

WARRIORS

PEARL STEPHENS ELEMENTARY

Student Handbook

2024-2025

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WELCOME

Welcome to Pearl Stephens Elementary School! Our teachers, school leaders, parents and community partners are already making a difference in the lives of our students.

Mission

Our Mission is to produce confident, self-directed, lifelong learners.

Vision

Our Vision is to inspire, engage, and develop our high achieving WARRIORS.

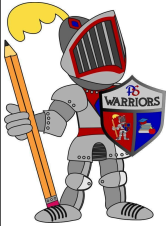
Our Beliefs:

- We believe in maintaining positive relationships with all students, staff, families, the district, and community
- We believe in creating a welcoming and engaging learning culture
- We believe in supporting quality learning by student by standard through collaboration and continued collective commitment
- We believe in continuing personal and professional growth through professional learning communities and collaborative teams
- We believe in learning for **ALL**.

What does it mean to be a “Mighty Warrior?”

Students at Pearl Stephens Elementary School are expected to demonstrate being a “Mighty Warrior” at school and at all school-related functions. Throughout the year students will learn about the various ways in which they can show their Mighty Warrior Pride through respectful actions and attitudes. When they show their Mighty Warrior Pride, they will be recognized with a “Warrior Buck” and their good behavior will be celebrated. We appreciate your help and support in this effort to instill lifelong skills in our students.

Mighty Warriors Are...

	<i>Respectful</i>
	<i>Responsible</i>
	<i>Safe</i>



A NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Greetings Students and Parents,

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year! I hope you all had a fun and relaxing summer. I am very proud to continue supporting and serving the students, parents and community of this GREAT school. Each year offers new opportunities for us to work together to foster a positive learning community that meets our students' needs.

Last year was an awesome year with regards to increasing student achievement. Preliminary data from the 2024 ELA Georgia Milestone test indicates we had more students scoring at the proficient and distinguished levels in some of our grade levels. This success could not have been possible without your continued support.

Our theme for this year is “Level Up.” This simply means we want to increase our achievement percentage points on the 2025 Georgia Milestones in reading and math by at least 3%. We also want to increase the number of students who are reading on or above grade level by the end of the school year. Parents, you play an integral role in us achieving these goals. As principal, I encourage you to become an active partner of the school community by doing the following:

- Make sure your child arrives at school each day on time.
- Make sure your child reads each night for approximately 20 minutes and writes a summary.
- Make sure you attend instructional activities sponsored by the school. These activities are designed to teach parents the reading and math strategies teachers use in the classroom.
- Make sure your child exhibits behavior that exemplifies a Mighty Warrior and follows all schoolwide expectations.
- Make sure you schedule and attend parent/teacher conferences with your child’s teacher throughout the year to discuss their academic performance.

One of our initiatives this year will be to pilot a new reading program. Administrators, teachers and support staff will be working alongside district personnel to implement this curriculum. We will work to update our instructional practices to ensure high quality instruction is provided in each classroom.

In closing, we solicit your continued support in making this school year one of the BEST years ever. Together, we can move to the next level in building a community that strengthens our educational program and increases achievement for ALL students.

Best Regards,
Gloria Smith, Principal



A Day in the Life of a Pearl Stephens Elementary “Warrior”

From 8:00 a.m. to 8:20 a.m., our students prepare for instruction. All students arriving at school prior to 8:20 a.m. will be provided a free breakfast. Car riders and walkers arriving after 8:20 will receive a grab bag breakfast.

At 8:25 a.m., the morning announcements will begin. We have a live broadcast of our morning announcements where students can watch from their classrooms. We will have our Pearl Stephens Newscast give the latest news to the student body along with the pledge of allegiance to the flag and a moment of silence. Students are expected to be in their classroom ready for the instructional day at 8:30. If your child arrives at school after the starting time of 8:30, he/she is considered tardy.

Please sign your child in at the office. We appreciate you having your child here on time.

Arrival

The doors will be unlocked at 7:45 a.m. and students may enter the building. Pearl Stephens Elementary staff members will be on duty at the car ramp and on the bus ramp to receive students at 7:45 a.m. No one is available to supervise students before this time. **Students need to remain in their vehicle until the 7:45 a.m. bell rings.** Students arriving in cars will enter from the side doors by the car ramp parking lot. Students arriving by bus will enter from the side doors by the bus ramp. Walkers from Huntington Crest and Hill will enter from the back of school near the gym.

Prior to 8:00 a.m., all students will report to the cafeteria. They will sit by grade level in the designated area. Students are subject to the authority of the adult on duty. Students will be released to homerooms at 8:00 a.m.

Breakfast is served from 7:45 – 8:20 a.m. All students receive free breakfast. Students must eat breakfast in the cafeteria if they arrive prior to 8:20 a.m.

Tardiness/Early Dismissal

Instruction begins promptly at 8:30 a.m., and a student is considered tardy after that time. A student who is tardy must report to the office to check in. A parent is expected to accompany the student and to sign him/her in. If a school bus arrives after 8:30 a.m., students will not be considered tardy and no tardy permit is necessary. Students who are signed out of school before 3:30 p.m. are considered as having an early dismissal. Parents should provide the school with a reason for the tardy or early dismissal. The school will determine if the tardy or early dismissal is excused or unexcused using the same system guidelines outlined for absences. **A parent who continues to drop students off before 7:45 will be reported to the appropriate authorities such as the local police and DFACS.**

Many people do not realize that missed instructional minutes add up quickly. For example, if your child arrives a mere 10 minutes late each day, they miss 50 minutes of instructional time every week. During a 36 week school year, they could miss nearly 30 HOURS OF INSTRUCTION! If they're



20 minutes late, it would be 60 hours, and so on. These instructional minutes are especially important to the achievement of our students and the success of our schools. An excessive number of lost instructional minutes could prevent your child from being promoted to the next grade level. For the benefit of ALL students, we may implement the following procedures with relation to unexcused tardies and unexcused early dismissals:

- 5 Unexcused Tardies/Early Dismissals – Parent Contact
- 10 Unexcused Tardies/Early Dismissals – Excessive Tardy/Early Dismissal Notification Letter
- 15 Unexcused Tardies/Early Dismissals – Attendance Contract Meeting Scheduled with parents and administration
- 20 Unexcused Tardies/Early Dismissals – Referral to the HCBOE Social Service Department and assignment to Mandatory Make up Time
- 25 Unexcused Tardies/Early Dismissals – Parent Meeting scheduled with the Attendance Panel at the Central Office in Perry, GA

Please make extra time allowances during rainy days, since traffic tends to be heavier when it rains.

