



Northwoods Academy
Parent Handbook
2023-2024

Northwoods Academy
709 Pierce Avenue
Macon, GA 31204

April Harriger, Director

Northwoods Academy Parent Handbook

Welcome to Northwoods Academy. We are glad your child is here! Northwoods Academy is committed to providing a safe, supportive, orderly, and enjoyable learning environment. At Northwoods Academy it is our commitment to ***ensure high levels of learning for ALL students***. Children at Northwoods Academy are nurtured and provided with valuable learning opportunities. Thank you for entrusting your child's early education to us. We will make every effort to help your child achieve academically and socially. We value your participation and support of our program and believe that as your child's first teacher you are an integral part of our program.

This handbook has been designed to help communicate the expectations for a successful school year. The information contained highlights policies and procedures that will allow us to provide maximum safety for students as they arrive to and leave from school daily. We recognize the importance of the school and community working together and request that you read this information carefully and follow the policies and procedures outlined. If you have any questions, please contact the school.

Please read it carefully, sign and return the Acknowledgement located on the last page. Thank you for the opportunity to work with your child. We invite and welcome you to be an active participant in your child's education.

Respectfully,

April Harriger

Director of Northwoods Academy

Our Vision

Students are empowered to learn, lead, innovate and serve as productive and caring citizens within their chosen paths of success.

Our Missions

The Bibb County School District maximizes student achievement and social-emotional well-being by building a sense of community in safe, equitable learning environments.

PBIS Mission: At Northwoods Academy our families and staff work together to guide little feet in taking giant steps towards graduation and developing positive social and emotional skills.

Built4Bibb

Our Guiding Principles

Personalized Learning- Students are successful when they are provided flexible opportunities to be self-directed learners in an adaptable, risk-free environment.

Collaboration- Strong, transformative collaboration among home, school, community unlocks student potential and fosters increased opportunities for diverse meaningful learning experiences.

Engagement- Engaged teachers with proper tools, resources, and support make for a quality education that will prepare our students for their future.

Safety- Every student deserves to be loved, cared for, and educated in a safe environment.

Effective Leadership- Effective leadership is key to a positive learning environment where all voices are respected and heard.

Attendance

Regular school attendance is essential to academic success, and even at a young age is important for the stability and structure of the educational program. Please take note that Pre-K students who are chronically tardy/leave early or have 11 unexcused absences and/or excessive tardies may be dismissed from the program. Kindergarten students may be required to return to their zoned school for excessive tardies and 11 unexcused absences. Attendance is something we take very seriously at Northwoods Academy. When your child is late or leaves early she/he is missing vital instruction time.

Georgia Attendance Law: All children enrolled for 20 school days or more in the public schools of this state prior to their seventh birthday shall become subject to all of the provisions of this article, the provisions of Code Sections 20-2-690 through 20-2-701, and the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education relating to compulsory school attendance even though they have not attained seven years of age.

Regular attendance and punctuality are vital if students are to receive the most out of the instruction that is being offered. Students are expected to attend school every day, to arrive promptly, and remain throughout the scheduled hours. Excessive absences for Kindergarteners are one of the key factors considered in any retention due to the lack of instructional time. Regular and punctual attendance is a key factor of academic achievement. When students are absent or tardy from school, they are missing instruction. Bibb County Public School's Attendance Policy will be followed.

	Absent 1 day	Absent 2 days	Absent 5 days	Absent 7 days	Absent 10 days	Absent 20 days
Minutes of instruction missed	390	780	1,950	2,730	3,900	7,800
Hours of instruction missed	6.5	13	32.5	42.5	65	130

Georgia law places the responsibility of daily student attendance on the parent or guardian. Frequent absences and/or tardies for any reason may adversely affect a student’s schoolwork. Each student is expected to be in school every day except during illness, injury or if a providential condition beyond his/her control prevents attendance. Tardiness creates a major disruption. **After three (3) tardies,** school officials, to determine the best course of action to remedy the situation will contact parents.

