the protection of all students, it is important for us to know who is in the building at all times. Therefore, all visitors must use the front entrance. All doors are locked during the school day. Visitors are required to buzz in at the front door and let the office know who you are and your purpose for being at the school. At that time the door will be unlocked to allow your entry. Please do not allow others who are not in your party to come in with you. Visitors are then asked to sign in at the office and receive a visitor's badge. Visitors must return to the office and sign out when leaving the building. Visitors who wish to observe in a classroom must call ahead at least 24 hours in advance to schedule their observation. Observations should last no longer than one hour. These procedures apply before and after school, as well as, during school hours. Please refrain from taking pictures of children other than your child. This is for the safety of all children.

OOPS I FORGOT MY.

Please do not send your child back in the building if he/she forgot something. Due to classrooms being empty and lack of supervision when a child returns, we need to ensure your child's safety.

VOLUNTEERS / MENTORS

- Mentors are adults who commit to a minimum of two hours per month to become a special person in a student's life. Mentors sometimes help children with their schoolwork, encourage them to face challenges, visit them during lunchtime, or simply provide friendship. We are actively seeking adults who would like to make a difference in a child's life. Please contact the school and ask for the counselor.

- Adult volunteers are used frequently and are a valuable asset to our total school program. The PTA coordinates a volunteer program. Adults who would like to volunteer their time are encouraged to tell their child's teacher or call the main office. More detailed information concerning the many needs for volunteers will be forthcoming in early fall, as well as throughout the year.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Radio station WSB (750 AM) and other major Atlanta radio and TV stations will be contacted concerning school closings. Closings will be announced as close to 6:00 a.m. as possible. Please listen to these stations for information.

SCHOOL HOURS: 8:00 AM - 2:45PM

OFFICE HOURS: 7:00 AM – 4:00 PM

SCHOOL MASCOT: PANTHER

SCHOOL COLORS: BLUE AND WHITE

INTERNET ADDRESS: www.douglas.k12.ga.us

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF:

PRINCIPAL: CHER ALGARIN

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL: SHARON MUCHA