Dismissal

Students who are car riders will be dismissed at the 3:30 p.m. bell. All students leaving earlier than 3:15 must be checked out in the office on the computer. Please do not put your child's teacher in an awkward position by asking them to release a student early. **No students will be allowed to be dismissed from the office after 3:15p.m. After week two of school, parents/guardians will be asked to come to the front office to get another copy of their child's car rider number and return to the car rider line to pick their child up. Please visibly display car rider numbers on the drivers side or below the rear view mirror.**

Please inform the teacher, **in writing**, if your child is going home a different way than usual. You may write a note in the agenda. **No child will be allowed to go home a different way unless you have sent written permission.** If you call the office to change the normal transportation, you must do so **before 3:00 p.m. Do not email a teacher with a change of transportation. Teachers may not get this message until after dismissal time.** Anyone picking up a student for an early dismissal is subject to an ID check. **Please present a photo ID when you are picking up your child early. The safety of our students is the primary concern.**

If a student is a car rider, it is essential that the student be picked up from school by 3:50 pm each afternoon. A parent who is continuously late picking their child up will be reported to the appropriate authorities such as the local police or DFACS.



Release of Students

The school may not release a student to any person other than the person who enrolled the student in school. If an individual other than the person who enrolled the student in school is authorized to take the student from school on a regular basis (e.g., a grandparent or other relative, childcare provider, etc.), the person who enrolled the student in school must notify the school of such in writing and this notification should be kept on file at the school. If someone other than the person who enrolled the student in school (or an individual authorized in writing by this person) attempts to take custody of the child or to remove the child from the school, the school will immediately contact the person who enrolled the student in school. If a person who attempts to take custody of the child without consent of the person who enrolled the student in school refuses to leave the campus or causes a problem, the school will contact the appropriate law enforcement agency. Exceptions to these student release procedures may occur in cases involving state or local law enforcement and child protection agencies.

BUS CONDUCT

The parents or guardians of students are responsible for the supervision of their child until they board the bus in the morning and after they exit the bus at the end of the day. The school has the authority to discipline a student for any misconduct occurring on the way to or from school. The school bus is an extension of the classroom. Once the student boards the bus, the student is expected to conduct himself/herself on the bus in a manner consistent with the established standards for classroom behavior. Provisions pertaining to bus misbehavior are included in the student Code of Conduct.

The bus driver shall report students who do not conduct themselves properly on a bus to the attention of the principal or his/her designee. The bus driver is responsible for the safety of all who ride the bus. Students are expected to comply with reasonable instructions given by the bus driver. The bus driver has the authority to assign seats either temporarily or permanently and to establish rules for safety and proper behavior on the bus. Bus students are not to leave the school grounds before or after school without permission.

A student who cannot conduct him/herself properly on a bus may have riding privileges suspended or revoked. In such a case, the parent or guardian of the student involved shall be responsible for transporting the student to and from school. In cases of bus vandalism, the student and parent/guardian will be held responsible.

Students are prohibited from any and all acts of physical violence, bullying, sexual harassment, physical assault, verbal assault of other persons on the school bus, disrespectful conduct toward the school bus driver or other persons on the school bus, and any other unruly behavior.

A meeting of the parent or guardian of the student and appropriate school officials may be held to create a school bus behavior contract whenever:



1. A student is found to have engaged in bullying/sexual harassment; or
2. A student is found to have engaged in physical assault or battery of another person on the school bus.

Students are prohibited from using any electronic devices during the operation of a school bus in a manner that might interfere with the school bus communications equipment or the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.

Students are also prohibited from using mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.

All students, grades K-12, shall be instructed annually in emergency evacuation and safe riding practices on school buses. The Director of Transportation shall work with school principals and bus drivers to ensure that this is accomplished

Please view our district's elementary school handbook for additional information regarding minor offenses/major offenses and consequences for infractions.

Car Rider Procedures

CAR RIDER RAMP:

Please be courteous to others:

- Park only in designated spaces. No cars should park blocking the car rider ramp.
- All students should be released from the passenger's side of the car, in the lane nearest the building. **NO EXCEPTIONS.** This includes the parking lot and any additional lanes. Students are put in dangerous situations when they must cross between cars. **This is for your child's safety.**
- **Please refrain from cell phone usage while in the line.**

Enter the school parking lot from Pearl Stephens Way using the driveway near the front. Drop your child(ren) off under the second covered walkway on the side of the school by the gymnasium. **Please drive as far down as you can until the sidewalk ends. This prevents traffic from getting backed up and permits our staff members to enter the side parking lot.** Students should enter the building through the covered walkway door (near the front of the school). If your child arrives between 7:45 – 8:00 a.m., he/she will report to the cafeteria. If he/she arrives between 8:00 – 8:30 a.m., he/she will report to his/her class. You will then exit the campus in the front parking lot. You will re-enter Pearl Stephens Way. **If your child arrives at school after 8:30 a.m., please sign your child in at the office.** He/she will receive a tardy pass to admit him/her to class.



Car riders will be dismissed beginning at 3:30 p.m. Please enter the campus as outlined above. Drive to the farthest point beside the covered walkway using one lane of traffic. The students will be supervised in their homerooms until you arrive. Carpooling families can display several family identification numbers to pick up students. **No one will be permitted to “walk up” to pick up your child.** As your car approaches the pick-up point, your family identification number will be radioed inside to the school carpool administrator and displayed on the computer in your child’s classroom. The staff member will be responsible for matching your child(ren) to your car. After 4:00 pm, all remaining car riders will need to be signed out in the front office.

