

STRAUGHN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

"WHERE THE PROUD STRAUGHN TIGER TRADITION BEGINS"



2024-2025 STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK

Includes Covington County Schools' Code of Student Conduct 2024-2025

29324 Straughn School Road
Andalusia, Alabama 36421-5582
Phone: 334-427-1311 Fax: 334-427-1401
<https://ses.cov.k12.al.us>

School begins at 7:45 a.m. and dismisses at 3:00 p.m.

Covington County Board of Education

807 C.C. Baker Avenue
Andalusia, Alabama 36421
(334) 222-7571

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Mr. Jeff Bailey, Vice President
Mr. James Prestwood
Mr. James L. Rodgers
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Mr. Shannon Driver, Superintendent of Education

Straughn Elementary School

Bettye Anne Older, Principal
Daniel Rodgers, Assistant Principal
Sara Williams, Bookkeeper
Ann Grantham, Secretary
Mandi Morris, Counselor
Monica Fallin, Library Media Specialist
Terri Watson, School Nurse

SES Advisory Committee

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Stacy Varner, Teacher & Awards Day Program Chairperson
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Sara Williams, Bookkeeper

Straughn School Celebrates 100 Years



During the 2024-2025 school year Straughn School (Elementary, Middle and High) will celebrate its centennial- *100 years of educational excellence!*

Straughn School's first high school diplomas were awarded to a class of nine (9) students in May 1925. These graduates were Madilyn (Mills) Adams, Lorenzo Clark, Claud Cope, Lela Cope, Malcolm Croft, Willie Foye Grant, Lois (Wells) Jones, Wease (Osteen) Rose, and Audrey Williams.

The first graduation service was an evening event, and in the absence of an auditorium, graduates and speakers were seated on a temporary platform outdoors. The honorable Lister Hill, then a U.S. Representative and later a U.S. Senator for many years, delivered the first graduation address.

Sources: A Brief History of Straughn School through June 1986 by Izola Williams Chesser, Class of 1927, and A Continuation of the History of Straughn School through September 2012 by Kelley Carter, Class of 1961.

Welcome to Straughn Elementary School

Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians:

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year – a year that we’ll be celebrating Straughn School’s 100 Years of Educational Excellence! The faculty, staff, and students of Straughn Elementary School join us in welcoming you, and in sharing the pride we have in our school and our community. What an exciting time to be a Straughn Tiger! Straughn Elementary School has a long tradition of academic excellence (even before 1925), and it is our hope that during this school year this excellence will result in your child’s achievement of his/her highest potential.

Open and clear communication between school and home is important to student success. The pages of this handbook are filled with important information regarding school system and school policies and procedures. Parents/guardians and students should review this Handbook together. If you have any questions please call the school office at (334) 427-1311. The Covington County Schools’ Code of Student Conduct 2024-2025 is contained within this handbook beginning on page 28 and can also be found at the back of the CCS calendar.

We welcome your participation and support during the school year and encourage your participation in the Straughn Elementary School Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO). We look forward to celebrating 100 additional years of educational excellence at Straughn!

It’s great to be a Straughn Tiger in 2024-2025!

Bettye Anne Older, Principal

Daniel Rodgers, Assistant Principal

Mission Statement

The mission of the Covington County School System is to provide students with the skills and knowledge to become respectful, responsible, and resourceful members of society.

Vision Statement

“Respectful, Responsible, and Resourceful”

Accreditation

Straughn Elementary School is accredited through the Covington County School System district AdvancED accreditation. Straughn Elementary School is a federal Title I school, an Alabama Reading Initiative school, a First Class Pre-K grant recipient, a Be Healthy School grant recipient through BlueCross BlueShield of Alabama, and former federal 21st Century Community Learning Center.

Equal Opportunity Policy: It is the official policy of Covington County School System that no person shall, on the ground of race, sex, religion, color, creed, national origin, handicap, or age, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any program, activity, or employment and provide access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Inquiries of complaints regarding compliance with federal regulations on 504, Title I, Title II, and Title IX may be directed to Mr. Chris Thomasson, Federal Programs Coordinator (chris.thomasson@cov.k12.al.us) or Kelly McCollough, 504 Coordinator, Covington County Board of Education, 807 C.C. Baker Avenue, Andalusia, AL. 36421-2137, (334) 222-7571

2024-2025 School Calendar

Open Enrollment	July 29-31, 2024
Inservice/Professional Development Days	August 5-9
Student/Parent Orientation	August 9, 2024; 8:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.
First Full Day of School for Students	August 12, 2024
Labor Day Holiday	September 2
Fall School Pictures	September 3
National Grandparents' Day	September 9 (TBD)
Constitution Day 2024	September 17
SES 101 and Title I Parent Meeting	September 26
Homecoming	October 4
Open House	October 10; 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Fall Break – No School	October 14
Fall Festival	TBD
Veterans Day Holiday – No School	November 11
Thanksgiving Holidays	November 25-29
Christmas Music Program	TBD
Christmas/New Year's Holidays	December 23 – January 3, 2025
Teachers & Students Return from holidays	January 6, 2025
Boosterthon through Jan. 21	January 13
King/Lee Holiday	January 20
Beauty Pageant @ new Straughn Auditorium	February 8
Presidents' Day/Weather Day – No School	February 17
ACAP Alternate Assessment Window	March 3-7
OLSAT testing for 2 nd Grade	March 4
Spring Holidays	March 24-28
Spring Pictures & Kindergarten Cap & Gown	April 2
ACAP State Assessment testing window (Grades 2-5)	April 7-17
Break/Weather Day – No School	April 18
Parent Music Days	TBD
Kindergarten Program	May 21
Awards Day & Students' Last Day of School	May 22
Progress Reports:	September 19; November 14; February 13; April 17
Report Cards:	October 17; January 9; March 20; May 22

(Calendar is subject to change and may be amended throughout the school year as needed.)

There are four (4) nine-week **grading periods** during the school year. In the middle of each grading period students will receive a **Progress Report** (see above calendar for dates) indicating classroom performance. Each student will receive a **Report Card** at the end of each nine-week grading period.

School Hours

School begins at 7:45 a.m. and dismisses at 3:00 p.m. for K-5

School personnel *should not and are not* expected to assume responsibility for students whose parents permit them to arrive at school before 7:20 a.m. (breakfast served @ 7:20 a.m.).

Procedures for Checking Students In and Out

Parents and guardians are strongly discouraged from scheduling dental and doctor's appointments during school hours. Vacations taken during the school year are also discouraged. The principal may excuse students for non-school related events. Such absences must be based on written parental request, approved in advance, in order for the absence to be excused. However, the student will not be considered to be perfect in attendance.

Students who report to school at or after 7:45 a.m. are considered tardy and must be checked in through the Office. A parent/guardian must bring the student to the office and sign the student in on the check-in sheet before the student goes to his/her classroom. **Parents are not allowed to walk their child to class.** Tardies are considered unexcused if these procedures are not followed.

Students will only be released to a parent, an authorized guardian, or a person who has been authorized by the legal guardian in writing. Identification (photo I.D.) is required to check-out students.

Checkouts should be kept to a minimum. If a student must be checked out during the school day, the parent/guardian should go directly to the school office, request to check out the student, and sign the check-out sheet. **Parents/guardians are not allowed to go to classrooms to get students.** Student check outs will be monitored.