Northwoods Academy will adhere to the attendance policy adopted by the Bibb County School District.

Students having 10 or more unexcused absences and/or excessive tardies, s/he will not be eligible to apply for the initial lottery selection process for Kindergarten at Northwoods Academy but may be put at the end of the waiting list if the parent desires. Kindergarten students with frequent tardies and unexcused absences will be sent to their zoned school.

NORTHWOODS ACADEMY ATTENDANCE POLICY

Excused absences – All absences will be reported unexcused unless the school receives one of the following forms of documentation:

A note of explanation written and signed by the student’s parent or guardian, **if presented within three (3) days. ONLY 3 PARENT WRITTEN NOTES PER SEMESTER.**

Additional absences will require official documentation:

- o a doctor’s note,
- o a court document,
- o note/form verifying religious holidays,
- o parent note indicating there is a family funeral. The student will be excused up to (3) days unless extenuating circumstances apply.

NOTE: If a student is absent more than three (3) consecutive days, official documentation will be required. Determinations regarding excused/unexcused absences are at the discretion of the principal/director or designee and are considered final.

Automated phone calls will go out to parents/guardians in the data system each time a student is absent. Attendance letters will be sent after 3 unexcused and 5 unexcused absences as a courtesy. If no improvement is made, a referral will be sent to the School Social Worker. **NOTE: Ten (10) unexcused absences violate the State of Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law and a referral to State Court and/or Juvenile Court will be filed by the School Social Worker.** If convicted of such violation, parent/guardian may be subject to a fine or imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, or both, at the discretion of the Court.

Tardiness – Student tardiness is a disruption to the instructional day. Please help us establish a good work ethic for your children.

A student is tardy if he/she:

- is not present in the classroom before the 8:20 a.m.
- leaves during the day and returns later the same day; or
- leaves school before the 3:00 p.m. dismissal bell.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES - Students may request to be temporarily excused from school by the principal in the following circumstances:

- Serious illness or hospitalization;
- Serious illness or death in the immediate family;
- Special and recognized religious holidays observed by the student's faith;
- Court orders or mandates by order of governmental agencies;
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety; and
- Other circumstances for which the parent or guardian makes **prior** arrangements with the director for their child to be absent from school.

All such requests should be submitted in writing, in advance (as much as possible), and be accompanied by supporting documentation. **NOTE:** While absences of this nature may be excused, they will still be recorded as student absences.

The goal of the attendance procedure is to assist families in establishing and maintaining regular school attendance patterns (Family Handbook, Georgia Pre-K).

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS:

The Bibb County School District offers a Multi-Tiered System of supports (MTSS) for all students related to both academic and behavioral needs. The MTSS, Response to Intervention (RtI), is a three-tiered model that utilizes preventative instructional practices and interventions to support both universal and individual student's needs. Behavior supports are provided at a universal level intended to effectively address the needs of all students in a school (referred to as Tier 1 and/or PBIS). A major initiative in Bibb County Public Schools is Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS), which includes proactive strategies for defining, supporting, and teaching appropriate behaviors to create positive, safe learning environments. Attention is focused on sustaining a Multi-Tiered System of Support to increase student learning. School staff recognizes that maintaining and changing student behaviors involve a continuum of acknowledgements, supports, interventions and remediation. RtI provides a tiered approach dedicated to the following: preventing inappropriate conduct and reinforcing appropriate behaviors, providing interventions so students can acquire necessary social/emotional/behavioral skills, and individualized supports to remediate inappropriate behavioral patterns.

RtI behavioral support is a systematic process for providing a series of intensifying, evidence-based behavioral interventions and supports matched to student need. Student need is determined by inadequate response to an evidence-based, behavioral intervention implemented with fidelity.

RtI behavioral support relies on the repeated collection of objective data (progress monitoring) to make decisions about whether the student is responding adequately or inadequately to support(s) currently being provided.

