

# BELLE MORRIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## Parent-Student Handbook

### WELCOME

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The faculty and staff of Belle Morris Elementary School wish to welcome you to a new school year. We look forward to getting to know you and working with you and your child. Thank you for entrusting your child's care to us. We will do our best to provide the highest quality education possible. To help make this a good year for all concerned, we need your help to ensure that your child knows and understands what is expected of them. Please read the information in this handbook and discuss with your child the importance of the items which pertain to *them*. *Sign the second page and return it to school when you have finished reading the handbook. **Please keep the handbook for reference.*** Thank you for your support and cooperation.

We invite you and your family to become active participants at our school. Your involvement here will benefit your child, yourself, and the community. We look forward to your presence at Belle Morris.

*Coming together is a beginning.  
Keeping together is progress.  
Working together is a success.  
-Author Unknown*

Sincerely,

*Terry Lynn Hursey*

Principal

*Lynne Fitzpatrick*

Assistant Principal

Please read the Parent/Student Handbook and then complete this form.

### Parent/Student Contract

I have read or explained the contents of the Belle Morris Elementary School Parent/Student Handbook. I agree to encourage my child to follow the guidelines contained within.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(For students in grades 1 – 5)



Home of The Bears  
2022-2023

**BELLE MORRIS IS PROUD TO BE A TITLE I & COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

## COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Knox County's Community Schools Initiative is a strategy for using public schools as a hub for organizing community resources to improve neighborhood health and safety and student academic success. Ultimately, community schools aim to enhance student learning and serve as a catalyst to achieve healthy communities, with schools at the center. This is accomplished through two main areas of focus: (1) Coordinating with partner organizations to provide direct services onsite and (2) addressing the factors that influence community health and quality of life.

To learn more about Community Schools, you can go to <http://www.knoxed.org/initiatives/community-schools/>.

### Title I

The additional resources Title I provides for our school is used to focus on improving the achievement of ALL children in the school.

### SCHOOL HOURS

The school day begins at 7:45 am and ends at 2:45 pm for students in Kindergarten through fifth.  
PreK begins at 7:45 A.M. and ends at 1:00 P.M.

### STUDENT ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Students may begin arriving at school at 7:15 am, as supervision is provided at that time. (Doors are not unlocked until 7:15 am.) ***Students should not be dropped off at school before 7:15 am. Students will go directly to their classroom. (Take this out)***

School-wide dismissal will begin at 2:45 pm Walkers, bus riders, and car riders will be dismissed to their various pick-up stations. The car pick-up area will be monitored until approximately 3:00 pm. After 3:00 pm, parents and guardians must come to the front door.

### VISITING SCHOOL

Belle Morris Elementary welcomes parents and guardians to visit with their children. Involved parents are crucial to the success of a school and a child's education. To provide a safe environment for students, it is essential that each visitor stops by the office and signs in; *this includes visiting the building before the start of the school day or after students have been dismissed*. Belle Morris staff members are trained to alert the school office when someone is in the halls without one of the bright orange visitor badges. Thank you for abiding by state law by signing in each time you visit the building.

To maintain a climate conducive to learning, we ask that you respect each day's instructional time. This means that classroom teachers will not be able to meet with you during school hours unless you have a scheduled appointment. To obtain a license, please call the school office at 594-1277. You are welcome to visit your child's classroom. Please arrange this time with your child's teacher twenty-four hours in advance. Visits should last **one hour or less** unless you have set them in advance with your child's teacher. We invite you to be a part of the educational day for your child because when we all work together as a team, your child is more successful.

*An involved parent is a key to their child's education success.*

### TEXTBOOKS

The taxpayers of the State of Tennessee provide textbooks. All students are responsible for caring for any book they have for use during the school year. Loss or damage of texts will result in payment to the school system. Parents who wish to

purchase textbooks may do so from Tennessee Book Company. Our school office will gladly supply this company's address and phone number.

