

Merrywood Elementary



Student Handbook
2025-2026

329 Deadfall Rd. W.
Greenwood SC 29649
864-941-5700

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Merrywood Elementary is to educate students through challenging learning opportunities and provide the life skills for responsible and caring adults.

ADMISSIONS

All established students will need to update their information each year in FINAL FORMS located at GWD50.ORG

To register a student go to GWD50.ORG The following items are needed: a legal birth certificate, an updated *South Carolina Immunization Form* and proof of residence. Proof of residence may be a mortgage statement, rent receipt, telephone bill, power bill or cable bill (with the parent's name and current address).

K4 and Kindergarten students must be 4/5 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 of the school year. A physical examination is strongly encouraged when a student enters school for the first time.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

The school day begins promptly at **7:50 a.m.** Students should be in their classrooms and ready to begin work at that time. Punctuality is a quality of good citizenship. Please help your child to be on time. **Parents will be required to sign their child into school after 7:50am**

Car riders should not be dropped off before 7:10 a.m. For safety reasons, students should be dropped off in the car line. Students should not be dropped off in the parking lots or bus circle. They should not exit the driver's side of the car.

Car riders wishing to eat breakfast must arrive before 7:35 a.m. each morning. No outside food or drink allowed after 7:35 a.m.

If a student changes his/her mode of travel to/from school, he/she should bring from home a written explanation of the change. This helps the teacher ensure the child's safety. Students are not permitted to ride on buses other than the one for which they are assigned.

Students who walk or ride in cars will be dismissed daily at 2:40pm Parents are urged to pick their children up promptly during dismissal. Please remain in the car line to pick up your child. All children must be picked up promptly in the afternoons, teachers have other obligations and can't supervise children. Parents must come inside to sign their child out after 3:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

PERFECT ATTENDANCE AWARD STANDARD

A student must be present every day and must not accumulate more than a total of 4 early dismissals or tardies within a school year.

The board believes that attendance is a key factor in student achievement. Any absence from school represents an educational loss to the student. However, the board recognizes that some absences are unavoidable.

1. Students are required to bring written documentation for absences within five (5) days from the day of the absence.
2. Parents' notes will be accepted but are limited to ten (10) absences per year. Thereafter, a medical note will be required.
3. For elementary and middle school students, principal judgment will be used to excuse absences above 10, which total no more than 15 days of lawful and/or unlawful absences.
4. For secondary students, principal judgment will be used to excuse absences above five days per semester, which total no more than eight days of lawful and/or unlawful absences.
5. Absences with no documentation are automatically considered unlawful.
6. In accordance with SBE Regulation 43-274, Section B (1):
 - . When a child between the ages of 6 to 17 years has three consecutive unlawful absences or five unlawful absences, that child is determined to be truant.
 - . Once a child is determined to be truant, school officials must meet with the parent(s) or guardian (s) to identify reasons for absences.
 - . A written "Intervention Plan" must be developed to address the student's continued absences.

"No absences will be excused for vacations"

BREAKFAST/LUNCH

We provide a free breakfast for all students arriving prior to 7:35 a.m. Parents should notify the school of any special dietary needs. No outside food or drink will be allowed after 7:35 a.m. Lunch is free as well.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Students are assigned to ride a specific school bus that will pick them up and drop them off daily. Bus assignments are based on the address of the student and the capacity of the bus. The state regulates distances, bus routes and the number of students allowed on a bus. Buses will not cross transportation zones. Therefore, if students attend daycares or have babysitters, parents must provide transportation.

Please help us follow these regulations. When a student receives a bus assignment, he/she should ride the same bus daily.

If there is a change in transportation, please notify the school (in advance) in writing. If the notification is not received, your child will assume his/her regular method of transportation. These rules are made for the safety of all of our students.

If you have a problem regarding bus drivers, bus stops, bus routes or late buses, please contact the Transportation Office at 941-5555.

Riding a School Bus is a Privilege Not a Right

State laws and regulations govern the conduct and safety of our students. All students are under the supervision and authority of the bus driver. Failure to follow the bus driver's rules will result in a discipline referral to the principal or his designee. Repeated disciplinary problems can result in suspension from riding the bus for an indefinite period. School bus rules and regulations can be found in the *Student's Rights and Responsibilities* handbook.

