



# Karns Elementary School

## K-5 Family Handbook 2024-2025

### Vision of KCS

To grow lifelong learners who contribute their talents, strengths and skills to build a stronger community.

### Mission of KCS

To commit to excellence in foundational skills, great educators in every school, career empowerment & preparation, and success for every student.

### Karns Elementary School 3 Core Values

*Safety, Relationships, Educate*

# Karns Elementary School

Daniel Champion, Principal  
Trista Calhoun, Assistant Principal  
Theresa Reed, Assistant Principal

Dear Families:

Welcome to ***Karns Elementary School!*** We are pleased you and your child will be part of our school family this year. We know this will be an exciting and successful year. We continually work toward academic excellence, and we look forward to working with the parents and community this year to achieve our school improvement goals. There is a strong tradition of support in the Karns community for our school and our students, teachers, and staff. We look forward to a new school year of learning and growing together!

Close cooperation between the school and the home is essential to promote the best interests of the child. This handbook is meant as a communication tool between the school and the home. There are many important policies and procedures within this handbook. We ask that you carefully review all the material in our handbook and keep this for future reference during the year. We are always available and may be contacted at 539-7772 (east office) or 539-7767 (west office). For additional information regarding our school and the Knox County Schools' programs, policies, and announcements, check out the Knox County School website at <http://knoxschools.org>.

Please mark your calendar for the “**Parent Information Night 24-25**” where you will receive very important information regarding grade/class specific curriculum and procedures.

**Kindergarten:** August 12, 5:00pm  
**First Grade:** August 13, 5:00pm  
**Second Grade:** August 15, 5:00pm.

**Third Grade:** August 12, 6:00pm  
**Fourth Grade:** August 13, 6:00pm  
**Fifth Grade:** August 15, 6:00pm

Again, we look forward to an exciting new school year of learning, growing, and working together!

Sincerely,

Mr. Daniel Champion  
Mrs. Trista Calhoun  
Mrs. Theresa Reed

Karns Elementary will adhere to all Knox County School Board Policies and Procedures. A complete list of those can be found at <https://www.knoxschools.org/Page/2107> (for policies) and <https://www.knoxschools.org/Page/2108> (for procedures). Please contact the school offices if you have any questions.

WEST Office (K-2nd) 865-539-7767

EAST Office (3rd - 5th) 865-539-7772

The clinic is located at the WEST Office. If you are contacted from the clinic, you should pick up your child from the WEST office regardless of grade.

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## Allergies

- We are an “Allergy Aware” school as we have students with varying allergies (food, insects, gluten, etc). However, peanut products may be contained in cafeteria items and food brought from home by others.
- Peanut products sold through the cafeteria are individually packaged.
- If your child has a severe allergy, please alert your teacher immediately.
- Please talk to your child’s teacher before considering sending in food for the classroom to be shared with others.

## Animals at School

- No live animals may be brought to school. With the exception of certified *Habit Animals* or trained service animals.
- No pets should be brought to the school doors or into the school office at any time.

## Absences

- When a student is absent, a **parent must send a note or doctor’s statement within FIVE days** to the child’s teacher in order to have the absence excused.
  - If, after five days, the teacher has not received a note from the parent explaining the absence, that absence will remain an unexcused absence.
  - Be aware that even if a parent calls the office to explain an absence, a written note is still required to excuse the absence.
  - A phone call without a note will result in an unexcused absence.
  - A student may be absent due to illness no more than 10 days per school year before a medical statement is required.
- Please refer to KCS Board Policy J-120 “Attendance” for full policy review.
- Situations that qualify as excused absences include:
  - Personal illness (a medical statement required after a total of 10 absences per school year)
  - Illness of an immediate family member
  - A death in the family
  - Extreme weather conditions
  - Religious observances
  - Court Order
  - For students with a parent/guardian who is deployed as a member of the U.S. Armed Forces, the following excusable absences shall apply provided appropriate documentation of deployment is provided to the school: 1 day when deployed, 1 day upon return. Excused absences for up to 10 days for visitation when a member is granted R/R and stationed/deployed out of the country.
  - Circumstances which in the judgment of the school leader create emergencies over which the student has no control.
  - Please see Policy J-120 for additional excused situations (that typically do not impact elementary students)
- ***Vacations or trips out of town are unexcused absences.***
- Student attendance is monitored by our classroom teachers, administration, and social worker.

