

# CASTLEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## STUDENT HANDBOOK 2023-2024



*“Teaching Today’s Cubs to be Tomorrow’s Tigers”*

**THIS HANDBOOK BELONGS TO:**

---

(Student Name)

*Please read this handbook carefully. Policies and procedures outlined in the handbook will be followed and enforced to ensure a safe and productive learning environment for all Castlen Cubs.*

# CASTLEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

9960 School House Rd.

Grand Bay, AL 36541 Telephone (251)865-6733

Fax (251) 221-1099

## *Welcome to Castlen Elementary!*

**Castlen's Purpose:** The purpose of Castlen Elementary School and Mobile County Public Schools is to equip and empower College and Career Ready Graduates. We believe high expectations are essential as we enable all students to be successful. We also believe safe, innovative, and equitable environments enhance student learning. Our focus is to build and maintain shared responsibility of students, families, and our school in this endeavor. At Castlen, we ensure equitable access to resources and support based on student need, are bias for or against an individual group that interferes with impartial judgement and strive to implement practices that shape and sustain the desired institutional culture. Throughout each school day, learners will be given many opportunities to collaborate with partners or in small groups to learn from one another in a setting that is open to all opinions and suggestions. Teachers work together to model this behavior for their students extensively. This allows learners to understand our purpose as educators and to use the tools as they learn and grow throughout the school year. Teachers allow students opportunities to set their own goals and to provide guidance and support as students work to reach those goals at their own level. Learners have access and choice in academic and non-academic opportunities available according to grade levels by showing motivation, curiosity, and excitement about their learning. Learners are given ample support when encountering barriers related to accessing academic and non-academic experiences most suited to their individual needs and well-being. Learners are also encouraged to express their needs and interests and to give input into their instructional activities. We strive to be a school that not only has high academic expectations but one that also will allow our students to set high expectations for themselves through a variety of rigorous and engaging opportunities and programs. Respect for the diversity of cultures, backgrounds, and abilities are present in the school's culture and learning environments. The presence and contributions of the global community are included in the curricular content and instructional practices. Throughout the school year, we invite and request responses from surveys as we collaborate with one another to identify priorities and analyze data. Learners are involved in identifying their learning targets while monitoring their progress. Student activities are constructive and purposeful and allow them to develop independence and responsibility. This approach allows our students the opportunity to collaborate, build social skills, solve problems and think critically. Staff members demonstrate commitment to learners' academic and non-academic needs and interests. Our school practices, processes, and decisions are consistent with and based on stated values. A formal structure is planned and implemented to promote a culture and climate in which learners receive supports from adults and peers. Interactions between both parties demonstrate respect, trust, and concern for one another's well-being. The structure and processes at Castlen are documented and communicated so that all stakeholders know what to do and expect in everyday circumstances. Our structure and processes include emergency and contingency plans that support responses to both incremental and sudden change. The goal at Castlen is to create an atmosphere that promotes learners' lifelong skills through engaging experiences for their next steps in learning and future success through building skills in creativity, curiosity, risk taking, collaboration, and design thinking. We want our learners to pursue opportunities that may not always result in success, knowing they will always be supported.

*If at any time, you have questions or concerns, please call the school office for assistance or clarification.*

PRINCIPAL

*Laura L. Dickens*

Principal's Email Address: [ldickens@mcpss.com](mailto:ldickens@mcpss.com)

*Castlen Elementary School Website: <http://castlen.mce.schoolinsites.com/>*

## ALL ABOUT CASTLEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



### *Castlen's Vision*

Castlen Elementary students will be career-minded individuals who are proficient in all academic areas and who will graduate from high school fully prepared to enter college or the global workforce. They will use self-discipline and motivation while benefitting from parental and community involvement, with a staff who fosters an enthusiasm for learning.

