

Guide to Bell's Crossing Elementary

Introduction

What this guide is - This guide is meant to be a comprehensive overview to Bell's Crossing Elementary School, including school and PTA information. Please be sure to refer to the calendar/handbook sent home to each family for more information on school policies before calling the school. If you still have questions regarding a school policy or information after reading this guide and checking the handbook, please call 355-3800. If you have questions about PTA, please call 355-3859 and someone from PTA will be in touch as soon as possible.

What this guide is not – an in-depth examination of every school, district, classroom, or PTA policy and program. If you have any questions or want more information regarding specific topics, please contact the appropriate person (front office, teacher, PTA, etc.). We have tried to indicate the contact person for each subject in parentheses after each description, but if we have missed something, please contact the front office and they can direct you. A school e-mail/phone list is included for reference. Please note all school phone numbers begin with 355; all district e-mails end in @greenville.k12.sc.us.

Communication

School handbook – One handbook is sent home to each family the first week of school. Please refer to this for more school information and policies. The handbook also includes a school calendar, teacher listing, and PTA contact names and numbers (all subject to change). (Contact the front office for more information.)

School website – The school maintains a website (www.greenville.k12.sc.us/bells) where you can access teacher websites, e-mails and other information. Every attempt is made to keep it current. (school)

Teacher e-mail and telephones – Every teacher has e-mail capability and a telephone in the classroom. The phone does not ring for outside calls, but goes to voicemail to minimize the disruption to the classroom; the teacher will return messages within 24 hours. Handwritten notes are a useful way of corresponding with homeroom teachers as well, and are necessary in some circumstances, such as a change in pick-up (short or long term), change in personal/emergency information, and absence excuses. (classroom teacher)

From the Desk of the Principal – Note from the principal sent home several times each year to note major items of interest. (front desk)

E-mails – If you have e-mail capability, please let your child's teacher know your e-mail address. It saves time and money to have Monday memos, newsletters, and certain other items delivered to homes via e-mail. If you do not have e-mail capability, hard copies will be provided. All families with internet access are encouraged to receive school and PTA information via e-mail. (classroom teacher & PTA)

School/PTA Newsletter – *The Bell Ringer*, a monthly newsletter distributed by the PTA, includes information from the school, PTA, and other sources. It is distributed the first Monday of each month, August through May (excluding January). All families with internet access are encouraged to receive this document via e-mail. (PTA)

Menu/Bylines – The lunchroom menu and weekly announcements are sent home the first day of each week. Please be sure to read the announcements carefully as they often contain corrections or other information not included elsewhere. All families with internet access are encouraged to receive this document via e-mail. This is not distributed on very short weeks. (PTA)

Monday Memos/Folders – Homeroom teachers send home a communication folder on Mondays with each child. This folder, provided by the school, may contain a memo from your child's teacher regarding the upcoming week, grades/papers for that week, a conduct mark, a place for you to write the teacher a note, and/or other items from the school or PTA. (classroom teacher)

Attendance and Dismissal

Morning Drop Off – BCES is a very large school with the traffic to go with it. Children may be dropped off at school no earlier than 7:20 each morning, when supervision is available. Please pull all the way to the end of the sidewalk. Always follow the directions of the staff member in the cross walk. **Do NOT drop your child off in the parking lot or park on the grass to let your child off or to walk him or her in!** That is a very dangerous practice and, because we have had experience with this in the past, cars are no longer allowed to exit from the front parking lot until 8 a.m. every morning. Please allow your child to walk to his/her classroom on his/her own after the first week of school. This is an important part of their developing independence. (front office)

Afternoon Dismissal – Please refer to the handbook for more information on regular afternoon dismissal for car riders, bus riders, daycare van riders, and Extended Day at Bell's. If you need to change your child's afternoon transportation, send a note to the teacher or call the front office **before 1:45 p.m.** to allow time to notify the teacher.