Upon identifying a student as a Chronic Disciplinary Problem Student, as described in the Student Code of Conduct, a teacher **must** provide behavioral support for all students needing support by utilizing the MTSS/RtI. BCSD has determined that RtI and PBIS will be implemented in all public schools within the district.

PBIS- The Pyramid Model

The Pyramid Model is a framework of practices that promotes the development of young children's social and emotional competence and effectively address challenging behaviors. Each of the three tiers provide level of support beginning with promoting positive social and emotional competence for all children, preventing challenging behaviors with targeted supports for some children and providing intense intervention for a few children.

At Northwoods Academy, we use the Second Step Social-Emotional Learning Program to teach self-regulation and social-emotional skills to set students up for success. The curriculum teaches students the skills needed for learning, establishing friendships, problem solving, developing emotional management and empathy.

CONFERENCES/COMMUNICATION

We encourage frequent communication between the parent and the school through Remind, letters, notes, phone calls, and conferences (including video conferences). Communication is an essential part of the educational program. You can also visit our school website at <https://northwoods.bcsdk12.net/> and Northwoods Academy Facebook page.

If a parent has a concern, which involves a teacher and a child, the first person to see is the teacher. If a parent does not think his/her concern has been adequately addressed by the teacher, the parent may then seek help from the director. Most problems can be satisfactorily resolved by following this procedure.

SCHOOL HOURS

Early Arrival: 7:50-8:15

School Hours are from 8:20 to 3:00

Early Dismissal- students must be checked out prior to 2:00

Office is closed from 2:00 to 3:00

Check Out Procedure/Policy

If a student has a medical or dental appointment requiring parent or guardian to come to school requesting an early dismissal, please write a note to the teacher ahead of time. **NOTE: All early dismissals must occur before 2:00 p.m.** Parents are required to sign out students from the office. **The person checking out the child must be designated on the child's emergency contact information in the office and must have a valid ID to show school personnel at the time of checkout.**

There are times when checking your child out of school is necessary. To better facilitate a timely and safe dismissal for all students, please plan to pick up your child before 2:00 pm. Please arrange appointments after school hours whenever possible.

Arrival and Dismissal

Northwoods Academy hours are from 8:20 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Students are admitted on campus as early as 7:50. Breakfast is available for kindergarteners if they arrive to school prior to 8:10. Pre-K students will eat breakfast as a class.

Students are considered on-time when they arrive at school before 8:17 a.m. Please keep in mind that kindergarten students who arrive after 8:10 will miss breakfast. Students arriving after 8:17 will need to be escorted to the main lobby by a parent/adult guardian for check-in. Students are expected to be in their class by 8:20. Students not in the building by 8:20 will have to be considered tardy and must be escorted to the main office by a parent/adult guardian for check-in.

At 3:20 P.M. all remaining students will be brought to the office where parents must report to sign them out. While emergency situations do arise, extended supervision is not readily available. Frequent late pick-ups will require a conference with the director to consider alternate transportation arrangements or a more convenient educational setting.

Kindergarten students who are chronically tardy or absent will be sent to their neighborhood school.

RIGHT TURN ONLY! WE ARE A RIGHT TURN ONLY SCHOOL COMING AND GOING DURING THE CARPOOL HOURS. Left hand turns are restricted during the morning arrival and afternoon dismissal process. The school has observed that Pierce Avenue becomes obstructed with school traffic when left hand turns were permitted into and exiting the school parking lot. This traffic obstruction restricts access on Pierce Ave to emergency vehicles such as ambulances, fire trucks, police officers and other public safety vehicles, in addition to obstructing the movement of other motor vehicles.

