

# Highland Lakes Elementary Parent-Student Handbook 2022-2023



## Highland Lakes Panthers

The mission of Highland Lakes Leadership Academy is to create a safe and respectful learning environment which fosters self-directed learners. We will do this by accomplishing our School Improvement Plan goals and providing quality educational experiences so that we will build a community of successful, life-long learners.

**Eliza Defant: Principal**

**Jason Jessie: Assistant Principal**

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## Welcome to Highland Lakes Leadership Academy

Highland Lakes Leadership Academy staff and faculty look forward to working with you this year. The school has always considered education as the key to achievement. We also know that education begins in the home and grows when we, the school community, combine efforts with the children and parents.

It will be a continued goal to see that learning confidence and self-direction grow in each student at Highland Lakes Leadership Academy. We will work to make the future a success by joining together to strengthen our efforts to help children prepare for the challenge of tomorrow.

This handbook has been designed to give you brief answers to questions which may arise concerning Highland Lakes Leadership Academy operational policies. Occasional changes and clarifications may be communicated through telephone and/or email, but if policy questions are still unanswered, a telephone call to our school should clarify any concerns.

Eliza Defant, Principal

Jason Jessie, Assistant Principal

## Arrival/ Dismissal

### Bus Transportation

Buses begin loading at 2:55pm every day.

We currently have 3 school buses at Highland Lakes. The safety of our students getting to and from school is our priority. Please remember that only students who are assigned the bus may ride the bus. That means your child must be assigned by the District's transportation department to ride the bus. If you move to a new address, please stop by the front office with proof of residency of your new address so that we can get new transportation for you in a timely manner. Remember, if you live within 2 miles of the school, you are not eligible for a bus. One way you can help us make sure students are safe on the bus is to discuss proper bus behavior with your child. Students should stay in their seats facing forward, keep their hands to themselves and use quiet voices when talking to their seatmate. Bus drivers should be watching the road, not children who are misbehaving. We may have bus assistants riding the buses to help with our ESE students and with bus safety.

Please remember to be at the bus stop 10 minutes early and give a few minutes for a late bus before calling **Transportation (727-587-2020)**. We cannot control the traffic out there. Remember Kindergarteners will not be let out at the bus stop if there is not an adult there to meet them. They will be taken back to the school or to the bus compound and you will need to pick them up. Please see Administration if you have any safety concerns regarding your child's bus stop or bus ride.

### Car Circle and Walkers and Bikers

- At 2:55 students on buses that are here (others called as they arrive), back car circle Grades K-2, day care vans, and YMCA are dismissed.
- At 3:00 front car circle Grades 3-5, bike riders, and walkers are dismissed. **Please be patient in the first 2 weeks. The car circle always takes a few weeks to become efficient.**
- Please remember that children can ONLY be picked up and dropped off in the car circle. Having children walk off campus or in a spot not monitored by a school employee sends off safety flags as we cannot see and cannot control who picks up your child.

### Carline Congestion

Here are a few things you can do to make the procedure run more smoothly.

- **First, put down your cell phone.** Then make sure the sign we provided has your child's name on it and is clearly visible through the windshield so we can call your child once we see you. Eventually we will be able to pronounce your name properly and sometimes we even start to recognize you and your car. ☺
- **Second, when pulling in, alternate with the other drivers letting them in to the car circle.** Do not ENTER through the EXIT of the school. Please be careful and courteous in the car line, talking on the phone and texting while driving sets a poor example for your child. **Please do not park or block intersections on Highlands Blvd or neighboring subdivisions to avoid being ticketed by Pinellas County Sheriff.** The car line works very well if we work together. This will speed up dismissal.
- **The last thing you can do is pull your car all the way down to the end of the car circle.** This allows us to load 8-10 cars at a time. We will see your card in the window as you drive by and send your child to you. It is a great process when it gets going. 15 minutes after dismissal the back car circle closes and car riding students are walked to the front car circle. After 3:25pm you will need to come inside the front office and sign them out to pick them up. **Once we get good at this the car line is clear by 3:20!**
- **Parking and walking up to drop off or pick up your child at the school front entrance is reserved for PreK Parents ONLY. Parking in the back car loop is reserved for school staff. This will help eliminate congestion in our limited parking lots and ensure efficient and safe school operations.**

### Walkers

Walkers are only allowed to cross at the designated crosswalks. We encourage students to walk in pairs or groups. If your child walks to and from school, please make sure you have a talk with them about their safety. There are limited crossing guards on duty in the neighborhood.

