

# Morningside Elementary



## Panther PRIDE!

**Prepared! Respectful! Intelligent! Dedicated! Engaged!**

**Vision: Students Today, Leaders Tomorrow  
Mission: Nurturing ALL Students to be Leaders**

**Parent/Student Handbook/Communication Guide  
2025-2026**

**Dr. Richard Rogers, Superintendent  
Houston County Board of Education  
Post Office Box 1850  
1100 Main Street  
Perry, GA 31069  
478-988-6200  
[www.hcbe.net](http://www.hcbe.net)**

**Dr. Kasandra King, Principal  
Mrs. Yolanda Felder, Assistant Principal for Instruction  
Mr. Jeffrey Whitaker, Asst. Principal for Discipline  
Mrs. Holly Torok, Counselor & 504 Coordinator**

July 30, 2025

Panther Parents,

As we prepare to begin another exciting school year, the faculty at Morningside Elementary welcome you back to our school!

Our goal is to instill in every student, Panther PRIDE! We will model and teach the importance of being Prepared, Respectful, Intelligent, Dedicated and Engaged daily in all that we do.

We are committed to growing leaders by maintaining a high standard of excellence in instruction and by creating a positive, nurturing environment to ensure all students are college and career ready.

We respectfully ask you the parents, guardians, family, and community members to join us in developing the leaders in our students by supporting classroom instruction nightly as you listen to your children read and practice math fluency. Through the commitment of working together, I am certain, our students will make tremendous academic gains. As so eloquently spoken by Helen Keller many years ago and very apropos for today: "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much."

We look forward to an awesome year of learning and teaching. We would love to see you and invite you to come see the great things taking place at Morningside where Panther PRIDE runs deep!

Panther PRIDE,  
*Dr. Kasandra King*  
Principal

### **For Your Information:**

School Office:	988-6261
(FAX)	988-6265

### **Morningside Elementary School's Vision:**

Students Today, Leaders Tomorrow

### **Morningside Elementary School's Mission:**

Nurturing ALL Students to be Leaders

### **Morningside Elementary School's Values:**

- We believe everyone is a dynamic and integral part of everything we accomplish together.
- We hold educational success as a collaborative effort involving students, teachers, administrators, parents, families, and community.
- We know change is valuable; we embrace change to move forward.
- We embed continuous professional development because it is essential for everyone who affects student learning.
- We expect all students to be successful learners.

### *STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY*

#### **MORNINGSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

The faculty of Morningside Elementary School has deep convictions concerning the children with whom we work. We believe our school, along with home, churches, and community must work together in the educational process. Consequently, we strive to provide more than a curriculum. Our aim is to help build the individual child, by providing opportunities for each student to become an independent learner and leader.

We see the school's primary responsibility as helping everyone to achieve his/her highest potential – academically, socially, emotionally, physically, and behaviorally. We seek to give the individual a feeling of self-worth. It is expedient in our environment for students to learn to respect others. Special opportunities are offered through organized activities to develop a strong body, good sportsmanship, leadership, and teamwork.

## As the Day Begins

- Our instructional day is from 8:30 to 3:30. The first bell of the day rings at 8:25. The tardy bell rings at 8:30. Students **are tardy after 8:30 a.m.**
- **Students may enter the building at 7:45.** Please **do not** drop off your child prior to this time. **This is a safety issue because there will not be adult supervision prior to 7:45.** Beginning at 7:45, students may go to the cafeteria where they will be supervised until 8:00 a.m. If you would like your child to eat breakfast at school, breakfast is served from 7:45-8:20. **All students should be in class no later than 8:25.**
- Students will be dismissed from the cafeteria at 8:00 a.m. to report to homerooms. Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. will report directly to their classes unless they are eating breakfast. From 8:00 to 8:25, students get their materials and complete bell work to prepare for the instructional day. Any notes for the teacher should be given to the teacher as soon as the student arrives.
- At 8:25, morning announcements are made, and students are given the opportunity to pledge to the United States flag and observe a moment of quiet reflection. After announcements, the instructional day begins. It is very important that our students start each day without being rushed. If your student does not ride the bus, please have them on campus before 8:25 a.m.
- If your child arrives at school after 8:30 a.m., a parent must accompany the child to the office to sign in. Your student will be given a tardy slip to give to the teacher.

