

# **Student/Parent Handbook**

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## **Welcome to C. A. Sinclair Elementary School - Student/Parent Handbook School Hours – 8:15 a.m. – 2:55 p.m.**

This handbook contains important information for you and your child. Sinclair believes that our children will achieve a more productive and successful learning experience when teachers, staff, parents, and students all work together. Your child's learning experience is our number one priority. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us.

### **Activities - Before and After School**

Sinclair offers a variety of before- and after school activities . If your student(s) takes part in such activities, information will be provided by the staff member in charge of that activity. Transportation for before- and after school activities will not be provided unless you are told otherwise. Some examples of before/afterschool activities previously held at Sinclair are: Scrabble Club, Robotics, Girls on the Run, and After School Tutoring.

### **Arrival/Departure**

We ask that students arrive at school between 7:55 and 8:10, as there is no adult supervision prior to this time. Students are considered tardy after 8:15.

When dropping off or picking up children, pull into the car rider lane and have your child exit on the right side next to the median. Students **MUST** use the crosswalk where supervision is present.

Any changes from the child's daily dismissal routine **MUST** be reported to the office and teacher. These changes include walking home, riding an unassigned bus, getting off the bus at a different stop, or the person picking up your child. Please send a note with your child to inform the school of any dismissal changes.

### **Attendance**

Attendance is an important aspect of a child's success in school. Children who are frequently absent, tardy, or dismissed early miss valuable learning experiences. In keeping with legislation instituted by Prince William County Public Schools, specific action will be taken by the school after a student's first, fifth, and subsequent unexcused absence of the school year. These actions may include: parent contact by phone; the development of a plan to address the student's absence(s); a conference held between the parent, school personnel, and the attendance officer; and if necessary, the filing of a complaint against the student and/or parent for failure to comply.

If your child is going to be absent, please notify the school by 7:55 a.m. Student absences will be recorded as unexcused unless previously notified. A note from the parent/guardian must be submitted upon returning to school to confirm and provide a written record of the absence. Tardy students must report directly to the attendance desk in the main office with a parent/guardian and must be signed in by the adult stating the reason the student is tardy.

Families sometimes ask that absences for family vacations and trips be excused. Prince William County School Policy states that request for pre-approved excused absences require 5 days advance notice. Teachers are not required to provide instructional materials prior to the

absence. Please see the section on make-up work for more information on missing assignments. While having family time together is important, doing so during instructional time weakens your child's education. Please refer to the school calendar to make plans to vacation when school is not in session. Your child's first 5 days of absence may be approved depending on the circumstances. Anything over 5 days will be unexcused, unless there are extreme circumstances.

Students in grades Kindergarten through fifth who miss ten or more days of school for the year, excused or unexcused, and who have completed little or no make-up work may be considered for retention.

### **Care of Textbooks/Library Books**

Students and parents are responsible for all books issued to them by their teachers or borrowed from the library. Parents will be asked to make restitution for all damaged or lost books.

### **Celebrations**

In an effort to comply with Prince William County Regulation No. 275-1 and support healthy decisions, Sinclair encourages alternative birthday celebrations, such as donating a game in your child's name or small tokens such as pencils, erasers, stickers, etc. If parents would like to send treats to celebrate, they are welcome to. It is asked that food items are shared during lunch time.

### **Classroom Visitation**

Parents/Guardians are always welcome to observe and visit in the classroom. We ask that you give us at least a 24 hour notice so that we can be sure the teacher will be present that day. Please let us know if you have any specific concerns.

### **Communication Folders**

On the first day of school, your child will be given a folder with important information that needs to be returned to school immediately. This will become your child's "Communication Folder". Please check for this folder daily for completed work and important school-related information.

### **Contacting Your Child's Teacher**

There are many ways to contact your child's teacher or set up a conference. You may:

- email through the Sinclair website at <http://sinclaires.schools.pwcs.edu/>. Go to "Classrooms" and find the teacher. Their email will be on their classroom page.
- send a note in your child's folder, agenda, or book bag. Be sure to label the note with the teacher's name.
- call the school office to leave a message. Ask for the Parent Liaison if you need a Spanish-speaking contact.

Remember that the teachers are with students during the school day, so phone calls and emails may not be returned immediately.