## LUNCH AND BREAKFAST PROGRAM

Belle Morris is one of 52 Knox County Schools qualified and selected to participate in the USDA's Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). *This program will provide all students enrolled at our school site breakfast and lunch each school day at no charge, regardless of their economic status.*

**Breakfast is served from 7:15 – 7:35.**

The meal price for a visitor is **\$3.75 – No visitors first semester. (Take this out)?**

## FIELD TRIP POLICY

Students from Belle Morris Elementary will have opportunities to participate in field trips during the school year. Students must demonstrate appropriate behavior while away from the school building on these learning adventures. They must demonstrate self-discipline and good character while on the trip and act safely away from the school. To ensure student safety, Belle Morris Elementary uses the following field trip policy:

*If a student's behavior indicates that he has been unable to follow teachers' directions and safely conduct himself (documented by office referrals) during the nine weeks the field trip occurs, the student may not be allowed to participate in the field trip opportunity.*

We want all students to participate in these valuable learning opportunities, so please encourage your child to demonstrate appropriate school behavior.

**If you plan on going on a field trip, please make other arrangements for siblings, as they are not allowed to go on the school field trip. This is safety protection for all children involved.**

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICIES

### Student Attendance

Good attendance is fundamental to student learning. Parents have a legal obligation and a moral responsibility to see that children are present every day school is in session. However, there are times when attendance is not possible or desirable. Acceptable (excusable) conditions for students being absent from school are listed in The Knox County Board of Education Attendance Policy. Any absence not complying with this will be considered unexcused.

The Knox County Board of Education Attendance Policy is as follows:

Students are considered present when they have been at school for more than half the school day. In Kindergarten, students must attend for at least two hours and thirty minutes. Students in all other grades must be present for a minimum of three hours and fifteen minutes.

Students may be excused from school for up to ten days for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness
2. Death in the family (Obituary Required)
3. Illness in the family that temporarily requires help from the child
4. Recognized religious holiday regularly observed by persons of the student's faith (This must be a nationally recognized holiday, or a statement on church letterhead is required.)
5. Verifiable family emergency

For each absence from school, a written note stating the reason for the absence must be sent to the school **within five days** of the child's return to school. **After five days, the absence will be unexcused.** Each student is allocated up to ten school days that a parent note will excuse. After being absent from school due to illness, a doctor's note will be required for each additional absence. The absence will automatically be marked unexcused if a parent or doctor's note is not received.

Knox County has a truancy initiative in cooperation with the Knox County Court System. On the occasion of the fifth unexcused absence from school, a report is filed. If the student accumulates additional unexcused absences from school, further consequences will occur. Truancy is considered a serious matter in the Knox County School System and is monitored closely by the office of the Attorney General.

If the staff at Belle Morris has documented an attendance problem (5 unexcused absences), you will be invited to attend a meeting with the Attendance Review Team so that you may participate in developing a plan for your child to attend school regularly.

### **TARDY POLICY**

Coming to school on time teaches a child to be responsible for being on time for work. Instruction begins at 7:45. Please make it a priority to get your child to school a little early. Students are considered tardy if they arrive at school after 7:45 am. Tardies are excused only for medical appointments, and verification of the appointment must be provided.

### **EARLY DISMISSAL**

To provide the best possible learning environment for Belle Morris students, we will not allow students to be checked out after 2:15. When there are early checkouts at the end of the day from 2:15 pm – 2:45 pm, **it disrupts the classroom learning time**. Additionally, students miss the summary of the day's learning and final instructions. **EXCEPTION:** We understand when an appointment with a dentist or a doctor exists. If you have an appointment that requires the early dismissal of your child, please send a note to the classroom teacher that morning. The following day, please send the doctor or dentist's note to school the next morning with your child.