When the traffic flow plan has not been followed, there have been several near miss accidents. We have also received community complaints and concerns about the safety of others. This is of serious concern for the safety of our children, parents, and other community members. We also ask that parents refrain from turning their vehicle around on Pierce Avenue. Safe right hand turn entry to Northwoods' campus can be accomplished utilizing one of the following options:

Continue down Pierce Avenue and take the first left onto Old Horton Road approximately .9 mile passed the school and then another left (continuing Old Holton Rd) to merge back to Pierce Avenue. This will allow you to make a right-hand turn onto our campus.

From Riverside Drive turn on to Corbin Avenue and then make a right turn on Old Holton Road.

Old Holton Road runs directly into Pierce Ave. Merge Right on Pierce Ave and the school is on your right.

Morning Arrival

To help the morning flow quickly and smoothly we ask that you drive through the carpool line and wait for an adult to get your child out of the car. Parents should pull all the way up to the front entrance. Students will enter the building through the middle door at the front of the school. Students should exit the car on the passenger side only. Parents are asked to remain in their cars and be prepared to move quickly and safely when students exit the car. There is only one carpool line and students should never exit their cars in the parking area to walk through carpool traffic without a parent. Students will not be able to enter the school using the front entrance unless accompanied by a parent who is coming to the office or has a scheduled parent/teacher conference. Please be sure to sign in at the office and obtain a visitor's badge.

Students may begin entering the building at **7:50 a.m.** Please remember that all students should be seated in the classrooms and ready to start the day by 8:20 a.m. It is important that they arrive on time. If students are late to school, parents/guardians must check them in at the office. Do not send students to the office alone to sign in.

Dismissal

To maximize instructional time and maintain an orderly school environment and safe dismissal, Northwoods students will not be checked out of the office between **2:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.** The office will be closed during this time to prepare for dismissal.

All students will be kept in the building during dismissal time. Parents are to remain in their cars. Individual students will be called and escorted to their cars as their ride arrives. Parents should only come into the building if they are signing their child out of school early or if they have a scheduled parent/teacher conference. Because of dismissal responsibilities, teachers will not be available to converse at this time unless you have made previous arrangements. Teachers are providing instruction or supervising students and do not always have time to talk with you. Please request a conference time or leave a message and the teacher will respond as soon as possible.

We will begin dismissing students promptly at 3:00 p.m. It is essential to move the carpool line quickly. Please help us out and refrain from lining up for carpool before 2:45. When parents come and start lining up before 2:45 it causes the line to get backed up on Pierce before we even begin carpool.

***ALL CAR RIDERS MUST BE PICKED UP THROUGH THE CARPOOL LINE; IF AN ID CHECK IS NEEDED IT WILL BE DONE AFTER 3:10. IF YOU HAVE A CAR TAG YOU MUST GO THROUGH THE CARPOOL LINE.**

Expectations of Drivers

- It is critical that drivers pay close attention to staff and their directions. Pull safely and slowly into the pickup area. Wait in your car while in the carpool line until your child is loaded. Do not park in the pickup zone or leave your car unattended in the carpool line. If you are coming into the school for a scheduled conference or to sign students out of school, you must park in a parking space in the parking lot. Do not park in the handicap spaces unless you have a handicap

sticker. Please be considerate of those who are disabled and need these spaces. Always sign in at the front office and obtain a visitor's pass.

- Please be patient and polite while you wait. Adults who lose their temper, use obscene language or gestures, speed through the pickup area, park illegally, or in any way endanger children or staff will be asked to leave the campus. Carpool pickup will be safe and calm. School rules will be followed and enforced – no exceptions. Failure to do so may result in your permanent suspension from campus.
- **Please refrain from being on your cell phone while in the carpool line.**
- If there is an emergency and you need to sign your child out of school, you will have to come directly to the office and speak with office personnel. Parents will not be allowed to go to the classroom and pick up students.
- Office personnel will not call students to the office for pickup during dismissal time. For safety reasons, we must have strict procedures in place and will monitor the process closely. It is not the school's intention to make it inconvenient for you, but to keep children safe.
- Students will not be released to anyone that is not on the student's emergency contacts. If you need to sign a student out before 2:00 p.m., you will need to park, come to the main office and sign the child out. Anyone who signs the child out must be listed as an emergency contact and present photo identification. Again, this is for the safety of the students.

