

# AMHERST STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK



2019-2020

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Principal

Mrs. Gwynne Carey  
Assistant Principal

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## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

**Welcome to the 2019-2020 school year at Amherst Elementary.** We look forward to working with you all this school year. We are honored each day that you entrust your children to us, and we also understand that you are your child's first and most important teacher. Together, we are going to make it the best year ever!

The beginning of the year necessitates a **mountain of paperwork** for you and our teachers. **Please read the notices that come home carefully.** Several items including free/reduced lunch forms, student profile update, handbook signature sheets and media release **forms must be signed and/or completed and returned to school.** Please give these items your prompt attention.

**Please join our PTA.** Amherst is a community school and we must have active parent involvement to make our school strong. The projects the PTA has planned for this year will benefit all our students and promise to be fun for everyone in the family! If you have questions about PTA, please contact the PTA at [pta.president.amherst@gmail.com](mailto:pta.president.amherst@gmail.com)

While the school administration relationship with families is extremely important, the most important relationship you will have in the school is with your child's teacher. Please work with teachers to cultivate that relationship and reach out to them with your concerns or even to tell them how awesome they are doing! Your administrators are pleased to help you when you need further assistance. This year, we are attempting to split up grade levels as follows: Ms. McGill 2nd and 4th grade, Mrs. Spence Kindergarten and fifth grade, and Mrs. Carey PreK, 1st, and 3rd grade. Please reach out to us by email or by phone 560-7001 should you need us.

I look forward to a wonderful first year at Amherst!

With students first,

Shelly McGill

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 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.

**Approved by the Knox County Board of Education**

## Amherst Elementary Discipline Policy

We are so excited to be a PBIS school! Our goal is to make the environment so positive that students WANT to choose the right thing, while also having consequences for those times when they choose not to do the right thing. Childhood is a great time to learn from mistakes, so we strive to make every infraction a learning opportunity. More information will come home regarding PBIS at a later date.

All students will be taught and expected to follow the following school wide expectations at the beginning and throughout the school year. Please reinforce these expectations at home. You will receive more specific information in terms of individual classroom expectations.

**Amherst Elementary School Matrix of Behavior Expectations**

Expectation	Classroom	Hallway	Bathroom	Cafeteria	Special Areas	Playground
<b>Be Safe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself</li> <li>Move around the room carefully</li> <li>Use and clean up all materials as taught</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eyes are forward</li> <li>Hands by your side</li> <li>Walk on the right side of the hall on the 3rd square</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walk at all times</li> <li>One person per stall</li> <li>Report problems to an adult</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walk at all times</li> <li>Keep feet under table and bottom in chair, facing forward</li> <li>Raise your hand for help</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wear appropriate shoes</li> <li>Stay in your personal space</li> <li>Use and clean up all materials as taught</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be alert, don't get hurt</li> <li>Use equipment the correct way</li> <li>Keep your hands and feet to yourself</li> </ul>
<b>Be Respectful</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give your best effort on all your work</li> <li>Active listening when others are talking</li> <li>Follow directions the first time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Body control</li> <li>Voices off</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voices off</li> <li>Use bathroom area correctly</li> <li>Keep area and floor clean</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use good manners and a quiet voice</li> <li>Keep your hands, feet, and food to yourself</li> <li>Use lunch items appropriately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enter and exit quietly</li> <li>Active listening when others are talking</li> <li>Follow directions the first time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay in your play area</li> <li>Wait your turn patiently</li> <li>Follow game rules</li> </ul>
<b>Be Responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete work, stay on task, and ask for help when you need it</li> <li>Clean your work area</li> <li>Have what you need</li> <li>Monitor your own behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close line gaps</li> <li>Keep items safe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Always flush</li> <li>Wash your hands and turn off the water</li> <li>Toilet paper in toilet and paper towel in trash can</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring lunch items only</li> <li>Get everything you need before you sit down</li> <li>Pick up all items and trash from your area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in activities</li> <li>Give best effort, stay on task, and ask for help when you need it</li> <li>Come prepared</li> <li>Monitor your own behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listen for your teacher</li> <li>Manage your own behavior</li> <li>Keep playground clean</li> </ul>
<b>Be Kind</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use kind words</li> <li>Care for classroom materials</li> <li>Treat others how you want to be treated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quiet waves</li> <li>Smile</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wait your turn patiently</li> <li>Keep your eyes in your own stall</li> <li>Be quick</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk kindly with neighbors at your table</li> <li>Say "please" and "thank you"</li> <li>Leave no trash at your table</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use kind words</li> <li>Care for materials and equipment</li> <li>Treat others how you want to be treated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take turns and share equipment</li> <li>Include others</li> <li>Show good sportsmanship</li> </ul>

## ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

School Hours: 7:45am-2: 45pm

### **STUDENTS MAY NOT BE DROPPED OFF BEFORE 7:05.**

Students who arrive before 7:35 should report to the appropriate grade level waiting area.

If a student is eating breakfast, he/she should report to the cafeteria. **Students must be in the cafeteria by 7:35 to receive breakfast.**

**Tardies: Students who arrive at school after 7:45 must report to the office with a parent to receive a tardy slip before reporting to class.**

### **Afternoon dismissal:**

- Bus riders will load buses at 2:40.
- We will begin calling cars between 2:45-2:50. All car riders will load in the back of the building.
- Car drivers must have a name plate, given to you by the school, to load your student.
- **Students will be loaded into cars from the passenger side only.**
- If the car driver does not have the name plate, the driver must park and enter through the front office to make sure they are on the student's pick up list.

**FOR THE SAFETY OF YOUR CHILD: PARENTS MAY NOT CALL THE SCHOOL TO CHANGE THE WAY A STUDENT IS TO GO HOME.**

**THE SCHOOL/TEACHER MUST HAVE A NOTE FROM THE PARENT INDICATING CHANGE IN TRANSPORTATION FOR THE CHILD IN ORDER FOR THE CHILD TO GO HOME IN A DIFFERENT MANNER.**

**IF AN EMERGENCY ARISES DURING THE SCHOOL DAY, YOU MAY COME TO THE SCHOOL TO CHANGE THE DISMISSAL PLAN IN PERSON, OR A NOTE MAY BE FAXED TO SCHOOL IF THE NOTE HAS A COPY OF THE PARENT/GUARDIAN DRIVER'S LICENSE WITH THE NOTE.**

**Our fax number is 865-560-7005.**

**Early dismissal: Students being checked out before the end of the school day should be checked out before 2:30. Please do not ask that your child be signed out after 2:30. Adults who check students out early must have and show a picture I.D and must be listed on the Emergency Card.**

### **Beginning of the year – Walking your child into the building:**

Amherst staff understands that the beginning of a new school year is an exciting time for families and you would like to walk your child(ren) into the school. With this in mind, we have set up guidelines to ensure the safety for all students and staff.

1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade parents – August 5 and 6 parents of First – Fifth graders can walk their child(ren) into the building. Beginning August 7<sup>th</sup> first – fifth graders will be expected to come into the building on their own. Parents will be required to sign-in in the front office after that date.

Kindergarten parents – You will walk and check your child into the gym during the staggered days of August 6<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>. On August 19, Kindergarten students begin full time. Parents of Kindergarten students will be able to walk your child into the back lobby on that day. Beginning August 20<sup>th</sup>, all students will be expected to walk themselves into the building.

No parent will be permitted to walk across the back lot to walk his or her child into the building beginning September 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **Emergency Closings/Delayed Openings**

Please remember to listen to your television or radio for information. School Messenger will notify your contact numbers, and you may view information on the Knox County Schools website at [www.knoxschools.org](http://www.knoxschools.org). Remember School Messenger will only call your phone if you have opted in. Do not call the school as we have a limited number of phone lines that need to remain open for information from Central Office and bus drivers. If school is delayed one hour, we will not have a teacher on duty at the regular time for early arrivals. The school will open at 8:00 instead of 7:00.

### **ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS**

All students entering Knox County Schools must have the following documented Information on record:

- Birth Certificate
- Social Security Card
- Current physical examination
- Permanent Tennessee Certification of Immunization
- Proof of address (most recent KUB bill)

Immunizations may be obtained from your family doctor or the Knox County Health Department. Students cannot be enrolled until these requirements are met

## PROOF OF RESIDENCE

Students enrolled in Amherst Elementary School will be required to provide proof of residence within our school zone, unless he/she has been approved through the transfer process. If the parent/guardian is not listed on the proof of residence (most recent KUB bill), the parent/guardian must provide a notarized statement stating that the family is living at the residence of the person listed on the proof of residence (most recent KUB bill).