### **ARRANGEMENTS FOR STUDENT DISMISSAL**

At the beginning of each school year, parents and guardians are asked to complete a Student Enrollment/Emergency Information Sheet. This sheet is used to make every decision about your child. Please make sure that these are updated as changes occur. The school is always happy to send another sheet home should you need to make changes. One part of the sheet asks you to provide us with the usual way your child will be dismissed in the afternoon (bus, daycare, car, walker.) **THIS IS THE METHOD BY WHICH YOUR CHILD WILL BE DISMISSED DAILY UNLESS YOU SEND WRITTEN INFORMATION REQUESTING A DIFFERENT DISMISSAL OPTION. THIS INFORMATION CAN NOT BE TAKEN OVER THE PHONE BECAUSE WE HAVE NO WAY TO VERIFY YOU ARE THE ACTUAL CALLER.**

### **TRANSFERS AND SCHOOL ZONES**

When transferring to another school from Belle Morris, please notify the office before the student's last day. This will enable the teacher and the school office to prepare your child's records for transfer to the new school.

According to Knox County Schools policy, students must attend school at their zoned school unless a transfer request has been completed and approved. Children are in zone only if their custodial parent or guardian resides in our school zone. No other addresses will be accepted. When proof of address is required, the following are acceptable forms of evidence: KUB bill, rental agreement, mortgage document, and telephone bill (not cellular). If your family resides with another family, a notarized letter from the legal resident of the address is required. Additionally, if you are using a notarized letter stating that you reside with a family in the school zone, you must provide proof of that address, such as a bank statement or credit card statement indicating that address.

#### **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 at 594-1502.

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

#### **EMERGENCY INFORMATION SHEET:**

The emergency information sheet is kept on file in the office, and the clinic is our link to you in an emergency. They are issued to students on the first day of the school year and should be returned the next day. **It is vital that we always have**

**correct phone numbers for parents or guardians, both at home and at work.** It is critical to list the phone numbers of relatives, friends, or neighbors so we can act even if we cannot reach you. PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT ONLY THE PEOPLE NAMED ON THE EMERGENCY INFORMATION SHEET ARE APPROVED TO PICK UP YOUR CHILD FROM SCHOOL. The names listed on the emergency information sheet are the only ones who may have any contact with your child at school. It is essential to update this information when there are changes. Do not be afraid to give us unlisted numbers. We regard all phone numbers and addresses as private information and do not give out this sort of information.

### **CLOSING OF SCHOOL IN EMERGENCIES**

Decisions to close school because of inclement weather or disaster are made by personnel at the Central Office of the Knox County School System, not by the individual schools. Please do not call the school to find out if the school is to be closed or dismissed early. This ties up our phones and prevents us from making necessary calls. Local television and radio stations will broadcast school closings or early dismissal as soon as the decisions are made at the Central Office. Please listen to the news media for information concerning school closings.

### **MEDICATION**

As a general policy, medicines are not administered to students at school. However, in exceptional circumstances, parents or guardians may obtain a Medical Information Form from the school office. This form should be filled out by the parent or guardian and the physician prescribing the medication for the child. Once completed, the form should be returned to the school office, and arrangements will be made to administer the indicated medication. When a medicine has been approved for administration at school, it must be brought to the office by the parent or guardian and will be administered according to the instructions on the medication form. The medication must be brought to school in the container and box received from the pharmacy. Knox County Board Policy forbids students to be in possession of any form of medication.

### **ELEMENTARY DRESS CODE**

The Knox County School System has a system-wide dress code designed to reduce distraction and enhance classroom safety and security. The dress code is different at the elementary school and the middle and high school levels. Copies of the code may be obtained at any school. It is also available on the school system website.

Standards for elementary school dress reflect "common sense" and a concern for each child's comfort, safety, cleanliness, and sense of modesty. A strong relationship exists between neat, appropriate attire and a positive learning environment.

