

2024 - 2025 Student Handbook



Mathews Elementary School

B U L L D O G S

725 Marshall Road
Greenwood, SC 29646
864-941-5680

Website: <http://mat.gwd50.org>

Facebook: @Mathews Elementary Bulldogs

Mathews Elementary School

Vision

Educational excellence for a changing society!

Mission

The mission of Mathews Elementary School is to challenge all students to think, dream, believe, and achieve to their fullest potential by being ready, respectful, and responsible.

School Motto (slogan)

“Where Children Think, Dream, Believe and Achieve”

School Theme

“Learning is an Adventure”

School Expectations

BE READY

BE RESPECTFUL

BE RESPONSIBLE

School Colors

Blue and Gold

School Mascot

Bulldog

EVENT CALENDAR	
July 24	Students Return to School
August 16	In-service day (no school for students)
September 2	Labor Day (schools and offices closed)
September 30 - October 11	Intersession Break
October 1 - 2	Remediation Days
November 5	Election Day (no school for students)
November 27 - 29	Thanksgiving Holiday (School and offices closed)
December 18	Exams (half-day dismissal)
December 19 & 20	Intersession Break
December 19 & 20	Remediation Days
December 23 - January 2	Winter Break (school and offices closed)
January 3	In-service Day (no school for students)
January 20	Martin Luther King Holiday (school and offices closed)
February 17	In-service day (no school for students)
March 17 - 21	Intersession Break
March 18 & 19	Remediation Days
March 22 - 28	Spring Break
April 18	Good Friday
May 26	Memorial Day (schools and offices closed)
May 28 & 29	Exams (half-day dismissal)
May 30	In-service Day (no school for students)
June 2 & 3	In-service Days (no school for students)
June 4 – July 17	Summer Break
July 18 - 23	In-service Days (no school for students)

Weather Make-up day January 3rd, February 17th and May 30th

Note: This calendar is published with the understanding that changes in state law or inclement weather could necessitate changes to this document.

ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE /HOURS OF OPERATION

School Hours: 7:50 am – 2:40 pm

(Students arriving after 7:50 a.m. must stop by the office for a late pass.)

Office Hours: 7:30 am – 4:00 pm

State law and district policy set specific guidelines for lawful and unlawful absences. Immediately upon returning to school from an absence, the student must provide a written excuse. Tardies and early dismissals can also interfere with the learning process. **A total of two tardies and/or early dismissals will disqualify a child for perfect attendance purposes during a nine weeks period.** Please make every effort to see that your child is in school on time, unless the child is ill or there is serious illness or death in the immediate family.

Parents may provide handwritten notes, but they are limited to ten (10) per year. **After ten parental excuses, medical notes are required.** Excuses should be written on a full sheet of paper and should include the following: the current date, the date of the absence, the reason for the absence, the student's name, the teacher's name, and the parent's signature.

All excuses will be filed in the office. The Student Support Facilitator will work with families of students having excessive absences as directed by district guidelines. After three (3) consecutive or a total of five (5) unlawful absences, an attendance intervention plan must be developed. This plan will discuss ways to improve attendance. **If a student has more than fifteen (15) absences (excused or unexcused), he/she is subject to loss of credit for the school year or retention per school board policy.**

Work missed during any absence should be made up within five (5) school days of the student's return to school. It is the responsibility of the student or parent to request missed assignments from the teacher. A student who has a serious illness or injury causing him/her to be absent for more than a week may be eligible for instruction at home by a certified teacher. It is recommended that family trips be scheduled around the school calendar, since absences for family vacations will be counted as unexcused absences. Any parent having questions about attendance, absences, or upcoming absences should speak with the attendance clerk or principal, since teachers do not approve student absences from school. **Good attendance is necessary for optimal student achievement and success!**

ADMISSIONS - All admission and enrollment information should be completed using Final Forms.

To register a student, the following items are necessary: a legal birth certificate, an updated South Carolina Certificate of Immunization, and proof of residence. Proof of residence may be a rent receipt, telephone bill, power bill or cable bill with the parent's name and address. If the student is living with a relative or friend and cannot provide proof of residency, an affidavit to verify residency must be completed, notarized and approved. Please remember, it is important that the school has current contact information. **If changes in address or phone number occur during the school year, alert the office immediately.**

Kindergarten students must be 5 years old on or before September 1 of the school year in which they are enrolling. First grade students must be 6 years old on or before September 1.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Children enter their rooms at 7:40 am and begin their morning work. At 7:45am the whole school will stand and say the Pledge of Allegiance and the Mathews Bulldog pledge. **Instruction begins at 7:50 am, and attendance is taken at 7:50 a.m.** **Students arriving after 7:50 are tardy and should be signed in at the office.** Children may report directly to the cafeteria for breakfast up to 7:30.