### Bicycles

Florida law requires students to wear a bike helmet. All bicycles will be parked in a special secured parking area. **It is mandatory for all bicycles to be locked individually within the bike parking area.** Bikes are to be locked as a deterrent to theft. There are two bike racks including the one by the PE field/back gate. Remember, you must walk your bike, scooter or skateboard while on school property.

## Absences

Parents are required to log onto the Highland Lakes website and click on the "Report Student Absence" icon when your student will be out of school. You can send a written explanation of your child's absence to school, within two (2) days of an absence. If no written notification is received, the absence is regarded as an **"unexcused absence."** Should a student miss school for 3 or more consecutive days for medical reasons, a doctor's note is required to excuse these absences. Should a student be out of school for family/personal reasons for a prolonged period, advanced notice should be given to the office. When a student has missed 10% or more of possible school days, they will be referred to the Child Study Team. A member of the Child Study Team will be in contact with the student's parents to determine any barriers to attendance. Classwork/homework is required to be made up **after** the absence according to the arrangements made with the

teacher. Phone calls requesting work for an absence must be made to the office by 9:45 am. Work will be available to pick up in the office after 3:10 pm.

### Address and information

All students are requested to have current contact information (yellow clinic card AND white office information card) in the office. **If you move during the school year, you are required to update your address in Portal and provide the school with two proofs of your new address.** If work or emergency contact phone numbers change, please contact the front office so that they may be changed on the students' office and clinic cards. Please include cell phone numbers, and P.O. boxes as part of the contact information.

### Animals

Animals are not to be brought to school. If, as a part of a curriculum unit, a teacher requests that animals be used to extend the topic of study, several precautions need to be taken. Parents need to be surveyed to see if the students have allergies to the animal. This must be preapproved by the Principal before any animals are brought on campus.

### Appointments

If a student must leave school early, the parent or guardian must pick the student up from the school office. The child will be called from class on the intercom when the parent arrives in the office. It is strongly discouraged to pick up your child within the last 20 minutes of the school day as this interferes with end of day routines. The parent must sign the child out in the office. No child is to leave the school grounds at any time without permission from the office. Verification of the person removing the child will be made through a driver's license and student's office card. Chronic/excessive early pickups may result in a referral to our social worker for evaluation of truancy.

### Attendance

**Classes begin promptly at 8:45a.m. and children arriving after 8:45 a.m. will be marked tardy. No student should be dropped off at school prior to 8:15 a.m. Dismissal is at 2:55 p.m. All students must be picked up by 3:15 p.m. Please adhere to these times.** If student is requested by teacher to stay after school, the student will need **written** authorization from the parent in order to stay.

### Birthdays

We have a limited list of county approved healthy options available in the front office and on our school website. **NO birthday invitations** may be distributed at school unless the entire class is invited. Parents are requested not to bring, flowers, balloons, or other gifts. All birthday treats must be store bought and in the original sealed container

### Bus Transportation

The bus driver has the responsibility for the safety and conduct of students riding the bus to and from school. Students should always obey these rules. Any student who persists in disorderly conduct on a school bus shall be reported by the bus driver in the form of a bus referral. Should an emergency develop due to the conduct of students on the bus, the bus driver may take the appropriate steps for the safety of all students.