## SCHOOL FEES

**School fees are \$25.00 per child.** Make checks payable to Amherst School. This fee is used for expendable supplies such as manipulative material, teacher made and commercial material, and art material. If a child qualifies for free or reduced priced meals under Federal guidelines the parent/guardian is not required to pay fees.

## VISITORS

We welcome visitors at Amherst. **All visitors must enter the building through the main office. It will be necessary for visitors to press the intercom and announce their visit before being “buzzed” into the building by the office staff. To maintain the best learning environment, we ask you to make appointments in advance for classroom visits or conferences with teachers (this includes prior to the school day).** For the safety of all our children, visitors must sign-in in the office when they arrive and receive a visitor’s pass. **Passes must be worn in the building.**

If you are coming to an event i.e. Field day, class parties etc. for your child please abide by our rule of not checking out their sibling(s) to go with you to watch/participate.

## VOLUNTEERS

We welcome volunteers at Amherst. In order to volunteer at a Knox County school, volunteers must complete required paperwork in our office. Our staff members will have specific tasks for volunteers to complete and will schedule volunteers to help on days that most benefit our students. Chaperones on field trips will also be required to complete volunteer paperwork. **If you are volunteering or chaperoning please do not bring siblings/younger children with you.**

## BACKPACKS

Rolling backpacks are not allowed at Amherst Elementary.

## BIRTHDAYS, CELEBRATIONS, AND PARTY INVITATIONS

Birthdays are a very special time in the lives of children. **Federal Nutrition Guidelines prohibit cupcakes, cookies and other items that do not meet nutritional standards from being distributed at school as a class treat.** At the end of this handbook, you will find the KCS Approved list. Another option is to purchase ice cream from the cafeteria for the entire class.

Children or parents MAY NOT distribute invitations to birthday parties or special events at school unless they are inviting the entire class (or all the boys/all the girls in the classroom).

## STUDENT DELIVERIES

Due to the increased deliveries to students on their birthdays, holidays, or special days we will no longer be able to accept or sign for deliveries of any kind. We appreciate your understanding.

## CAFETERIA

We encourage our students to enjoy school breakfasts and lunches. The costs for student food services are:

### Breakfast is served from 7:15 –7:35

Breakfast, Reduced	\$0.30
Breakfast, Paid	\$1.75
Lunch, Reduced	\$0.40
Lunch, Paid	\$2.50
Extra milk	\$0.75
Ice cream	\$0.75
Side items	\$0.50

Students may pre-pay for cafeteria meals by writing a check payable to the Amherst Cafeteria or by visiting [K12paymentcenter.com](http://K12paymentcenter.com).

## MEAL CHARGE PROCEDURE

Parents will be notified when students charge lunch/breakfast and will be expected to send the money the next school day. **Parents are encouraged to pay for meals in advance.** All students have a Personal Identification Number (PIN) that must be entered at a keypad when any food is purchased.

Students, in elementary school, do not have the option of saying they do not want to eat lunch. It is expected that every child will eat at lunchtime.



### **Cafeteria Procedures**

- Once seated, students should remain seated.
- Students should raise a hand if they need help and a cafeteria assistant will help them.
- Students may not take toys, games, purses (other than change purses), textbooks, pencils, etc. in the cafeteria during lunch.
- Students should NOT drink soft drinks at school. Glass containers are not allowed in the cafeteria.
- Sharing food is prohibited.
- The faculty has developed guidelines for behavior in the cafeteria that seek to allow students a chance to socialize while maintaining a pleasant, safe atmosphere for everyone.

### **Eating Lunch with Your Child**

We will not allow anyone to visit a child who is not on the emergency card of a student or has written permission from the parent on the emergency card. Due to this policy, visitors that come to eat lunch with students will only be allowed to eat with those named on the emergency card or who have written permission from the parent on the emergency card.

Due to our large class sizes, we have limited lunch space for adults. Adults visiting for lunch will be able to take their child to the tables directly outside of the lunchroom to have lunch with their child.