### *Castlen's Creed*

*As a proud Castlen Cub, I believe education is the key to success. I will do my best to learn and allow others to learn by being a respectful, honest, caring, and responsible student.*

### *Castlen's School Colors*

Red, White, & Blue

### *Castlen's Mascot*

Tiger Cubs

### *Castlen's Motto*

"Teaching Today's Cubs to be Tomorrow's Tigers"

## CASTLEN'S DAILY SCHEDULE

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 6:50 A.M. | Breakfast  |
| 7:05 A.M. | Beginning of school  |
| 7:20 A.M. | Students are tardy after this time                                   |
| 1:45 P.M. | Early Dismissals stop at this time to secure the halls for dismissal |
| 2:20 P.M. | Dismissal of bus students and day care riders ONLY                   |
| 2:25 P.M. | Dismissal of all car riders  |

**Parents must pick up all car riders by 2:40 p.m.**, except in emergency situations. If there is an emergency, contact the office at 865-6733. We do not offer after school care for any reason.

### Morning Procedures

- **Students should not exit cars until 6:50 a.m. There will be no supervision by school staff prior to this time.**
- Car traffic should pull as far up as possible to avoid backing up traffic at Castlen and Grand Bay Middle.
- For safety purposes, students must exit from the right side of the vehicle due to safety reasons.
- Right turn only when exiting the horseshoe.
- **PARENTS SHOULD REFRAIN FROM EXITING THEIR VEHICLE TO WALK THEIR CHILD TO CLASS EACH MORNING. SCHOOL PERSONNEL WILL BE ON DUTY IN THE HALLWAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD SHOULD THEY NEED FURTHER ASSISTANCE.**

**Do not unload students on the street (School House Road) or in the teacher's parking lots. There are teachers on duty in the horseshoe only. Students may only walk with parents in the parking lot. They may not be dropped off near the curb of the parking lot or in any other location near the parking lot and allowed to walk in by themselves.**

## Afternoon Procedures

We expect our children and parents to follow the correct procedures that will insure a safe and expedient departure.

- ALL PARENTS PICKING UP STUDENTS MUST COME THROUGH THE HORSESHOE. Hang the nametag of the student(s) you are picking up on your review mirror.
- **STUDENTS WILL NOT BE DISMISSED TO PARENTS PARKING ON THE STREET OR IN THE PARKING LOT AND WALKING UP TO THE DISMISSAL AREA. THIS IS TOO DANGEROUS AT THIS BUSY TIME OF THE DAY.**
- Teachers walk students outside to be ready to load at 2:20 p.m.
- Traffic must pull all the way to the front of the carpool line at all loading times.
- To avoid dangers, please turn car engine OFF.
- PLEASE do not exit your vehicle. Teachers on duty will use the name tags to bring students to you. DO NOT leave your car to come and get your child. We must ensure the safety of all students by bringing them to your car. It is not safe for adults to enter the dismissal area at any time. If your child is not brought to you, please let the teacher on duty know and they will retrieve the student for you.
- PLEASE refrain from having a conference with the teacher at this time as this slows down the dismissal process for those that are trying to pick up students at other local schools.
- Children will sit with their grade level until they are called and given permission to load. Brothers and sisters must stay with their individual grade levels.
- Students load under the protection of the loading signals. Please pay attention and stop when asked.
- Right turn only when exiting the horseshoe in front of Castlen.
- Please remember to refrain from using your cell phone during carpool. Smoking is also not allowed

on school property. This includes the areas for dismissal.

- Turn the volume of your radio down.

## Changes in Dismissals

If there are to be changes in your child's regular dismissal procedure, it **MUST BE IN WRITING.**

- Discuss changes with your child prior to arriving at school in the morning.
- Send a **written note** including child's name and date of dismissal change to YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER.

## Early Dismissals

Early dismissals are unexcused unless the student is sick or verification of a doctors', dentists', or court appointment has been provided within 3 days. Students being sent home from first aid due to illness are excused. Six or more early dismissals are referred to the MCPSS Attendance Officer.

### **EARLY DISMISSALS WILL NOT BE GRANTED**

**AFTER 1:45 PM.** Students will not receive an attendance award if they get 3 or more early dismissals in a quarter. Instruction does not end until 2:20. It is vital that your child stays until the end of the school day to receive all of their instruction for the school day. Please refrain from early dismissals unless it is a true emergency.