Students should know the arrival time of their bus and be ready. Drivers will make every attempt to be on time, however due to traffic please allow a 10-minute window before and after your scheduled time. Children who live more than two miles from school will be transported by bus. **Students may ride only their assigned bus and**

**non-bus-riding students may not ride the bus (for example, to visit with a friend) even with parent permission.**

### Cafeteria

Our cafeteria serves breakfast daily from 8:15am to 8:40am, and lunch from 10:45am to 1:05pm. All students are eligible for a free breakfast and the cost of lunch is \$2.25. Ala carte items are available for purchase and monies can be prepaid by cash or check and put into your child's account in the cafeteria. The money remains in the student account and may be used for items during the year. Checks should be made out to "Highland Lakes Cafeteria" and sent to school in an envelope clearly labeled with the student's name and teacher. A **"Cash only" basis is in effect** if a previous check has been returned by the bank as **"NSF"** (non-sufficient funds.) Funds can also be added to lunch accounts online via **myschoolbucks.com** Applications for 'free/reduced' lunch can be made at **myschoolapps.com**

Our intention is to make sure all students have the proper nutrition to work well and learn in our classrooms. Milk for students who bring their own lunch is available.

Parents are limited to Fridays if they would like to join their child for lunch outside at the picnic tables. Parents must sign in at the front office and must have an ID available for staff to check. Once you have been cleared, you will receive a sticker for the cafeteria and directed to the picnic tables to meet your child. We have a staff member to assist in locating your child, no parent may enter the cafeteria. You may not have other students join you. If bringing in food from an outside restaurant, please keep in mind that we strive to be a healthy school when making your selections.

### Cell Phones

Elementary school students that have cell phones are to ensure it is turned off and out of sight on school grounds (school grounds include cafeteria, bus, bus circle, car circle, hallways, sidewalks, playground, and classrooms). The Highland Lakes School Staff is not responsible if any electronic items (including cell phones) are lost, stolen, or damaged.

### Class Preparation

For significant educational progress to occur, students are expected to be prepared daily. All textbooks and laptops (for students in grades 1-5) are loaned to students free of charge. However, students are responsible for lost or damaged books/laptops and will be expected to pay for them. Students are urged to take good care of books/laptops to avoid an assessment at the end of the year.

### Classroom Visitation

All visitors must report to the office first and have a driver's license. It is important that we know who is on our campus at all times. Please call or plan with your child's teacher **24 hours in advance if you are interested in a parent teacher conference.**

### Clinic and Health Services

Children who become ill at school are sent to the school clinic. Phone calls may be made home when a student comes to the clinic. Unless the student is running a fever, throwing up or is impaired by an illness, the parent will be given the option of picking the student up or have them rest in the clinic no longer than 10 min and then return to class. **Emergency phone contact numbers must be on file in the school office in case of the need to contact someone to pick up a student.** To change or add information to the clinic card, please come into the school office.

We attempt to prevent accidents; however, should a minor accident occur, first aid will be administered. In case of a serious accident, the parent or guardian will be notified by telephone. The school staff never attempts any treatment beyond necessary immediate aid.

### **Medication: Prescription and Non-Prescription**

Parents are reminded of the following School Board policy concerning sending students to school with either prescription or non-prescription medication. Medications will not be administered if written authorization has not been completed by parent and doctor according to the School Board policy. No medications may be carried to school by the student.

BLUE, ORANGE AND/OR RED CARDS ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE SCHOOL OFFICE.

#### **Prescription medication**

1. Blue card must be completed with the name of the medication, dosage, special instruction, and signed by the parent or guardian.
2. Medication must be presented to the school office by parent/guardian in labeled, **original** container from the pharmacy. Prescription label must include specific time for daily medications and dosage, time frequency, and indication for "as needed" medications.

#### **Non-prescription medication (including cough drops):**

1. Physicians/ dentist must order the medication to be given at school through written prescription to include dosage, time frequency, and reason for the medication.
2. Orange card must be completed with the name of medication, dosage, special instruction and **signed by the parent/ guardian**.
3. Medication must be presented to school office by parent/guardian in labeled original unopened container.

#### **Emergency Medication:**

1. Red card must be completed with the name of the medication, dosage, special instruction, and signed by the parent or guardian.
2. Medication must be presented to the school office in labeled, **original** container from the pharmacy.

#### **General:**

1. Trained school personnel will assist the student in administration of medication.
2. Trained school personnel will record on blue, red or orange card each time medication is administered.
3. Parent/guardian will be notified prior to administration of any non-scheduled medication and if Emergency medication is given.
4. Medication must be stored under lock and key in the school's clinic.