- Parents will receive contact from various school employees as students accumulate unexcused absences.
- A documented meeting with the classroom teacher will be required if your child receives five unexcused absences.
- The attendance officer will be in contact with parents whose child has more than 10 unexcused days. A Student Support Team will be initiated and a meeting with the attendance officer and school administration will be required. This is an effort to work together to ensure the student's regular attendance to school.

#### **Make - up work Policy-**

- Our classrooms are different than they were 10 years ago. Our children have the advantage of many hands-on, participatory lessons to help them learn. Because of this student involvement and teacher-directed instruction, it is very difficult for children to miss school and make up the same amount and type of work. We would ask families to please plan vacations around the school holidays. If a child misses school for a vacation, most work will need to be made up as soon as possible AFTER he/she returns. The teacher will not assemble work before a trip.
- Please call by 10:00 A.M. to arrange after school pick-up of assignments when your child is sick. This gives us time to gather the missed work for after school pick-up in the office.

#### **Tardy Policy**

- Being on time each day is extremely important for students in every grade, including kindergarten. Schedules and responsibilities are defined and clarified during the first part of the day. Each student needs the opportunity to start the day feeling good about the teacher's expectations. Please help your child begin the day on time.
- Students who arrive at school after 7:45 a.m. must report to the front doors with a parent to obtain a tardy slip and have their names removed from the absence list.
- Students who accumulate multiple tardies may be asked to submit updated proof of residence.

#### **Authorization for News Media Contact and Release to Publish**

- Occasionally we have the opportunity to highlight some of our programs and students through special coverage by news media. We would also like to include pictures of students on our website (student names WILL NOT be attached to the pictures on the website).
- A media release form will be sent home in the beginning of the year folder for permission.
- Please call the school office if you have any questions.

#### **Arrival & Dismissal Procedures**

##### **Arrival**

- School begins each day at 7:45 a.m. for all grades, including kindergarten.
- Children are expected to be in their seats (not at the door being dropped off) at 7:45 a.m. as classroom instruction begins at 7:45 a.m.
- The school opens at 7:05 a.m. to receive students.
- The cafeteria, where breakfast is served from 7:05-7:35 a.m., or designated bus room areas

are the only areas students are allowed before 7:35 a.m.

- Please help your child to arrive on time.
- Families can choose to use the West Side or Gymnasium arrival lines in the mornings. The WEST Side drop off will be assisted by safety patrols to open car doors. The Gymnasium drop off is not an assisted drop off area. If you drop off on the Gymnasium side loop, your child must be able to exit quickly unassisted.
- Please say your goodbyes as you are approaching the drop off area. Have your child ready to exit the car once you stop at the sidewalk beside the building.
- If you drop off before 7:30, there will be less traffic. After 7:30, the lines and wait time are longer.
- SAFETY PATROLS **ONLY** will be dropped off at the EAST circle between 6:50 and 7:00.
- No car riders may use the EAST circle for morning drop off from 7:00 - 7:45.
- If you choose to park and walk your child to the doors, you will need to park in the overflow lot next to the WEST playground, walk your child down the sidewalk, and your child will enter through the west doors.
- Parents who need assistance will report directly to the office.
- To help with safety, parents may not walk their children to the classrooms in the morning.

### **Dismissal**

- If you need to change your child's regular dismissal procedure please notify your teacher in writing in advance. In the rare occurrence you **MUST** make an emergency change during the school day, you **MUST** call the school office. Messaging the teacher during the day will not be accepted. Our teachers are teaching and may not receive a message until it is too late.
- Dismissal is at 2:45 p.m.
- Students who dismiss to a school bus or an after-school program will be dismissed first.
- Students who need to be checked out early must be checked out **before** 2:15 p.m. through the school office. There will be no office dismissals from 2:15 - 3:00.
- Students in Kindergarten and first grade will be dismissed from the west lobby, and car traffic will enter the campus from the direction of Byington Beaver Ridge/ Emory Road. If a kindergarten student has older siblings, the siblings will come to the WEST LOBBY for dismissal. If a first grader has older siblings, the first grader will go to the GYM for dismissal. Kindergarten students will **ALWAYS** be dismissed from the west lobby.
- Students in second, third, fourth, and fifth grades will be dismissed from the gym. The vehicles will enter from the Byington/Beaver Ridge Road side of our campus and pick up in front of the gym. Once the buses have left the campus, cars will be dismissed.
- **West Side Afternoon Dismissal - USE K-1 Car Line**
  - Kindergarten car riders and their older siblings will dismiss from the West Side dismissal area.
  - All 1st-grade students **without** an older sibling will dismiss from the West Side dismissal area
- **Gymnasium Afternoon Dismissal - USE 2-5 car line**
  - All 1st-grade students **with** an older sibling will dismiss from the gym
  - All other car riding students in grades 2-5 will dismiss from the gym.
- All vehicles will need to display a car tag that either hangs from the rear view mirror or is