CAR PICK-UP

With the cooperation of all parents, arrival and dismissal procedures will be a quick process. We require that the following guidelines be followed:

- 1. Early dismissals will not be granted after 2:00 p.m.** In order to maintain a secure building and provide a quick and orderly dismissal process, your cooperation is requested. A note should be sent to school the day of the early dismissal. *The note should contain the name of student, date, time of dismissal, reason for dismissal, name of person picking up the student and the parent's signature.* If the person that plans to dismiss a student is not the parent and/or are not on the student's contact list, the student cannot be dismissed without permission from parent or guardian. A photo id is required at all times. Please make every effort to schedule appointments after school hours.
- 2.** All car riders will be using the car line at the front of the building.
- 3.** Cars need to line up single file in the dismissal lane. Remember to alternate merging into the dismissal lane. **To help with moving the car line quickly, please have your child's name displayed in the front window.**
- 4.** Children may load only when a car is stopped in the designated loading spots directly in front of the building. **Students are not allowed to cross the driveway. Please do not park and come to the door of the school to get your child.** This interferes with the loading process and

impedes the progress of those parents who have waited in line. This impediment is also a safety hazard for our students.

5. Parents and guardians should remain in their cars and in the car line.
6. All cars should move forward as much as possible before stopping to load and unload students.
7. **Students are to be picked up by 3:00 p.m. each afternoon. Students not picked up by 3:00 p.m. will need to have an adult sign them out in the office.**

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

It is important that the school has each parent's current address and phone number. Please notify the school immediately upon a change in address or telephone number. A new proof of residence is required for each change. Please see the Secretary or Power School Operator if a change needs to be made.

We reserve the right to request a new proof of residence when needed to verify an address for our attendance zone.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

Our Character Education program combines good character and citizenship to help students become more respectful and responsible citizens. Each month, a different character trait is emphasized. One student per class is recognized as the Character Kid for the Month.

EARLY CLOSINGS for EMERGENCIES

The closing of school due to extreme weather conditions will be announced through social media from the District Office, Parent Phone Calls and through various news outlets. If bad weather develops during the day, parents will be notified using social media and phone calls. In case of an emergency situation during the school day, parents are asked not to call the school for information. In an emergency, it is vital that the phones be available for use by those who are directing emergency procedures.

Greenwood School District 50 has a *School Closing Hotline* (941-5511) for parents to use if weather or other emergencies cause school closings, delays or early dismissals.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Greenwood School District 50 is committed to the principle of equal opportunity. It is the district's policy to not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, handicap or disability. Please contact the Human Resources Department or the Administrative Office (941-5400) to have questions, comments and/or concerns answered.

FAMILY EDUCATION RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT

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

1. Inspect and review the student's education records;
2. 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;
3. 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;
4. File a complaint with U. S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the agency or institution to comply with requirements of the act and the part; and
5. Obtain a copy of the policy.

If a parent does not want identifiable information published as directory information, he/she must notify the school in writing stating the specific information that he/she does not want classified as directory information.

FIELD STUDIES

Field studies are planned by teachers to supplement lessons. A signed Permission & Power-of-Attorney Form is required before a student is permitted to go on a field study. All forms and monies must be returned by the designated time. Students must have acceptable behavior in order to qualify for field studies.

Field study transportation is provided by school/charter buses and the cost is equally divided among all participating students. All students must ride buses and are the responsibility of their respective teachers.

FIRE DRILLS AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

Fire drills are conducted monthly. Exit routes are posted in each classroom and procedures are explained by teachers at the beginning of the school year. During drills, everyone must exit the building quickly and quietly.

Tornado and other emergency drills are held during the year. Directions regarding the proper procedures for these drills are explained to students by administration and teachers. During all drills outside persons will not be allowed to enter the building.

GIFTED & TALENTED PROGRAM

The mission of the Gifted & Talented Program 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. The description of Gifted & Talented Program from the *National Excellence Report* (1995) is as follows:

Children and youth with outstanding talent who perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment.