### **Communication**

A PTA/School newsletter will be sent via email and posted to the school's website monthly. The newsletter will have notices of coming events and other school news. The Highland Lakes website contains valuable information and may be accessed through the Pinellas County School website [www.pcsb.org](http://www.pcsb.org) or directly [www.pcsb.org/highland-es](http://www.pcsb.org/highland-es). Also visit our Facebook school mascot Pawl Panther [@PawlPantherHLE](https://www.facebook.com/PawlPantherHLE) to see upcoming events and happenings. Follow our PTA [@Highland Lakes Panthers](https://www.facebook.com/HighlandLakesPanthers) on Facebook and at <https://highlandlakes.ptboard.com/>.

### **Discipline**

The teacher has the authority and responsibility to maintain a positive learning environment in the classroom, consistent with school policy. A copy of the classroom behavior plan will be sent home the first few weeks of school.

In instances where the teacher or school personnel have used these behavior guidelines without success, the concern will be referred to an administrator. He/she has the authority and responsibility to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning through a fair and consistent application of district policies and procedures. When a problem occurs, the Principal or the designee will:

1. Receive a behavior referral from the teacher
2. Speak with the child
3. Speak with additional people if necessary, to gain information
4. Based on all the information gathered, form a final determination
5. Call to inform parent of the behavior infraction and final determination

When disciplinary action is necessary, the Principal or designee may:

- Conference with the student.
- Refer the problem back to the teacher.
- Refer the problem to the school counselor or behavior specialist.
- Conference with the parent and/or student
- Take other disciplinary action (time-out, suspension, expulsion).

### **Discipline -- Right to Appeal**

Students who are sent to the office for discipline receive a note to take home to their parents. The referral lists why the student was sent to the office and the consequences. The consequences administered are the decision of an administrator. If a parent wishes to challenge a decision, the parent should call or write the principal immediately.

### **Elevator**

An elevator is available to students who present a physician's note saying the timeframe that this type of assistance is needed.

### **Emergency/ Evacuation Drills**

Fire drills held at specific intervals are required by law and are an important safety precaution. Safety drills are held on a regular basis to prepare children to handle the possibility of a tornado in a safe way. Each student is also issued an emergency tag, which is kept by the classroom teacher. This tag must have the student's legal guardian or parents name, correct address, home phone number and parent work number (please make sure that your information is correct in Focus and notify Suzy Jones, [jonesusa@pcsb.org](mailto:jonesusa@pcsb.org), with any changes.)

### **Field Trips**

Written parents' permission on the **appropriate form** is required of all students who go on educational trips. No exceptions can be allowed. Fieldtrips will use county school buses as the primary form of transportation.

Should private cars be used for an activity, the owner, and/or driver of the privately-owned vehicle being used for school business must carry a proper license and insurance as required by Florida Statute 234. Vehicles must be registered, insured and in good working order as determined by school personnel. Children under thirteen (13) years of age should never be transported in the front seat of a vehicle having a passenger side airbag, which could activate in a crash. All students must wear seatbelts.

The principal has the authority to prohibit any vehicle from use for transportation of students at any time.

### **Forgotten Items (homework/lunch/jacket)**

If your child has forgotten his/her lunch at home, you may bring it to the office. Your child will be responsible to pick up his/her lunch while heading to the cafeteria. Forgotten classwork/homework may be

brought in and will be placed in the teacher's mailbox. Teachers are to check their mailboxes twice per day.

### Gum Chewing

**Gum chewing is strictly prohibited at ALL times.** We wish to prevent possible accidents and preserve the beauty of our facility.

### Hats

Hats/bandanas (unless approved by the principal) are prohibited on school grounds during regular school hours. Hats may be brought to Highland Lakes in a child's backpack for the sole purpose of wearing it during P.E. The hat must remain in the backpack at all other times. Hats may not be worn at any other time during the school day.