Bus Riders

Your child’s bus will arrive at school, and students will enter the school through the side door near the cafeteria. They will report to the cafeteria to eat breakfast and are to remain until they are dismissed to go to homerooms at 8:00 a.m. In the afternoon, the bus students will be called for dismissal through the school carpool computer system. Students will board the bus from the side of the school. **Students are expected to ride their assigned bus to and from school.**

Walkers

Only students who currently reside in Huntington Park, Huntington Crest, or Huntington Hills will be considered walkers. Huntington Park will exit the front of the building. All other walkers will exit the back of the school. If you want your students to walk/ride bikes, they will come through the back gate of the campus, walk on the sidewalk path and enter the school through the exterior door nearest the gym in the mornings. In the afternoons, students in Grade 3-5 will be dismissed from their designated areas.

Our standard procedure is that the child goes home the same way every day unless we have a phone call before 3:00 p.m. or a written note from you. At 3:00 p.m., all teachers are notified through our school carpool system of any changes in transportation.

We begin releasing students at 3:30 p.m. Please help us with this by making sure your child's teacher has received a note from you or you have called the school with a transportation change. My staff and I will do our very best to ensure your child arrives home per your request.

Inclement Weather Dismissal for Walkers: In the event of inclement weather (**heavy rain or thunder/lightning**), you will be notified through text message or school messenger to pick up your child at the car rider line. **Please visibly display car rider numbers on the driver’s side or below the rear view mirror.** Your child will not be dismissed from the front office.



Absences

Compulsory Attendance

Houston County School authorities, in cooperation with other county agencies, shall enforce the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law, O.C.G.A. §20-2-690.1, Mandatory Attendance, which requires that every parent, guardian, or other person residing in the state having control of any school age child or children between the ages of 6 and 16 enroll and send such child or children to school. Further, all children enrolled for 20 school days or more in the public schools of Houston County prior to their SIXTH birthday shall become subject to all provisions of the law. All students missing more than 5 unexcused days in Georgia are declared as truant by law.

All Houston County students are affected by and fall under the provisions of our attendance protocol which is stated as follows;

- Level I Three (3) unexcused absences.

School staff will contact parents and document the contact. Contacts may consist of e-mail, text message, phone call, letter, note in the agenda, etc...

- Level II Five (5) unexcused absences.

School staff will notify parents of the truancy and request a conference with the parents to sign an Attendance Contract.

- Level III Eight (8) unexcused absences.

School staff notifies the Social Services Department; Social Services provides data to court for judicial proceedings to begin.

Any parent, guardian, or other person residing in Georgia having control or charge of a child or children who violate GA Code Section O.C.G.A. §20-2-690.1 shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be subject to a fine of not less than \$25 and not greater than \$100, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combinations of such penalties, at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Absence from school is classified as either excused or unexcused. Reasons established by the Georgia Board of Education as excused absences are set forth in this policy. Students may be temporarily excused from school and allowed to make up work when:

1. Personally ill and when attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others. Excessive/extended absences due to illness must be justified by a physician's statement.



2. A serious illness or death occurs in their immediate family. (Parent, Sibling, or Grandparent of child)

3. Mandated by order of governmental agencies or by a court order.

4. Celebrating religious holidays observed by their faith.

NOTE: An excused absence does not mean the student is given credit for being at school. It means that the student may make up work missed during the excused absence. Students should present a written excuse within five [5] days after an absence whether excused or unexcused. A text message is not considered as a formal written excuse. Failure to do so will result in the absence(s) remaining unexcused. Excessive/extended absences due to illness must be justified by a physician's statement. For your convenience, we have provided you with six (6) absence notes you can fill out and return to your child's teacher once the student returns to school,(Please see absence notes in the back of the agenda). **After ten (10) parent notes, you will be required to provide a doctor's note for any other absences due to illness.**

Only students who have excused absences may make up work or tests missed. The following items should be specified and included on each written excuse:

1. The date the excuse is written.
2. The date and day of the absence.
3. Reason for absence.
4. Signature of parent or guardian.

Upon returning to school, students should complete makeup work missed within five [5] school days. Parents may pick up homework assignments in the school office. The teacher, however, should be given adequate time to prepare homework assignments and materials.

At the discretion of the principal, a statement from a physician may be required to validate extended or excessive absences.

Perfect Attendance

To receive an award for Perfect Attendance, a student may not be absent, tardy, or be dismissed before the end of any school day. It does not matter if the absence is excused or unexcused.

Agendas



Our agendas will be used as a time-management tool for students. Students will be taught how to use this notebook. They will be responsible for writing important information in their agenda. Please feel free to use it to send messages to your child's teacher. Each child will be given an agenda. If lost, there will be a \$5 fee to replace the agenda/communication binder.

Behavior Management Plan
















The faculty and staff are committed to making this a successful year for our students. Our primary goal is to provide quality instruction within a positive learning environment. To accomplish this, each student must learn to manage his/her behavior and to cooperate with others. In an effort to encourage positive behavior, Pearl Stephens will implement Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Principles from the implementation of the PBIS system will teach students proper behavior for interacting with their peers and responding appropriately in the learning environment. **Please read and discuss this plan with your child(ren) and assist us in maintaining a positive learning environment.** The staff of Pearl Stephens Elementary strives to recognize students who are cooperative and considerate of others. We encourage you to continually review the rules and procedures below with your child(ren). Your support in helping us implement this program will ensure a safe and healthy environment for all our students.

Pearl Stephens PBIS Mission Statement

Our mission is to foster and promote a safe and positive school environment that enhances student learning through teaching and recognizing positive behavior.

Please review our PBIS Matrix below which outlines rules and behavioral expectations for which students will be held accountable for as they transition throughout the building.