placed in the car dashboard with the student's name written in large, dark print. The tags will be sent home at the beginning of school and are available in the office. If you have more than one person who picks up your student, please ensure that each person has a car tag. Please ensure names are legible.

- Please be sure you have arrived no later than 3:00 p.m. for dismissal.
- Students who walk home will be dismissed after the car traffic has cleared for the SAFETY of the walkers (approximately 3:00 p.m.)
- We encourage all students to be picked up through the car lines. This will be the fastest and safest process for your child to exit. If you choose to park and walk up for dismissal, students of parent walk ups will be dismissed at 3:00. If you will regularly pick up your child at the door, let your child's teacher know in writing.
- Parents who are volunteering in the building until the end of the day or who are a substitute teacher for the day will receive dismissal directions from the office. **Students must be called from the office for check-out to ensure consistency and safety for the children.** These dismissal procedures were previously developed by a committee of parents, teachers, and administration in an effort to make the dismissal procedure as safe as possible. If you have questions, please contact Mr. Champion. Thank you!
- **It is imperative that all children be picked up on time. Teachers finish car duty at approximately 3 p.m. If you arrive after the car line is finished, you will need to check in the office with your ID or Car TAG to sign out your child.**

### **Bus**

- School bus service is provided for students who live more than one mile from our school.
- The privilege of riding the bus is based on the appropriate behavior of the student both on the bus and at the bus stop. The principal may issue a warning in writing or suspend the student from the bus for inappropriate bus/bus stop behavior. Parents are responsible for transportation if a student is suspended from the bus.

### **Cell Phones/Smart Watches/Personal Electronic Devices**

- Cell phones/smart watches and other personal electronic devices are required to be OFF and in student backpacks at all times during the school day (bus, classes, school building, grounds, etc). The school is not responsible for lost or stolen devices
- Please do not call/text/message your child during the school day.

### **Changes in Transportation**

- Any time a child goes home from school in a manner that differs from his or her 'regular' way, **the parent must provide a written note to the school.** This should be done when the child first arrives at school. **Parents must avoid last-minute telephone calls attempting to change a child's method of transportation, for these changes must be in writing.** This is for the safety and protection of your child.

### Devices (Chromebook)

- Every student in Kindergarten – Fifth grade will receive a Chromebook device.
- Parents are required to complete the device form online at <https://www.knoxschools.org/chromebooks>. You will need your child's student ID number which can be found on Aspen Parent Portal.
- Insurance information is also available online.
- Insurance is \$20 per device.
- Charging cords will be \$16 and are not covered by insurance.
- Devices will be deployed within the first 2 weeks of school via classroom teachers.

### Early Dismissal Policy

- Students who leave before 2:45 must be signed out by a parent or authorized adult listed as a contact in Aspen.
- Parents must be prepared to show proper ID when checking out their child/ren.
- Remember that we will not check students out **after** 2:15.
  - It is too confusing when we begin our dismissal procedures to call students to the office for early dismissal.
  - If you **MUST** check your child out early, please do so before 2:15 p.m.
- Please note - if you pick up your child before 11:15 AM, he or she will be counted absent for that day.
- Excessive tardies may negatively impact a child's attendance record.