## Tardy to School

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to assure that their children arrive on time each day. Any student who enters the classroom after 7:20 a.m. is considered tardy. Students arriving at school after 7:20 a.m. must be escorted to the office by a parent to be signed in and receive a tardy slip. **Six or more tardies are referred to the MCPSS Attendance officer.**

## **LUNCH AND BREAKFAST AT CASTLEN**

Students at Castlen can receive two free hot meals each day. Menus are distributed monthly. Students may elect to bring their lunches from home. Lunches brought from home **MAY NOT** be heated in any microwave at school. If you send fast foods, you must re-wrap the food off campus and send it in a lunch box or plain bag. Carbonated drinks are not allowed in the cafeteria or for snack in the classroom, nor are glass containers.

**Breakfast and lunch for all students will be free of charge this school year.**

Prices for meals are as follows:

Adult Visitor Breakfast

\$ 1.50

Adult Visitor Lunch

\$ 3.50

Holiday Meals-Adult Visitor

\$ 5.00

Holiday Meals-Visitor 10 years & under

\$ 3.50

\*Prices are subject to change.



**STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Laws of Our School Community

A school is a community and its rules and regulations are, in essence, the laws of that community. All those enjoying the rights of participation in the school community must also accept the responsibilities that go along with those rights. All students have a fundamental right to a public education, provided they accept the corresponding responsibility to join with other members of the school community in respecting the rights and responsibilities of others in that community.

The system-wide student code of conduct is designed to encourage students to accept responsibility for their actions. When a student does not respect the rights of others or acts irresponsibly, consequences for such behavior must occur in order for the student to recognize the seriousness of the offense. The code of conduct will be followed, exclusively.

This year, after two "B" offenses, parents will be referred to the Effective Parenting Program as explained in the Code of Conduct.

Because we want Castlen to be a safe, orderly and joyful environment for all students, fighting will not be tolerated. We are trying to teach our students other ways to solve problems. Also, we want our students to know that we, the adults, are here to help. That's part of our job! It is our aim to resolve all conflicts. An adult will be summoned immediately if there is a conflict or a problem. This year, the school system is putting a

program in place for parents who are having issues with their children. After two offenses, parents and students will be referred to the Effective Parenting Program which consists of a series of workshops for families in need of assistance.

**Expected Lunch Room Behavior for Students:**

1. Enter the lunchroom quietly.
2. Once you are seated, you may eat your lunch.
3. No talking during the first ten minutes of lunch. Your teacher will signal when you are allowed to whisper quietly.
4. Stay seated until you are dismissed.
5. Be sure to pick up all trash in your area and empty your tray in a quiet and orderly manner.

**Expected Hall Behavior for Students:**

- Walk quietly on the right side of the hall.
- Have respect for your surroundings – pick up trash, paper, pencils, and dispose of properly.
- Yelling, running, and interrupting other classes will not be tolerated.

**Bus Dismissal/Behavior**

- Bus students are to walk and stay with teachers until their teacher dismisses students to their bus.
- Once on the bus, students are to obey the bus driver and abide by the bus driver's rules.

**Castlen Bus Regulations**

Students who live two or more miles from school are eligible for bus transportation. Students may ride their assigned buses only (physically handicapped students are exempt from this law). Specifically, students may not ride home with other students for parties, sleepovers, etc. The bus driver will be required to report any unacceptable conduct to the principal.

Students not complying with bus rules on the bus or at the bus stop will be suspended from riding the bus. Parents are responsible for student transportation if their child is suspended or expelled from riding the bus.

## **Bus Expectations**

### **Students will:**

1. Board and exit the buses in a quiet and orderly manner.
2. Remain seated when traveling on the bus.
3. Wait at approved bus stops in an orderly manner.
4. Be picked up and unloaded only at approved bus stops.
5. Refrain from disturbing the flow of passengers.
6. Use soft voices while on the bus.
7. Respect the rights and property of others.
8. Abide by all MCPSS Discipline Policies and Castlen standards.
9. Be respectful and courteous to the bus driver and peers.