Transportation Procedures

The Covington County School System provides bus transportation to students, and students are encouraged to take advantage of this service. For students not riding a school bus the following pick up and drop off procedures must be followed:

Morning Drop-Off Procedures: Students must be dropped off in the **BACK** of the school (off Tiger Drive). **DO NOT** drop students off in front of the school building or behind the cafeteria (Pre-K and Special Needs' students are the exceptions by being dropped off in front of the school).

Afternoon Pick-Up Procedures: Students not riding a school bus are to be picked up in the **BACK** of the school. **DO NOT** park in the front of the school building or behind the cafeteria. All parents should remain in their vehicles in the back of the school and teachers/instructional aides will bring students to the vehicles beginning at 2:58 p.m. Students who are not picked up by 3:10 p.m. will be sent to Extended Day and parents will be charged the daily rate of \$10.00 per student.

VERY IMPORTANT: If changes need to be made concerning your child's transportation to and from school, please send a signed and dated note to your child's teacher.

Written transportation changes from a parent/guardian are required.

We DO NOT accept Telephone Calls, Texts, Faxes, Remind Messages or Emails for TRANSPORTATION CHANGES.

School Lunch & Breakfast Program

Straughn Elementary School participates in the Federal Lunchroom Program and provides nutritious meals (breakfast and lunch) for students. Adult/visitor prices are subject to change.

2024-2025 Breakfast Prices: Students: FREE Adults/Teachers: \$3.25 Visitors: \$3.50	2024-2025 Lunch Prices: Students: FREE Adults/Teachers: \$4.75 Visitors: \$5.00
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For additional information on Covington County Schools' Child Nutrition Program visit their website at www.cov.12.al.us/childnutrition. Follow CNP on Facebook and/or Instagram.

School Visitors

Visitors must report to the school office upon arrival. In the interest of keeping our school safe, we have implemented the following procedures: Upon entering the school, all visitors must stop in the office, sign in the visitors' book, and pick up a visitors' pass. Our sole purpose for this sign-in procedure is to have knowledge of each visitor's purpose on campus and to ensure the safety of our students. Prior arrangements must be made with teachers to visit their classrooms. If staff members see visitors in the hallways, they should see a visitors' pass. Due to already overcrowded conditions we discourage the practice of student visitors from other schools. All day visitation is not allowed.

Parental Involvement

Straughn Elementary School values a strong home/school relationship and understands that students learn best in a team atmosphere where parents/guardians and teachers work together for the benefit of the student. Parents of students in Title I schools are urged to sign the parent compact. Parents are urged to attend all public meetings held by the school for parents, to get to know their child's teacher(s) early in the school year, and to schedule individual parent/teacher conferences if they have questions or concerns. Conferences must be scheduled to avoid disruption of classroom instruction. Parents/guardians are not allowed in classrooms unless accompanied by a teacher. Call the school office at (334) 427-1311 to schedule a conference.

Straughn Elementary School hosts a PreK-5th grade student orientation program at the beginning of the school year, holds an Open House in October during evening hours, and conducts parent conferences at flexible times. In conjunction with Straughn PTO, evening activities, and parental involvement opportunities are planned and conducted. Take-Home Student Folders (grades K-2) and Student Planners (grades 3-5) are provided to students as daily communication tools between teachers, students, parents and guardians.

Enrollment Requirements

Students enrolling in Straughn Elementary School must meet enrollment requirements as set by the State of Alabama, Covington County Board of Education, and Straughn Elementary School. The following documentation should be on file:

- Withdrawal slip from previous school with pertinent, identifying information.
- Immunization Requirements: As required by Alabama Law, each pupil shall be immunized against diphtheria, varicella, pertussis, tetanus, poliomyelitis, measles, and mumps, including any other immunization that may be required by state law, before enrolling in any school in the Covington County School district. Such immunizations shall not be required in the case of a child whose health, in the opinion of a reputable physician, would be endangered, or where the parents or legal guardians of the child have filed a written objection to immunizations against non-epidemic diseases based on religious grounds or the student falls under the classification of LEP, Migrant or Homeless. The parent/guardian must present proof of immunization to school authorities.
- Birth Certificate Requirements: Any student entering kindergarten or first grade for the first time should present a birth certificate that is registered with the State Board of Vital Statistics.
- Each student enrolling in Straughn Elementary School should present an original Social Security card.

Student Attendance Policy

Enrollment Exemption Policy: Students may qualify for enrollment exemption. The principal and/or school counselor will make the determination.

Withdrawal from School: In order to withdraw a student from school, a parent/guardian must report to the office, pick up an official withdrawal slip and turn in all textbooks, library books, pay any fines/fees owed, etc. All records must be cleared with the office. **PLEASE NOTE: A transcript will not be issued for any student until all textbooks, library books, and any/all other debts have been paid.**

Students are expected to be in school except in cases of emergency, illness, or school approved absences. The Alabama Legislature passed Act 93-972 stating that parents are responsible for enrolling their children in school, ensuring that they attend school regularly, and that they conduct themselves properly as pupils. Each student must maintain a bona fide residence with the custodial parent(s) or legal guardian(s) within the boundaries of Covington County. The Covington County Board of Education recognizes that regular attendance is necessary for students to progress in school.

Permits for absences must be turned in **within two (2) days** after returning to school or the absence is unexcused. Permits must be properly filled out and complete or the absence is unexcused. **Permits must have students' first and last names, date, reason for absence, times (when needed), and be properly signed, or the absence will be unexcused.** **For excused absences, a student will have five (5) days to make up any classroom work.** If a student is checked out early for any reason, that absence from class must be excused in order for school work to be made up. If a student is absent from school that student will not be allowed to participate in any after school extracurricular activities on the day of the absence. Students must attend for four (4) periods of the school day. The *Covington County Schools' Code of Student Conduct 2024-2025* outlines attendance, documentation of absences, tardies, and absence procedures.

Truancy Policy

Truancy is defined by the State of Alabama as the absence from school for no legitimate reason. The stages of truancy at Straughn Elementary School are as follows:

FIRST-FOURTH TRUANCY: (unexcused absence)

Parent/guardian shall be notified by the school principal or designee that the student was truant and date of truancy. Parent/guardian shall also be provided a copy of Alabama's compulsory school attendance laws and advised of the penalties that can be applied and the procedures that shall be followed in the event that other unexcused absences occur.

FIFTH – SIXTH TRUANCY: (unexcused absence)

The parent/guardian or person having control of the child shall (1) attend a conference with the principal or his designee and/or (2) participate in the early warning program provided by the juvenile court (3) May be referred to after school detention and/or Saturday School. Attendance at one of these conferences shall be mandatory except where prior arrangements have been made or an emergency exists. Failure to appear at the school conference and/or to appear at the early warning program shall result in the filing of a petition against the parent under Ala. Code 1975, §16/28/12© failure to cooperate, or a truancy against the child, whichever is appropriate.

SEVENTH TRUANCY: (unexcused absence)

No earlier than seventh unexcused absence, but within ten (10) school days (court) (i) File complaint/petition against the child and/or parent/guardian, if appropriate.

UNEXCUSED TARDIES:

Students who accumulate four (4) unexcused tardies may also be required to attend Saturday School, TRR, or after school detention. This action will require the approval of the school principal.