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 be at a safe length.
2. Head apparel may not be worn inside the school building except for religious or medical reasons.
3. Footwear is required and must be safe and appropriate for indoor or outdoor physical activity.
4. Clothing or accessories may not create disruption or display vulgar language or images and must not advertise products that students may not legally purchase.
5. For students in Grades 3-5, "short shorts," mini-skirts, and skin-tight outer materials without proper coverage 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. Skin-tight outer materials are prohibited without appropriate coverage.
- 7. Face Coverings are NOT a requirement.**

The school administration reserves the right to determine whether a student's attire is within acceptable limits of decency and modesty. The principal may allow exceptions for school-wide programs or special classroom activities. If a student's clothing or footwear is inappropriate, parents or guardians will be contacted to bring proper attire for the student.

### **BOOK BAGS**

Students are permitted to bring a book bag/backpack to school. (Please, no bags with wheels.)

## USE OF PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES IN SCHOOL

Students may possess cellular phones while on school property during the regular school day. ***The cell phone must be in the off mode.*** It is not to be visible or handled during the school day. Some teachers may take up the phones at the beginning of the day, store them, and return it at the end of the day. The principal or principal designee may grant a student permission to use a personal cell phone at the principal's or principal designee's discretion.

A person who discovers a student possessing a cell phone outside the parameters of this policy shall report the violation to the principal. The principal shall confiscate the phone until it may be released to the student's parent or guardian.

## PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are an essential part of the student achievement picture. Along with weekly reports and the report card, parent-teacher conferences allow communication about your child's progress. To arrange a conference, you should call the school office, write a note to the teacher, **or message the teacher through Class Dojo (not sure whether to leave this added or not?)** Conferences should not be held without an appointment as learning time cannot be interrupted to talk with a teacher.

There are at least two scheduled parent conferences during the year.

## PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Use by students in grades Pre-K-5 Students may possess PCDs while on school property. However, the PCD must be in the off mode and must be kept in a backpack, purse, or similar personal carry-all and may not be used unless the principal or the principal's designee grants a student permission to do so. The principal or the principal's designee may specifically grant permission for a student to use a PCD during class time for a specific academic purpose or at other times for other purposes that the principal deems appropriate.

## TELEPHONE CALLS TO THE SCHOOL

Messages cannot be relayed to students except for emergency reasons. In most cases, students cannot be called on the telephone. It is essential to teach our students to become responsible persons. Consequently, we ask our students not to form the habit of repeatedly calling home for lunch money, forgotten assignments, or other items.

## ACCIDENT INSURANCE

Accident insurance is made available to all students. Parents will receive accident insurance information at the beginning of each school year.

## TOOLS FOR LEARNING

For students to succeed in school, they must arrive at school with the necessary tools for learning. These tools for learning include textbooks, paper, pencils, and more specific items for certain activities.

**Toys, electronic games, and items such as these are not considered tools for learning and should not be brought to school.** If students get such things to school, the items will be taken and stored in the principal's office. The student's parent may pick up the item from the office. To assist in the cleaning of the school, we request that students do not use individual **handheld** pencil sharpeners at school. Students are welcome to use the pencil sharpeners in the classrooms at times designated by the teachers.

## ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL TRAFFIC FLOW

Guidelines and procedures have been established, which allow students to arrive at school and be dismissed from school in a safe and orderly manner. In the mornings and the afternoons, we use a single line of cars in our back alley. Please remember that students can only be dropped off in the designated spots, as these are the only places with adult supervision.

In the mornings, if you need to park and come into the school, please use the parking lot across the street at the church. Parking in the back lot will prevent our staff members from having parking places; therefore, during arrival and dismissal times, the back parking lot will not be available to parents.

For morning drop-offs, the back alley will be open to cars beginning at 7:15 am and ending at 7:45 am.

To ensure your child's safety and keep traffic flowing, each student is provided a car tag with their name printed on it. Please display this on the front passenger's side of your car. A car tag must be shown in your vehicle every day. If you need additional car tags for other adults who occasionally pick up your child, we will be glad to provide these. In the afternoons, student pick-ups are in the back alley. Failure to display the sign in the car window will result in entering the building to check out your child. Please remember that these guidelines are established for the safety of all students.