We realize that many of our parents need to drop their children off at school on their way to work. **The earliest a child may be dropped off is 7:00 AM.** All buses and daycare vans will use the Woodfields Drive entrance. **All car riders will enter the property from Marshall Road** and cars should circle in the drop-off lane only. For safety reasons, students may not be dropped off in the visitor parking lot area.

All students will be dismissed daily at 2:40 pm. Parents are urged to pick their children up promptly when school is dismissed. **Under no circumstances should any student be at school after 3:00 pm.** Please limit early dismissals only to emergencies. We cannot allow this to be a daily routine. If you must have your child dismissed early for an appointment, please do so by 2:00 p.m. We will not call children up after 2:00 pm as this is disruptive to our routine. If you have restrictions concerning who may pick up your child, please come by the office to complete the appropriate form. If a student changes his mode of travel to or from school, he/she should bring a written and signed explanation of the change. **Without written parental permission, students must be transported by their normal means.**

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Mathews' Assistant Principal works with the principal and the teachers to improve student achievement by focusing on instructional programs and the curriculum. He also coordinates incentive, motivational, and instructional programs. Parents may call the assistant principal with questions concerning student achievement, standardized testing, or discipline matters.

BEHAVIOR/DISCIPLINE

Students at Mathews Elementary School will learn school-wide behavior expectations. The expectations, agreed upon by the staff, serve as an effective way to be proactive in managing behavior (See Chart provided on the next page). As part of the **Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)** model, we have established several school-wide expectations for student behavior in all areas of our school. We will explicitly teach these expectations to the students and encourage them with positive reinforcement for their good choices.

We will apply consistent consequences and positive reinforcement for all students. By detailing every expected behavior and teaching each in a positive way, we will provide a common language for everyone in our building, including students, teachers, front office staff, and our paraprofessionals.

We will focus on positive behavior and good choices.

The *Student's Rights and Responsibilities* for Greenwood School District 50 is located on the district website, under the student tab. When a student's behavior affects others, the district's policy for breach of conduct will be applied. Please read and review this information with your child. We believe that by helping students practice good behavior, we will build a school community where all students have an environment where they can think, dream, believe, and achieve!

BREAKFAST

Breakfast is provided free of charge to all students. Front doors are opened at 7:00 AM. In order to participate, students must be in the building no later than 7:35 AM. Students report to the cafeteria immediately upon arrival.

BIRTHDAY LUNCH: On your child's birthday, **two** adults may bring lunch and eat with the birthday child during their lunch period. Cupcakes **only** will be allowed as a class treat but they must be store-bought and will be passed out during lunch or recess as decided by your child's teacher. Balloons and gifts cannot be delivered to classrooms. Please be respectful of these guidelines and do not ask for exceptions - only two adult visitors checked in at the front office - and only store-bought cupcakes, no other food, if you wish to provide a class treat. Direct any questions to the school principal.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Students living one and one-half miles or more from Mathews and are zoned for Mathews are provided bus transportation. State laws and regulations govern conduct and safety for your child. Riding a bus is a privilege not a right. Student safety is of the utmost importance as students are being transported to and from school. All students are under the supervision and authority of the bus driver. Failure to follow driver directives will result in disciplinary action, which may lead to a child not being permitted to ride the bus. Bus rules are included in the *Students' Rights and Responsibilities Handbook*. A student may only ride the bus to his/her home address as listed on school records. **Students may not ride home with another student on a different bus without approval from the transportation department.**