### Discipline Policy

- The school's administration and faculty are committed to providing learning experiences in a positive, supportive, and motivating atmosphere. We believe that every student in our school is capable of learning and demonstrating appropriate social interaction. We believe in accepting the responsibility for behavior in a shared commitment towards good citizenship.
- Students are expected and required to:
  - 1. Follow the directions of all adults in the building.**
  - 2. Show courtesy, kindness, and respect to everyone.**
  - 3. Be prepared and on time for all classes.**
  - 4. Move about the building in a quiet and orderly manner.**
- Each teacher has the primary responsibility for establishing a classroom climate conducive to learning. This includes maintaining consistent behavioral expectations. Communication among administrators, students, teachers, and parents facilitates a positive learning atmosphere and promotes high educational values.
- **If a consequence is assigned of a behavior infraction, and the child is absent on the day of the consequence, the consequence will be fulfilled the next day of school attendance.**
- The Knox County Board of Education has established a policy (J-211) prohibiting acts of harassment, intimidation, bullying and/or cyber bullying. We will work with individual students to uphold this policy, and the consequences for misbehavior can be very serious. Please help us help your child to be respectful of everyone and to not harass, intimidate, or bully any student. Report incidents to a school employee immediately.
- Any acts of harassment, intimidation, bullying and/or cyber bullying should be reported to a school employee immediately and an investigation will be conducted.



- School staff investigate discipline concerns first and notify parents/guardians following the investigation as needed.
- Please help us help your child better understand what is bullying and what is NOT bullying. The chart below can help with that discussion. -The following chart may be used during conferences with students to identify types of conflict between students and aid in developing a plan moving forward.

### Types of Conflict Chart

<p><b><u>Teasing/Making fun of/Roasting/Mocking:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Everyone is participating</li> <li>- No one is getting hurt</li> <li>- Those involved were at some point during their interaction having fun</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Peer Conflict:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The group is not having fun</li> <li>- There is a disagreement</li> <li>- Everyone is upset</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Rude/Disrespectful/Hateful/Mean:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Someone is emotionally, physically, or socially hurt on purpose</li> <li>- Feelings and reactions are very high or strong towards one another</li> <li>- Happened once or has happened a couple of times over a long period of time</li> <li>- The person being hurt has been hurt on purpose</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Bullying:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Someone is emotionally, physically, socially attacked multiple times over a short period of time</li> <li>- The person doing the hurting continues even after being asked to stop and/or when the person being hurt has shown to be upset</li> <li>- The person being hurt has been hurt on purpose</li> <li>- The person doing the hurting has power over the person being hurt</li> </ul>

- **Transfer Option for Students Victimized by Violent Crime at School:** Under the Tennessee State Board of Education's Unsafe School Choice Policy, any public school student who is the victim of a violent crime as defined under Tennessee Code Annotated 40-38-111(g), or the attempt to commit one of these offenses as defined under Tennessee Code Annotated 39-12-101, shall be provided an opportunity to transfer to another grade-level appropriate school within the district. Additional information regarding this option may be obtained by contacting Brian Hartsell, Supervisor of Transfers, at (865) 594-1502.

### Dress Code

- The standards for elementary school dress reflect "common sense" and a concern for each child's comfort, safety, cleanliness, and sense of modesty. There is a strong relationship between neat, appropriate attire and a positive learning environment. Apparel or appearance which tends to draw attention to an individual rather than to a learning

situation must be avoided. To help create the best learning environment for elementary students, the following standards for student dress must be observed in all Knox County Elementary Schools:

1. Pants must not sag below the waist and must be at a safe length.
2. Head apparel, except for religious or medical reasons, must not be worn inside the school building.
3. Footwear is required and must be safe and appropriate for indoor or outdoor physical activity.
4. Clothing or accessories may not display offensive, vulgar language or images and must not advertise products which students may not legally purchase.
5. For students in Grades 3-5, “short shorts”, mini-skirts, and skin-tight outer materials such as spandex are inappropriate attire.
6. For students in Grades 3-5, shirts, blouses, and dresses must completely cover the abdomen, back, and shoulders, and shirts or tops must cover the waistband of pants, shorts, or skirts with no midriff visible.
- The school administration reserves the right to determine whether the student’s attire and appearance are within acceptable limits. In matters of opinion, the judgment of the principal/designee shall prevail. The principal may allow exceptions for school-wide programs or special classroom activities. The teachers and the principal will administer appropriate consequences for policy infractions. We respectfully request that all students wear tennis shoes to school every day. Flip-flops may pose a hazard/injury. Tennis shoes are the safest shoes for all school functions and are required for physical education class.