If you would like to volunteer at Northwoods, stop by the front office and fill out the Volunteer Forms. We will need a copy of your Driver's License. Bibb County will conduct a background check and then will let us know if you are cleared to volunteer.

Medical Issues

Students Who Become Ill at School

Every effort will be made to encourage students to remain at school when they complain of minor aches and discomforts. A student cannot remain at school if he/she has a fever or has thrown up. This policy is in effect to help curb infection. Parents will be notified of illness and will be expected to plan for their child to be picked up within one hour. **We must always have an emergency contact number that works. Please update contact information in the parent portal when needed.** If we cannot reach anyone, and we feel that medical treatment is necessary, we will call appropriate medical personnel or a facility to help. Costs for medical treatment are the parent's responsibility.

Students who have diarrhea, vomiting, and/or fever must be symptom free for 24 hours without medication prior to returning to school.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROCEDURES: Bibb County School District Policy will be followed for communicable disease procedures. Written instructions will be provided and explained to parent by the school nurse/med tech or designated person. Communicable diseases may include chicken pox, pink eye, COVID-19, ringworm, and head lice.

MEDICATION

The guidelines regarding students taking medications at school are as follows:

- The principal, school nurse, or a staff member designated by the principal shall be responsible for administering medication to students and storing all medication in a reasonably secure location. A detailed record of said medication and its distribution will be kept on file in the front with the school nurse.
- All medication must be brought to the school nurse or principal, in the most recent original pharmaceutical container, clearly labeled with the student's name, name of the medication, the appropriate dosage, and the time for each dose. Please administer these medications at home whenever feasible.
- Any student who must have medication administered during school hours, shall file with the principal of the school a medication authorization, signed by the parents or legal guardians of the student and the student's physician. The form shall provide clear instructions from the prescribing physician as to the method or manner such medication is to be administered, including the quantity or dosage to be administered and frequency, together with any potential reaction or other cautioning instructions in connection with usage of the drug. The medication will be administered only in accordance with the written instructions from the child's physician. The parents or guardians shall authorize the school to correspond directly with the child's physician in the event it is deemed appropriate or necessary in the best interest of the child. Students who need an inhaler for medical reasons may keep it in their backpacks or on their persons only if the appropriate medical authorization is on file in the school office.
- Staff members other than a Nurse may not administer non-prescription medication. Parent permission must be given via the completion of the Nurse's form.

TRANSPORTATION CHANGES

Please notify the school in writing, in advance, if there is to be a change in the normal transportation of your child. If no notification is received, your child will follow his/her regular method of getting home. Please do not wait until the last minute to call. Last minute changes create a hardship on others.



Elementary School Unified Dress Code

BACKPACKS MUST BE CLEAR OR MESH

Pre-Kindergarten:

- All clothes must be the appropriate size.
- Students wearing skirts, dresses, and jumpers must wear shorts or biking shorts underneath their skirts, dress, or jumpers.
- Socks must be worn, and shoes must have closed toes and backs.
- No spaghetti strap dresses or open back clothing.

Kindergarten:

- Collared shirts of any solid color may be worn.
- School spirit shirts are permitted.
- Solid colored pants, shorts, skirts/skorts, dresses and uniform jumpers in the colors of khaki, navy blue, and black are allowed. Must be knee-length, tight fit not permitted.
- Plain denim jeans with no holes are allowed.
- Solid-colored hoodies are allowed to be worn, with the hood tucked in while inside the school building.

CAR TAGS

Families will be provided with up to 2 car tags at no cost. Additional car tags or car tag replacements will cost the family \$2.00 to help cover the cost of materials.

Northwoods Academy will implement Health and safety practices outlined by the Bibb County School District. See <https://www.bcsdk12.net/> for policies and procedures.