## REPORT CARDS AND INTERIM REPORTS

The report card for all students in Grades K–5 will be issued by the school for each four nine-week grading period as defined by the system-wide school calendar. The Interim Report for all students grades K–5 will be issued by the school at the mid-point of each nine-week grading period.

## BELLE MORRIS SCHOOL PLEDGE

**I will be responsible.  
I will respect myself and others.  
I will choose to learn.  
I will allow the teacher to teach.  
I will do my personal best.**

## DISCIPLINE

**NEW: Belle Morris will use a school-wide behavior program called Class Dojo. Class Dojo is an online behavior management system that fosters positive student behaviors, classroom culture, and school safety. Students earn "Dojo Points" based on their classroom conduct. Teachers use Class Dojo to keep parents updated on student progress and classroom happenings.**

Belle Morris will be in the 5th year for *PBIS*: Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports this year. This program will teach and reward behavioral expectations in all areas of the school. *PBIS* is meant to reduce problem behavior, increase student engagement, improve academic performance and encourage family involvement.

To highlight the positive accomplishments of individual students, Belle Morris has created a ***Positive Office Referral***. This referral is to honor students who have demonstrated actions or words that have enhanced the classroom's climate for learning. The student brings the referral to the office, is highly recognized with shouts of praise, and gets in the treat jar. A copy of the ***Positive Office Referral*** is hung near the front office and remains for the month they were written.

The Belle Morris Elementary staff is committed to developing outstanding citizens. We believe every student has a right to learn, and every teacher has ownership and responsibility to teach. Thus, classrooms must establish expectations that support an organized and positive learning environment that is preventive rather than reactive. For this to occur, we believe that teachers and students must work collaboratively to construct classroom expectations that support an organized and positive learning environment.

Each classroom has its own set of established rules and procedures. A student will be referred to the office if there is a persistent problem with self-control or if the student is involved in an incident that is critical to students feeling emotionally or physically safe at school. Possible consequences for students who continue to be referred to the office include a phone call to the parents/guardians or a time-out in the Personal Accountability Class (PAC). More severe discipline problems will be handled accordingly and could result in suspension from school. Striking another student, making threatening comments, or making sexual overtures will always result in a referral to the office, a call to the parent, and could result in a suspension. A student with frequent and continual office referrals may be referred to a Knox Co. Schools Behavior Liaison.

## SCHOOL FEES

At Belle Morris, the basic fee is \$20.00 (\$10.00) if you have multiple children at the school for all grades, K – 5. These fees will be used to pay for expendable supplies such as manipulative materials, teacher-made, and commercial skill sheets, writing journals, computer ink, highlighters, and other materials.

## BUS TRANSPORTATION

SCHOOL BUS RIDING IS A PRIVILEGE. Bus transportation is provided for students who live one mile or more from school. This is the policy of the Knox County Board of Education. Routes and stops are arranged by the Supervisor of Transportation and may not be changed by parents, drivers, or the school principal. Requests for changes in bus stops may be made on a particular form available in the school office.

To find your bus route or stop, contact the transportation department or check your route online on Knox County Schools' website, which is <http://www.knoxschools.org>.

A note must be sent to the child's teacher whenever a student changes their regular stop. Requests to ride different buses, even for a one-time event, must be made in writing and approved by the principal. These notes will only be considered for approval if seating is available on the requested bus.

Knox County Schools has established bus riding policies and procedures to maintain road safety. Students are expected to follow each of the Knox County policies and procedures. If a bus driver completes a School Bus Incident Report that informs the school administration of a student's inappropriate behavior, the following are the usual consequences.

- A written warning may be given for the first School Bus Incident Report.
- For the second School Bus Incident Report, the student will receive a suspension of bus riding privileges of usually one to three days.
- Increased suspension days of bus riding privileges will be given for three or more School Bus Incident Reports.
- Severe misbehaviors will be handled following the guidelines on the reverse side of the School Bus Incident Report.