## **Castlen Bus Safety Restrictions**

### **Students will:**

- Refrain from distracting the bus driver with noise and unruly conduct.
- Refrain from putting heads and hands outside the windows.
- Not yell or throw objects from bus windows.
- Not fight, use obscene language, or gestures.
- Not bring weapons, alcohol, or illegal drugs on the bus.
- Not eat or drink on the bus.

### **Parents are:**

- Encouraged to supervise students at bus stops.
- Not allowed to board buses.
- Not allowed to follow closely behind buses.

All rules of the Student Handbook and Code of Conduct apply to conduct of students while waiting for, loading, riding, or unloading the school bus.

## **Riding the bus is a privilege.**



## **Parent Responsibilities**

1. Parents are encouraged to foster an environment in and out of school that nurtures quality education.
2. Parents must encourage his/her child to respect the rights and individuality of others.
3. Parents must ensure student's prompt and regular compliance with attendance rules and other school procedures.
4. Parents are encouraged to attend teacher/parent conferences, PTO Meetings, and Parent Meetings.
5. Parents are encouraged to work with the school to see that the student completes his/her assignments and show responsibility for school property: homework, reading Accelerated Reader books, special projects, library book return, respect for issued textbooks, etc.

## **Parent Conferences**

All teachers are required to hold two parent conferences per year to discuss students' progress. However, parents are free to request conferences at any time of the year by sending a note to the teacher. **Conferences with teachers are ONLY held at scheduled times.**



## **HEALTH INFORMATION**

### **Immunizations**

All children must present an Alabama Immunization Certificate to be enrolled in any public school in Alabama. Immunization forms are also required for second dose measles vaccine at designated grade levels.

### **Medications**

The first aid room is staffed our school nurse. If medication is to be administered at school, a Medical Permission Form must be completed and filed. All medicine must be delivered by an adult to the office. The container has to be labeled by the pharmacy as to the doctor's orders. Only prescribed medicines may be given by school personnel.

To protect all children from taking medication belonging to another child, no child may keep medication on their person at school unless a current (within the school year) written request from a physician is on file. The Mobile County School System does not allow school officials to dispense over the counter/non-prescription medications without a written request from a physician and a bottle or box labeled by the pharmacist. This includes:

- Inhalers or Epi-pens
- Cough drops
- Medicated Chap-Stik
- Tylenol or other analgesic (Advil, Aleve, etc.)
- Vitamins
- Food supplements
- Other over the counter medications

### **Students in the Hospital**

Students who have been in the hospital or emergency room as a result of an injury or illness, must have doctor's clearance before returning to school. Parents/guardians must provide a copy of the doctor's release to school office and the PE Department if physical activity is a concern.

If doctor's orders prohibit physical activity for an unlimited amount of time, then a release must be also provided before the student is allowed to participate in PE again.

### **WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME DUE TO ILLNESS**

Please call the school nurse at 865-6733 if you have concerns and before sending your child to school.

- Fever – 100° or higher – stay for 24 hours after fever has gone without medication
- Vomiting/Diarrhea your child should stay home if he/she has vomited or had diarrhea prior to the start of the school day and remain home for 24 hours after the symptoms have subsided
- Pinkeye conjunctivitis can be very contagious. If the white of your child's eye is red and has a thick yellow/ greenish colored drainage, keep your child home.
- Head Lice –Students identified as having head lice or nits are sent home that day for treatment. All nits must be removed prior to re-admission through the office.
- Impetigo infected sores – must be treated by a physician for 24 hours

- Ringworm must be covered while the child is at school. Ringworm of the head will need to be evaluated by a physician.
- Strep Throat: if your child has a diagnosed case of strep throat he/she should stay home for 24 hours after antibiotic therapy has been started by a physician.

**Attendance Policy:** Students will be allowed to have 8 parent notes. Parent notes are to be written and sent to the teacher within 2 days of the absence. There will be no parent notes accepted after this number has been met. All other absences must be a doctor's note or excused by the principal. Otherwise, the absences will be unexcused.

\*Perfect attendance will be recognized quarterly. Students will not receive an award if they have any absences or a combination of more than 3 early dismissals.