 PEARL STEPHENS ELEMENTARY		<h1>MIGHTY WARRIORS</h1>	
	RESPECTFUL	RESPONSIBLE	SAFE
HALLWAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep voices off 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go directly to your destination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep hands/feet/objects to yourself Walk on the right side of the hall 
RESTROOM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give others privacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use, flush, wash, and leave 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report problems to an adult Keep hands/feet/objects to yourself Use the restroom equipment properly and safely
CAFETERIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow adult directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean your area Get all needed items when going through the line Use normal voice level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk at all times 
PLAYGROUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow adult directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep playground clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep hands/feet/objects to yourself Use equipment properly Stay in approved areas 
BUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow adult directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go directly to your seat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep hands/feet/objects to yourself. Stay in your seat. Report problems to an adult 

Rewards

There are additional school-wide rewards that students may earn:

Warrior Bucks: Students will have an opportunity to earn Warrior Bucks for being respectful, responsible, and safe. These bucks can be spent by students in the Warrior Store once a month. Some of the items that students can purchase with their Warrior Bucks include: treasure chest items, key chains, pencils, erasers, sticky hands, slime, candy, hats, and much more.

Staff members are encouraged to pass out of Warrior Bucks to students who display positive behavior in our school.

Warrior Celebration: Each nine weeks, students who have exhibited Warrior behavior (no After school Detention, In-School Suspension, Out-of-School Suspension, or bus referral) will participate in a school celebration.



Warrior Store: Throughout the year, students will be able to bring their saved Warrior Bucks and purchase items by spending their reward bucks at the store.

Consequences

Plan for Improvements (PFI) are used as a consequence for the teacher and student to conference about their behavior. The teacher and student will discuss, create, and carry out a plan for improving the behavior. PFIs start over each nine-week period.

After School Detention (ASD) is also used as a consequence for student behavior. ASD is assigned based on the number of PFIs your child receives. ASD is held from 3:45-4:30. You are responsible for picking up and signing your child out from school in the front office.

PFI Guidelines

- 2 PFIs of the ***same behavior*** within a nine-week period = 1 day of ASD
- 2 more PFIs of the ***same behavior*** within a nine-week period= 2 days of ASD
- 1 more PFI of the ***same behavior*** within a nine-week period= Office Referral

Each teacher follows the behavior flowchart below as a tool to redirect, reteach, and reinforce positive behavior.

Bullying:

It is critical that every student at Pearl Stephens Elementary School feels safe when they are at school, at the bus stop, on the bus, or at school-related events. The Houston County Board of Education is committed to the safety of our students and has declared Houston County as a “Bully Free School System”.

In accordance with Georgia Law, bullying is defined as:

- (1) Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so: or
- (2) Any intentional display of force that would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or
- (3) Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass or intimidate, that
 - a. Causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of Code Section 16-5-23.1 or visible bodily harm as such term is defined in Code Section 16-5-23.1
 - b. Had the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s education;
 - c. Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it created an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or



- d. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operations of the school.

Bullying, as the term is defined in Georgia law, of a student by another student is strictly prohibited. Acts of bullying shall be punished by a range of consequences through the progressive discipline process. Such consequences shall include, at a minimum, counseling and disciplinary action as appropriate under the circumstances. Upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer or panel that a student in grades K-5 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, the student **may** be assigned to the elementary alternative school. Minimum assignment in an alternative setting for bullying is 30 days. Mrs. Monique Dawsey, Assistant Principal for Discipline, is our Title IX Coordinator; however, suspicion of bullying can be reported at any time to any of the administrators.

BYOD

As new technologies continue to change the world in which we live, they also provide many new and positive educational benefits for classroom instruction. During the 2013-2014 school year, Bring Your Own Device, BYOD, was piloted at all Houston County Elementary, Middle and High Schools. Each school will notify parents of the program parameters at their schools. Students who do not have their own device to bring to school will not be penalized. Please do not feel obligated to go out and purchase a device for your child. Students will be encouraged to work collaboratively while allowing the owner of the device to be the one to manipulate and handle the device (see PSES Acceptable Use Policy for stipulations regarding use of devices). **This device may not be used for non-instructional activities, including but not limited to phone calls, text messaging, photo apps, or social media. Device use is at the principal's and teacher's discretion and should relate directly to instruction. Failure to adhere to appropriate device use will result in disciplinary action.**

Definition of "Device"

For purposes of B.Y.O.D. (Bring Your Own Device), "device" means a privately owned wireless and/or portable electronic hand held equipment that includes, but is not limited to, existing and emerging mobile communication systems and smart technologies, smart watches, wireless earbuds, portable internet devices, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), hand held entertainment systems or portable information technology systems that can be used for word processing, wireless Internet access, image capture/recording, sound recording and information transmitting/receiving/storing, etc.

Internet

Only the internet gateway (HCBE_BYOD) provided by the school should be accessed while on campus. Personal internet connective devices such as but not limited to cell phones / cell network adapters should not be used to access outside internet sources at any time.



Security and Damages

Responsibility to keep the device secure rests with the individual owner. **The Houston County School System, its staff and its employees, are not liable for any device stolen or damaged on campus.** If a device is stolen or damaged, it will be handled through the administrative office similar to other personal artifacts that are impacted in similar situations. It is recommended that skins (decals) and other custom touches are used to physically identify your device from others. Additionally, protective cases for technology are encouraged.

Conferences with Our Staff Members

For the safety of our children and to maximize instructional time, we are asking all of our parents to please follow the guidelines below.

Our Guidelines for classroom visitation:

For the safety of our students, parents must enter and exit through the front doors only.

We ask that visitors **not** drop in between 8:00-8:30 a.m. and 3:15-3:45 p.m. to discuss their child's progress or to talk with the teacher. Teachers are supervising students at this time.

Please schedule a time/conference to meet with your child's teacher to discuss student progress or concerns.