## **Arrival, Dismissal and Transportation Guidelines**

- Buses/Day Care Vans deliver students each morning on the bus ramp at the Kings Chapel Road entrance beginning at 7:45 a.m. In the afternoons, buses /day care vans are called as they arrive, and students are dismissed from classrooms to the bus ramp. It is a goal that all buses depart from campus by 4:15 p.m.
- If you bring your children in the morning, please drop them off at the front entrance of the school. **Please do not drop children off prior to 7:45 a.m. Teachers are unavailable prior to 8:00 a.m. to supervise students. This is a safety issue! If a student is dropped off prior to 7:45 a.m., Morningside is not liable for the student's safety.**
- Pre-K & K car riders will be dismissed from their classrooms. First through fifth, car riders will be released from the cafeteria. During the first week of school, you will receive two car rider cards with your student's name on them. As you arrive, please have this card on the front dashboard of the passenger side of the car or have the card clipped to the sun visor for teachers on duty to see. This helps in calling children quickly and efficiently. It also guarantees your child will only leave campus with people authorized to pick up your student. Should you need additional pick-up cards, please notify the office. In addition, if you lose your card, please notify the office to secure another car rider card. Anyone picking up a student must have this identification card; otherwise, the person must park in a

regular parking space and report to the office for the purpose of releasing a student to an approved person on the student's pick-up list.

- Students will be called as parents arrive for dismissal at 3:30. For **safety, parents should remain in their cars in the pick up line** so teachers on duty can load students quickly and efficiently. We ask that you line your vehicles up in a single file in the front driveway and **wait in your vehicle.** Pull as far down in a single file line as the sidewalk permits.
- Parents should not park on the side of the building reserved for buses. Parents will be asked to move their vehicles to the front parking lot. We must keep this area clear for buses and day care vans.
- If you must come into the building due to time constraints, appointments, family emergencies, etc., please park your vehicle in a parking space, come to the office, and your child will be called. If you come to pick up your child before school ends, please report to the office to sign your child out. However, any child signed out by a parent prior to 3:30 p.m. is counted as an early dismissal. Please do not go directly to the classroom to get your child. **Teachers cannot release students from the classrooms.**
- **If your child is to go home by any means other than his/her regular way, please notify the teacher in writing.** All notes received are signed in the office and approved by the ATS clerk. If transportation needs to be changed after the school day has started, please call (478)988-6261 before 3:00 p.m. We cannot take your child's word that he/she is to go home a different way. We do this for the safety of your child. Students must have a note written and signed by a parent/guardian.
- It is essential that all students be picked up from school by 4:00 p.m. each afternoon unless they are staying after school for an extracurricular activity.
- We will not release your child to anyone that is not on the pick-up list provided by you in writing on the first day of school. Please be understanding when we request identification (i.e., driver's license) to ensure the safe release of your student.

### **After School Program**

Morningside Elementary does have an after- school program located on campus.

- The After- School program is from 3:30 to 6:00 p.m. daily.
- You may register your child at any time for participation.
- Weekly and drop-in options are available.
- Please stop by the office to secure the necessary forms or call the office and we will gladly send them home with your child.
- Should you have questions, the After-School Coordinator, Mrs. Holly Torok will be more than happy to talk with you.

### **Take-Home Folders**

Each student receives a weekly folder for signed papers. Students will bring home graded papers and any papers needing to be signed each **Wednesday**.

### **Classroom Observations**

At Morningside, we want parents and guests to visit our classrooms. Parents/guests who are interested in observing their child may reserve a time to observe in a classroom for no longer than 45 minutes. Upon arrival, check-in with the front office to receive a visitor's badge. Office personnel will notify the teacher of your arrival and ensure students are not testing. If students are testing, parents/guests will be asked to wait until the test is over or to come back at another time.