Bus Transportation – All students riding the bus **MUST** be registered through the front office! This process may take anywhere from 1-5 days. New registrants will be given the form when they register; parents of existing students who are making the change to bus rider will need to request a form and turn it back in at least one day before the child is expected to ride the bus home. PLEASE NOTE: Students cannot ride a bus home if they are not registered for that bus, even with another student.

Grades K and 1 – The registration form must list the names and phone numbers of all those allowed to take the child off the bus, including parents. Siblings must be in 5th grade or older. One of these people must be at the stop to pick the student up or the driver will return the student to the school.

Early Dismissal – If your child needs early dismissal from school, please send a note to your child's teacher that morning, indicating the time of pick up. The parent or other approved person must come to the front office to sign the student out. **Last early dismissal is 1:45 p.m.** to keep regular dismissal on track. For security reasons, anyone picking up a student should be prepared to show a photo ID. (front office)

What if your child gets sick or injured at school... You will be contacted by the school nurse. When you arrive at school to pick your child up, you will go directly to the health room located to the right in the main lobby and sign him or her out there. (nurse)

Tardies/Late Arrivals – If your child is late for school, he or she must report to the school attendance office in the lobby for a pass to class. **Parents must sign the student in;** please bring a note or doctor's excuse when possible. School starts promptly at 8 a.m. (attendance office)

Absences – Please refer to your handbook for a list of lawful absences and for the SC state truancy policy; a copy of the policy was sent home in every child's first day packet as well. All absences must be verified by a note regardless of the

reason for the absence. A vacation is an unexcused absence. If you know your child will be out of school, please notify the attendance office. (attendance office)

General Information

Accelerated Reader – A computer based reading enhancement program. (classroom teacher)

Assignment Pads – Students in grades 2-5 are required to have an assignment pad of some sort to aid them in their organization, particularly for homework and upcoming tests and projects

Awards – Awards are given out quarterly for Principal's 4.0 Club, A/B Honor Roll, BUG (Bringing Up Grades), and 100% attendance for that quarter. In partnership with the Simpsonville Kiwanis Club, two children are chosen each quarter from each homeroom to receive the Terrific Kids award, to encourage good citizenship and character at all grade levels. During the last awards assembly, students are also recognized for perfect attendance and honor rolls for the entire year. (classroom teacher)

Banking at Bell's – an opportunity for students to open and make deposits into their own savings account (in partnership with First Citizens Bank at Five Forks). Look for information to come home regularly. (Guidance Department)

Bell's Buddies – The Bell's Buddies Program is designed to help students understand more about filling out an application, applying for a job and being a good employee. Fourth and fifth graders apply to work in different positions around our school. These students work during their recess each Wednesday for one nine week period. Positions include helping the custodial staff, tutoring younger students, cleaning desks, and running errands. Evaluations are completed at the conclusion of the program. (Guidance Department)

Bells of Caring – In November, a tree is put up in the school lobby. Each bell on the tree represents a needy student or sibling of a Bell's Crossing family. The bells list the age, clothing sizes and toy wishes for each child. If you decide you would like to help out a needy child, please come to the lobby, find a bell that interests you and follow the directions. It is crucial that all donations are returned by the deadline so they may be delivered to the families. (Guidance Department)

Book Fair – The media center holds a book fair in the fall during open house week and again in the spring. All profits from the book sale go to the media center to provide new multimedia materials for all students. (PTA-volunteer questions; media specialist-book fair questions; teacher-visitation time)

Boxtops for Education – On many food items, you will see a small rectangular "box top" coupon. Cut these out and send them to school. Each one is worth 10 cents to the school and they add up fast! (PTA)

Breakfast – Breakfast is served each morning from 7:20-7:50 a.m. See the weekly *Bylines* for breakfast choices and prices.

Carnival – Held in October in conjunction with our silent auction, this fun family event has music, games, rides, and food. There's fun for all ages, so plan to attend. Tickets will be pre-sold at a discount and are available at the carnival as well. (PTA)

Challenge (Gifted and Talented Program) – A pullout program for students in grades 3-5 who meet certain criteria. Please refer to the school website or your handbook for more information or contact the Challenge teacher.