### Head Lice Policy

Should a student become infested with head lice, Pinellas County Policy states the child must be sent home and may not return to school until he/she has been treated. **Students must be nit-free to be re-admitted to school.**

### Homework

Homework is written or oral work assigned by the teacher during the week. The student is expected to complete this work at home and return it to school. This is an important responsibility of each student. Individual teacher procedures for homework may vary. A written overview of each teacher's homework policy is distributed at the beginning of the year to each student.

Our homework objectives are:

1. To reinforce learning that has taken place in school.
2. To communicate to parents which skills the student is learning.
3. To help students develop independent study habits.

### Insurance

Accident insurance is available for all students. Information for the parents who wish to purchase this insurance is available in the front office. **The school strongly recommends the purchase of school insurance as the school does not provide insurance for individual pupils.** The school only makes this insurance available and all claims are made to the company. Claim forms are available from the school office.

### Lost and Found

**All outer garments and lunch boxes should be labeled to avoid loss and ease in the return of forgotten items.** Articles found are brought to lost and found in the Media Center or Cafeteria where they may be claimed by the owner. Those items not claimed will be sent to service organizations after they are kept at the office for several months.

### Media Center

Our media center is an extension of the classroom. The media center is an area where resources and varieties of literature are housed for the benefit of students and staff. The following applies to all students.

Books must be returned in a specific amount of time. If a book is lost or damaged, repairs or replacement must be paid for promptly. NOTE: Florida law states the school can collect from the pupil or parent/guardian the value of lost or damaged books.

### Money/Toys

Money and toys should not be brought to school. They cause a distraction in the classroom and keep the student from his primary focus at school, which is to learn. The school cannot be held responsible for the loss of these items. We strongly recommend that

extra money not be brought to school. **Toys resembling weapons are expressly forbidden and could result in expulsion.** See Student Code of Conduct for details.

### Parent Teacher Association - PTA

The PTA meets regularly during the school year. A schedule of meetings and events for the coming school year will be listed on the PTA website <https://highlandlakes.ptboard.com/>. A monthly newsletter will be emailed and posted on the PTA website. The PTA has been of tremendous help to the school program. We encourage all parents to join.

PTA General Meetings are:

- Tuesday, Sept. 13<sup>th</sup>
- Tuesday, Nov 15<sup>th</sup>
- Tuesday, Jan 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023
- Tuesday, Mar 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023
- Tuesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023

### Parties

Two parties will be planned for students during the school year. Teachers will plan classroom parties. Parties should offer educational and social experiences for the children and should be planned with this in mind.

### Privacy and Family Rights:

Privacy and family rights are protected under Federal Law. The intent of this law is to protect the accuracy and privacy of student records. Without your prior consent, only you and authorized individuals having legitimate educational interest will have access to your child's educational records. You have the right to review all of your child's records by making an appointment at least one working day in advance. Requests for copies of school records should be made in writing and allow one week's notice. No student information can be given to anyone over the phone. The person requesting the information must come to the school to receive the information.

### Physical Education

All children are required to participate in 150 minutes of physical education each week. Parents may request that a student not participate in P.E. by writing a note. An extended excused absence (3 or more days) must be approved by the student's doctor in writing and filed in the school office. A closed-toe, flat, rubber soled shoe must be worn during physical education class for a child to participate.

### Pictures

- Individual student pictures will be taken on Thursday, Sept. 8, 2022, with retakes scheduled for Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Club pictures will be taken Tuesday, December 6, 2022
- Class Group pictures will be taken Wednesday January 11, 2023
- Spring pictures will be taken on Thursday March 23, 2023

### Progress Report Cards

Reports cards are sent home four times during the school year – **Oct. 27, 2022; Jan. 19, 2023; March 30, 2023; and May 25, 2023.** The child must be in school one half of the grading period to receive a report card. Questions concerning a child's progress can best be answered through a parent-teacher conference.

### Promotion/Retention Policy

Parents are notified by mid-February if their child is being considered for retention. To determine promotion/retention, the following will be considered: test scores, reading and math levels, daily class

performance, attendance, previous retentions and special programs. Third and fifth grade retention is determined by Florida State Law.