- **Before visiting your child's classroom, parents/visitors should contact the teacher to set up a specific time and date for the visit. We do not allow unannounced visits to the classrooms. This is a disruption of instructional time.**
- It is suggested that classroom visits should be limited to no more than 60 minutes unless agreed upon by the teacher/admin.
- Visits should not be scheduled for several consecutive days.
- All visitors need to sign-in in the office and wear a visitor's badge while they are in the building.
- After 8:30 a.m. all doors will be locked, except those at our front entrance.

Counselor

Our counselor at Pearl Stephens is in charge of our SST (Student Support Team), attendance, and 504 information. Please contact the counselor, Mrs. Azaga for more information concerning these issues.



Dress Code

DRESS CODE (BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY)

Good personal appearance, appropriate dress, proper behavior and cleanliness are vital to each member of the school community. Developing good tastes in attire, good grooming habits, and good behavior are a part of the educational program.

Students must learn that different circumstances influence the type of dress appropriate for particular occasions. For instance, what is worn at the beach would not be appropriate for school wear. Certainly, a football player would not wear a full uniform to class. Wearing inappropriate dress to school can have a negative influence on the educational process and the educational climate of the school.

Each student, with the advice and counsel of his/her parents or guardian, should dress in a manner which is appropriate for school and its related activities. Modestly dressed students will generally have no problems concerning student dress codes.

The campus administrator of the school is charged with the enforcement of the student dress code. The campus administrator is given wide latitude of discretion in the determination of proper or improper dress and behavior of students. Students who are found to be in violation of the dress code are subject to disciplinary action. The principal's actions may include:

- * Counseling the student
- * Warning the student
- * Calling parents to bring a change of clothes
- * Placing the student in in-school suspension for the remainder of the day
- * Suspending the student short term
- * Recommending long-term suspension (for flagrant or repeated violations)

All clothing is to be worn appropriately and in the manner for which it was designed. For example, belts should be buckled. The school reserves the right to establish rules during the school year regarding new fashions in dress.

The following rules for dress, apparel, ornament (jewelry), and/or grooming apply:

- * Both males and females may wear earrings. Students may not wear ornaments and piercings which are extreme and may interfere with the learning process or cause a disruption of the educational environment.
- * Outer clothing which resembles loungewear, pajamas, or underwear is prohibited.
- * See-through clothing is prohibited. (T-shirts must be worn under mesh see-through shirts.)
- * Proper underclothing which ensures modesty is required.
- * Shoes/sandals must be worn at all times. Cleated shoes, bedroom shoes, furry sandals which resemble a bedroom shoe, rubber flip-flops, shower shoes, and slides should not be worn during PE class.
- * **Holes in clothing that are excessive in size or amount, are a distraction to the learning environment, or allow skin to show are prohibited. No open holes above the knees. Leggings or tights must be worn underneath ripped attire.**



* Halter tops, spaghetti straps, midriff/crop tops, backless blouses, strapless blouses and dresses, sleeveless T-shirts, bike shorts and short-shorts are prohibited. Shorts appropriate for young children are permitted. **Students in 3rd grade may wear appropriate tank tops.**

***When leggings are worn, a dress, shirt, or skirt must be worn over the leggings. The dress, shirt, or skirt must be mid-thigh length or longer.**

* Fads and styles in dress that differ extremely from conventionally accepted standards are prohibited.

*** Students may not wear hats, hoods, bonnets, bandanas, head scarves, caps, combs, or picks, etc., inside the building.**

* Pants, skirts, shorts, and dresses must be mid-thigh lengths or longer. Sagging pants are not allowed and pants must be worn at the waist.

*In accordance with board policy governing student conduct with regard to bullying, weapons, gangs, and drugs: clothing shall be free of inflammatory, suggestive, racial, or other inappropriate writing, advertisement, or artwork. This includes offensive words and designs, violence (blood, death, weapons), sex, playboy symbols, hate groups, tobacco products, drugs, and alcohol. No clothing or other article may be worn or displayed which may indicate membership in a gang at school or any school function.

INSURANCE

At the beginning of the school year an independent insurance company offers student accident insurance coverage to students. Two plans are available: School-day coverage or twenty-four (24) hour coverage. Insurance forms will be available in the school office or distribution center for parents who request them. Checks should be made payable to the insurance company. You are encouraged to carefully look at this affordable insurance as it definitely covers any accidents occurring at school. The Houston County Board of Education insurance does not cover your child if they have an accident at school.

Family and/or Parent Activities

Several family and/or parent activities are held throughout the year. The purposes of these vary from giving information to opportunities for families to participate in activities just for fun. The Parent Information Night scheduled for August is designed to give parents a broad overview of the school and its programs and activities. Pearl Stephens has also scheduled school wide PACT (Parent and Child Together) Times. PACT Times are organized instructional activities that allow the parent to work with the child on classroom curriculum related skills and objectives. PACT Time is designed to help parents better understand the actual classroom learning environment. During PACT Time sessions parents can learn strategies that can be transferred from the classroom to home. Please visit our Parent Resource Center in Rm 209. It is open from 8:00 am until 3:00 pm daily.



Field Trips

Field trips are a valuable addition to a child's educational growth. Field trips are usually initiated and planned by the classroom teachers. Children will not be allowed to attend a trip unless he or she has submitted a permission slip signed by the parent or guardian. Permission slips will be sent home with the child when a trip is planned. If a child is not permitted to participate in a field trip, he or she is still required to attend school; alternative instructional activities at the school will be provided. No student will be denied the opportunity to participate or be penalized in any way if the parents choose not to contribute. All parents and/or guardians must have a Houston County Background Check before going on any field trips.

Homework

Homework is given for review and enrichment purposes. Parents are encouraged to look over these assignments and give help when needed.

Lunch Program

The Houston County School Nutrition Program provides fun and nutritious meals every school day. The menu for breakfast and lunch can be found by visiting <https://www.hcbe.net/schoolnutrition>.