### **Homework**

Homework is given for review and practice purposes. Parents are encouraged to look over these assignments and give help when needed. We ask that your students read a minimum of 20 minutes per night and practice their math fluency. These are activities highly encouraged for parents to do with their students.

### **Media Center**

Our Media Center is open each day from 8:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Students may check out books during these hours. We have three book fairs each year (September, December and May) that you and your children will enjoy. Book fairs are an excellent opportunity for students and parents/guardians to purchase books to add to their home collection.

### **Medication Given at School**

We are happy to administer medicine for your child when needed. Our Med. Tech./School Nurse must have a Short-Term Medication form, HRS 29C completed. Specific information regarding medicine, dosage, and time to be given must be clearly stated. All medications must be in the original container, age appropriate, and labeled with your child's name.

Non-prescription medicine, such as Tylenol, can be given only for a short-term duration (two consecutive weeks or for a total of 10 times through a single semester). Non-prescription medicine cannot be brought in by students. Expired medication will not be given. Please check the expiration date before bringing the medication to school. Herbal medicines cannot be given at school without a doctor's specific order.

In cases of prescription medication given long-term (more than two weeks), a medication form, HRS29 must be completed by your child's doctor and given to the Med. Tech./School Nurse. The medication form can be requested from the Med. Tech./School Nurse.

### **Lost and Found**

Each year, we send beautiful jackets, sweaters, and other articles of clothing to Goodwill because no one claims them. Please help us help your child keep up with jackets and other articles of clothing by **writing your child's name on the label of the garment using a Sharpie Pen or Laundry Marker**. This way, we can be diligent in returning items that are lost to the correct child.

## **Lunch**

The Breakfast and Lunch program provided by School Food Service is FREE to all students at Morningside Elementary.

## **Parent Volunteers**

We love Parent Volunteers at Morningside. We hope you will join us as time allows by volunteering. Please contact our Parent Engagement Liaison, Mrs. LaWanda Mason, at (478) 988-6261 ext. 2508.

- Morningside Elementary follows the Houston County Board of Education policy for parent and community volunteers.
- All interested in being a school volunteer must attend an orientation session and have a background check.
- Parents will be unable to participate as chaperones on a field trip if a background clearance has not been secured in advance.
- The following areas require you to be certified as a volunteer: test proctoring, tutoring, working in the classroom, chaperoning field trips, working the book fairs, etc.
- An approved parent volunteer clearance is good for five years.

## **Report Cards & Progress Reports**

- Students in K will receive a GKIDS Report, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades receive a Record of Progress (ROP) and students in grades 3rd, 4th, and 5th receive report cards every nine weeks.
- Please sign the GKIDS, ROP and/or report card promptly and return it to your child's teacher(s).
- In addition, progress reports are sent home every 4 ½ weeks on Wednesday in the Take Home Folder

## **School Parties**

- Each class may have a party to celebrate the winter holidays and the End of the Year. These parties may begin at 2:30 p.m.

## **Title I**

Morningside Elementary is a School-wide Title I School which means we receive additional funding from the federal government. These additional monies are used to pay salaries, to provide professional learning opportunities for the staff, to provide after-school tutoring for students and to provide instructional materials for the classroom. The staff solicits your support in working together to provide a quality instructional program and a nurturing learning environment for our students.

## **School Clubs**

Morningside Elementary has a wide variety of extra-curricular clubs for students to participate in throughout the school year. We encourage our students to find activities they are interested in and become involved in extracurricular activities. What we know is, students who participate in extra-curricular activities achieve and perform better in school. These clubs provide an opportunity for students to experience learning beyond the regular school day. Clubs also develop strong leadership skills.

Students must have permission to participate in all clubs and parents must provide transportation after club meetings and activities.

Clubs may include but are not limited to:

- Art Club
- Basketball
- Boys with PRIDE
- Drum Club
- Girls with PRIDE
- Panther Planters
- Handbell
- MSES Cheer Squad
- Student Council