

Russell
Elementary
Procedural
Manual
2025-2026

HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOLS STUDENT CALENDAR 2025-2026

2025-2026 School Year

July 23: Opening Session for Certified Staff
 July 23-July 29: Pre-Planning/Site Collaboration
 July 30: First Day of School
 September 1: Labor Day Holiday
 September 2: Distance Learning Day/Site Collaboration
 October 6 - 10: Fall Holiday, Students & Teachers
 October 13: Student Holiday/Site Collaboration
 November 11: Veterans Day Holiday
 November 24 - 28: Thanksgiving Holiday
 December 19: Last Day of Semester - ½ for Students
 December 22- January 1: Christmas & New Year's Holiday
 January 2: Student Holiday/Site Collaboration
 January 5: Second Semester Begins
 January 19: Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
 February 16: Presidents' Day Holiday
 February 17: Distance Learning Day/Site Collaboration
 March 30 - April 3: Spring Break
 April 6: Student Holiday/Site Collaboration
 May 20: Last Day of Semester - ½ for Students
 May 21 - 22: Post-Planning/Site Collaboration
 May 21 - 22: 2026 High School Graduation
 May 25: Memorial Day Holiday

Half Day Dismissal Times:

- 11:30am - Middle Schools
- 12:00pm - High Schools
- 12:30pm - Primary and Elementary Schools

Report Card Dates

Nine Weeks Period	End Date	Date Report Issued
Progress Report, Day 23	August 29	September 3
Report Card (9 weeks), Day 45	October 1	October 15
Progress report, Day 65	November 6	November 12
Report Card (9 weeks), Day 90	December 19	January 7
Progress report, Day 111	February 3	February 11
Report Card (9 weeks), Day 136	March 11	March 18
Progress Report, Day 156	April 16	April 22
Report Card (9 weeks), Day 180	May 20	May 20

Principal's Message

Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year! On behalf of the entire Patriots staff, I am excited to welcome you to a new year filled with engaging learning experiences and memorable events. We are dedicated to creating a positive, supportive environment where all students can thrive. Together, with our Russell community, we look forward to a successful year built on collaboration, pride, and a shared commitment to student achievement.

This insert is a valuable source of information to both students and parents. It is important to take the time to become familiar with the school and how it operates. For more detailed information refer to the Houston County Elementary School Handbook on our website at www.res.hcbe.net.

At Russell Elementary, we feel communication with our families and opportunities for participation are a large part of what makes our school great. Some of the ways we will share school information with you is through weekly phone callouts, monthly newsletters, weekly folders, and Class Dojo. You can also keep up with school news online through our Facebook page and school website. Of course, anytime you have a question, you can always call the school directly at 929-7830.

Many opportunities for participation will be available throughout the year. School Council meeting dates will be posted to our website and we are always looking for volunteers to help students here at RES. Events such as Pancakes with Santa, holiday lunches, grade level programs, craft nights, book fairs, and Field Day are all chances for our parents to join us at school. Your participation in our various fundraisers is also encouraged and important to our school's many activities.

Here at Russell, we are always committed to academics and personal growth of all our students. We will encourage our students to set goals for themselves and track their own progress throughout the year. Together, we will guide students in a path where they take actions into their own academic growth. We will help children to commit to getting better every day. It is going to be an awesome year because Russell is the Best School in the Universe!

Thank you, in advance, for your support here at Russell Elementary!

William H. Wilson
Principal

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission is to promote high expectations and academic excellence for ALL Students.

Vision Statement

Striving for excellence, shaping tomorrow's leaders.

Beliefs

1. Safety is our first priority.
2. Students learn best when the school, parents, and community are partners in education.
3. The diversity of all students needs to be embraced by providing an innovative and nurturing learning atmosphere.
4. A positive attitude among staff and students will ensure the success of student learning.
5. All students can make progress toward their personal goals.

TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

Main Office	478-929-7830
Mr. Wilson	Ext. 3233
Mrs. Henslee	Ext. 3230
Mr. DeWitt	Ext. 3227
Mr. Burris	Ext. 3224

To reach your child's teacher, call 929-7830, and leave a message with the front office. You may email or DOJO the teacher.

Arrival Procedures and Student Safety Reminder

To ensure the safety of all students, walkers should not arrive on campus before 7:45 a.m., as staff supervision does not begin until that time. Early arrivals will not be permitted. Car rider drop off ends for student drop off at 8:30 when doors close.

Car riders must be dropped off on the east side of the building under the designated awning. For safety reasons, students should never be dropped off in any parking lot or area not clearly marked for student drop-off. This includes the front and side parking lots, which are not supervised and pose serious safety risks.

If you need to enter the building in the morning, please park in a designated parking space and report to the front office to sign in. We appreciate your cooperation in maintaining a safe and orderly arrival process for all students.

All students arriving before 8:00 a.m. will report to the cafeteria. After 8:00 a.m., students may report directly to their homerooms unless they plan to eat breakfast at school. The instructional day begins at 8:30 a.m., which means students must be in their classrooms by that time. Students who arrive after 8:30 a.m. are considered tardy and must report to the front office for a tardy slip. An adult must accompany the student to sign them in, and a staff member will escort the student to class.

Please note: If students are consistently dropped off before 7:45 a.m. or left on campus after 3:50 p.m., the school is authorized to contact the School Resource Officer.

ATTENDANCE/SCHOOL HOURS

School hours are **8:30 am - 3:30 pm** for all grades. The doors to the school are opened at 7:45 am. Students must remain in their cars with their parents should they arrive earlier.

Please remember that illness as well as doctor appointments for the student are valid reasons for being absent, tardy or dismissed early. *If a child must leave early, please check him or her out before 3:00 p.m.* Avoidance of traffic is not a valid reason for an early dismissal.

A doctor's school excuse or parent note must be submitted within 5 days of your child returning to school after his or her absence, tardy, or early dismissal to be considered excused, otherwise it remains unexcused. Student excuses will not be excepted for absences through Apptegy our new communication tool.

Please be mindful of the Board of Education policy about student absences. If a student misses 10-18 days, he/she may be promoted at the discretion of the principal. If a student misses more than 18 days, he/she may **NOT** be promoted.

Tardies and early dismissals are included in the criteria for the end-of-year Perfect Attendance Award. A student may not have any tardies, early dismissals or absences to be awarded the Perfect Attendance Award.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

All adults are required to have background checks if they plan to be chaperones for field trips or serve as volunteers in the school. If you are new to the Houston County School System and would like to volunteer, please stop by the office and complete a Houston County School System Background Check Form. Background checks are valid for five years.

If you are currently a Russell parent and your Background Check is more than five years old, please stop by the office and fill out a new form. The school secretary will notarize the form for you.

BREAKFAST/LUNCH/SNACKS

Breakfast and lunch are provided at no cost to all students at Russell. We are asking that ALL students eat a breakfast and lunch at school. If your child eats at home or brings his/her lunch to school, he/she can pick up a breakfast/lunch supplement to go along with what you have provided. **Please no hot items in a cup/thermos at school. Children can be burned by the hot liquid. For safety of children metal water bottles are not permitted at school.** We sell snacks before school and during lunch for 75 cents. Breakfast is served from **7:45-8:30 a.m.**

- Breakfast/Lunch menus are published monthly on our school website.
- Students are allowed to bring a snack to be eaten during their recess/break time.
- All students are expected to eat lunch unless they have a note.
- Students bringing lunch from home will carry it to the lunchroom. They will go through the line and pick up a “lunch buddy” to go along with their lunch from home. There is no microwave or any way to heat up a student’s lunch when brought from home.
- Due to the school systems efforts in nutrition education, staff and parents are asked **NOT to bring commercial foods to their child during the school day.**
- Students are not permitted to exchange food with or give food to other students.
- Carbonated drinks are **not** allowed in the lunchroom.
- If your child cannot drink milk or has a food allergy, please have the doctor to complete the medical form available from the Med Tech.