### Property, Litter and School Pride

Much of the spirit and reputation of the school is reflected in its appearance. This takes effort. Every student needs to do his/her part by making sure his/her wrappers and wastepaper are deposited in the trash containers. Respect for all school property is always expected.

### Public Notice of Family Rights and Privacy Act

The **Family Rights and Privacy Act** intent is to protect the accuracy and privacy of student educational records. These records include files, documents, and other materials containing information directly related to your child. Without your prior consent, only you and authorized individuals having legitimate educational interest will have access to your child's educational records.

The principal has the responsibility for all educational records, and this office will periodically review these records for the purpose of correcting or deleting any inaccurate, misleading or inappropriate information. You may have an appointment to inspect and review your child's records. The appointment may be made in person or by telephoning the school at 724-1429.

Upon review of the records, if you have a reason to believe that any information contained therein is inaccurate, misleading or inappropriate, you have the right to challenge that information. If there is agreement, the necessary steps to expunge or correct the information contained in the record will be taken. If agreement is not reached, an informal hearing will be scheduled. The hearing will provide you with the opportunity to present your views and reasons for the challenge. You may bring with you any individual who is knowledgeable of the factual information to support your contention relative to the record. Following the hearing, should there be a failure to reach an agreement, you have the right to appeal the decision to the appropriate Area Superintendent. The rights pertaining to access and challenge described herein are transferred to your child upon the attainment of his/her eighteenth birthday or admission to an institution of post-secondary education. Copies of educational records are available to the parent or eligible student. A minimal fee is charged for these copies.

Directory information which includes name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, dates of attendance, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height, if a member of an athletic team, degrees and awards received, and most recent previous educational agency or institution attended may be released unless you make a request in writing within 30 days from school entrance date, to the contrary. This information will be released only in accordance with the guidelines established by the Pinellas County Public Schools.

**Please note:** the right of access will be honored by the school unless there is a legal document or court order **on file** at the school specifically denying the right to either or both parents.

### Safety and Security

Pinellas County Schools takes several safety and security measures to comply with the Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act. It is possible you will encounter questions about these steps from students, families or members of community. The following information is designed to help you respond.

Summary of measures:

\* Students will participate in monthly age-appropriate active assailant safety drills.

\* Each school will have a School Resource Officer or an armed School Security Officer on site.

\* All classroom doors must remain locked and latched when students are present and class is in session.

\* All exterior gates must remain locked during school hours (the exception being the main visitor parking area).

\* Parents will be allowed to walk students to classrooms the first week of school, Aug. 10-12, only. Beginning on Aug. 15, parents must drop off their children at the front gate, front car circle, back gate, or back car circle.

\* All visitors must be cleared to enter the secure area of the school through the district's Visitor Management system and be escorted by a member of staff while on campus (the exception being volunteers with level 2 state clearance).

\* The district has a partnership with Sandy Hook Promise. Their mission is to promote research-based programs and practices to help protect children from gun violence in homes, schools and communities. This will also be accompanied by the Say Something App which is an anonymous reporting system that allows you to submit secure & anonymous safety concerns to help identify and intervene upon at-risk individuals BEFORE they hurt themselves or others.

### Safety Patrols

Students from Grade 5 are selected to be safety patrol members. Their major jobs are to remind children of safety rules and to aid other students in our hallways, walkways and car loops. Students must maintain good grades and have appropriate behavior to be selected and remain a safety patrol.

### School Advisory Council - SAC

The School Advisory Council (SAC) consists of parents, teachers, and community representatives. This committee is advisory in nature, but is instrumental in forming school guidelines, and the School Improvement Plan. If you would like to be a part of the SAC, please contact Ms. Defant at [defante@pcsb.org](mailto:defante@pcsb.org). Meetings are announced on our school website.

### School wide Discipline Plan

A safe learning environment is crucial for achieving our school goal of highest student achievement for all students. To have a safe learning environment all students are expected to follow school expectations and procedures.