## **Delayed Opening or Early Closing**

Information regarding delayed opening and early closing of school is provided to you through the media, television, radio, and by the use of the school telephone tree. When the school closes for the entire day or when there is a delayed opening, information is given to radio and TV stations for broadcast at about 6:00 a.m. and at repeated intervals thereafter. Parents should communicate and explain a backup plan with their child in the event an emergency arises. This plan is needed in the event the parent or emergency contact person is not at home or cannot be contacted. You can register for announcements and information online at: <http://pwcs.medianext.com/pwcs/start.html>

## **Discipline Plan**

Sinclair Elementary School seeks to maintain outstanding levels of student achievement. All students will demonstrate cooperation, self-discipline, respect for others, citizenship, and academic effort. Such quality performance will be found in schools where expectations for conduct are clear, simple, and high. Our motto is:

### ***Where Eagles Learn to S.O.A.R.***

**(Study, Organize, Appropriate Attitudes & Actions, Respect & Responsibility)**

The rules and procedures outlined below are provided to support, rather than replace, the Prince William County **Code of Conduct**.

Sinclair seeks to continue its tradition of developing self-discipline and a sense of responsibility in a warm, but firm, consistent manner. Parents should review the rules and consequences with their children. Sinclair uses the Baldrige and Olweus Bullying Prevention programs to help achieve these goals.

In September 2008, Sinclair began implementing the Baldrige Program. This program requires students to be “Responsible for their own actions”, and “Response-able to the success of the group.” Teachers and students collaborate to develop academic and behavioral goals, as well as characteristics for a quality student and teacher.

In September 2013, Sinclair implemented the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. The philosophy is to ensure basic human rights through promoting empathy, tolerating diversity, and accepting differences. Bullying is unacceptable. According to Virginia State Law: “Bullying” means any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. “Bullying” includes cyber bullying. “Bullying” does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict.

## **Quality Student School Wide Expectations**

### **Hallways**

- Walk and keep your hands to yourself.
- Quietly walk in the halls.
- Walk on the right side of the hallways.

### **Assemblies**

- Enter Quietly.
- Sit Sinclair Style (flat, with legs crossed).
- Hands in lap.
- Clap politely to show appreciation.
- Quietly watch and participate in the assembly.
- Walk out quietly.

### **Playground**

- Use playground equipment correctly.
- Keep hands to yourself.
- Remain on school grounds and in plain sight at all times.
- Use balls in designated areas only.

### **Cafeteria Rules**

- Raise your hand for assistance.
- Use quiet voices while talking.
- Walk in the designated path to the serving line.
- Utensils are to be used properly.
- Clean up after yourself; keep paper and food off of the floor.
- Raise your hand for permission to leave the table.
- Always use good manners and be cooperative with all adults.

### **Restroom**

- Use the restroom appropriately
- Wash your hands
- Dispose of all paper products in the trash can

### **Bus Rules – Remember, riding the bus is a PRIVILEGE!**

- Sinclair will utilize the Peaceful School Bus Program.
- Obey the instructions of the bus driver.
- Be seated and face forward immediately.
- Keep aisles clear.

- Talk quietly.
- No eating or drinking on the bus.
- Follow directions given by Safety Patrols.

## **Character Counts**

On July 1, 1999 the teaching of Character Education in Virginia Public Schools became mandatory and the Virginia Board of Education approved criteria for Character Education on February 24, 2000. Character traits as defined in the Code of Virginia 22.1-208.01 include:

### **Trustworthiness**

- Be honest.
- Don't deceive, cheat or steal.
- Be reliable – do what you say you'll do.
- Have the courage to do the right thing.
- Build a good reputation.
- Be loyal – stand by your family, friends and country.

### **Respect**

- Treat others with respect; follow the Golden Rule.
- Be tolerant of differences.
- Use good manners, not bad language.
- Be considerate of the feelings of others.
- Don't threaten, hit or hurt anyone.
- Deal peacefully with anger, insults and disagreements.

### **Responsibility**

- Do what you are supposed to do.
- Persevere: keep on trying!
- Always do your best.
- Use self –control.
- Be self-disciplined.
- Think before you act – consider the consequences.
- Be accountable for your choices.
- Be a responsible student.

### **Fairness**

- Play by the rules.
- Take turns and share.
- Be open-minded; listen to others.
- Don't take advantage of others.
- Don't blame others carelessly.

## **Caring**

- Be kind.
- Be compassionate and show you care.
- Express gratitude.
- Forgive others.
- Help people in need.

## **Citizenship**

- Do your share to make your school and community better.
- Cooperate.
- Get involved in community affairs.
- Stay informed; vote.
- Be a good neighbor.
- Obey laws and rules.
- Respect authority.
- Protect the environment.