CONFERENCES

Parents may email the teacher or send a message in Appetgy requesting a conference. Conferences may be scheduled before school, during teacher planning time, or after school. We encourage you to meet with your child’s teacher as often as possible. Communication is necessary in order to ensure your child’s progress is monitored on a regular basis.

DISCIPLINE PLAN

At Russell Elementary School our faculty and staff are committed to providing quality instruction within a safe and positive learning environment. In order to maintain a safe and positive learning environment, we have developed a school-wide discipline plan that focuses on teaching and modeling healthy and safe behavior for students utilizing a system called PBIS

PBIS is an acronym for Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports. PBIS focuses on creating and sustaining school-wide, classroom, and individual systems of support that improve the educational environment for all children. Our aim is to explicitly teach behavioral expectations and then recognize the positive behaviors shown by students.

Since our implementation of PBIS, we have seen a reduction of school and classroom behavior disruptions. Additionally we have been able to educate all students about acceptable school behaviors. In addition, our school-wide PBIS system has incentives for students who are meeting or exceeding those behavior expectations. The goals of PBIS are consistent with those found in educational initiatives for the state of Georgia. All schools in Houston County utilize PBIS share the following foundational components:

- Clearly defining and teaching a set of behavioral expectations
- Consistently acknowledging and rewarding appropriate behavior
- Constructively addressing problematic behavior
- Effectively using behavioral data to assess progress

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As a 21st Century School, we will be utilizing a digital classroom management system called Appetgy. This is a schoolwide system, meaning all adults that work with your child will use it. It calculates points for positive behavior and removes points for negative behavior. Another awesome feature is that parents can log in at any time and can see how their child is doing in real time. Parents and teachers can also use Appetgy as a communication device. One school wide reward tied to student points are our school behavior celebrations. The good behavior celebrations are conducted three times throughout the year. Students who have met the behavior requirements are permitted to attend. Behavior requirements include meeting a Positive behavior point percent requirement for the behavior celebration window as well having received no referrals.

As you can see, whether it is on the bus, around campus, or in the classroom, the teachers and staff are here to encourage, guide and support our students to reach their highest potential.

DISMISSAL POLICY

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child/children have a **consistent** dismissal plan for the school year. It is very important that your child be dismissed the **same way** every day to keep them from becoming confused. **If there is a change in how your child will be going home, it is the responsibility of the parent(s) or guardian(s) to notify the school in writing. Changes by phone will not be accepted.** For safety reasons, we **CAN NOT** take the word of a student. If we do not receive notice of the change in writing, your child will go home in the normal manner.

It is also the parent's/guardian's responsibility to notify the school in writing when your child will be picked up by anyone other than those who are listed on the student information card. Students will not be dismissed from the classroom between **3:00 and 3:30**. Your **child will have to be either a walker, bus rider, car rider, or daycare.**

All walkers, bus students, and day care riders will be dismissed through the front doors. Students riding home in cars will be dismissed on the east side of the building (Featherstone Drive) beginning at 3:30 p.m. They will be called to the ramp by their carpool number. It is mandatory that anyone picking up a student have the carpool number in its original form. You may NOT use a carpool number on your phone in the carpool line. It is not permissible to "tell" the carpool number. You must "show" it in the original form. Each family will be given a set of carpool numbers per child. All children in the same family who are picked up together will receive the same carpool number. If you receive multiple numbers for your children, stop by the office and we will assign them one number. If carpool numbers are left at home, lost or misplaced there will be a \$1.00 fee for each reprint (cash only).

Students must be picked up before 3:50 pm each school day. This is Houston County School System policy. The school is authorized to contact the appropriate authorities if students are dropped off before 7:45 or picked up after 3:50 on a regular basis.