Chimes Choir and Chorus – Chimes Choir and Chorus auditions for rising 4th and 5th graders only are held during the school day beginning in March. Students will bring home an informational letter and a contract to sign and return

indicating interest. Students will be notified of the results within 2 weeks so they can audition for their second or third choice club if needed.

Chorus – Chorus auditions for rising 4th and 5th graders only are held during the school day in March. Students will bring home an informational letter and a contract to sign and return indicating interest. Students will be notified of the results within 2 weeks so they can audition for their second or third choice club if needed.

Class Parties – Two school wide parties are allowed during the year. The Holiday Party takes place the day before winter break and the End of the Year party is held on the last full day of school before summer break. Usually, there is a treat provided by parents as well as an organized activity. There may be other opportunities to provide a snack or small treat for the class during the school year, such as Halloween, Valentine’s Day, or a child’s birthday, but this must be authorized by the teacher. When preparing a class treat or sending in supplies for a treat bag, please remember some classes have students with severe allergies. We ask that NO PEANUT PRODUCTS be used for class treats. Check with your child’s teacher if you have any questions; dates are published in your handbook. (classroom teacher)

Club Day – Children in grades 3-5 choose a club in which to participate during the school day once a month. Children in grades K – 2 participate in organized activities. (classroom teacher)

Discipline Policy – Please see the handbook for detailed information regarding this topic. (classroom teacher or administrator)

Do-Dads – A club whose members are any male figure in a student’s life. These men help with various projects around the school, such as spreading mulch, hanging bulletin boards, guest hosting on ENN, and other areas. (Guidance Department)

Dress Code – Please see the handbook for detailed information regarding this topic.

ENN (Eagle News Network) - ENN (Eagle News Network) broadcasts each morning throughout the school. Students and teachers can hear the latest school news, lunch menu, weather forecast, trivia, and lots of other exciting news on the ENN broadcast. This is a student-run news program (supported by a teacher sponsor) for 5th grade students. Fourth grade students have the opportunity to audition for the ENN crew at the end of their 4th grade year.

Extracurricular Activities – Some extracurricular activities are available for our older students:

4th Grade – WEE Deliver, Chorus, Chimes Choir, Honors Artists, Bell’s Buddies

5th Grade – Chorus, Chimes Choir, Honors Artists, Safety Patrol, ENN, Bell’s Buddies

Field Days – Usually held in May, each grade level gets to spend the day outside participating in organized games. (PE Department)

Field Trips – Each grade level participates in field trips. Any child without a signed permission slip will not be allowed to attend a field trip. Chaperones are chosen randomly unless medical consideration is necessary. All chaperones must ride in the arranged transportation with the children. For liability and safety purposes, only the students, chaperones, and school personnel are allowed on school-sponsored field trips – no younger children, siblings of any age, or extra adults. (classroom teacher)

First Day Packets – At Meet Your Teacher, each child will bring home a large packet of information, including an emergency form and early dismissal card. Please fill these out and return them to your child’s teacher as soon as possible. The items will be separated and distributed to the appropriate person at school. PLEASE READ ALL DIRECTIONS CAREFULLY – some checks may need to be made out to **BCES** while others are to be made out to **BCES PTA**.

GeoBee – The Geography Bee is competition involving all 4th and 5th grade students. All classroom winners and runners-up move on to the semifinals, where the top 10 winners are selected. One schoolwide winner then takes a written test for eligibility to compete at the state level.

Half Days – Students only attend part of the last few school days to allow teachers time to finalize grades and close up for summer. Lunch is served and buses run two hours earlier than the normal time. Please be sure to include this in your child care plans. See handbook for dates.

Honors Artists - Honors Artists is a program designed for rising 4th and 5th grade students who have a love for art and are seeking to develop their skills on a more advanced level. Students will bring home an informational letter and a contract to sign and return indicating interest. Students will participate in an audition process; results will be mailed with final report cards. Students new to Bell's Crossing are able to audition for Honors Artist in August. (art teachers)

In case of Emergency at the school – Please see the handbook for more information on this topic.