Below is a list of people who are First Responders. Please contact those listed under the area of your concern/question.

First Responders™

Northwoods Academy
April Harriger, Principal

Area	1st	2nd	3rd
Attendance	Cachet Sims	Anthony Henry	Karen Madden
BCW / Headstart Referrals	Christie McNair	Eliazabeth Gant	
Behavior	Tracey.Gilbert	Elizabeth Gant	April Harriger
Budget/Finance	Karen Madden	April Harriger	
Building Technology/Key check in/out	Karen Madden	Phillip Robertson	
Canvas	Erin Radney	Lindsey Nobles	
Event Pictures	Scotisha Wilson	Charity Evbuomwan	Amber Rowland
FaceBook	Samantha Bergeron	Lindsey Nobles	
Facilities/Building Maintenance	Ifeanyichuku Amanugi	Rhonda.Johnson	
Fire/disaster Drills	Cachet Sims	Karen Madden	April Harriger
Health/First Aid	Krystal Canty	Karen Madden	April Harriger
Infinite Campus	Anthony Henry	Cachet Sims	Karen Madden
Lunch Menu	Jennifer Johnson		
Panda	Karen Madden	April Harriger	
Parent Portal	Anthony Henry	Cachet Sims	Karen Madden
PBIS	Tracey Gilbert		
PEC Questions	Elizabeth Gant	Tracey.Gilbert	April Harriger
Registration	Anthony Henry	Karen Madden	Cachet Sims
RTI	Tracey.Gilbert	April Harriger	
School Website	Samantha Bergeron	April Harriger	Karen Madden
Special Education Referral/Intake	Christie McNair	Elizabeth Gant	
Substitutes	Karen Madden	April Harriger	
Technology Support	Erin Radney	Melissa Watson	
Timesheets	Karen Madden	April Harriger	
Transportation/bus referral	Elizabeth Gant	Cachet Sims	April Harriger
Trouble Tickets	Karen Madden	April Harriger	
Vision and Hearing	Christie McNair	Theresa Robinson	Elizabeth Gant

We are looking forward to a great year!



As Wise O.W.L.S we:
Obey Rules
Work together
Look, listen, learn
Safety First



By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the Northwoods Academy Parent Handbook and agree to fully abide.

Student Name: _____

Parent Name (print): _____

Signature of Parent: _____

Date: _____

Teacher: _____

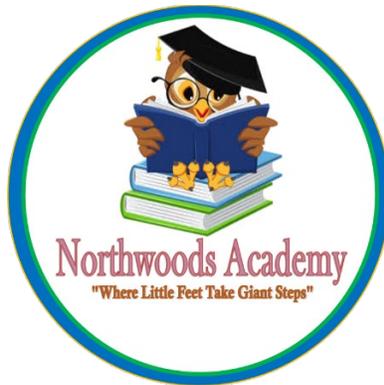
Pre-K Students:

By initially below, I understand that attendance is important and if my student has 10 or more unexcused absences and/or excessive tardies, it will impact his/her slot in the random lottery selection for Kindergarten at Northwoods Academy. _____ (Parent initials)

Kindergarten Students:

By initially below, I understand that attendance is important and if my student has 10 or more unexcused absences and/or excessive tardies it will impact his/her kindergarten slot and may be sent to his/her zoned school. _____ (Parent initials)

Please complete and return this page to your child's teacher within 5 days.



Student Name: _____

Number of Car Tags Issued: _____; Date Issued: _____

By signing below, I understand that my family will be provided with up to 2 car tags at no cost. Additional car tags or car tag replacements will cost the family \$2.00 to help cover the cost of materials.

I also understand that my child cannot be picked up through carpool without a car tag. Without a car tag I must park in a parking space and check in at the front office with my photo ID.

Parent Name (print): _____

Signature of Parent: _____

Date: _____

Teacher: _____

***Reminder the front office will be closed from 2:00-3:00.**