Children are expected to conform to good standards of behavior in the halls, on the walkways, in the cafeteria, on the playground, and on the way to and from school. See our Guidelines for Success below. School expectations and individual classroom expectations will be fully explained to all students by their teacher. Parents should become familiar with the Pinellas County Schools Code of Student Conduct (sent home on the first day of school) and use it as a reference. Please read the Code of Student Conduct booklet with your child, then sign and return the designated page to school. Should your child bring home a discipline referral, please be certain to discuss the behavior with him/her and sign and return the form to school the following day. Parental support is vital to our school goal of highest student achievement in a safe and learning environment for all our students.

### Smoking

Smoking is prohibited on the campus, in compliance with School Board Policy. It is unlawful for any person to smoke tobacco in, on, or within 1,000 feet of the real property comprising a public or private elementary, middle, or secondary school between the hours of 6 a.m. and midnight. Florida Statutes, Section 386.212.

- Maintain a safe environment

### Special Notices

Please keep the principal informed concerning your child if he/she needs to have special protection for health or any other reasons. This information should be given on registration day or afterwards in writing. We must make certain that we are doing what is proper under the law. We must also be aware when court regulations change the custody status of a child. Even though you think we are already aware of these special situations, please check with the office to be sure that they know of any special circumstances for your child.

### Telephone

The school phone is a business phone and is not to be used to make arrangements to go home with a friend, etc. These arrangements should be made at home. Special arrangements for rainy or cold days should also be made in advance with your child. The telephone is always available for **emergencies**.

### Textbooks/ Library Books

Highland Lakes Leadership Academy supports the county's textbook policies. All textbooks are loaned to students free of charge. However, students are responsible for taking good care of textbooks and library books. If books are lost or damaged by a student, parents will be expected to pay for its replacement.

### Transferring

It may become necessary for some to leave our school during the year. Please, if possible, try to **notify the principal in writing in advance of your move**. This information will be shared with your child's teacher and the school office staff so that we may help make your transfer speedy and efficient. Library books, textbooks, and computers must be returned, and outstanding debts paid before leaving.

### Volunteers

Volunteers play an important role here at Highland Lakes Leadership Academy. There are many ways to get involved in the volunteer program: PTA and SAC, assisting teachers and children with curriculum and much more. Feel free to contact the school for information about volunteer opportunities. Please note that all volunteers must be registered at the school each year. All NEW volunteers to HLE need to go through an orientation before volunteering at our school. Level II background checks are now done on all volunteers who will have one-on-one contact with students. Please contact the school's Family & Community Liaison, Carolyn Burke (burkecar@pcsb.org), to get the proper paperwork.

### "Walk the Panther Way"

#### Highland Lakes GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESS (GFS)

Guidelines for Success are skills, traits and attitudes that students need to be successful in school and life.

Please include students that are left out

Ask for help from adults

We will not bully others

Stand up for someone who is bullied

#### School Rules

- Respect Others
- Cooperate with others
- Listen and follow directions
- Put forth your best effort

### Water Bottles

We encourage students to bring a water bottle labeled with their name on it. Students will have an opportunity to refill their water bottles before transitioning back into their classrooms throughout the day to stay hydrated and engaged.

### Wellness Policy

Federal law requires school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program and or School Breakfast Program to develop a local wellness policy that addresses student wellness and the growing problem of childhood obesity. The four basic components of the wellness policy are nutrition education, physical activity, nutrition standards for foods on campuses, and other school-based activities. Parents who would like to send class snacks must comply with the district's nutrition standards and may not send any low nutritional candy or dessert type items (cookies, cakes, cupcakes, pudding, ice cream or frozen desserts). Our wellness exception days for these snacks include the Winter Holiday and Friendship Day parties. Homemade foods are not permitted on campus. In addition, no gum is permitted at any time. Examples of approved class snacks: Cereal bars, multigrain bars, rice cereal treats, pretzels, graham crackers, animal crackers, goldfish, whole grain crackers, low fat cheeses and fresh fruits and veggies. More information on the wellness policy and nutritional guidelines is available on the Pinellas County Schools' Website School Wellness page at <https://www.pcsb.org/Domain/5066>.

**PLEASE CHECK OUR SCHOOL WEBSITE FOR THE MOST UPDATED HANDBOOK**

[www.pcsb.org/highland-es](http://www.pcsb.org/highland-es)