Use of Electronic Devices

The Houston County School District policy JCDAF outlines the access and use of personal electronic devices for students in pre- kindergarten through eighth grade while on school premises during school hours. Students in grades PK-8 are not permitted to access personal electronic devices while on school premises during school hours, including but not limited to cell phones, smartwatches, tablets, e-readers, headphones, earbuds, and other devices with functionalities such as wireless communication, internet access, messaging, video recording, gaming, social media access, or data transmission during school hours. Any student found in violation of this policy and/or its procedures during the school day shall be subject to progressive discipline consequences as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

DRESS CODE POLICY

Students' dress must conform to the policies of the Houston County Board of Education. Each student, with the advice and counsel of his/her parents or guardians should dress in a manner which is appropriate for school and its related activities. Students dressed modestly will generally have no problems concerning student dress codes.

FIELD TRIPS

Appropriate field trips that relate to units of study will be planned for each grade level. There will be a cost to cover the field trips that each grade takes. The price for each field trip will cover transportation as well as the fee to get into the exhibits. Each child will have the opportunity to do a fundraiser to bring down their cost of the field trip. County policy states that chaperones are required to have a background check on file **BEFORE** going on a field trip. When students go on field trips, they **must** have the original signed permission form from their parent/guardian before he or she will be allowed to leave the campus. Please note that hand-written and oral permission will **not** be accepted. Should your child forget or neglect to return the signed form he or she should **not** expect to call home for you to bring the form on the day of the field trip. **No refund will be made for a field trip once the field trip has been paid.** The only circumstance to issue a refund will be if your child becomes sick. Missing the bus or having ISS is not an acceptable excuse for a refund.

LEGAL NAME

All records for students in grades Pre-K to 5th will be recorded in the child's name as it appears on his or her birth certificate. If a nickname is used, it will be placed in quotation marks after the name.

MEDICATION POLICY

Students needing occasional non-prescription medications for colds, earaches, or sore throats are to take these medications at home if possible. Non-prescription medications will be administered at school for a short-term duration only (10 school days or less), and only in a brand new **container**. **We must break the seal** and it has to be accompanied by written parental request with directions for administering. If a student goes past 10 days it has to be approved by a physician.

Medication that is prescribed three (3) times a day can be given before the student comes to school, after school, and again at bedtime. However, if medication **MUST** be given at school, it must be in the **original container** with the specific information regarding medicine, dosage, and time to be given.

If prescription medication must be given at school on a daily basis or for more than 2 weeks, you will need to have your doctor complete and sign medication form HRS-29. This form may be obtained from the Med Tech. All prescription medication must be presented to the school by the parent in a **prescription labeled bottle**, which must include the student's name, date, instructions for administering, name of drug, and name of the issuing physician. No student is permitted to bring any medication to school. Parents must bring it in.

NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

Students receiving two or more home and/or In-School-Suspensions or more than one bus referral in a 9 week period will not be allowed to attend **ANY** non-academic after school activities (after school socials, clubs, jump rope/dance performances, talent shows, etc.).

REPORT CARD SCHEDULE

A progress report and report card schedule is included with this handout. All students in third - fifth grades will receive progress reports as well as report cards. K-2nd grade students will receive Records of Progress Reports at the end of each nine weeks.

RETURNED CHECK POLICY

When a check written to the school is returned due to **“Insufficient Funds”** the school is charged a fee by our local bank; therefore, should your check be returned, you will be assessed the charged fee of \$15.00. If more than two NSF checks are received from the same party during the year, the school will no longer accept personal checks as payment.

SCHOOL BUS RULES/BUS RAMP

Students who ride the school bus are expected to adhere to all of the rules as listed in the transportation guidelines. Riding the bus is a privilege and will be taken away if a student is disruptive or causes other safety problems on the bus. The bus driver will make contact with parents after the first infraction. Any future infractions will be written up as a “bus referral” and will be given to a school administrator. School administrators will follow a progressive discipline plan regarding bus referrals.