#### **Visitor meal prices:**

Breakfast	\$2.25
Lunch	\$3.75

### **MEDICATION**

**No medication of any kind (prescription, over the counter drugs including but not limited to ointments, eye drops, Tums, Tylenol, aspirin, etc.) shall be self-administered by students**, even with assistance from school nurses or other school personnel, except when medication must be given on a long-term basis and is necessary to be given during school hours in order for the student to remain in school.

**Medications such as Tylenol, aspirin, and other over the counter (O.T.C.) medications are included in these regulations.** Elementary students should not carry these medications to school to be taken after school hours.

If medication is to be administered according to the above guidelines, the appropriate paperwork required by Knox County Schools must be completed and returned to the school office. **Parents must deliver the medication to school.**

## ILLNESS AND ACCIDENTS

You are informed if your child becomes seriously ill or is injured in a school activity. We must have a telephone number on file where parents, a relative or neighbor can be reached in an emergency. It is your responsibility to notify the school if your number changes.

Students who become ill with fever/vomiting/diarrhea have to be symptom/fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Excused absences:

1. Student illness
2. Illness in the family temporarily requiring help from the student and **supported by medical documentation**
3. Death in the family (provide obituary)
4. Recognized religious holiday regularly observed by members of the student's faith
5. Verifiable family emergency

It is the parent's responsibility to provide appropriate documentation regarding absences to the school within five (5) days of your child's return to school. If appropriate documentation is not provided within five (5) days, the absences will be recorded as unexcused. Ten days (10) per school year may be excused with a note from the parent if the child is sick, but does not see a doctor. **Always send in a doctor's note if your child makes a visit to the doctor.**

**Absences resulting from vacations, car trouble, family business trips, oversleeping, missing the bus, etc. will be unexcused absences.**

Children must be in school for 3 hours and 30 minutes to be counted present for the day. **According to State of Tennessee policy, THESE RULES INCLUDE DAYS THAT ARE DESIGNATED HALF-DAYS OF SCHOOL.**

## MAKE UP WORK WHEN A CHILD IS ABSENT

If your child is out of school for an extended time due to illness and you wish to pick up the child's school assignments, you may call the office on the **SECOND** day of the absence and place your request. **You must call the office no later than 10:00 A.M.** in order for the assignments to be available after 2:45 P.M. on the same day. **There will be no exceptions to this policy.**

## INAPPROPRIATE ITEMS

Students must not bring to school any items that violate laws, safety rules, or disrupt the learning process. Parents and students are especially reminded that no weapons of any kind may be in any student's possession. This includes guns (including "toy" or water guns), knives, or any items used to hurt or threaten others. Knox County Schools practice strict "no tolerance" procedures with regard to students' possession of weapons of any type, and students, including elementary students, who violate these rules, will be subject to severe disciplinary action, including the possibility of long-term suspension from school.

**No live animals may be brought to school without prior consent of the teacher and the school office.**

## TOYS AND GAMES

Children may not bring any toys or electronic games to school. Personal radios and CD players, ipods, MP3 players, Gameboys etc. are not allowed at school or on the bus. If any toy, game, or valuable item is brought to school and is then stolen or lost, neither your child's teacher or the school is responsible for replacement.

## EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

A 'Student Information Verification Sheet' is sent home the first day of school. **It is extremely important the form be corrected and returned to school the second day of school.** We must have an emergency contact number in case we cannot reach the parent. **Adults who are not listed on the Student Profile Form may not check out students.**

## TELEPHONE CALLS

Staff members will not be called to the telephone to speak with parents while classes are in session. The office will forward your call to the staff member's voice mail and the staff member will return your call as soon as he/she is not responsible for the supervision and instruction of students. Please do not ask office personnel to relay messages to children except in cases of **EXTREME EMERGENCY**. Children will not be called to the telephone to speak with parents except in the case of an emergency.

Please respect your child's instructional time when expecting responses back on messaging apps set up by teachers. These are set up for your ease and convenience, however instructional time takes precedence.

### **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Parent-teacher conferences are welcomed at Amherst Elementary and special conference days are scheduled in the calendar. Any time during the year, parents are welcomed to arrange a conference with the teacher. We also have two parent conference nights throughout the year – please see our “dates to remember” section for this information.