TARDINESS (per semester)

A student is considered tardy when he/she is not in the assigned seat when the tardy bell rings (7:45 a.m.) and must be checked in through the Office. Unexcused tardies result in the loss of perfect attendance for exemption privileges. Excused tardies will not count against perfect attendance.

See the *Covington County Schools' Code of Student Conduct 2024-2025* for additional information.

NOTE: In Alabama, chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 15 or more days of school, whether excused or unexcused, in one year.

Promotion & Retention Policy

Initially Adopted by the Straughn Elementary School Faculty May 2008; Amended June 2019; Amended June 2022

Straughn Elementary School will provide an effective curriculum presented through the cooperative effort of a dedicated and caring staff. This will be accomplished in an environment that promotes high self-esteem, expects academic achievement, and fosters responsible citizenship for each student.

Straughn Elementary School students must be well prepared to meet the rigor and challenge of a new grade level as he/she progresses through the school years. Promotion to a new grade level is an accomplishment for a student because promotion demonstrates that the student has learned the requisite skills and knowledge and is prepared for the next challenge. It is the policy of the Covington County Board of Education that each student

successfully completes existing course work and acquires the skills and competencies as required before that student is promoted to the next grade level or course.

Currently the State of Alabama requires public schools to administer the following assessments to students to determine proficiency:

- Students in **Grades 2-5** are administered the state required assessment in reading and mathematics. 4th graders also are administered the state required assessment in science.

Decisions on promotion, retention, and placement of students shall be made in the best interest of the student after consideration of known factors. These factors include student grades, student performance on state mandated assessments, additional evaluations, portfolio reviews, school attendance, and students' social and emotional maturity and age. If a student is absent over fifteen (15) days during the school year he/she may not receive credit for that grade unless all absences after the fifteen (15) days are legally excused.

Promotion and Retention:

In Covington County Schools, students in grades K-5 who fail to meet the minimum requirements of the Alabama Course of Study Grade Level Standards in the subject of READING or any two (2) subjects will be retained.

Response to Instruction (RTI) is a problem-solving process that focuses on data-based response and evidence-based intervention. RTI targets improved academic and behavioral achievement for ALL students through research-based instruction/intervention. RTI is the practice of providing high-quality research-based instruction/intervention matched to student needs. A three-tiered model of support provides interventions to students with academic and behavioral needs through whole group, small group and individual instruction. Typically, the RTI system of support focuses on the general education population. However, a special education referral may be necessary if the interventions have not been proven successful.

Realizing the need for academic success before advancing to the next grade level, a conference between the parent/guardian, teacher, counselor, and the principal may be held prior to the end of the school year concerning the status of a student for the next school year. After the conference a decision will be made by the principal to retain, assign, or promote the student.

IMPORTANT – Please Read!

The Alabama Literacy Act, passed in 2019, is designed to help improve reading in Alabama public schools to ensure students are reading on grade level by the end of 3rd grade. The Act requires Alabama schools to assess the reading level of children in K-3rd grades at the beginning, middle, and end of each school year.

Students in 3rd grade are required to pass the Reading Portion of the ACAP (Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program) in order to be promoted to 4th grade (beginning with the 2023-24 school year).

The Instructional Program at SES

It is the desire and intent of the school administration to operate an educational program in which every student will have the opportunity to learn and grow to the extent that his/her abilities, interests, and motivation permit. The administration is most concerned that individual differences do not affect the quality of education that is available to every student; that individual needs of students can be met; and that the opportunity for success can be achieved.

Grading Scale Used at Straughn Elementary School

A+	98-100	C+	78-79	F	59 and below (Failure)
A	93-97	C	73-77		
A-	90-92	C-	70-72	G	Good
B+	88-89	D+	68-69	S	Satisfactory
B	83-87	D	63-67	U	Unsatisfactory
B-	80-82	D-	60-62	NI	Needs Improvement

To encourage a higher quality of scholastic achievement, an Honor Roll for Straughn Elementary students in grades 1-5 will be posted after each grading period. These honor students will be recognized in various ways. Honor Rolls may be sent to local newspapers and radio stations.

Annual Awards Program

An annual awards program is held to recognize students for academic achievement, perfect attendance, and citizenship. Grades from the first three-nine weeks and progress reports are figured into the academic average for academic awards. Students must maintain an academic average of 90 to receive an academic award. A student must have attended Straughn Elementary School for at least nine weeks to be eligible to participate in the awards program. Parents, guardians, and guests are invited and encouraged to attend the awards program.

Textbooks

Students will be issued state-owned textbooks in all classes where textbooks are used. Upon issuance, these books become the responsibility of the student. Alabama State Law (16-36-69) states that “the parent/guardian, or other person having custody of the student to whom such textbooks are issued, will be held liable for any loss, abuse, or damage in excess of that which would result from normal use of the textbooks.”

Students will be required to pay for any books they lose. If a student pays for a book and the book is found, there will be no refund. Students will also be fined for damaging books in any way, including cutting or tearing pages or the cover; writing in the book (no highlighting, marking, or drawing of any kind); and/or allowing books to get wet. Report cards will be held for students who owe for damaged or lost textbooks.

Straughn Elementary Library

At Straughn Elementary School assisting the students in the library is a collaborative effort between the classroom teacher and the library media specialist. Each class is assigned a library class period each week and the librarian assists the student(s) in selecting appropriate reading material(s) to meet the student(s) required reading goals.

Mission Statement

The mission statement for Straughn Elementary library media center is to assist in providing a quality education for every student and to encourage lifelong learning through reading and inquiry. The library media center supports and assists the learning community in becoming effective users of information.

Library Hours

The library is open at 8:00 a. m. on most mornings for checking in/rechecking library books and/or paying fines. A fixed schedule is followed from 8:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. with a planning time for the librarian and open time for students built in. Students should not come to the library during the announcements, the playing of our National Anthem, and/or recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, etc. In addition to a student's regularly scheduled library class, a student may check out books during open times once they have read and tested on **both** library books; however, teacher's need to limit in between visits each week, thus avoiding the loss of valuable classroom instruction time. These times will be noted/designated on the library's master schedule. Students should not check out books after 2:30 p.m. each afternoon.

Circulation

Students in grades K-1st can check out one book per week and grades 2nd -5th can check out up to two books for two weeks. The books may be rechecked (renewed) if necessary; however, in order to recheck (renew) a book or books, the student must present the book(s) to the circulation desk to be scanned. A student may not check out a book if he/she has an overdue book until the book has been returned or paid for.

Upon the receipt of the first overdue notice, the student should come to the library, as soon as possible, and check in the book(s) OR recheck the book(s).

Lost/Damaged Books

For lost/badly damaged books, the student will be charged the full price of the book. As with other "lost and paid for" school items, the library does not issue refunds. If the book is returned after payment for said book has been made and it is possible to return the book to the student at the time, the book becomes the property of the student. If it is not possible to return the book to the student easily or quickly, the book will be returned to the library's collection. Please contact Ms. Monica Fallin, SES Library Media Specialist, at (334) 427-1311 if you have questions or need clarification on library procedures.

Throughout the year, minor changes may be made without disrupting the over-all library program.

*Damage to a book while in the student's care will be assessed after discussion with the student. Students are responsible for school property and should take appropriate measures to keep books safe and protected.

Alabama School Library Media Common Beliefs

The school library is a unique and essential part of a learning community.