***It is extremely important that all children are in school on time and stay for the entire school day every day. Students who are consistently absent during instructional time miss valuable information and may eventually fall behind their classmates.***



# CASTLEN UNIFORM POLICY

## 2023-2024



All Mobile County Public School children are required to wear uniforms as mandated by the State of Alabama. To comply with this policy, the Uniform Committee at Castlen Elementary has chosen the following uniform attire:

### Boys:

- Solid red or white shirt polo, solid white oxford style (must have collar), or any red, white, gray or blue Castlen t-shirt purchased from the school—NO other colors are allowed.
- Navy pants and knee length navy shorts (with belt loops).
- Brown, black or navy belt
- Tennis shoes with rubber soles only (no boots, slip on shoes, cleats, etc.)

### Girls:

- Solid red or white polo shirt, solid oxford style shirt (must have collar), or any red, white, gray or blue Castlen t-shirt purchased from the school—NO other colors are allowed.
- Navy pants, knee length navy shorts (with belt loops), or navy skorts, skirts and jumpers (knee length).
- Brown, black, or navy belt
- Knee length navy Castlen plaid skirt or jumper
- Tights may be worn under school uniform shorts, skirts, or skorts.
- Tennis shoes with rubber soles only (no boots, slip on shoes, cleats, etc.)

### Additional Notes: Read Carefully

- Gray, red, white, navy, or black sweatshirts are allowed. All outwear should be gray, red, white, navy, or black in color.
- Gray, red, white, navy, or black cardigan style sweaters are allowed.
- Gray, red, white, navy, or black jackets or windbreakers are allowed.
- Spirit t-shirts (red, white, gray, or blue) sold by Castlen may be worn Monday through Friday. NO other colors are allowed.
- No jewelry of any type except for stud earrings and watches.
- No makeup.
- Fingernails must be student's natural nails, no artificial nails.
- No ball caps or hats of any type are acceptable.
- No sweatshirts, sweaters, or jackets are allowed that are not approved colors in the building.
- No dark colored jeans. Leggings/tights used as pants are not allowed.
- Students who do not wear appropriate footwear suitable for gym floors or P.E. fields will not be allowed to participate in P.E. activities that day due to safety reasons.

Shirts may be monogrammed in navy stitching with Castlen only. Total monogramming should be between 1-1/2 inches to 3 inches long.

Castlen Spirit Shirts may be worn to school Monday through Friday.

**The principal shall have the authority to interpret dress code and make case by case determinations for the appropriateness of dress which is questionable, or which is not covered under this policy.**

***Thank you for making sure that your child is dressed in full uniform each day!***



## FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are educational experiences that occur during school hours. The excursions are planned by a teacher to correlate with the regular classroom instructional program. In planning a field trip, the following guidelines and procedures should be followed:

- Our legal responsibility requires that we obtain parental permission for each field trip. Students may not participate without a permission slip.
- Trips that require pupils to pay entrance fees, or any other monies are kept to a minimum. \*No money will be accepted after 9am daily (in the classroom or the office).
- It is recommended that one adult accompany each group of ten children to assist in supervision. However, additional supervision may be needed depending upon the activity and/or method of transportation.
- Students should be made aware of the importance of behavior and the image we project on excursions from school.
- Students must wear school uniform on all field trips.
- No refunds are given when students are unable to attend field trips. Buses/tickets are reserved and paid for in advance.
- Parents must sign the chaperone contract prior to attending the field trip as a chaperone.
- Student with major behavior issues on campus will not be allowed to attend field trips due to safety reasons.

### Field Trip Chaperone Responsibilities:

- Parents must adhere to MCPSS policies when chaperoning field trips with students and abide by Castlen school policies.
- Chaperones may be assigned students to monitor during field trips.
- At all times chaperones are expected to be aware of students' whereabouts.
- Younger or older siblings may not attend field trips.
- Chaperones are expected to abide by rules set by field trip sites and support teachers by enforcing rules.
- **Smoking** (including vaping) or the use of alcohol is not permitted on field trips.
- Students and/or chaperones will not be allowed to purchase weapons (replicas or toys) while on field trip excursions.