Mathews Elementary PBIS Matrix

Settings/Locations

Settings/Locations									
E X P E C T A T I O N S		Classroom	Hallway	Arrival	Dismissal	Cafeteria	Playground	Bathroom	Assembly
Be Ready	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Have your materials *Stay on task *Use 1-2-3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Get in line order *Face forward *Walk on the black line * Use 1-2-3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Exit vehicles quickly & quietly *Enter the building quietly *Stay in line *Walk to your designated area *Use 1-2-3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Look & listen for your ride silently *Keep book bag closed *Use 1-2-3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Get needed items while in the line *Wait patiently *Know your lunch choice *Use 1-2-3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Wait for your teacher's signal to play *Know & follow the rules of the games you play *Use 1-2-3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Enter & exit quietly *Use the restroom quickly *Use 1-2-3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Enter & exit quietly *Follow teacher & presenter directions 	
Be Respectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Use positive voice and language *Raise your hand to answer or speak *Honor personal space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Stay silent *Honor personal space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Read while in your designated area *Arrive on time daily 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Wait patiently & silently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Use table manners *Honor personal space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Honor personal space *Use kind words & actions *Enter the building silently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Wait your turn *Keep it clean *Honor personal space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Eyes & ears on the speaker *Hands & feet still *Lips silent 	
Be Responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Do your best work at all times *Keep your area organized *Follow directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Stop at designated spots *Enter only when an adult is present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *If you eating breakfast, report to the cafeteria *Leave the cafeteria silently *Walk to your designated area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Walk directly to your assigned area *Remain seated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Eat silently until the teacher gives the signal *Face the table *Keep hands, feet, & utensils to yourself *Clean up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Use equipment properly *Listen & look for your teacher's signal *Bring in personal items *Report problems to an adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Flush *Wash your hands *Report concerns to an adult *Use facilities properly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Honor personal space 	
1-2-3 : 1 - Tell the person to stop 2 - Stop or I will tell 3 - Tell an adult									

CHILD ABUSE

Any teacher, nurse, counselor or other school professional acting in an official capacity who has reason to believe a child under age 18 has been subjected to or adversely affected by physical, mental, or emotional abuse/neglect **must** make a report to the County Department of Social Services or appropriate law enforcement agency in accordance with the SC Child Protection Act of 1977.

CELL PHONE POLICY

To create and provide a more focused learning environment, minimize distractions, and improve overall student engagement and academic performance, students are **not** allowed to use cell phones during the school day.

DRESS CODE

In an effort to have a school environment that is safe, orderly, and conducive to learning, students are expected to dress in an appropriate, decent manner. Greenwood School District 50 Board of Trustees Policy states the following:

- All pants will be worn at/above the hips.
- Clothes or accessories that depict alcohol, drugs, tobacco, racial slurs/epithets, sexual suggestions/insinuation, inappropriate language, or gang association are prohibited.
- Halter tops, tank tops, and see-through clothing are prohibited. Cleavage will not be shown.
- All garments (shorts, skirts, etc.) should be of appropriate length with no holes above the knees.
- Hats nor hoods will not be worn in the building.
- Extremely short clothing and garments made of clinging material (form-fitting knit fabric) should be avoided.
- For your child's safety, shoes must be worn at all times. Tennis shoes or closed-toe shoes are best for days on which your child has physical education (PE) classes.

We expect our students to be dressed in clean and comfortable attire at all times in accordance with our district policy. Student dress and appearance should not interfere with the educational process. Students who are dressed inappropriately will be allowed to call home for appropriate clothing or will be given a written warning (first offense unless severe violation is noted). Students continuing to wear inappropriate clothing may be sent home. The student will wait in the health room until the clothing arrives.

FAMILY EDUCATION RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT

According to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1988, the parent or eligible student has a right to:

- Inspect and review the student's education records
- Request the amendment of the student's education records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights
- Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that the Act and the regulations in this part authorize disclosure without consent
- File with the U. S. Department of Education a complaint under #99.64 concerning alleged failures by the agency or institution to comply with requirements of the act and the part, and
- Obtain a copy of the policy adopted under #99.64.

If you do not want identifiable information published as directory information, you must notify the school in writing stating the specific information you do not want classified as directory information.

FIELD STUDIES

Educational field studies are planned to provide experiences correlated with curriculum objectives. Students are required to have written permission from a parent or guardian prior to going on field trips. All trips will be chaperoned by school personnel and assisted by parent volunteers, who have been approved by the district. Buses are reserved in advance of the trip. Each student's share of the cost of the bus and the cost of any admission is calculated at the time the bus is reserved. Therefore, **it is not possible to refund field trip fees if a student is not able to go on the trip.**

GIFTED AND TALENTED

The mission of gifted education is to maximize the potential of gifted and talented students by providing programs and services that match the unique characteristics and needs of these students.

In Greenwood School District 50, gifted and talented students are provided the following program services:

- Grade 3: Enrichment through a pull-out or push-in program for 125 minutes per week.
- Grades 4-5: Enrichment through a pull-out or push-in program for 200 minutes per week.

The Greenwood School District 50 Gifted and Talented brochure contains specific details on the South Carolina Department of Education's identification and placement process, along with eligibility criteria.

GUIDANCE

The philosophy of our guidance program is aimed toward the total development of students. Developmental in nature, school guidance and counseling focuses on preventing problems through classroom, group, and individual activities.