These children exhibit high performance capability in intellectual, creative and/or artistic areas. They possess an unusual leadership capacity, or excel in specific academic fields. These students may be found within any racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group, within any nationality, within both genders and within populations with physical disabilities, learning disabilities or behavioral problems.

The purposes of the identification process are as follows:

- to find students who display characteristics of the gifted and talented (i.e., ability or potential for high performance in academic areas);
- to assess the aptitudes, attributes, and behaviors of each student; and
- to evaluate each student for the purpose of placement.

Referred students in other grades will be screened with an achievement test and an aptitude test (if applicable). Students who move into the district will be screened automatically. Referrals for the gifted and talented program may be made from administrators, parents, teachers and students. Parents should contact the Guidance Counselor to begin the referral process.

For more information about the Greenwood School District 50 program for academically gifted and talented students, contact Mrs. Cathy Chalmers (Director of the Gifted & Talented Program) at 941-5400.

GUIDANCE

The philosophy of the Guidance program is aimed toward the total development of students. Guidance is based on the democratic concept of each individual's dignity, worth and freedom to make choices. Developmental in nature, the Guidance program focuses on preventing problems. Guidance services are provided through classroom guidance lessons, small group guidance and individual counseling. Students may request to see the Guidance Counselor or may be referred by their teachers or parents. In order for Guidance lessons to be successful, the parents and teachers must be involved.

The Guidance Counselor works with students to help them learn how to work out conflicts with others, become more successful in school and be the best people that they can be. The Guidance Counselor also assists with school-wide programs..

In addition, the Guidance Counselor is available to talk with parents who have concerns about their child's academic achievement or changes in their behavior. If a parent wishes to set up a conference with the Guidance Counselor, please call the school.

GUM

Chewing gum at any location on the school campus or on state-owned school buses is not allowed.

HEALTH ROOM AND HEALTH SCREENING

The Health Room is located at the main entrance of our building. If a student is ill or injured, his/her classroom teacher will allow him/her to visit the Health Room.

If a student is not well enough to be in class, he/she should be at home under parental supervision. Please do not send students to school if they are sick, vomiting or have fevers. Parents will be called if students have temperatures of 100.0° or greater.

All medicine (prescription and over-the-counter) that is brought from home must be accompanied by a signed *Medication Permission Form* (which may be obtained from the School Nurse). No medication will be dispensed without this signed form. All medicines will be kept in the Health Room. **Medicine can't be sent to/or from school on school buses.**

Each year a basic health screening (vision and hearing) is conducted by the School Nurse and a team of trained assistants. If concerns are detected, a parent is notified via letter. This screening is by no means intended to take the place of a regular physician or dentist check up. Maintenance of health records and immunizations are also monitored.

HOME COMMUNICATION

Teachers regularly send newsletters and make phone calls in order to keep parents well informed. Please check your child's book bags, homework folders, etc., on a daily basis.

Merrywood will use CLASS TAG as our normal means of communication with parents.

Greenwood School District 50's web address is www.gwd50.org. The school's website provides information regarding the school, faculty and students.

HOURS OF OPERATION

School Office Hours	7:15 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.
Student School Day	7:50 a.m. until 2:40 p.m.
Teacher School Day	7:30 a.m. until 3:15 p.m.

ILLNESS OR INJURY

In case of an illness or injury, a student will be cared for temporarily by the School Nurse or a staff member. If emergency medical treatment is necessary, the parent will be contacted. If the parent can't be reached, the student's contact information that was provided on the Student Information Form will be used. The name and number of the student's family doctor must be on file at school. Parents must maintain current contact information with the school in case contact needs to be made regarding sick children.

MEDIA CENTER

The Media Center, which is the hub of the school, is available to all students during the school year for research and to check out various books.

When checking out books, students have been instructed to properly care for them. They should notify the Media Specialist if a book has been lost or damaged.

Book Fairs are scheduled during the year. Parents are invited to view the books and make purchases.

PARENT CONFERENCES and SCHOOL VISITATION

To ensure student success, conferences are scheduled during the school year to discuss student progress, test scores, academic plans and other student matters. Each teacher should have at least one face-to-face conference with each parent during the school year. Report card conferences are held at the end of the first nine-weeks. All conferences are usually held before school, after dismissal or during the teacher's planning period.