Students should avoid being loud and boisterous while in the cafeteria. Each student is responsible for keeping the lunchroom clean and orderly, and they should dispose of trays and other trash in the proper place immediately after finishing their meal. Students are not allowed to receive food items from commercial vendors at school. Students may not have snacks, breakfast, or lunch delivered to the school by a restaurant or third-party food delivery service i.e. GrubHub, DoorDash, Uber Eats, etc. More information on school meals including pricing, free and reduced meal applications, and answers to frequently asked questions can be found by visiting <https://www.hcbe.net/schoolnutrition>

Media Center

Our media center is open each day from 8:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Classes will visit the media center each week. Children may check out books during those hours. You are encouraged to visit the media center with your child. We will have a number of book fairs that you will also enjoy. Mrs. Callaway is our Media Specialist. You may reach her at (478) 929-7895 ext. 3040.

Medicine Given at School

Our school med tech helps monitor the health of our students. We are more than happy to administer medicine to your child when needed. You must send the medicine in the original container with the specific instructions for your child. If medicine must be given on a daily basis for more than two weeks, we need to have your doctor complete and sign a special form. This form will be sent home with your child, or you may pick it up in the office. It is suggested by our county nurse that when your child is sick and the doctor prescribes a medicine for your child to be taken three



times a day, this should be administered at home in the morning, when the child returns home from school, and at bedtime. **MEDICINE (INCLUDING COUGH DROPS) SHOULD NOT BE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL BY A STUDENT. MEDICINE WILL NOT BE SENT HOME WITH A STUDENT. PARENTS MUST BRING AND PICK UP MEDICINE FROM MED TECH.** Our Med Tech can be reached at (478) 929-7895 ext. 3044.

Parent Involvement & Volunteer Program

The faculty and staff at Pearl Stephens Elementary are committed to a high standard of excellence to ensure that our students receive the very best education. In order to accomplish this, it is essential for students, parents, and the school staff to work closely together in a relationship characterized by mutual respect. Any time you have concerns regarding your child's progress, please contact the school at (478) 929-7895. The following guidelines are offered to ensure your child's success:

We have a Board Policy for our Parent Volunteer Program. If you went through the orientation session and background check the previous year, you are still certified as a parent volunteer. **Please note that every 5 years a background check must be completed.** If you are new and have not been through our parent volunteer orientation, you will need to attend a meeting. These meetings will be announced in advance. The following areas require you to be cleared to be a parent volunteer: Mentoring Program, Tutoring, Clerical Work in the Classroom, Proctoring, Media Assistant (which includes helping at our book fairs), and Field Trip Chaperones. Contact our Assistant Principal for assistance.

Personal Possessions

Please make sure that children leave their valuable possessions at home. **No toys** should be brought to school. Toy guns, knives, and e-cigarettes are not allowed due to board policy. Consequences will be given for bringing items of this nature. The **Weapons Policy** will also be discussed in the Houston County Student Handbook that we will send home, at your request, with your child at the beginning of the year. Please carefully read the Houston County Student Handbook.

Students are not to bring Pokémon cards and other cards of this nature to school; nor are they to bring any non-instructional magazines. These have caused disruption during the instructional day.

Report Cards

Third through fifth grade students will receive report cards every nine weeks. Report card dates for the 2024-2025 school year are listed below:

- **October 16**
- **January 8**
- **March 19**
- **May 21**

Sign the report card promptly and return it to your child's teacher.



School Parties

Each class may have a class party before our Christmas Holidays and on or before the last day of school for the year.

There are only two (2) approved parties during the school year. They are as follows: Holiday party in December and the End-of-School Year party. Valentine's Day is celebrated at "break time" on February 14th. Birthday parties will not be celebrated at school nor will party invitations be distributed during instructional time, nor will staff assist in distributing invitations to private parties. Also, lists of students will not be provided due to BOE policy JHD, Student Social Events. Due to student food allergies, any treats should be store-bought and sealed. No homemade treats will be accepted. Any treats will be shared during lunch or break time.

Balloons/Gifts at School:

Students will not be allowed to accept flowers, balloons or other gifts sent to the school during the school day. Parents should not bring these items to the school.

School-wide Title I

Pearl Stephens Elementary is a School-wide Title I school which means it receives additional funding from the federal government. These additional monies are used to pay salaries, provide professional learning opportunities for staff to provide extended day tutorial programs for students, support parent activities, and purchase instructional materials. The school's staff solicits your support in working with us to provide a quality instructional program and a nurturing learning environment for our students. Please read and give your support to the Parent-Student-Teacher Compact. Please sign it, have your child sign it, and return it to your child's teacher. We will provide you with a copy of our Title I Parent Involvement Policy and other required Title I documents. Once received, please sign pertinent papers and return to your child's teacher.

Signed Papers

Signed papers will be sent home on **Wednesday** of each week. These include graded work, conduct reports, and school announcements. Parents are requested to review, sign, and return the papers to the teacher.

Recess/Break

Each class has a 15 minute recess period every day.

School Closings

If school is closed for any reason, it will be announced on television and also on radio stations. Please check the Houston County Student Handbook for vacation and holidays. We will also use our school crisis communication system if a school closing is to occur.



Title IX

Dr. Walter Stephens is the coordinator of any and all Title IX issues that might occur at Pearl Stephens Elementary.