## **Detention**

Detention will be assigned to a student with repeated minor infractions. It will be held every Tuesday from 2:55 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Students complete a discipline learning packet with assistance. The administration asks that the parents arrive no later than 3:50 p.m. to provide transportation from detention, since transportation will be the responsibility of the parent.

## **Discipline Notes**

At Sinclair Elementary School we set high expectations for our students, staff, administration, parents, and the community. However, sometimes we have to spend our instructional time disciplining students. No student will be permitted to interrupt the educational process of any other student and every child has the right to an education provided by professional educators. Our teachers will make every effort to keep each student in the classroom, providing them with an appropriate education. A teacher does not send a student to the office without first trying to implement the appropriate strategies to try to have each and every child learn to the best of his/her ability.

If a student receives an administrative referral his/her conduct grade on his/her report card for that nine-weeks will be marked unsatisfactory or below average (S- or N). Students receiving three discipline referrals, including bus referrals, will be considered for suspension. The initial suspension may be in school; however, Sinclair ES reserves the right to suspend a student from school after one referral depending on the severity of the act.

Teachers are expected to explain the Code of Behavior to the students beginning on the first day of entry at Sinclair ES. Parents and students are **required** to sign the PWCS Code of Behavior form and return it to school. Mr. Flowers and Dr. Woodson will visit each class the first few weeks of school and discuss the Code of Behavior. Parents also need to discuss the Code of Behavior with their children to ensure that the students understand how important these rules truly are.

## **Positive Student Recognition**

At Sinclair Elementary School, we believe all students, staff, and parents should feel safe, comfortable and respected. We are all committed to providing the best education possible. It is our goal to put the needs of the students' first. We, as a school, will provide positive reinforcement throughout the school, and instill the confidence into each child that they so deserve. We will recognize students as a whole school in a number of ways **as outlined below.**

### **1) Classroom Recognition Plans**

Each classroom has a plan in place to recognize students during the school day. All classroom teachers will share their plans with their students and parents. To support the classroom plan, talk with your child each day to encourage positive behavior.

### **2) The S.O.A.R. Award**

Students can earn a SOAR Award sticker for any act that goes above and beyond the behavior that is expected for all students. They can also earn a SOAR Award for any classwork that is above and beyond the average work of a student at their grade level. A SOAR Award celebration will take place for eligible students as determined by each grade level.

### **3) Quarterly Award Assemblies**

School-wide award assemblies will be held during the school day on a quarterly basis to recognize students for a variety of academic accomplishments. Parents are invited to attend these celebrations. Dates and times for the Quarterly Award Assemblies will be posted on school calendars, website, newsletters, and the digital marquee. We encourage Sinclair families to view pictures and write-ups posted on the school website.

## **Dress Code**

The School Board requires that students dress to meet general standards of health, cleanliness, neatness, decency, and safety. At Sinclair School, we believe that cleanliness and proper dress are important in setting a pattern of school and social conduct. Clothing must not present a distraction or disruption of instruction.

Hats, visors, or sunglasses may not be worn by any student while in school. Student footwear should be stable and allow them to walk quickly to exit the building in the event of an emergency. Students must wear athletic shoes for physical education classes and outdoor activities.

## **Early Dismissal/Change in Dismissal**

We encourage you to try and schedule appointments and activities to allow a minimum loss of classroom time. However, if you do need to pick up your child for an appointment, you must come to the school office first to check your child out. Students must be picked up by a parent or parent-authorized adult. This procedure is necessary for your child's safety.

There will be **no early dismissal** after 2:30 p.m., as office staff must prepare to handle school dismissal.

Change in directions to a student's home transportation: At the beginning of the year, parents will be asked to let the teacher know how their child is to go home. Parents are to

provide changes in writing or provide a phone call by 2:15 p.m. We cannot allow children to ride a different bus or go home with a friend without a note or a phone call from a parent/guardian.

### **Emergency Cards**

The school office maintains on file an emergency card for every student. Parents should continuously update emergency information to ensure prompt notification in the event of an emergency. Please be sure to inform the school office of any changes in address, telephone, or childcare arrangements. Always be sure to have an emergency contact person listed on the card in case you cannot be reached.