Parents are welcome to request a conference at any time by sending a note to school or calling the school office for an appointment with the teacher or principal.

Parents are encouraged to visit classes at any time. In order to do so, they should check in at the office with a photo id and adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Observations should be conducted as discreetly as possible (without interrupting instruction). Parent/teacher discussions shouldn't take place during instruction.
2. Children behave differently when parents are present in the classroom. Inherently, specific concerns will not be observed during a parent visit.
3. Teachers may/may not greet parents until an appropriate break in instruction. They have been instructed to maximize instructional time. Teachers will acknowledge parents at an appropriate time.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents are the most important and influential people in their children's lives. Research has shown that there is a direct correlation between parent involvement and student achievement. Teachers need the parents' help in providing their children with the best education. This facet can be accomplished by avoiding absences and tardies, allotting for quiet homework time, providing safe play time, monitoring your child's progress and ensuring a good night's sleep.

PERMISSION TO LEAVE SCHOOL

If a parent needs to dismiss his/her child before the close of the school day, the parent must come in and sign the child out of school. To ensure your student's safety, no child will be released to anyone

other than parents or legal guardians unless prior notification is received. Unless there's an emergency, students will not be dismissed after 2:00 p.m.

PTO

The overall objective of the PTO is to promote the welfare of all children through a working partnership among parents, the school staff and the community. Everyone is encouraged to actively participate in the school's PTO. PTO membership is \$5.00 per family.

REPORT CARDS AND GRADING

Report cards are issued following the completion of each nine-week grading period. Parents can access student grades at any time using the Parent Portal.

Our district has adopted a uniform, 10-point grading scale. The grading scale for our students is as follows:

A	=	Excellent	90-100
B	=	Good	80-89
C	=	Satisfactory	70-79
D	=	Poor	60-69
U	=	Unacceptable	59-Below

Students in first and second grades are graded in Math and Language Arts. Students in third grade are graded in Math, Language Arts and Science. Students in fourth and fifth grades are graded in Math, Language Arts, Social Studies, Science and Health.

The following grading scale is used in first grade:

S	=	Successfully Meeting Expectations
P	=	Progressing (Needs Support)
N	=	Needs Improvement
+	=	Area of Strength
-	=	Area of Weakness
Blank	=	Not yet Assessed

The following symbols are used for Physical Education, Art, Music, Conduct and Work/Study Habits:

S	=	Satisfactory
I	=	Shows Improvement
U	=	Needs Improvement

READING

The first years of school establish the essential foundation of literacy that enables all achievement. Students assume the roles of readers and writers, which will serve them well. Effective literacy programs foster active and responsible learning. They help students use literacy as a tool that gives

them the power to find the information they need, express their opinions and take positions. Active learners have their own goals and are engaged over time. They recognize the teacher's requirements and recognize that fulfilling these requirements will help them achieve their goals. Parents can help their children by encouraging and supporting daily reading. Time should be set aside for reading.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL

The School Improvement Council (S.I.C.) serves as an advisory council to the faculty. One of the key roles of the S.I.C. is to bring parents, educators and community stakeholders together to collaborate on the improvement of their school.

The S.I.C. works to develop and implement a five-year school improvement plan (School Renewal Plan) that monitors and evaluates the success in reaching the plan's goals and objectives. An annual report is sent to parents about the progress of the plan. The S.I.C. assists the principal in writing the narrative for the *School Report Card*.

SCHOOL PROPERTY

Students are responsible for taking care of textbooks and materials. If those materials are lost or damaged, students must pay replacement or repair fees. Students should keep the school campus as neat and clean as possible. The appearance of the school campus depends on each student's cooperation. Any student who vandalizes school property must pay for the damages.

STUDENT SUPPORT FACILITATOR

The Student Support Facilitator effectively and appropriately uses his/her resources to assist students in resolving personal, emotional and social problems. He/she focuses on school attendance and works with families in accordance with the state attendance law.

Water Bottles (Stanley's)

Beginning the 24-25 school year students will only be allowed to bring clear water bottles to school. The liquid inside the water bottles must be water and visibly seen by school staff.