Staff Extensions and Numbers

Andrea Toliver	Med Tech	478-929-7895 ext. 3044
Hyacinth Bauld	ATS Clerk	478-929-7895 ext. 3041
Cedric Wynn	Family Engagement Liaison	478-929-7895 ext. 3034
Anita Earthly	Secretary	478-929-7895 ext. 3042
Nicole Richburg	Lunchroom Manager	478-929-7895 ext. 3036
Sundae Azaga	Counselor	478-929-7895 ext. 3038
Dr. Karen Phillips	Assistant Principal of Discipline	478-929-7895 ext. 3037
Jessica Teemer	Assistant Principal of Instruction	478-929-7895 ext. 3039
Gloria Smith	Principal	478-929-7895 ext. 3046

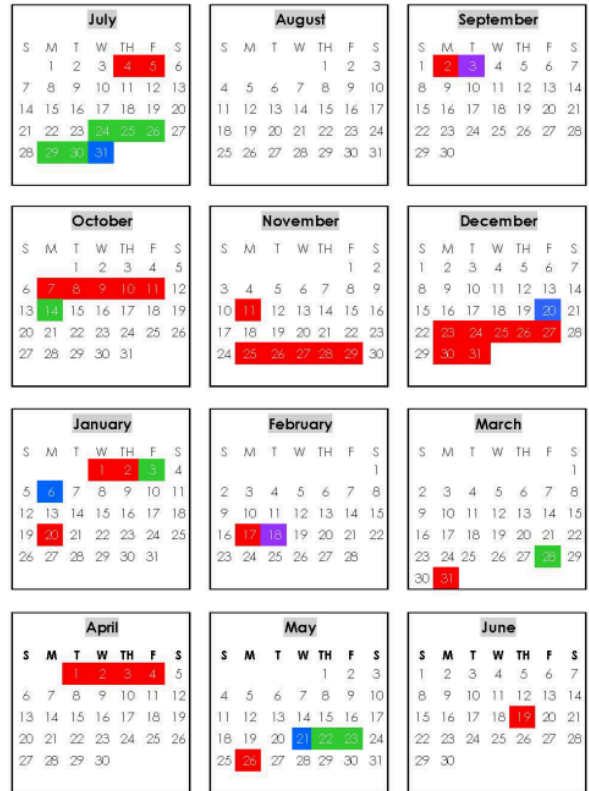


READING LEVELS BY GRADE

Kindergarten	1 st Grade	2 nd Grade	3 rd Grade	4 th Grade	5 th Grade
A					
B					
C	C				
D	D				
	E				
	F				
	G				
	H				
	I	I			
	J	J			
		K			
		L			
		M	M		
			N		
			O	O	
			P	P	
				Q	
				R	
				S	S
				T	T
					U
					V



July 24 – July 30, 2024	Pre-Planning/Site Collaboration (Opening Session July 24)
July 31, 2024	First Day of School
September 2, 2024	Labor Day Holiday
September 3, 2024	Distance Learning Day/Site Collaboration
October 7-10, 2024	Fall Holiday, Students & Teachers
October 11, 2024	Columbus Day Holiday (Observed)
October 14, 2024	Student Holiday/Site Collaboration
November 11, 2024	Veterans Day Holiday
November 25-29, 2024	Thanksgiving Holiday
December 20, 2024	Last Day of Semester – ½ Day
December 23 – January 2	Christmas & New Year's Holiday
January 3, 2025	Student Holiday/Site Collaboration
January 6, 2025	Second Semester Begins
January 20, 2025	Marlin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
February 17, 2025	Presidents' Day Holiday
February 18, 2025	Distance Learning Day/Site Collaboration
March 28, 2025	Student Holiday/Site Collaboration
March 31-April 4, 2025	Spring Break
May 21, 2025	Last Day of Semester – ½ Day
May 22-23, 2025	Post-Planning/Site Collaboration
May 23-24, 2025	High School Graduation
May 26, 2025	Memorial Day Holiday



First & Last Day of Semesters	Pre/Post-Planning & Collaboration
Holidays/System Shutdown	Distance Learning/Site Collaboration

Approved July 18, 2023 by the Board of Education

Progress Reports & Report Card Dates

Report cards are issued as follows, based on 180 days of school:

- **Elementary School:** every nine weeks (about 45 days)

Elementary School

Nine Weeks Period	End Date	Date Report Issued
Progress Report, Day 23	August 30	September 4
Report Card (9 weeks), Day 46	October 3	October 16
Progress report, Day 65	November 7	November 13
Report Card (9 weeks), Day 90	December 20	January 8
Progress report, Day 111	February 4	February 12
Report Card (9 weeks), Day 137	March 13	March 19
Progress Report, Day 157	April 18	April 23
Report Card (9 weeks), Day 180	May 21	May 21



Testing

All students in grades third-fifth will take the state-mandated Georgia Milestone Assessment System (GMAS) test in the spring. These test results will be sent home as soon as we receive them. Our Assistant Principal for Instruction, Mrs. Teemer, will be glad to discuss test results with you. You will receive notices of exact test dates and the dates are also included in the Houston County Student Handbook as well.

2024-2025 Houston County District Assessment Calendar DRAFT	
Adjustments in the assessment calendar may be necessary due to system needs or state requirements	
August 5-30	i-Ready Diagnostic
August 12-30	MAP Growth Fall Administration
August 5-September 13	HCLI Assessment
January 6-17	i-Ready Diagnostic
January 8-February 28	ACCESS for ELLS/ALT ACCESS for ELLs
January 13-31	MAP Growth Winter Administration
March 24-May 5	GAA 2.0 Administration
April 16--23	Georgia Milestones EOG Main Administration
May 13-May 14	i-Ready Diagnostic



ABSENCE NOTE

This note is due within three (3) days following an absence whether excused or unexcused. Failure to do so will result in the absence(s) remaining unexcused. Only students who have excused absence(s) may make up work or tests. Excessive/extended absences due to illness must be justified by a physician's statement. Parents will be allowed to send in ten (10) parent notes for the entire year. After the tenth parent note, each absence must be accompanied by a doctor's excuse.

Name of student: _____ Homeroom: _____
My daughter/son was absent on the following date(s): _____

The reason for the absence(s) was:

Personal Illness Death in Family Religious Holiday Doctor's Appointment
Other: _____
Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

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Other: _____
Parent signature: _____ Date: _____



Student Organizations

Pearl Stephens Elementary will offer several student organization membership opportunities for students in grades 3 – 5 that will meet before and/or after school. Please note that students participating in the clubs at Pearl Stephens Elementary must be picked up **promptly** after each club meeting. No students will be permitted to walk home unsupervised. Students' behavior must be exemplary. Students in Grades 3 – 5 will receive a club information packet in late August listing the meeting dates & times and containing parental permission letters. **Parental permission is a requirement for participation.** See list below of all the Warrior Clubs.