Our counselor works for and with all children who have a need. For counseling to be successful, the parents and teacher must also be involved in the process. Referrals for guidance services may be made by parents, teachers, or the students themselves. Parents are encouraged to call the school counselor to discuss concerns, problems, or to schedule a conference. Students may make a self-referral by placing a note (with the student's name, grade, and classroom teacher) in the counselor's box.

HAZARDOUS ROAD CONDITIONS/EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

In the event dangerous road conditions may exist, announcements of school closings will be made by 6:00 a.m. on local radio and TV stations.

Information about school closings will also be posted on the Greenwood District 50 website – www.gwd50.org.

In addition, you may call the Emergency Weather Hotline at 941-5511.

In case of an emergency situation during the school day, parents are asked not to call the school for information. Information will be given on the radio and television. In an emergency it is vital that the phone lines be available for use by those who are directing emergency procedures.

HEALTH SCREENING

Each year a basic health screening is conducted as recommended by South Carolina's Department of Health and Environmental Control. Children's vision, hearing, teeth, etc. are checked by our school nurse and a team of trained assistants. If concerns are detected, the parent is notified via letter. This screening is by no means intended to take the place of a regular physician or dentist exam. If you do not wish for your child to participate, please notify the school nurse in writing at the beginning of the school year.

HOME COMMUNICATION

Good communication between home and school is vital to your child's success. Check your child's book bag, agenda, homework folder, etc. daily for notes from the teacher. Teachers also send papers home on a regular basis to be signed and returned as well as a monthly update of class news. You can also follow the school on Facebook: Mathews Elementary Bulldogs or visit our website: <http://mat.gwd50.org>. Also, we would like all parents to please join Class Dojo for school announcements and make sure to sign up for the PowerSchool Parent Portal.

HOMEWORK

In order to become well-rounded, students need to have time to participate in activities outside of school. However, a definite time for reading and/or homework should be planned each day. Teachers plan for homework to be an extension of the classroom activity and to be challenging and meaningful.

- Homework may be assigned every night except Friday.
- Students in grades K-2 will use a homework sheet to record assignments. Space will be provided for parents and teachers may make comments.
- Students in grades 3-5 will be given an agenda notebook to record homework assignments and communications between parent and teacher.
- Please sign your child's homework sheet or agenda each night.
- Your child will receive the first agenda free of charge. Replacement agendas are \$5.00 each.

INFORMATION SHEETS – ILLNESS, INJURY, OR PICK-UP

Please complete the forms as accurately as possible. In case of illness or injury, your child will be cared for temporarily by the school nurse or a staff member. If emergency medical treatment is necessary, a parent/guardian will be contacted. Therefore, current telephone and cell phone numbers are requested along with the student's family doctor. We may also ask that you fill out a data sheet for us to have on file as well.

If there are changes in the information during the year, please contact the office to make the needed changes. Also, the names and phone numbers of the persons we can call in an emergency should be current. **Any person that you arrange to pick your child up from school needs to be listed on the information sheet.** If they are not, we ask for picture identification and will call you to confirm the person has your permission to pick up your child. We are just working to keep our children safe!

LUNCHROOM/CAFETERIA INFORMATION

Breakfast and lunch are served daily. A carton of milk is included with lunch. **Breakfast and lunch are free for elementary students.** Menus are posted on the district's webpage.

LOST AND FOUND

Students are asked to turn in lost and found items to the school office. They, as well as parents, are urged to check our lost and found area for missing items. Each year, quantities of clothing in excellent condition accumulate. **Please mark all jackets and sweaters with the proper name.** This will help us to return lost items to the right owner. Clothing left at school at the end of the school year will be donated to a local charity.

MEDIA CENTER

The Mathews Media Center has a large selection of books and other media. All students are issued a computerized library checkout card, which must be used to check out a book. The media center is available to all students during the school year for reference work, individual study, and for checking out books. Every child is encouraged to check out books as needed. Additional books may not be checked out until overdue books are returned. Students may also renew books. We ask for your assistance in getting the books back on time. Students will be instructed in the proper care of books and will be charged for damaged or lost books.

PARENT CONFERENCES/VISITS

Parents who wish to have a conference with a teacher may make an appointment by contacting the teacher or calling the school office at 941-5680. Sometimes the teacher may find it possible to talk with the parent during the school day. Otherwise, **conferences may be scheduled before or after school hours.**

PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

PTO meetings provide excellent opportunities for communication between parents and teachers. Mathews is fortunate to have an active PTO that supplements the school program with special activities. The PTO provides many “extras” for our children. We are striving to have 100% participation in PTO, so please be sure to join.