### **Fees**

- Knox County Schools request a materials fee for each student in order to provide the necessary paper, technology, and other supplies for the students.
- The fee for Karns Elementary students is \$25.
  - Fees can be paid on School Cash online. There is no fee to pay with this method for parents.
  - Please make checks payable to Karns Elementary School and pay the fee during the first month school is in session.

### **Field Trips**

- Field trips are planned to support specific instructional curriculum. Parent volunteers help supervise and ensure the safety of students when away from the school site. All chaperones must have a level 3 or level 4 background check clearance.
- Only parents and legal guardians can apply to be a chaperone. Please be aware that when background checks are required, they may take several days to several weeks to complete.
- Ensure you are planning ahead and requesting needed checks well in advance. (For more information, see the section under volunteers). Please contact the teacher if you are interested in being a chaperone.
- Chaperones are not allowed to bring siblings along on field trips.
- Please note that field trips are an extension of instruction and focus on the curriculum. Appropriate behavior is expected on campus and during field trip experiences to ensure the safety of all involved. We reserve the right to withhold participation to the field trip if

the student has ongoing unsatisfactory behavior. If a field trip is lost due to behavior, any fees paid toward the trip are non-refundable.

- While attending most field trips, students are expected to ride the bus to and from the event and parents/guardians may not check their child out of school while on the field trip.
- On rare occasions, parents/guardians may be permitted to check their child out at the conclusion of a field trip. If such action is permitted, a signed note must be submitted to the school at least 24 hours in advance. If this is an option, more information will be communicated from the grade level prior to the field trip.

### **Flowers/Gifts/Balloons**

- These items should not be sent to the school as these items will not be delivered to students during the school day. *Please keep this in mind for birthdays and other special events.*

### **Food & Snacks**

- Due to student food allergies, we ask families to refrain from sending food items to share with the class. No homemade food items may be distributed in school. Please see the “Allergies” section for more details.

### **Health & Wellness**

- Students will be expected to and will be given the opportunity to wash and sanitize hands throughout the day. Each classroom will have hand sanitizer stations for student use that are provided by the school district.

### **Meals - Breakfast/Lunch**

**Karns Elementary will serve individually packaged PEANUT BUTTER sandwiches in the cafeteria. We will have peanut free tables for those with allergies. Please reinforce to your students that food should NOT be shared. Please notify your teacher of any allergies.**

- We are blessed to participate in the CEP program for the 2024-2025 school year. This allows ALL of our students to receive free breakfast and lunch daily!
- You may want setup an account for additional items for your child to purchase.
- Knox County Schools has the K12 Payment Center. This on-line system allows parents to establish their own login/password and to add money to their student's account (by name, birth date, and school). Parents can then view their student's cafeteria account balance, their meal purchases, set up automatic payments, or make one-time payments.
- For information regarding this account go to KCS website- Families tab and choose school nutrition. Families can send in cash or check to the cafeteria to advance pay for meals and this minimizes loss of breakfast or lunch money. Please send checks or cash in an envelope labeled with “cafeteria”, your child's name, grade, and teacher's name.
- All children in Knox County Schools are assigned a number that they use to access their cafeteria account. This number will go with them throughout their entire school experience. Please help your child commit this number to memory.
- **Visitors at lunch** - Due to limited space in our building we are unable to accommodate parent visitors during lunch. The commons areas are NOT open for parent visitors at lunch. There are designated picnic areas in front of both offices outside. If you choose to have lunch with your child, you will check him/her out in the office, enjoy your time outside the building and sign him/her back in at the end of lunch.

- We are reviewing this situation and will update if we are able to make any changes that allow family members to visit during lunch.
- Lunches delivered from restaurants will not be given to a student. Again, all students receive a free breakfast and lunch during the school day.