Innisbrook – Each fall, the PTA holds its major fundraiser of the year. Historically, this has been a wrapping paper, chocolate, and gift sale from Innisbrook, a catalog fundraising company, during the first three weeks or so of school. This accounts for approximately half of the PTA's revenue for the year. 100% of the profits from this sale are returned to the school. (PTA)

Illness or Injury – If your child becomes ill or is injured at school, you will be contacted by the school nurse. When you arrive at school to pick your child up, you will go directly to the health room in the lobby and sign him or her out there. (health room)

Interim Progress Reports – Mid way through each quarter, teachers send home a progress report to help you keep track with your child's school performance. You will be asked to sign these and return them to your child's teacher. (classroom teacher).

Junior Beta Club – Membership in this national academic honor society is limited to 5th graders and then continues until 9th grade as long as a student maintains an A or A/B average as well as good citizenship. The initial registration fee is \$13. Students are nominated for this group by their teacher after the first grading period. (classroom teacher)

Lost and Found – Misplaced items are placed on the hanging rack in the cafeteria. Items not claimed will be donated to charity on the last day of each quarter. For small or especially valuable items, please check with the front office.

Lunch – You are welcome to join your child at lunch at any time, however, if you plan on eating a cafeteria meal, please send a note that morning with him or her. This will allow our cafeteria staff to plan accordingly. See the weekly *Bylines* for lunch choices and prices. Please note that the menu may need to be changed with very little notice due to circumstances beyond the school's control or at the discretion of the cafeteria manager. (classroom teacher or cafeteria manager)

Student Lunch Accounts – Every student receives their own personal account number when they begin school in Greenville County. That number remains with them as long as they are in a Greenville County school. You may send in cash or a check to be placed on your child's cafeteria account. Place it in an envelope, mark it with your child's name and account number, and send it to your child's teacher.

The children enter their own number when buying lunch at school. Please be sure to keep this account current.

Lunch & Learn – Guidance offers informational sessions on a variety of topics several times each year. (Guidance)

Medication – Please refer to the handbook for more information. (health room)

Meet Your Teacher – Each August, the school and PTA host this Meet Your Teacher event. During a set time, parents may bring their children to the school to find out who the child’s new teacher will be, meet that teacher, and find out more information about the school and the PTA. (front office or PTA)

Money (see “Lunch” above for cafeteria payment information) – If you need to send money in any form to school, it is best to place it in an envelope and mark it with your child’s name, teacher’s name, and reason for sending it in. This will allow the school to identify anything that may have been lost. Reasons for sending in money may include: lunchroom account, field trip payments, or PTA purchases/programs. Please note that separate checks **MUST** be written for school and PTA purchases. (contact depends on reason for sending money; lunch, field trip or other school purchase questions should be directed to the teacher or front office. PTA memberships, fundraisers, or other items should be directed to PTA or listed contact person.)

Open House – presented the second Monday in September (see handbook for exact dates). This is a time for parents to come learn about curriculum and classroom expectations for the year, not a time for individual conferences. Please contact the teacher to set up a meeting if you have specific questions about your child. If possible, please leave children at home to minimize interruptions. Classroom visits are preceded by a PTA General Assembly meeting in the cafeteria. (front office)

Parenting Nights – On the 2nd Monday each month when there is not a PTA General Assembly meeting or special program, a parenting night is usually offered on topics such as test scores, guidance department subjects, what to expect next year, or other topics. (front office)

Parking – Please park your vehicles in the big parking lot in front of the school. The side parking lot is reserved for maintenance staff and other personnel for security purposes. Please do not park in the drop off lanes directly in front of the schools. Those are to be used only for morning drop off, afternoon dismissal, preschool drop off and dismissal at different times during the day, and deliveries. It must otherwise be kept clear for emergency personnel should they be needed. For the safety of the children, we ask that no one use those lanes for regular parking. **There is no exit from the front parking lot before 8 a.m. each morning for the safety of the children.** (front office)