Qualified school librarians lead effective school libraries.

Learners should be prepared for college, career, and life.

Reading is the core of personal and academic competency.

Intellectual freedom is every learner's right.

Information technologies must be appropriately integrated and equitably available.

Accelerated Reader Policy

Adopted by the Straughn Elementary School Faculty February 2008; Revised by AR Committee May 2018

The primary goal of Accelerated Reader is to improve reading by fostering a love of reading in our students. The computerized testing system is designed to help motivate, monitor, and manage student reading practice. Straughn Elementary School utilizes Accelerated Reader Enterprise as part of its instructional program. By subscribing to Accelerated Reader Enterprise, Straughn Elementary students have access to thousands of quizzes with new quizzes being added each month. Students may check online to determine if a quiz is available for the books they are reading. This has greatly expanded the number and variety of books available to students. DESTINY, our school's library automation system, assists students with selecting AR books housed in the Library Media Center.

AR is supported by scientifically-based research. An extensive body of research confirms the effectiveness of Accelerated Reader and best classroom practices in helping educators dramatically improve student reading skills. The research consistently demonstrates that Accelerated Reader enables teachers to target instruction and accelerate reading growth for students of all ability levels.

This AR Policy applies to all students in grades K-5. Students will be tested at least three times a year (fall, winter, and spring) using STAR Reading to determine their reading levels, or ZPD, Zone of Proximal Development, ensuring that students are challenged in reading without being frustrated.

The following guidelines will govern the AR Program at Straughn Elementary School:

- All students must log in using their own passwords and key in their own answers.
- Each student should be reading on their ZPD, or reading level, as determined by the STAR Reading test.
- AR tests are taken at school during school hours.
- Students in grades K-5 must maintain an 85% correct average on comprehension to attend celebrations. This score will be determined by using the Reading Practice Diagnostic Report.
- ANY FORM of CHEATING, including pulling up other students' records or taking tests for other students, will result in the student receiving a zero on all tests taken, tests being deleted, and/or AR privileges being suspended.
- AR will not be used for a grade unless the book has been read together in class, is a component of the adopted reading/science/social studies series, or is at the discretion of the teacher.
- Students who reach their goals will be recognized each nine weeks with a field trip and/or other award by their grade level teachers. Students will be eligible for rewards at the end of the first semester if they make their goal both grading periods.
- End of year top point earners will be eligible for an AR reward if they earn their goal three of the four grading periods.
- All students who earn 100 points or more will be recognized on Awards Day with a certificate.
- Points will be cumulative for all students with awards going to top readers in each grade level.
- The top point earner and best percent correct (with at least 100 points) in each grade will be recognized with a medal. The top point earner and best percent correct (with at least 100 points) school wide will receive a trophy.

Counseling & Guidance Program

The Counseling and Guidance Program at Straughn Elementary School provides comprehensive, preventing, and developmental services for all students. The principal, teachers, parents, or students can make referrals. Counseling and guidance sessions are conducted in small group, whole group, and individual settings. Some of the sessions include, but are not limited to: expressing feelings, cooperation, manners, respect, substance abuse, making good choices, anger management, conflict resolution, improving student habits, and career development. In addition, our program provides assistance in student placement, interpretation of test data, scheduling, program planning, outside referrals, and community awareness. School counselor, Ms. Mandi Morris, can be reached through the school office at (334) 427-1311. It is our aim to help students strengthen their career, educational, and social skills by implementing the objectives of *The Comprehensive and Guidance State Model for Alabama's Public Schools*. By reinforcing the students' personal strengths, our goal is to have emotionally healthy students who are happy, socially well adjusted, responsible, and productive. The cornerstone of our program is commitment to the home-school partnership. We encourage home involvement and look forward to your interest and support.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Backpacks

Backpacks are allowed at Straughn Elementary School, but due to safety considerations, rolling backpacks are not allowed without a physician's request.

Chewing Gum

Chewing gum is not allowed at school or on school buses.

Emergency Drills

Unannounced emergency drills such as fire, severe weather, and/or lockdowns are held monthly. Printed emergency instructions and school evacuation routes are posted in all classrooms and other facilities, and are discussed with students periodically.

Field Trips

During the school year there are educational experiences provided for students through planned, supervised field trips. Teachers will schedule the field trips. Written parent permission is required for all students who participate in any field trip or activity that requires the student to leave school. We cannot accept verbal approval over the telephone for participation in field trips. Please understand that some school sponsored field trips do not provide for parents to attend (AR field trips, petting zoo, etc.). Students choosing not to attend a school-sponsored field trip are still expected to be in school. Students may be denied participation on field trips by school administration based on discipline and/or school attendance. Field trip fees/charges may not be refundable.

Flowers, Balloons, Gifts and/or Birthday Celebrations

No flowers, balloons, or gifts will be delivered to students at school for any occasion. Due to safety and security reasons, no parents/guardians will be allowed to celebrate student birthdays by visiting during snack, lunch, or instructional time. If parents/guardians choose to provide one special treat for a student's birthday, only one (1) store-bought, pre-packaged/originally-sealed nutritional treat will be accepted. The treat must be dropped off at the office and inspected by office staff before being shared with students. The office will be responsible for delivering the treat to the teacher.

Lockers for 4th and 5th Graders

Lockers are, and will remain, the property of Straughn Elementary School. Students are allowed to use them without charge. **Students are not allowed to put locks on their lockers.** Students should take pride in keeping their lockers clean and in good condition. Lockers will be inspected periodically by school officials. Personal items such as jackets, etc., should be marked with the students' name for identification. All school property and other items at school may be searched by school officials with reasonable cause of suspected disruptive or dangerous items. Students may lose locker privileges for the remainder of the school year if they do not adhere to rules and regulations.

Personal Property

Care of personal and public property is part of growing up and exercising good citizenship. Each year many articles of clothing remain unclaimed in the school's lost and found. Although name labels on personal property are helpful in identifying owners of lost items, students are encouraged to be responsible for what belongs to them and others. **The school is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged possessions.** Valuable items should not be brought to school. Students are not allowed to sell/buy items from each other.

Straughn Elementary School will not allow students to bring items to school that distract other students such as toys, trading cards, video games, computer games, radios, lasers, cameras, play jewelry, etc. Items brought to school without permission will be taken from the student and sent to the principal's office. Items will be returned to the student's parent/guardian on the last day of the school year. Covington County Schools prohibit student possession of electronic communication or recording devices including, but not limited to, cell phones, pagers, beepers, iPods, and cameras during the school day or on school buses.

Physical Education (Illness or Injury)

According to Alabama Law and School Policy, no student may be excused from physical education classes except in cases where student participation in physical activities present an extreme hardship on the student's well-being. Students may be excused from physical education for a period of up to three (3) days by the parent/guardian writing a letter to the student's homeroom teacher stating this request. If the student needs to be excused from physical education for a period longer than three (3) days, a statement from the student's physician should be sent to the student's homeroom teacher. The letter will be initialized by the principal or teacher and sent to the physical education department.

To prevent injuries, students are expected/required to wear appropriate clothing and shoes for physical education activities. Students will be expected to walk for their exercise if they do not wear the appropriate shoes. Tennis shoes are highly recommended for PE. Shoes worn at PE must have closed toes and closed heels. Flip flops, 5-toe shoes, and/or Heelys are NOT allowed at PE.