### Bus Rules:

- Obey the bus driver
- Follow the bus driver's first request
- The driver is authorized to assign seats
- Loud, rude, abusive, or profane language is prohibited on the bus
- Eating and drinking are not permitted on the bus
- Never throw objects inside the bus or out of the bus windows
- Possession and use of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs are prohibited in any form
- Parents will be financially responsible for any act of vandalism
- 

### Student Responsibilities:

- Never crawl under the bus to pick up papers or other items
- Cross only in front of the bus
- Arrive at the bus stop about five minutes early
- Stay out of the road at the bus stop
- Help protect the property where stops are located
- Do not litter
- Be courteous to the driver
- Never get in a car with a motorist that you do not know
- Report any inappropriate behavior on the bus or near a stop to the driver and principal

### Parent Responsibilities:

- Instruct your child to be about five minutes early at the bus stop.

- Monitor conduct and safety of child before the bus arrives each morning
- Monitor conduct and safety of child after the bus departs each afternoon
- Review all safety and conduct expectations with your child
- Determine route procedure for the child between home and the bus stop
- Be courteous to the driver
- A signed note from the parent must be sent to the school for a student to get off the bus at a stop that is not the student's usual stop.

## **KNOX COUNTY SCHOOLS SCHOOL BUS DISCIPLINARY CODE**

### Level I:

- Eating or drinking on the bus
- Failure to remain seated
- Improper boarding/departing procedures
- Refusing to obey the driver
- Loud, rude, or abusive behavior
- Profane language/obscene gestures
- Any behavior jeopardizing the safety

### Consequences of Inappropriate Behavior May Be:

- Written reprimand (Maximum of one warning)
- Bus riding suspension (3 to 5 school days)
- Out-of-school suspension

### Level II:

- A third violation of Level I behavior
- Tampering with bus equipment
- Fighting/pushing/tripping
- Bringing articles aboard the bus of injurious or objectionable nature
- Destruction of property (Parent/guardian fiscally responsible for damages) (Student will remain off the bus until the damages are paid.)
- Possession and use of tobacco products
- Profane language/obscene gestures
- Throwing objects in or out of the bus
- Hanging out of the bus window

### Consequences of Inappropriate Behavior May Be:

- Bus riding suspension (Minimum suspension of 5 school days)
- Repeat occurrence of Level II violation (Minimum suspension of 15 school days)
- Out-of-school suspension

### Level III:

- A third violation of Level II behavior
- Physical assault/verbal threat directed to the bus driver
- Attempting to set fire to seat, hair, clothing, etc.
- Possession and use of alcohol, drugs, or drug paraphernalia
- Possession of weapon
- Use of chemical substance with intent to do bodily harm
- Unapproved use of emergency exits on the bus

### Consequences of Inappropriate Behavior May Be:

- Bus Riding Suspension (Minimum of 30 school days/Maximum of 180 school days)
- Out-of-school suspension
- Action by the Board of Education up to and including expulsion
- Appropriate legal action

The Knox County Council PTA operates a Clothing Center, distributing clothing to any Knox County School System pupil whose parents are found to be financially unable to provide adequate clothing to enable the child to stay in school.

Parents may request assistance through the school's principal. The student's teacher may also recommend them to the principal for clothing. The school will provide the family with a Clothing Center card. The family can present this card at the Clothing Center, 1000 N. Central Avenue, to receive clothing.

The policy is to provide parents with reconditioned and new clothing for each child. The average is approximately eighteen garments per child. Clothing may be provided twice each year, except under unusual circumstances.

#### **Frequently Called Phone Numbers**

- Belle Morris School 594-1277
- Belle Morris School Fax 594-1125
- Knox County Schools
  - General Information 594-1800
  - Transportation 594-1550
  - Transfers 594-1506
  - Elementary Supervisor 594-1787