LIST OF WARRIOR CLUBS

Name of Club- AMBASSADORS OF PEARL/ANCHORED4LIFE

Faculty Sponsors/Contact- Ms. Wiley, Mrs. Kirksey

Membership Requirement- Teacher recommendation (two students from every class)

Financial Obligations/Dues- Students will be invited to attend a team building event in the Fall. Students will be required to purchase a special shirt to wear for certain events or meeting days.

Approx. cost \$20

Mission/Purpose- Ambassadors will use resources from Anchored4life to help our students with transitioning. This includes students new to our school, moving from our school, and students with deployed parents. Team leaders will receive training on giving tours of our building to new students and how to administer resources to students who are moving or have a parent deployed. Other topics that Ambassadors will share with students include homework skills, dealing with fear, and how to stay healthy. Ambassadors are selected by their leadership abilities they display in the school setting. They will help facilitate special programs such as Awards Day and special guest appearances.

Ambassadors will meet at once a month and will be required to deliver information to their class. Team leaders will meet twice a month (once with the Ambassadors and separately with only the team leaders)

Name of Club- Jr. BETA CLUB

Faculty Sponsor/Contact- Ms. Harrell and Dr. Randall

Financial Obligations- \$20 fee

Membership Requirement- 4th and 5th grade students who have exemplary achievement (scored a Distinguish (level 4) on the 2024 Reading GMAS) and have worthy, moral, and ethical character (no PFI, ISS, ASD, or OSS) will be eligible to join the PSES Junior Beta Club.

Name of Club-COOKING Club

Faculty Sponsors- Mrs. Davis, Ms. Gresham, and Mrs. Mabry

Membership Requirement- 4th-5th

Financial Obligations- \$30.00 for cooking items

Mission/Purpose- To promote the lifetime skill of healthy cooking. Students will have an opportunity to cook familiar and unfamiliar cuisine. Students will apply for membership through a persuasive essay and teacher recommendation.



Name of Club- **CHARMING PEARLS**

Faculty Sponsors- Mrs. Spires and Mrs. Garza

Membership Requirement- 3rd-5th

Financial Obligations- \$30.00 fee for new members to include Starter Kit; \$15.00 fee for previous members.

Mission/Purpose- To develop the skills necessary to learn how to make jewelry such as necklaces and bracelets. Also, basic sewing skills will be included. Students will be required to be creative and finish any creations at home if needed.

Name of Club- **DANCING PEARLS**

Faculty Sponsors- Mrs. Bivins and Ms. McGriff

Financial Obligation- \$20 fee

Mission/Purpose- The mission of our elementary school dance team is to provide a supportive and dynamic environment where 4th and 5th-grade students can explore and express their creativity through dance. We are dedicated to fostering self-confidence, academic excellence, and teamwork by integrating dance into our students' holistic education. Through structured practice, performances, and collaborative projects, we strive to empower each student to reach their full potential both on and off the dance floor.

Name of Club-**ILLUSTRIOUS GIRLS OF PEARLS**

Faculty Sponsors- Mrs. Alexander, Mrs. Davis, and Mrs. Azaga

Financial obligations-\$20 for a t-shirt and snacks

Mission/ Purpose- The purpose of this mentorship club is to offer the mentees a safe space to talk and discuss ways they can become their best selves. The mentors will offer tools and resources for each girl to build their self-esteem, confidence, and self-assurance academically, socially, mentally, and emotionally. They will meet monthly and undergo a series of activities, discussions, observations, and visits from various ladies from the community. In March, the girls will have an opportunity to invite their moms to a mother daughter tea to celebrate their growth as an illustrious girl of Pearl.

Name of Club- **PARTNERS CLUB**

Faculty Sponsors- Mrs. Brown, Ms. Denk, and Mrs. Mabry

Membership Requirement- Must complete an application. Invitations will be given to 4th and 5th grade students who are chosen upon teacher recommendations

Financial Obligations- \$15.00. Students will receive a t-shirt to wear during events.

Mission/Purpose- The Partners Club is a program that partners students with and without disabilities together for various learning activities. This club is about inclusion and promoting respect and acceptance for all individuals.

Planned Activities- Students will assist students with disabilities in various instructional lessons, Specials, Field Day, and different Special Olympic events/trips. Operate the Warrior Cart. Hall monitors. There will be monthly meetings.



Name of Club- WARRIOR BEATS

Faculty Sponsor- Ms. Wiley

Membership requirements- Open to 4th and 5th grade students Warrior Beats are selected through tryouts in the fall. Information will be sent home to interested students. Code of conduct will be given to be followed.

Financial obligations- Money will be required for the cost of shirt and tie/scarf for performances.

Mission/Purpose-Warrior Beats will be learning bucket drumming songs and techniques. Students will be held accountable for their grades and behavior in all classes to remain in Warrior Beats. We will participate in December and May and periodically for in school events such as pep rallies and special events.

Planned Activities- Various performances to be scheduled throughout the school year.

Name of Club- CURIOSITY CREW

Faculty Sponsors- Ms. Harrell, Dr. Randall, and Mrs. Smith

Financial Obligations- \$25 for materials

Mission/Purpose- To help students enhance their critical thinking skills and recognize the intersection of art, science, technology, engineering, and math.

Name of Club- ACADEMIC BOWL

Faculty Sponsors- Ms. Harrell and Dr. Randall

Membership requirements-Open to 4th and 5th grade students selected through tryouts. Information will be sent home with interested students.

Financial obligations-Money will be required for the cost of the shirt

Mission/Purpose- Academic Bowl is a knowledge based game where 2 teams of 5 students each face off against each other answering questions covering a wide range of topics such as math, science, social studies, language arts, music, art, and popular culture. Academic Bowl provides important experiences with teamwork and preparation.