Peanut-Free School – BCES has several children enrolled who have severe and life-threatening peanut allergies. For their safety, our cafeteria does not use or sell any peanut products whatsoever. While you are free to send any kind of lunch with your child, we encourage you to be thoughtful of the other children in the classroom who may be allergic. Also, treats sent in to the classroom for a holiday may not include peanuts or peanut products. (front office)

PTA – Parent Teacher Association. In a nutshell, the PTA supports the school’s staff and students by organizing a large portion of the parent and community participation, various programs, and fundraisers. Please contact the PTA for further information.

Board Meetings – This is a monthly meeting of the PTA Executive Board (president; president-elect; vice presidents of programs, volunteers, and ways and means; membership coordinator; communications coordinator; treasurer; secretary; and parliamentarian) where business items are discussed, including topics related to the budget, any upcoming or past programs, membership and volunteers. Observers are welcome, but participation is limited to the agenda. If you would like to speak to the entire PTA board rather than one member, please contact the president prior to the meeting to discuss the addition of your topic to the agenda. These meetings usually last approximately one hour.

General Assembly Meetings – Held quarterly, usually in September, December, February and May. The PTA Board is responsible to the PTA membership at large. A report is made to the membership regarding budget, elections, or other PTA related items. Budget changes and elections must be approved by a quorum at these meetings, which typically last 15-20 minutes and precede a student- or school-based program, such as a chorus concert.

Publishing Center – Located in the library. Students select one of their special writings to be published at school. It is typed, made into a book, and returned to the child to illustrate. Every child publishing a book will be invited to an author's tea. (PTA)

Quality Day – Once or twice a year, educators from around the state visit Bell's Crossing to see how our teachers use skills related to Total Quality Education to improve the learning environment for our students. This is a school-based event and does not provide information for families. (front office)

Recycling – Currently, our recycling club recycles paper and cardboard, glue sticks, ink jet printer cartridges, plastic grocery bags, and cell phones. We will be adding aluminum cans and plastic water and juice bottles in the cafeteria in the future.

Red Ribbon Week – Drug awareness event sponsored by Greenville Family Partnership. Different activities are planned each year. (PTA)

Report Cards – Kindergarten and 1st grade students do not receive standard report cards. Grades 2-5 receive report cards four times per year. You will be asked to sign the envelope in which you receive them and return it to your child's teacher. At the end of the year, you will be asked to provide a self-addressed, stamped business envelope to your child's teacher for the last quarter's report card to be mailed to you a few days after school is out. (Please note that year end report cards are held if there is a balance due to the cafeteria or media center.)

Room Parent – Room parents work with the teachers and PTA to coordinate classroom activities like SEEDS, Sunshine Math, computer lab, parties, Red Ribbon Week, spring carnival, and other miscellaneous activities. A room parent is not necessarily responsible to help with all these activities, but will facilitate and work with the classroom volunteers and the Grade Level Coordinator. Most room parent responsibilities can be fulfilled from home. (PTA)

Safety Patrol – Safety patrols are 5th grade students chosen for their positive behavior and leadership qualities. A patrol is expected to be a role model for other students. General duties are to assist with loading/unloading cars during arrival/dismissal and to promote general safety rules around the school.

School Closings – Please see the handbook for detailed information regarding this topic.

School Directory – A school directory is published and available for purchase every fall. It includes the name, address, telephone number, e-mail address where applicable, and teacher and grade for each student who provided the information. Also, class listings by grade and teacher and PTA and teacher/school contact information are included. Look for information in your first day packet on how to be included and order forms to come home with your child in the fall. (PTA)

School Shirts

Class T-shirts – We ask that every child purchase a class T-shirt. This allows each teacher and their volunteers to group children together at a glance during field trips. Class shirts are also worn for class pictures. (classroom teacher)

School Spirit Wear – Bell's Crossing T-shirts and sweatshirts are available through the school store. (front office)