Teachers cannot conference or answer questions during the school day between the hours of 7:30-2:45 so **please do not go to the classroom during those time periods** for conferences or messages. **Conferences must be by appointment only.**

### **School Messenger**

We will be notifying every family in the building of special events or any emergency situations by phone through our automated phone and email system. Again, we must have the current contact information for every child at all times. Please keep the office updated with any changes.

In order to receive these calls on your cellular phone, you must opt-in. You can opt-in online or by paper. Directions are available on the Knox County School website or at the school. If you change cell phone numbers, you will be required to opt-in again for the new number.

### **CELL PHONES**

Knox County School policy allows students to have cell phones at school. The cell phones must be turned off and in a backpack. If a student has a cell phone ON or outside of a backpack, the cell phone will be taken from the student. The parent may come to school to pick up the equipment. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen cell phones.

### **SCHOOL BUSES**

Students may only ride the school bus **to which they are assigned**. Students may not ride home from school on the school bus with a friend. Our busses are full and do not have room for extra students.

### **Homework**

It is encouraged that students read/are read to and practice math fluency each night. If homework is assigned, it should be purposeful practice for review purposes and not dependent on parental assistance. It should be based on a **maximum** of 10 minutes per grade level (not to exceed 30 minutes). For instance, first graders should have no more than 10 minutes a night; second: 20 minutes; third: 30 minutes; fourth: 30 minutes; fifth: 30 minutes.

Students that do not finish assignments in class may do them as homework if that is deemed most appropriate. However, if this becomes a consistent practice for particular students, we will consider other ways to address the issue such as modifications or work habits contracts.

### **Special Education/ESL**

Knox County provides a continuum of services for students who qualify for special education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act. If you feel your child might require special services and want Knox County to provide them, contact your child's teacher, the principal, or Knox County Pupil Personnel Services.

We also have students from many countries throughout the world that may be in need of English language instruction. ESL services are provided during the regular school day for students who qualify for these services.

### **Field Trips**

Per Knox County School Board Policy (I-250) field trips must be "justified for the purpose of the established educational goals of the school system."

Students must have the opportunity to participate in field trips, with certain behaviors being maintained throughout the school year.

Students may be removed from the opportunity of participating in a field trip when their behavior becomes a safety concern for themselves or the school. These behaviors include, but are not limited to, a

- pattern of elopement
- pattern of self harm
- pattern of violence
- pattern of noncompliance with other established school rules

Teachers need to have frequent verbal communication with parents regarding their student's behavior and its impact on their field trip eligibility.

### Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying

Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying or Cyberbullying of any kind is prohibited. Please see the attached policy for more information. The following chart is helpful when identifying how to label a given situation.

CONFLICT	RUDE	MEAN	BULLYING
Occasional	Occasional	Once or Twice	Is REPEATED
Not planned; in the heat of the moment	Spontaneous: unintentional	Intentional	Is planned and done on purpose
All parties are upset	Can cause hurt feelings; upset	Can hurt others deeply	The target of the bullying is upset
All parties want to work things out	Based in thoughtlessness, poor manners or narcissism	Based in anger; impulsive cruelty	The bully is trying to gain control over the target
All parties will accept responsibility	Rude person accepts responsibility	Behavior often regretted;	The bully blames the target
An effort is made by all parties to solve the problem			The target wants to stop the bully's behavior; the bully does not
Can be resolved through mediation	Social skill building could be of benefit	Needs to be addressed/ should NOT be ignored	CANNOT be resolved through mediation

Source: Jennifer Astles, DASA Newsletter, January 2014, TST BOCES

#### Dates to Remember

##### **PARENT CONFERENCE DATES (BY APPOINTMENT)**

September 12, 2019 3:00-6:00 P.M.

January 23, 2020 3:00-6:00 P.M.

##### SCHOOL PICTURE DATES

**August 20, 2019:** Fall Individual Pictures

**February 4, 2020:** Class Group Pictures

**April 3, 2020:** Spring Individual Pictures

**See attached the KCS 19-20 Calendar**

**Amherst Student/Parent Handbook  
2019-2020**

My child and I have read and discussed the Amherst Student/Parent Handbook for this school year. My child and I understand the expectations of Amherst Elementary. We understand the importance for contributing to an environment conducive to learning for all students.

Please return this sheet only to your child's teacher.

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Student Signature and Date

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Parent/Guardian Signature and Date