Student Insurance Program

Student insurance is available on an optional basis at a reasonable cost. This supplemental and reduced rate insurance is offered to all students. Any student participating in any extracurricular activity is encouraged to purchase school insurance.

Telephone

Students are not allowed to use school telephones. In case of emergency, the school secretary will make the call for the student or deliver the message to the student. Parents are not allowed to call the school to speak directly with their child. The school secretary will take messages for students only in emergency situations.

Tobacco

It is the official policy of Covington County Schools that students will not be allowed to bring, use, or possess tobacco products at school or when participating in any school-sponsored activity.

Student Activities

National Elementary Honor Society

Straughn Elementary School's Honor Society is a local chapter of the National Elementary Honor Society, designed to recognize outstanding elementary students who demonstrate excellence in scholarship and responsibility. Membership of the group is limited to 4th and 5th grade students who have maintained a 90 academic average in the core curriculum subjects. At the end of the 3rd nine week reporting period, teachers will average grades, without P.E., and if this average is a 90 or above, students will be considered as a new inductee into the Honor Society. Students will not be considered as Honor Society candidates if they 1) have repeated their current grade; and/or 2) have committed a Class II, Class III, or Class IV offense according to the Code of Conduct for the current year. Dismissal from Honor Society will occur if a student commits a Class II, Class III or IV offense, at which time the student will be counseled by the principal and the Honor Society sponsor prior to dismissal. Parents will be notified in writing should a dismissal be agreed upon. A failing grade in any subject disqualifies students for membership. Students must have attended Straughn Elementary for a minimum of one full semester prior to induction into the Honor Society.

Student Council

The purpose of this organization is to serve as a democratic method for all students to have a say in the activities and operation of our school. Representatives will include two (2) students from each homeroom in 4th and 5th grade. If for any reason a position is not filled, the advisor may appoint a student to fill the position.

4-H Club

The 4-H Program is part of Straughn Elementary School's Character Education Program for 4th and 5th grades. The 4-H extension agent takes complete responsibility for the program, with meetings being held throughout the school year, on and off campus.

Spelling Bees & STEM Day

Students may participate in annual Spelling Bees and Covington County Schools' STEM Day.

Music

All K-5 students receive weekly music instruction from Covington County Schools' certified music teacher.

Programs and Assemblies

Special programs and assemblies are held throughout the school year. Students are notified when a program has been planned. Parents are always welcome and encouraged to attend.

Homework

Homework is an extension of daily class work or newly introduced concepts. Reports or long-range projects may also be assigned and are necessary to reinforce writing and reading skills. If you have any questions concerning your child's homework, please contact the teacher for clarification.

Students at Straughn Elementary School will receive varying amounts of homework depending on their grade level. It is very important that parents check with teachers early in the year to determine their expectations and general class procedures. Nightly extra study is necessary, especially in the upper grades. Daily assignments are designated by teachers and are due according to their guidelines. Students in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades receive homework planners to assist with communication between home and school.

Snacks

To comply with state laws on wellness, Covington County School System's Wellness Plan takes a proactive effort to encourage students to make nutritious food choices. Snack time is set aside each day for students, however, participation in snack time is not guaranteed to students who fail to meet their daily obligations for class assignments or behavior. Students denied such participation in snack time may remain in the classroom to complete assignments. Nutritious snacks and bottled water can be purchased by students during snack time for \$1.00 each including Ice Cream and popcorn (Popcorn Fridays when available). Prices subject to change.

Citizenship

All rules pertaining to student behavior shall apply while a student is attending school or school-related activities on campus. These activities include PTO, fundraisers, ball games, pep rallies, and assemblies of any kind. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous manner at all times. They should show respect to all school personnel. Obedience is required. A friendly attitude toward other students and teachers is encouraged. Every student should do their part to keep the school buildings and grounds in excellent condition and attractive in appearance.

All students are urged to exercise care in using all school property assigned to them. Any defacing or destruction of property will warrant disciplinary action that will result in the student having to pay for said property and be subject to suspension from school. Running is only allowed during physical education activities. This is a necessary safety precaution. Students should be quiet in the hallways, restrooms, and lunchroom. Loitering on the school campus is not allowed.

Behavior on School Buses

Excellent conduct on the bus is an absolute necessity and is expected. Misconduct will be reported by the driver and handled by the principal and/or assistant principal. The principal has the authority to revoke a student's bus privileges.

The following safety measures must be followed while students are riding a bus:

- Students must listen and obey the bus driver.
- If a student must cross the road to get to or from the bus, he/she must cross in front of the bus, only after it has stopped to load or unload (stop sign with lights flashing will be displayed). Watch for other vehicles that may still be moving.
- Student must stand six (6) to eight (8) feet off roadway while waiting to board the bus. This applies to students boarding the bus from the side of the road on which the bus stops, as well as those boarding the bus from the opposite side of the road.
- All students must remain seated while the bus is moving.
- No profanity, ugly remarks, or gestures are permitted on the bus.
- Students must not extend parts of their bodies or any other item out of the bus window.
- No eating, drinking, or chewing gum on the school bus.
- Alcohol, tobacco, and/or drugs of any kind are not allowed on the bus at any time.
- No sharp objects or weapons are allowed on the bus.
- No animals (reptiles, mammals, birds, etc.) are allowed on the bus.
- The emergency door will remain closed except in an emergency.
- No one will be allowed to get off of the bus at any location except at school and home without the parent or guardian's written permission which must be approved by the principal and/or school office staff.**
- In an emergency, students must remain on the bus until an authorized person gives instructions.
- Seats may be assigned on the bus by the principal or the bus driver.
- Students must keep feet and knees out of the aisles and seats, and face the front of the bus while riding.
- Objects should not be thrown from or inside the bus.
- Books should be held on students' laps and not placed on the floor or seat of the bus.

Dress Code

The dress code at Straughn Elementary School will be strictly adhered to as stated in *Covington County Schools' Code of Student Conduct 2024-2025*. Students are expected to be clean and appropriately dressed for school. Torn, tattered, or frayed jeans, pants, shorts, pajama bottoms, and/or short shorts are not appropriate. Dress and appearance must not present health or safety problems or cause disruption to the teaching/learning process. Teachers may deny a student admission to class due to improper dress. In this case, the student's absence will be unexcused. Students who violate the dress code will be documented, warned and asked to secure proper attire on the first offense. Straughn Elementary School allows students to wear hats/head coverings during PE, on Field Day, field trips, or other special outdoor events. Page 15 of this handbook describes appropriate PE footwear. **NOTE: If worn, face masks and/or face coverings must be appropriate for elementary students.**

Violations and Disciplinary Procedures

Corporal punishment may be administered by the principal/designee or teacher in the presence of a professional employee of the Board of Education. A written report will be prepared for each incident and copies of each report must be on file in the administrative office of the school. Corporal punishment for a student documented as having a disability, in which the behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability, will follow the same procedures as a non-disabled student (*Covington County Schools' Code of Student Conduct 2024-2025*).

The Crisis Management Program, defined as the removal of students from the regular class program to a class setting within the school or locale where the student will have no contact with the regular program, will be used as a support alternative for behavioral and academic reasons. Students shall be assigned as specified in the *Covington County Schools' Code of Student Conduct 2024-2025* or for academic reasons by the school principal/designee. Students may be assigned from one (1) hour to five (5) days unless time is extended for noncompliance with rules of conduct.