### **Field Trips**

Sinclair students are given opportunities to go on field trips to various locations that help students make real-life connections to what they are learning inside the classroom. Information about such trips will be sent home in your child's Friday Folder, including information about any fees due for the trip. Permission slips are required for all field trips. Bag lunches can be provided as part of the School Lunch Program or students can bring lunch from home. In the event that teachers need parent assistance with field trips, we ask that only the parent attends the field trip. Siblings are not allowed to attend. The school nurse sends any medications that are typically administered at school with the teachers on this trip.

### **Grading Scale**

<b><u>Grades K-2</u></b>		<b><u>Grades 3-5</u></b>	
S+	Making Outstanding Progress	A	90 - 100
S	Making Steady Growth	B+	87 - 89
S-	Not making adequate progress	B	80 - 86
N	Needs Support	C+	77 - 79
*	Modified Curriculum	C	70 - 76
X	Having Difficulty	D+	67 - 69
		D	60 - 66
		F	0 - 59

### **Homework**

Requirements for different teachers may vary. Your child's teachers will communicate their homework requirements to you. In all cases, teachers should follow Prince William County's policy as stated below:

"The Prince William County School Board supports the appropriate use of homework to enrich, enhance, and/or extend the instructional program. Homework shall be incorporated as a meaningful component of the instructional program. Homework assignments should be understood by the student and should involve only work for which the student is ready. All assigned homework will receive feedback from the teacher. Homework assignments shall be based on the teacher's assessment of the student's instructional needs. Teachers will use discretion in assigning homework so that it may be completed in a reasonable amount of time."

## **Inclement Weather**

Please be sure you have made your children aware of what to do if schools are closed, open late, or close early. Parents should be particularly clear in their instructions regarding what to do if schools close early. Parents are informed in a timely manner through PWCS E-News alerts of school closings. In addition, closings are posted on both school division and school websites.

## **Interim Reports and Report Cards**

Interim reports will be issued to students during the middle of each nine week grading period. Interim reports will indicate progress for the beginning of each grading period. Interim reports are sent home in the report card cover. The parent will receive two copies of the interim. Please make sure that one copy is signed and returned to the teacher and keep the other for personal record.

Report cards will be issued to students at the close of each nine week grading period. Report cards will contain both academic and conduct grades. Attendance will be reported on the report card. Report card folders must be signed by the parent and returned to the classroom teacher. The report cards can be kept at home.

## **Lunch Program**

Students in grades K – 5 may purchase lunch daily at school. Lunch cards are issued and retained in the cafeteria. Reminders to add money will be sent home prior to the last lunch on the card. Checks should be made payable to: **Prince William County Food Services**. Milk and dessert can be purchased separately by students who bring their lunches.

Parents wishing to apply for free and reduced price meals can complete and submit their application online. The process can help families avoid delays they may encounter by mailing in an application, and will ensure that applications are complete as users will be prompted to submit all of the necessary information required. To apply online, go to [www.pwcs.menus.schoolfusion.us/](http://www.pwcs.menus.schoolfusion.us/). This link is available in English or Spanish. All information transmitted will be kept confidential and made available only to the Office of School Food and Nutrition Services. If you need assistance contact the school.

Parents still have the option of completing the traditional paper application. Families with students who were registered in Prince William County Public Schools by the end of July 2015 will receive an application packet in the mail. Families with students who registered after that will need to secure an application from their local school. Applications may also be obtained at School Food and Nutrition Services at 703-791-7314 or at Sinclair Elementary School. You may also complete the application electronically. Visit the School Division Web site to access the electronic application at [www.pwcs.menus.schoolfusion.us/](http://www.pwcs.menus.schoolfusion.us/).

## **Make-up Work**

Students/families are asked to contact teachers to arrange for missed work after an absence. Students will have 1 day per absence to make up assignments and tests/quizzes as assigned by the teacher. For example: 3 days absent = 3 days to make-up all assigned work upon return. Failure to complete make-up assignments could result in a 0 on that assignment.

## **Medical Needs of Students**

Please do not send your child to school if he/she has a fever or has had fever-reducing medicine within 24 hours. Your child will not feel well enough to learn and is contagious even if the fever is down. Children who are ill or have serious injury must be picked up by the parent/guardian within a reasonable amount of time. The person picking up the student must present a valid government photo I.D. In case of illness your child should be kept home the following day and until free of fever and symptoms for 24 hours without the need of fever-reducing medication. When an antibiotic is needed, the student must also have been on that medication for at least 24 hours prior to returning to school. Please adhere to the Prince William County School policy number 757 if a healthcare provider prescribes medicine to your child.