Administrators may determine that a chaperone be excluded for the following reasons:

- exhibiting inappropriate behavior (including inappropriate clothing)
- those unable to stay for the duration of the field trip
- parents wishing to include other small children and babies

In addition, parents must not talk on cell phones when supervising students. Full attention must be on student safety at all times.

### Birthdays, Balloons, and Flower Deliveries

Students may not receive balloons, flowers, chocolate, etc. during school hours. Adequate staff is not available to make such deliveries. Classroom interruptions are discouraged as to protect instructional time. In addition, balloons are hazardous on school buses.

### Birthday Parties

Birthday parties are not allowed in classrooms. Instructional time cannot be interrupted for student birthday parties. Parents may send a store-bought snack with students in the morning to share with classmates during snack time if they have notified the teacher beforehand. Birthday party invitations may not be given out at school, unless the entire class is invited. All treats sent to school must follow the federal guidelines for child nutrition.

### Snacks

Students may bring a snack from home or purchase them at school. We will sell snacks to the students from the office beginning on the first day of school. When sending snacks from home, you are encouraged to adhere to the MCPSS Wellness Program. Please be reminded that carbonated beverages are not permitted. Students may not eat lunch during snack time—it is snack time, not lunch time. Please be mindful of what you pack for their snack.

### Class Parties

MCPSS policy states that each class is allowed two parties during the school year. Castlen parties are scheduled for Christmas holidays and at the end of the year. Teachers will work with room mothers and volunteers in making arrangements for details of the parties. Parties are held for one hour on campus. **Please remember to choose healthy items for snacks that are store bought. Due to the large number of food allergies, all food items brought to the school from home must be store-bought or they will not be served to the students.**

**ALL MONEY DUE FOR FIELD TRIPS MUST BE TURNED IN BEFORE THE DEADLINE!**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Homework**

Kindergarten through second grade students should have no more than 30 minutes of homework each night. Third through fifth grades should have no more than 60 minutes per night. Students should read every night for at least 30 minutes (K – 2) and 60 minutes (3 – 5).

### **Interventions**

Our teachers provide every opportunity for students to be successful. Castlen will also offer two “Extended Day” sessions this year. If your child is struggling with academics, please contact his/her teacher and find out what additional interventions your child is eligible for at our school.

### **Problem Solving Team (PST)**

The PST has the primary function of ensuring effective interventions and accommodations for students who are having difficulty with classroom performance. The team meets once a month and reviews interventions in place. The team determines the success or lack of success of each intervention and amends the plans for each student submitted. The teacher tracks the student’s performance. The objective is to provide corrective interventions that are effective and enhance student achievement. The team members are:

Laura Dickens, Principal  
Vicky Donald, Intervention Teacher  
Alicia Clevenger, Counselor

### **Schoology**

Parents will receive a password and directions to access grades from home. Teachers are required to post grades weekly so that parents, students and administrators can check on progress. Please check your child’s progress and notify teachers if you have a concern. Paper progress reports will be sent home every four weeks for parents to sign. Please notify your teacher if you do not receive one in a timely manner.

### **Devices**

Older students may bring cell phones to school to use for before and after school needs. ALL cell phones are required to be turned off during the school day and are to remain in your child’s backpack.

Students who choose to use school issued devices at school must have an Acceptable Use Policy form on file with the classroom teacher. Please read all rules prior to signing the form. Castlen is not responsible for lost or damaged devices.

### **Volunteers on Campus**

Our volunteers at Castlen are *very important* to us. Please know that we encourage and appreciate volunteers at the school. Volunteer opportunities are based on teacher needs. Please contact your child’s classroom teacher and notify them if you would like to volunteer if a need arises. They will notify you with a specific time and date that the additional help is needed. Volunteers on campus should follow the schools lead on expected behavior while on campus. Volunteers are not allowed to enter another classroom and pose a disruption to the learning process.

### **Visitors on Campus**

**ALL visitors on campus MUST sign in at the front office each time they arrive on campus. Due to safety reasons, administrators and office personnel must always know who is on campus before, during and after the school day. There are no exceptions to this policy.**