Disciplinary Actions for Class I Offenses:

- 1st Offense:** Crisis Management Program (Tutorial Resource Room) for 2 periods or 2 licks with a paddle.
- 2nd Offense:** Crisis Management Program (T.R.R.) for 3 periods or 3 licks with a paddle.
- 3rd Offense:** Crisis Management Program (T.R.R.) for 1 day.
- 4th Offense:** Automatically becomes a Type II Disciplinary Action

Class I Offenses:

105	Distraction of other students - any behavior that alters the teaching process of the classroom or educational activity.
110	Quarreling, minor harassment
120	Nonconformity to dress code
125	Minor misbehavior on a school bus
130	Inappropriate public display of affection
135	Unauthorized use of school or personal property
140	Eating or drinking in unauthorized areas
145	Locker abuse, incidental defacement, littering of school property
155	Possession of radios, tape players, cards, electronic games, etc. without written administrative approval will result in the confiscation of said articles.
160	Sitting in parked vehicle after arriving at school or returning to vehicle during the school day without permission
165	Tardies: Procedures will be followed as outlined under Tardiness in Code of Student Conduct.

170	Minor physical conflicts (ex. pushing, shoving) which stops by directive
175	Failure to follow specific instruction (disobedience)
180	Cheating (copying school work)
190	Any other violation which at the discretion of the principal may be deemed reasonable within this category after consideration of extenuating circumstances

Disciplinary Actions for Class II Offenses:

1st Offense: 2 days in the Crisis Management Program (Tutorial Resource Room).

2nd Offense: 3 days in the Crisis Management Program (T.R.R.).

3rd Offense: 4 days in the Crisis Management Program (T.R.R.).

4th Offense: Automatically becomes a Type III Disciplinary Action.

Class II Intermediate Offenses:

200	Continued failure to follow instructions of School Board employee
205	Repetitive instances of minor harassment
210	Possession and/or ignition of fireworks, firecrackers, stink bombs, etc.
215	Use of obscene behavior (verbal, written, gesturing, touching) directed toward another person
220	Leaving class without written permission
230	Misuse of lunch tickets and/or privileges
235	Truancy: Absence from school or class without principal's approval
240	Speeding (exceeding any posted campus speed limit) or reckless driving
245	Intimidation of students (threat by word or action to do violence to another student)
250	Any misuse of school equipment and/or supplies
290	Any other violation which at the discretion of the principal may be deemed reasonable within this category after consideration of extenuating circumstances

Disciplinary action for Class II, III, and IV Offenses will automatically be referred to the principal.

Disciplinary Actions for Class III Offenses:

1st Offense: Crisis Management Programs for five (5) days.

2nd Offense: Crisis Management Program for ten (10) days.

3rd Offense: Out of School Suspension for three (3) days.

4th Offense: Out of School Suspension and referral to Administrative Hearing Committee.

Class III Major Offenses:

300	*Possession and/or use of tobacco products
301	*Leaving campus without permission
302	Possession of non-controlled substance and over-the-counter drugs
304	Bullying
305	*Gambling (any participation in games of chance for money and/or other things of value)
310	*Vandalism (intentional and deliberate action resulting in damages of less than \$100 to public property/personal property of another)
315	*Stealing items less than a total of \$25 in value
320	*Defiance of a School Board employee's authority
321	*Possession of a laser light or any electronic device designed to shine bright lights at school or school activity
325	*Possession of stolen property (value of less than \$100)
330	*Threats, extortion (verbal, written, or printed communication maliciously threatening injury to the person, property or reputation of any person with the intent to extort or coerce any person against his/her will)
335	*Trespassing (willfully entering or remaining on school property without authorization)
340	*Unjustified activation of a fire alarm system or fire extinguisher

345	*Written or verbal proposition to engage in sexual activity
350	*Use or possession of obscene/pornographic materials
355	*Fighting – See No Fight Policy
360	*Forgery (falsifying/altering documents to secure privileges or monetary gain)
365	*Possession of a pocket knife on school property
370	*Directing obscene or profane language to a School Board employee
375	*Use of racial slurs/derogatory remarks
380	*Unauthorized activities/organizations (any attempt to use property for activities/organized meetings that are not school related)
385	*Any gross abuse of computers/computer programs/cell phones including inappropriate and unauthorized videos and photos
390	*Any other violation which at the discretion of the principal may be deemed reasonable within this category after consideration of extenuating circumstances

* Indicates the offenses which may be reported to law enforcement authorities. The principal will determine if Class III offenses are treated as Class II or Class IV offenses after viewing all facts.

Disciplinary Actions for Class IV Offenses K-12:

All actions should be considered.

1. Parent/guardian notification and request for conference.
2. If deemed necessary, reported to law enforcement authorities.
3. Suspension for three (3) to five (5) days.
4. If requested by the Principal or parent/guardian, an Administrative Hearing.
5. Expulsion

See the *Covington County Schools Code of Student Conduct 2024-2025* subsequent offenses in the same school year relating to Class IV offenses.

Class IV Severe Offenses:

404	Bullying
405	*Drugs, drug paraphernalia, alcoholic beverages, or imitations of all the preceding (unauthorized possession, transfer, sale, use or being under the influence while on school property or attending a school sponsored activity)
410	*Arson (the willful burning of any part of school property)
415	*Assault upon a School Board employee (the actual unlawful touching or striking of a School Board employee or the causing of bodily harm to an employee)
420	*Robbery (the taking of money/property by force, violence or intimidation)
425	*Stealing, larceny, grand theft (carrying away/possession of property of another valued at \$25 or more)
430	*Burglary of school property
435	*Criminal mischief (willful and malicious injury/damages in excess of \$100 to public/personal property of another)
440	*Bringing or possessing a weapon or an imitation of a weapon on school property (including but not limited to a firearm, stun/taser gun, an air gun, or an edged instrument)
441	*Firearm
445	*Bomb threats
450	*Explosives (possessing, preparing or ignition of explosives likely to cause bodily injury on School Board property)
455	*Sexual acts (acts including but not limited to sexual harassment, intercourse, attempted rape, or rape)
460	*Aggravated assault (intent to cause serious bodily harm or use of a deadly weapon)
465	*Inciting or participating in a major student disorder
470	*Indecent exposure (intentional exposure of private parts, mooning)
475	*Unprovoked assault/attack on another student
480	*Profession of affiliation/involvement with any subversive organization/gang-related activity (includes wearing clothing, symbols, or offensive speech causing disruption on school property)

485	Malicious use of technology for harassment and anti-social communications
490	*Any other violation which at the discretion of the Principal may be deemed reasonable within this category after consideration of extenuating circumstances

* Indicates the offenses which may be reported to law enforcement authorities. The principal will determine if Class III offenses are treated as Class II or Class IV offenses after viewing all facts.

Please contact Covington County Schools' Federal Program Section at (334) 222-7571 to obtain parental notifications in a language other than English, as well as information pertaining to the migrant program.

COVINGTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT/TITLE I COMPLAINTS/CONCERNS PROCEDURES

A complaint/concern is a signed written statement that includes allegations or concerns applicable to the Title I Educational Program (LEA Level) and information that supports the complaint/concern. Note: Any parent, teacher, or other concerned individual(s) or organization may file a complaint. The normal procedure to be followed regarding a personal grievance related to school is to discuss the matter with the immediate supervisor. Written complaints may be given to the local principal and filed at the Title I office (Central Office). Signature of complainant is required. The written complaint will then be delivered to the LEA Superintendent's office or Title I office by the principal or his/her designee.

Upon receipt of the written complaint, the Title I Coordinator and a District Supervisor will investigate the complaint in a timely manner consulting with the LEA Superintendent if necessary. Within a timely manner, a resolution and written decision acknowledging receipt of the complaint/concern will be rendered by the LEA (Title I Coordinator/designee). Complaint procedures may be viewed at www.cov.k12.al.us

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY

It is the official policy of Covington County School System that no person shall, on the ground of race, sex, religion, color, creed, national origin, handicap, or age, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any program, activity, or employment and provide access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Inquiries of complaints regarding compliance with federal regulations on 504, Title I, Title II, and Title IX may be directed to Mr. Chris Thomasson, Federal Programs Coordinator (chris.thomasson@cov.k12.al.us), Kelly McCollough, 504 Coordinator, Covington County Board of Education, 807 C.C. Baker Avenue, Andalusia, AL. 36421, (334) 222-7571

INJURY POLICY

In the event of injury or severe illness to any student in Covington County Schools, appropriate first aid will be rendered and the parent/guardian will be notified as soon as possible. Should school personnel be unable to locate the appropriate parent/guardian and the injury/illness requires medical attention, the student will be transported to the designated doctor on his/her information card or taken to the emergency room of the local hospital.

SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES/POLICY/PROCEDURES/PROGRAMS

Screening Program

Eliminating health problems helps students achieve their maximum potential. In an effort to assist in keeping abreast of the general health conditions of the students enrolled in Covington County Schools, various programs are conducted throughout the school year including vision/hearing, scoliosis, and other health assessment clinics as needed.

Procedure Following Screening Programs

Notification of a student's failure in any screening program will be sent immediately to the student's parent/guardian following any screening process. When a student has failed his/her vision screening, it is recommended by letter to the parent or legal guardian that he/she needs to see an optometrist for further evaluation. When hearing screening is failed, a referral is made to the Covington County Audiological Services Center where an audiologist will conduct an evaluation. When a student has failed the scoliosis screening, it is recommended by letter to the parent or legal guardian that he/she sees a physician for further evaluation.

Student with Medical Conditions

The State Department requires all students with a medical condition to have an emergency care plan for each student. If your child has a medical condition, please notify the **school nurse** so this emergency care plan can be signed and implemented as soon as possible.

Medication Regulations/Policy

In accordance with Alabama guidelines, a physician must prescribe all prescription medications given in the Covington County School System. **A medication authorization form must be signed by the physician and a parent or legal guardian and returned to the school nurse before any prescribed medication can be administered at school.** You may obtain a form from your local school nurse, physician's office, or from the Covington County Schools website under Health Services.

Over the counter medications require a medication authorization form to be signed by the parent and returned to school before any medication can be given. (Medication needs to be brought in the original bottle/unopened/label with student's name).

No medication can be brought to school or sent home by a student. Medication should be brought and picked up by the parent or legal guardian and given to the school nurse or a school designee for storage and administering.

Prescription medication:

1. Original bottle/box
2. Student's name
3. Directions for administering
4. Physician's Name
5. Name of medication
6. Date of drug's discontinuation(when appropriate)

Self-Administered Medication: Students who are capable of carrying their inhalers or epi-pens must bring a medication authorization form signed by both their physician and the parent or legal guardian. **No student is allowed to carry any medication on them at school without this authorization form being on file in the nurse's office. Any student that has been given permission to carry medication will be responsible for keeping their medication on them at all times and not to share with any other student. Students will be reprimanded according to Covington County Schools Code of Student Conduct for failing to comply with this medication policy.**

Sunscreen Policy

Students within public schools are allowed the option to possess and use Federal Food and Drug Administration regulated over-the-counter sunscreen at school and at school-based events. Any student, parent, or guardian requesting a school board employee to apply sunscreen to a student shall present to the nurse a Parent Prescriber Authorization Form (PPA) containing a parent or guardian signature. A physician signature or physician order shall not be required. You may obtain a PPA Form from your local school nurse or from the Covington County Schools website under Health Services.

Illness/Injury at School

In the event of injury or severe illness to any student in Covington County Schools, appropriate first aid will be rendered and the parent/guardian will be notified as soon as possible. Should school personnel be unable to locate the appropriate parent/guardian and the injury/illness requires medical attention, the student will be transported to the designated doctor/or taken to the nearest emergency room.

It is very important that students are not sent to school with fever, vomiting, diarrhea or a contagious medical condition. **Parents are advised that all students should be free of fever, vomiting, or diarrhea for a minimum of 24 hours without the use of any medications before returning to school.** Please notify the nurse if your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness.

Procedure for Head Lice

Covington County Schools are committed to utilizing best practice recommendations for lice management in our schools in a manner that respects the data privacy of students and families. Lice exclusions are viewed as necessary only when excessive infestations are present or there is a lack of follow up with treating lice. You may obtain a copy of the Covington County School System Lice Policy & Procedure from your school nurse or from the Covington County Schools website under Health Services.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE AND VACCINE, INFLUENZA, AND TDAP VACCINE

What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is a serious illness, caused by bacteria. It is the leading cause of bacterial meningitis in children 2-18 years old in the United States.

What is influenza?

Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by a virus. The virus infects the nose, throat, and lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, hospitalization, and even death.

What is a Tdap vaccine?

Tdap vaccine can protect adolescents and adults from tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis. One dose of Tdap is routinely given at age 11 or 12.

Information in regards to Meningococcal Disease & Vaccine, Influenza (flu), and Tdap Vaccine can be located on the Covington County Schools website under Health Services. Please contact the school nurse if you have any questions.

WORTHLESS CHECK POLICY

Any individual submitting a worthless check shall be charged a non-sufficient funds check fee of \$30 for all returned checks whether collected or not. Should a school receive a second bad check from an individual, then no further checks are to be accepted from that individual. The local district attorney's office will be utilized in the collection of bad checks should this action become necessary. Non-public funds must be used to cover any insufficient checks in state, federal, or public fund accounts.

GIFTED PROGRAM POLICY

Gifted students are those who perform at or who have demonstrated the potential to perform at high levels in academic or creative fields when compared to others of their age, experience, or environment. These students require services not ordinarily provided by the regular school program. Students possessing these abilities can be found in all populations, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor.

Teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self, or any other individuals with knowledge of the student's abilities may refer a student. Additionally, all second grade students will be observed as potential gifted referrals using a gifted behavior checklist.

For each student referred, information is gathered in the areas of Aptitude, Characteristics, and Performance. The information is entered on a matrix where points are assigned according to established criteria. The total number of points earned determines if the student qualifies for gifted services.

To make a referral contact Bettye Anne Older, School Principal, at 334-427-1311.

CLASS SIZE REDUCTION

Class Size Reduction (CSR) is a reform strategy that is used at the state and national levels. Federal funds available for CSR are based on research that shows positive outcomes for early grade levels. CSR increases the available instructional time between the teacher and student while reducing the student-to-student interaction. Teachers also spend less time on classroom management and more time on classroom instruction which should enhance student performance. Covington County Schools' goal with CSR funds is to reduce the number of students in some classes to twenty or fewer students. For more information about CSR please contact Covington County Schools.