PARKING

Parking for visitors and parents is located in the front of the school and is marked with a sign “Visitor Parking”. Since driveways and lanes provide access for buses, service vehicles, and emergency vehicles, please do not park next to the curb or in driveways.

PICTURES

Individual pictures will be made in the fall of the school year. The photos are used for permanent records. Parents are offered the opportunity to purchase pictures if they wish. Proofs are sent home, and pre-orders are taken. Class photos will be taken in the spring.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS AND OTHER MEDICATION

Prescription Medication – To be administered at school, there must be a form signed by the health care provider and one by the parent. In addition the medicine must be delivered by a parent, in the individual pharmacy container with the following items on the label: student’s name; name of medication; dosage; strength; mode of administration; physician’s name; and pharmacy name and address.

Over-the-counter Medication – To be administered at school, there must be a form signed by the health care provider, and one by the parent. The medicine must be in the original container and the dosage appropriate for the age of the child.

RELEASE OF STUDENT INFORMATION

Candid shots and videos of student activities are made and used in the school, on the school webpage, in district publications, and in local newspapers throughout the year. Additional information, such as the student’s name, grade, and reason for recognition, may also be included. If you do not want your child included, please stop by the office and make a written request for exclusion. This must be done within the first 15 days of school.

Under certain circumstances, such as an official request by law enforcement, personal student information (home address, telephone number, date of birth, parents’ names, etc.) may be released. Under no circumstances will information on any student be released over the telephone. Persons requesting information about a child must appear at the Mathews office with proper photo identification and proof of relationship to the student.

REPORT CARD GRADING SYSTEM

The primary purpose of the grading system is to inform students and parents of the quality of work being done and of progress being made. Report cards are issued following the completion of each nine-week grading period. Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled following the completion of the first nine-week grading period. Interim reports are issued midway through each grading period.

The following guidelines are used for grades 2 – 5:

Letter Grade	Range
A = Excellent	90-100
B = Good	80-89
C = Satisfactory	70-79
D = Poor	60-69
U = Unacceptable	59 and below

Students in kindergarten and first, receive printed report cards that focus on individual skills. Related arts teachers (art, music, P.E.) will use the following letters to indicate achievement: S (Satisfactory), P (Shows Improvement/Progressing), or N (Needs Improvement). Students receiving all A's or all A/B's in all core academic subjects are awarded at the end of the school year.

RESTROOM SAFETY

Students in K4 - 3rd grades have restrooms in their classrooms and are allowed to use them throughout the day as long as instruction is not taking place. 4th and 5th graders have many scheduled and monitored restroom breaks between classes. All students are expected to use the restroom before class begins each morning and before going to related arts. No backpacks or unnecessary items are allowed in the restrooms.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL (SIC)

Representatives of the Mathews SIC include parents, teachers, community members, and administrators. Duties include assisting the principal with preparation of the School Renewal Plan, assisting with the school budget, and establishing and evaluating school goals.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Having a safe school has become our number one priority. All doors will be locked throughout the day. To enter the building, all individuals will be required to enter through the main entrance and report immediately to the office, sign in, and receive a visitor's pass before going to any other place in the school. This pass allows all staff members and students to know that you have signed in at the office. If you are in the building without a pass, the office staff will be notified of your presence.

STUDENT SUPPORT FACILITATOR

A student support facilitator is available to assist with special family/school issues. Our student support facilitator also monitors attendance, absences, and tardies. If you need assistance, please call 941-5680.

TEXTBOOKS

The State of South Carolina provides books for each student. However, the student is responsible for the care of the textbooks. The parent must pay for lost and damaged textbooks. Additional textbooks or replacement textbooks will not be issued until the lost books have been paid for in full.

VISITORS

Anyone who visits our school, including parents, must stop by the office to sign in at the kiosk. Although parents are welcome, we need to keep down interruptions to class work and keep our students safe. Parents who wish to visit a classroom must make arrangements in advance with the teacher. A visitor's pass will be issued, provided that you have a picture ID, preferably a driver's license. You may call or stop by the office to schedule a conference with your child's teacher. Classroom visits are *not* permitted **without permission and pre-arrangement**. Visitors will be escorted throughout the building.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Mathews Elementary School has a formal community volunteer program. If you feel that you might be interested in giving a few hours of your time each week on a regular schedule, we would welcome your help. For the safety of all, **a SLED background check is required for all volunteers and/or chaperones**. This process takes approximately two weeks. **For the complete process, check the district website (gwd50.org) under the Human Resource tab, the last option is Volunteers.** Please contact Mrs. Youngblood for more information.