School Store – PTA staffs a school store in the lobby every morning before school from 7:30-8 a.m. Students may purchase basic school supplies as well as spirit wear. (PTA)

School Supplies – An updated school supply list is generated each spring for the following school year. The list is posted on the school website. All teachers from each grade level have input and use the same supplies in their classrooms,

although they may have individual wish lists as well. As a service to the parents, PTA offers prepackaged school supplies at cost. These boxes will contain everything a student needs for the grade they are entering, based on the supply list provided. They are available by pre-order only at the end of each school year for the following year's grade. (PTA)

SEEDS – This is a reading enrichment plan where volunteers come into the classroom, read a book to the children, and then discuss it with them. The length of time for each session depends on the classroom schedule. (PTA or classroom teacher)

SIC – School Improvement Council. Please see the handbook for more information. (front office)

Silent Auction – Held in conjunction with the spring carnival. Donations are provided by individuals and businesses for everyone to bid on. Bid sheets are pulled promptly at 7 p.m. and winners of each item posted. Payment is preferred that night but it is not necessary to be present to win. Look for more information in the spring. (PTA)

Spirit Nights – Throughout the year, business partners such as Frodo's, Chick-fil-a, Stevi B's, and other area food establishments will hold a spirit night for our school. A percentage of the proceeds from all products ordered that night when Bell's Crossing is mentioned come back directly to the school. (PTA)

Staff Appreciation Week – While the staff's hard work is appreciated throughout the year, a week is set aside each year especially for this! A luncheon and other organized activities are provided. More information in the spring. (PTA)

Standardized Testing – Children in grades 1-5 participate in some form of standardized testing each year (MAP, CogAT, ITBS, PASS; see school calendar for dates). Results of these will be provided to you at the fall conference with your child's teacher or in some other fashion at another time during the year. (classroom teacher)

Student Council – Students in 3rd through 5th grade have the opportunity to apply to become a student council representative. 75 students are selected from each of these grade levels to become a member of our Student Council. The group meets on a regular basis to plan school wide activities as well as participate in a variety of community service projects and events

Sunshine Math – A math enrichment program where children are given worksheets with more difficult math problems than they are accustomed to. A volunteer scores the sheets and returns them to the children. The length of each session depends on the classroom schedule. Participation is voluntary; children who participate receive rewards periodically. (PTA or teacher)

Teacher Gifts – Please see the handbook for detailed information regarding this topic. Note that, according to district policy, staff members are not allowed to accept a gift worth more than \$25.

Terrific Kids – Two children from each classroom are recognized quarterly by the Simpsonville Kiwanis Club for their good character and citizenship. These children are chosen by their peers.

Treats – If you would like to provide a treat for your child's class at lunchtime, please make arrangements with your child's teacher ahead of time. (classroom teacher)

Tutoring –

After School Tutorial – Standards-based tutoring by certified teachers outside the normal school day. (classroom teacher)

Peer Tutoring – Students apply to become tutors and are trained to work with students who need academic support. They meet at 7:30 or 2:00 to work on skills that will help build self-confidence. (Sharon-Marie Smith, Assistant Principal; or classroom teacher.

Volunteer Appreciation Week – Usually held in April, the school staff hosts a breakfast to thank volunteers for all their help throughout the year. (front office)

Volunteer Coffee – This is an opportunity to meet with PTA board members for an overview of the school and PTA while we discuss different volunteer activities. This is an excellent time to ask questions and to find out more about volunteering at Bell's Crossing. Some guidelines that the school has for our volunteers are also explained. (PTA)

WEE Care – A kindergarten orientation held each spring for registered kindergarteners who will begin school in the fall. They meet some of the school staff, go through the cafeteria line, get on and off a school bus, take a tour of the school, and visit a kindergarten classroom in session. It's a wonderful way to introduce your child to the "big school" and alleviate some of the anxiety many new kindergarteners (and their parents!) experience before starting school. (front office)

WEE Deliver – WEE Deliver is the inter-school postal system where students write to each other as a part of our writing program. This program is run by 4th grade students.