## **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Conferences may be arranged by sending a note with the student to the teacher stating the date and time convenient for the conference. The teacher will confirm or offer an alternate date. If you do not receive confirmation contact the school office. The most convenient time for conferences is before or after the instructional day. Teachers are not called to the telephone during class hours. **Please do not ask to be allowed to go to the classroom during school hours to talk to teachers.** In addition to the County's fall and spring scheduled conferences, parent-teacher conferences may also be initiated by the school staff.

## **Picture Days**

Individual pictures will be taken in the Fall and Spring. Class pictures will take place in the Spring.

## **Parent Teacher Organization**

The Sinclair Parent Teacher Organization exists to promote the educational welfare of our children. Parents are encouraged to be a part of the P.T.O. by joining the organization or attending P.T.O. Sponsored events. Funds raised from the P.T.O. are used to support students, instruction, staff and programs. Please look for information about how to join.

## **School Traffic Safety**

As the 2015-16 school year begins, we want to draw your attention to the traffic pattern in the front school entrance. Two lanes exist: the one on the right, closest to the building, is for **buses only**; and the one on the left is for cars to drop off students (Student Drop Off). Signs and staff will be present to help direct you to the correct lane. **\*\*Please refer to the Drop Off procedures that are listed below.**

## **Drop Off for Car Riders**

Cars may enter the kiss-and-ride parking lot no earlier than 7:55 a.m. to drop their children off. This is when staff reports for duty to assist students with safely crossing the bus

lane. There will be staff members out front in the Drop Off lane to help your children safely enter the building. During dismissal, car riders will be sent to the Multi-purpose Room at 2:45 p.m. Parents **WILL NOT** be able to pick their children up in the Multi-purpose Room. If the parent elects to pick their children up by car instead of walking or riding the bus, please see the staff at the front desk. You will have to show your ID and will be provided with a card to put in your car during our dismissal time. Please be advised that students are loading or unloading from cars in the school driveway in between buses and cars. Please follow the directions given by the school staff on duty so that student's safety is not jeopardized by moving vehicles. Cars are passing school buses while students are loading or unloading, reference VA State Law 46.2-859. Please do not leave your car unattended in the car rider lane as it will delay the dismissal process for all students.

### **Walkers**

Garner Drive walkers should follow the crosswalk at the school parking lot. Orange cones are placed across the entrance of the school parking lot during the arrival and dismissal of students. Students who walk down Garner Drive to the school driveway approach this crosswalk where cars are entering or exiting from the playground blacktop. Please obey the crossing guard.

We appreciate your cooperation in helping to make the arrival and departure of our children as safe as possible.

### **School Website**

Sinclair has made available a school website that provides valuable information regarding school contact information, classroom information, and calendar. Individual classroom pages are available for specific classroom information.

<http://sinclaires.schools.pwcs.edu/>

### **Special Programs:**

#### **ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) Program:**

Students whose first language or language spoken at home may qualify for ESOL Program Services. Each grade level typically has at least one certified teacher assigned to work with students on language development in all domains (reading, writing, listening, speaking).

#### **Gifted Education Program:**

Students who qualify for Gifted Education Services will be instructed weekly by a Gifted Education Teacher. The program for Kindergarten through Second Grade is called START and takes place at Sinclair. Third- through Fifth-Grade students take part in the Signet Program, for which they are bused to another school for the day.

#### **Special Education Program:**

Students who qualify for Special Education Services are supported by teachers with a specialty in that area. All teachers follow students' Individualized Education Plan (IEP) guidelines when instructing and assessing students in this program. Eligibility and Annual IEP

meetings occur on a weekly basis. You will receive notification of such meetings if this applies to your student(s).

### **Title I Math and Reading:**

Sinclair is a Title I School, therefore there are additional supports provided for students and families in the areas of Math and Reading. Title I teachers provide support within the classroom. They also hold Title I Math and Reading Family Nights. The Title I Family Engagement Policy will be explained at Back to School Night.

### **Translation Information**

Please contact the Parent Liaison by telephone if you require translation services. Translation services are available in a variety of languages. Advanced notice is required to secure translators for all conferences.

### **Withdrawal of Students**

If you are moving and withdrawing your child from school, please come by the school a few days prior to the withdrawal date to fill out a withdraw form. This will give the office ample time to complete the necessary documentation for withdrawal or transfer of student's records. Please be sure that any library books are returned and that all outstanding financial obligations have been fulfilled (i.e. lunch charges, fees for lost textbooks, or library books).