TITLE I SCHOOLS IN COVINGTON COUNTY

Mr. Chris Thomasson, Federal Programs Coordinator, would like to inform parents at these schools that they are encouraged to participate in the decision-making process in regard to their school's academic programs. Parents are invited to read their school's Title I School-wide Plan, on file in the school office, and get involved in the budgeting process as well as the development of future Title I School-wide Plans. If you would like more information on becoming involved in your school's planning process please contact Principal Bettye Anne Older at 427-1311.

Annual student assessment results will be communicated to parents in the following ways: Alabama State Report Card and the Individual Student Assessment Reports. General information (*not specific student information*) regarding student assessment will be communicated to the community through a news release to the local newspaper. Schools identified for school improvement will provide written notice to parents the status of the school's improvement.

PARENTAL RIGHTS TO INFORMATION ABOUT TEACHERS

The *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) law* builds on key areas of progress in recent years, made possibly by efforts of educators, communities, parents, and students across the country.

Covington County Schools are extremely proud of our teachers and teacher aides and are happy to provide you with the above information pertaining to your child's teacher. If you have such a request, please contact the school principal and ask for the information in which you are interested.

Teachers at Straughn Elementary School follow the State of Alabama's Courses of Study and develop their lesson plans around these academic standards. Lesson plans are accessible to parents/guardians via the internet.

ARMED FORCES RECRUITMENT

The following provision of the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015* relates to the ability of the United States military and institutions of higher education to request certain student information from Covington County Schools' high schools to be used for purposes of recruitment by these entities.

SEC. 9528. ARMED FORCES RECRUITER ACCESS TO STUDENTS AND STUDENT RECRUITING INFORMATION.

(a) POLICY - (1) ACCESS TO STUDENT RECRUITING INFORMATION - Notwithstanding section 444(a)(5)(B) of the General Education Provisions Act and except as provided in paragraph (2), each Local Educational Agency (LEA) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.

(2) CONSENT - A secondary school student or the parent of the student may request that the student's name, address, and telephone listing described in paragraph (1) not be released without prior written parental consent, and the local educational agency shall notify parents of the option to make a request and shall comply with any request.

(3) SAME ACCESS TO STUDENTS - Each local educational agency receiving assistance under this Act shall provide military recruiters the same access to secondary school students as is provided generally to post secondary educational institutions or to prospective employers of those students.

Parents or guardians of high school students wishing to exercise their right to request that the name, address and telephone number of their child not be released for such recruitment purposes should send a letter to that effect to the school principal within two weeks of enrolling in the school.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

Response to Instruction (RTI) is a problem solving process that focuses on data-based response and evidence-based intervention. RTI targets improved academic and behavioral achievement for ALL students through research-based instruction/intervention. RTI is the practice of providing high-quality research-based instruction/intervention matched to student needs. A three-tiered model of support provides interventions to students with academic and behavioral needs through whole group, small group and individual instruction. Typically, the RTI system of support focuses on the general education population. A special education referral may be necessary if the interventions have not been proven successful.

CHILD FIND – HELP US LOCATE CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Covington County Schools announces ongoing Child Find activities to locate, identify, and evaluate children with disabilities from birth to 21 years of age. If you know of anyone from birth to 21 with a disability or suspected disability that is not presently enrolled in a public school program, please contact the office of Special Education. Covington County Schools, 807 C.C. Baker Avenue, Andalusia, AL 36421 or call this office at (334) 427-3819.

COVINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION INTERNET USE POLICY

The Internet Use Policy is designed to provide guidelines for using the Internet in the classroom, school media centers, and computer labs in Covington County Schools. The Internet will be used for research and educational purposes. Students are responsible for appropriate behavior while using the Internet. Privileges may be revoked if guidelines are not followed.

Internet Student Guidelines

1. Users will be held accountable for their actions.
2. DO notify an adult immediately if you encounter materials that violate the Student Code of Conduct
3. DO NOT use a computer to harass, attack or harm others.
4. DO NOT damage the computer or network in any way.
5. DO NOT degrade the performance of the network with useless information.
6. DO NOT use the Internet for illegal activities.
7. DO NOT install software or download unauthorized electronic media.
8. DO NOT view, send, or display obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, disrespectful, threatening, or inflammatory language, messages or pictures.
9. DO NOT view, send, or display obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, disrespectful, threatening, or inflammatory language, messages or pictures.
10. DO NOT share your password.
11. DO NOT reveal personal addresses or telephone numbers.
12. DO NOT access other students' work, folders, or files.

THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she turns 18 years of age or enters a postsecondary educational institution at any age. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school amend education records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. Schools will notify parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools will notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA which may be by special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article.

Parents have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education regarding the alleged violation of FERPA. The Family Policy Compliance Office may be contacted at the following address: Family Policy Compliance Office; U.S. Department of Education; 400 Maryland Avenue, SW; Washington, D.C. 20202-5920

NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER THE PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA)

PPRA affords parents and students who are 18 or emancipated minors (“eligible students”) certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas—

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student’s parent; or
8. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of—

1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

Inspect, upon request and before administration or use —

1. Protected information surveys of students;
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

Covington County Schools will develop and adopt policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. Covington County Schools will directly notify parents and eligible students of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. Covington County Schools will also directly notify parents and eligible students at least annually at the start of each school year of the specific or approximate dates of the following activities and provide an opportunity to opt a student out of participating in:

1. Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution.
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening.
3. Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education.

Parents/eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with: Family Policy Compliance Office; U.S. Department of Education; 400 Maryland Avenue, SW; Washington, D.C. 20202-5920

**ALABAMA STATE DEPT. OF EDUCATION POLICY
CELL PHONE/DIGITAL DEVICE IN A TESTING SETTING**

Cell Phone/Digital Device in a Testing Setting By Students

The possession of digital devices (including but not limited to cell phones, MP3 players, cameras, mobile entertainment, social connections, navigation devices, or other telecommunication devices) is **strictly prohibited** in the testing setting. Local education agency (LEA) school personnel will collect such devices before students can enter the testing room.

If a device is in the possession of a student in the testing setting, testing for the student will cease, the device will be confiscated, the student will be dismissed from testing, and the student's test will be invalidated. Additional disciplinary action may be taken by the LEA.

Cell Phone/Digital Device in a Testing Setting by School Personnel

School personnel involved in administration of state testing may not use digital devices (including but not limited to telephones, cell phones, MP3 players, cameras, mobile entertainment, social connections, navigation devices, or other telecommunication devices) during test administration. Violations may result in disciplinary action/certification revocation. Additional disciplinary action may be taken by the LEA.



PLEASE NOTE:

Please call Straughn Elementary School at (334) 427-1311 if you have any questions about the rules and procedures outlined in this Student-Parent Handbook. The information in this handbook is not intended to conflict with Covington County Board of Education's policies and procedures. Those policies supersede the information in this handbook.

By signing and returning the Covington County Schools' Acknowledgement Statement you acknowledge that you have read and are familiar with Covington County Schools' Code of Student Conduct 2024-2025 and Straughn Elementary School's 2024-2025 Student-Parent Handbook.