### Medication Policy

- No medication of **any kind** can be administered to students by school personnel except when ordered by a health care professional for medication that must be given on a long-term basis and is necessary to be given during the school hours in order for the student to remain in school.
  - This includes over-the-counter medications.
  - If medications **MUST** be given at school, a *Medication Administration Form*, available in the school office, must be completed by the physician and signed by the parent/guardian. The medication must be personally administered by a responsible adult, in an appropriate container that is labeled by the pharmacy or in the original packaging.
- Students will not be allowed to transport medication to or from school.
- Students may not keep medication on their person. (Rare exceptions are made by medical providers for inhalers and epi pens)
- Any over-the-counter medication prescribed for a student must be in the original container and must be labeled with the student's name.

### Parent Square

- Parent Square is our primary form of communication between school and home. Visit <https://www.knoxschools.org/domain/4724> for more information on Parent Square or to download the app.

### Party Invitations

- Invitations may only be given out at school if every child in the classroom is to receive one. We are not able to provide addresses of students due to security.

### Photography/Social Media

- While on school property, you are prohibited from photographing or videoing other children. Because of potential security concerns for our students (foster care, custody concerns, adoption, other security risks), we ask that no one post pictures or videos of other children on any social media platform unless you have specific permission from the child's guardian. This is very important for the safety of our children.
- Please be extremely careful as you take group shots and videos of performances, field trips, class parties, and field day as these will potentially contain other children. All concerns will be addressed by the administrative team.

### PTO

- The Karns Elementary School PTO is a collaboration of caring adults who have a current connection to KES, a shared vision of a thriving school community, active parent involvement, and a desire to advocate for students' education. We are created by parents, community members, and school staff representation. We encourage you to join and participate in this vital organization. Membership forms and volunteer opportunities will be sent home with your child at the beginning of the school year. Meetings will be announced on parentsquare and social media. For more information visit our website [karnselementarypto.givebacks.com](http://karnselementarypto.givebacks.com)

### **Recess**

- Daily recess will be provided outside on the playground (weather permitting).
- Homeroom classes will remain together in designated areas.
- Teachers will monitor students.
- When temperatures are below 32° F students will not have outdoor recess.
- Playground Rules will be communicated to the students.

### **Report Cards**

- Report cards will be distributed each nine weeks during the school year with an interim report that is distributed at the 4 ½ week midpoint of each period.
- Grades will also be viewable throughout the school year on Parent Portal in Aspen. If you need help accessing Parent Portal, call the school at 539-7772 (East Office 3-5) or 539-7767 (West Office K-2) or email [helpdesk@knoxschools.org](mailto:helpdesk@knoxschools.org).

### **Smoking**

- All Knox County Schools property (campuses & buildings) are “Tobacco Free” per Knox County Schools’ board policy. Visitors and parents are not permitted to smoke or chew tobacco products on campus, in the car line or exterior of the buildings at any time. Please refer to the KCS Board Policy on “Tobacco Free”.

### **Teacher Conferences/Resolving Complaints/Parental Concerns**

- All parent-teacher conferences must be scheduled in advance at a mutually agreeable time. Parent/teacher conferences may be held via phone, virtually, or in person.
- Our teachers strongly desire to work closely and cooperatively with parents. If you have questions or concerns regarding your child, please convey such concerns directly to the teacher through a note, Parent Square, email, phone call or schedule a parent-teacher conference. This will lead to a positive resolution of most concerns.
- If you wish to discuss a concern regarding your child’s teacher, please call the school office to request a conference. **The Principal requires that you speak to the grade level administrator first.**

### **Toys at School**

- Students should not bring toys to school unless it is a designated day by the teacher.
- The school is not responsible for lost or stolen property and cannot guarantee that it can be found or returned. Please do not bring valuable toys to schools. Students should never “trade” items.
- If toys are brought for a special activity, they must remain in the backpack until the designated time.

### **Visitors & Volunteers**

- Visitors are welcome to our school with an appointment by school staff. At no time could a visitor be in the building without a verifiable reason. All visitors must sign in at the office and wear a visitor’s badge while on school property. If you are volunteering in the classroom, you must schedule with the teacher in advance and be prepared to show your ID.
- ALL Volunteers will be required to complete a Knox Co. Schools Confidentiality form to

volunteer in any capacity. Some volunteer opportunities require a Background check. More information will be shared regarding specific opportunities based on the volunteer assignment.

- Anyone coming to the school will always have to show ID for entry. Only those designated by the parent/guardian in writing may check out a student. We ask that you be prepared to show show your ID again once you are in the building to verify against our database.