Severe misbehavior may result in bus suspension on the first reported incident. Severe misbehavior may include, but is not limited to:

- Disrespect
- Fighting/Bullying
- Vandalism
- Possession of Drugs
- Possession of Weapons
- Profanity/Verbal Threats
- Sexual Harassment

SCHOOL PARTIES

Students at Russell Elementary have two classroom parties each year; one before the December break and one the last day of school. **Houston County Board of Education Policy does not allow gifts, flowers, or balloons to be sent to students.** Birthday invitations may be given out at school during non-instructional times. Board Policy does not allow addresses or telephone numbers of other students to be given out for any reason.

SCHOOL RULES

1. Listen and follow directions and procedures the first time they are given.

2. Keep hands, feet, mouth, and other objects to yourself.
3. Stay in your seat and on task unless you have permission to do otherwise.
4. Be respectful to teachers, all adults, and other students at all times.
5. Have classwork and homework ready to turn in on time, and have materials ready to use throughout the day.

STUDENT INFORMATION UPDATES

It is imperative that your child's homeroom teacher and the school office are notified immediately of a change of address, home/cell/work telephone number, or of a change in emergency contact information during the academic school year.

TELEPHONE CALLS

If a student gets sick or hurt, a call will be made to the child's parents/guardians by the Med Tech or a member of the office staff. Only in emergencies are students allowed to make telephone calls. Students will not be allowed to call home for left book bags, lunches, homework, field trip permission slips, after school activities, special practices, tutoring sessions, weekly signed paper folders, or to receive permission to stay for after school detention (students and parents are given 24-hour notice if after school detention has been given.)

TEXTBOOK GUIDELINES

Each textbook/workbook issued to a student is the responsibility of the student. A fee is assessed for lost or damaged textbooks/workbooks. The principal or the textbook coordinator will assess the appropriate fees, based on Houston County Board of Education guidelines, after the teacher has determined that a textbook/workbook has been lost or damaged. Lost or damaged textbooks/workbooks **must** be paid for before a new book is issued.

TITLE IX-NON-DISCRIMINATION

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities. Our school does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs and activities. Any inquiries concerning Title IX may be referred to an Administrator at **478-929-7830.**

Lost and Found Articles

Please! Please! Write your child's name (first and last) on all jackets, coats, sweaters, book bags, hats, lunchboxes, etc. with a permanent marker. Lost and found articles are located in the lunchroom hall near the 3rd grade pod. These items are collected and donated to charity at the end of each quarter.

RES K – 5th Afternoon Dismissal Procedures for 25-26

- **Car Riders:** Students who are picked up by parents in car rider line.
- **Bus Riders:** Students who ride the bus home.
- **Day Care:** Students who ride daycare buses.
- **Walkers:** Students who walk home unsupervised by an adult.

Car Riders: You will enter the car pick up line on Featherstone Drive. Parents please attach your child's dismissal number to your car visor and flip it down when you reach the teacher on duty and make sure he/she sees it. If the teacher on duty cannot see your number and it isn't put into the system your child's name will not appear on the dismissal board and he/she won't come to the car ramp. This creates a traffic problem and slows down dismissal for everyone. If you do not have the number you will have to park, go into the office and show proper identification before your child will be released. It is important to have your child's dismissal number in hand each day! Also, please note that dismissal for car riders will not begin until 3:30 and runs until 3:50. You may pick up your child any time from 3:30 - 4:00. After 4:00 is considered a late pick up and children will be waiting in the office. Refer to the student handbook concerning consequences regarding excessive late pick-ups. Please note: If you need a reprint of your child's dismissal number you will be charged \$1.00 (cash only) per reprint.

Bus Riders/Day Care Riders: Students will go to the bus ramp when they see their bus/van listed on the dismissal board.

Walkers: Walkers (who walk home unsupervised) are walked out the front door and across the street at 3:25 by a grade level teacher. These students must walk directly home and may not return to campus.

Questions: Please ask your child's teacher or an administrator. **Safety is our #1 Priority!**