



Rock Chapel Elementary

# Family Handbook

**Rock Chapel Elementary School**

**“Operating in Excellence”**

Principal Lewis  
1130 Rock Chapel Road  
Lithonia, GA 30058  
678-676-3802  
Updated August 1, 2023

School Web Address: <https://www.rockchapeles.dekalb.k12.ga.us/>  
Rock Chapel PTA Web Address: [www.Rock Chapelpta.org](http://www.RockChapelpta.org)

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**Information in this handbook is subject to change as needed. Please refer to the Rock Chapel website for updated information.**

### **Administration**

Mrs. Jamela Lewis, Principal

Ms. Delicia Stephens, Assistant Principal

Mrs. Torie Benjamin, Counselor

Ms. Shaniqua Person, Counselor

Mrs. Josephine Ellis, Registrar

Ms. Esther Guthrie, Bookkeeper

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### **School Information Lines of Communication**

Main Office: 678-676-3802  
FAX Number: 678-676-3810

**We value your input. Please email suggestions, questions or concerns to the school.**

*Thank you.*

***The rules, policies, procedures, dates and information in this handbook are subject to change. The handbook will be updated accordingly online.***

## **About Rock Chapel**

### **Welcome!**

Rock Chapel Elementary is a school that is focus on improving student achievement and fostering a loving partnership with school and home. Rock Chapel is best defined by its sustainable partnership between its parent community, teachers and administration. It is a small school packing a big punch with various extracurricular programs, clubs and extended experiences for our students! This academic experience could not happen without the outstanding support of our teacher, parent and community partnerships. Rock Chapel is part of a wide-spread community that works to build pride in the school by developing a strong base of support. The neighborhood is composed of a mix of single-family homes and apartments. Our students matriculate to Stephenson Middle or Lithonia Middle School. They will attend Stephenson High or Lithonia High School where they continue their academic career.

### **Motto** *(Guiding Phrase)*

Every day in every way we are getting better, better, and better.

**Operating in EXCELLENCE**

### **VISION** *(We will be...)*

Our vision is to provide the best education, experience and exposure to our students that foster's the development of critical thinkers, communicators and collaborative contributors to society,.

### **MISSION** *(How we will get there...)*

Rock Chapel's mission is to OPERATE IN EXCELLENCE; to obtain exceptional academic growth in students and professional growth within ourselves by providing a highly rigorous academic environment that nurtures the development of inquisition, critical thinking skills, and creativity, collaborative self-directed learners who embrace diversity and an open-mindsets, so that they are equipped to succeed in an ever-changing society.

### **PURPOSE** *(Why)*

To ensure that everything we do is centered in how to obtain exceptional academic and emotional growth in students and professional growth within ourselves.

## **BELIEFS AND VALUE STATEMENTS** *(Guiding Compass for our work)*

### **CORE TENETS: Respect, Relationships, Rigor, Rituals & Routines**

#### **SUPPORTING VALUES**

- We will be **Inspirational**; ensuring our actions and words inspire others to positive actions. *(...with the belief that colleagues and students often times need us to believe in them until they can learn to believe in themselves.)*
- We will be **Exceptional**; Always striving for greater excellence.
- We will be **Collaborative**; Sharing, supporting, and exploring practices, student work and data together to improve teaching practices, student learning and team practices that nurtures a culture of excellence.
- We will be **Reflective**; Understanding that open-mind sets are critical and that there's always space and opportunity for improvement in ourselves and our students.
- We will be **Instructional**; Constantly and systematically implementing varied researched based instructional strategies best practices that provide student access to concepts and key developmental skills.
- We will be highly **Knowledgeable**; Constantly seeking a clear understanding of the curriculum, our student's developmental needs and latest educational studies.
- We will be **Intentional**; Ensuring a laser-like focus in our work that is deliberate and purposeful constantly using data to inform instruction that is aligned to standards, tasks and assessments to ensure exceptional academic growth.
- We will be **Sensitive**; Cultivating and nurturing an open-minded, healthy, safe and supportive learning environment where diversity and compassion are assets that we embrace and promote

#### **Rock Chapel Pride Pledge**

Today and every day, I am getting better, better and better.

I will learn something new today that will position me better than I was yesterday.

I will try my best.

I will be **safe** in my actions. I will be **respectful** toward all people and property.

I will be **responsible** for my choices. I will be a LEADER. This if my Rock Chapel Pride Pledge.

## School Rules

1. Be Safe. 2. Be Responsible. 3. Be Respectful. \*\*\*Be A LEADER. \*\*\*

## ABC Reference Guide for Families

### After School

After School Extended Day Program (ASEDP) is offered for a small registration fee and weekly tuition to any family needing aftercare or will be late picking up children. If you are interested in after-school care for your child, please contact the front office or inquire about after-school programs at Open House. Students who remain after school for extracurricular activities must be picked up promptly at the time the scheduled event is expected to end.

### Appointments

Appointments with dentists and doctors should be made after school, on Saturdays, or vacation days. If such an absence is imperative, the student should bring a parent/guardian signed written statement to the homeroom teacher explaining the. Parents are strongly discouraged from checking students out of school before dismissal time. Instruction is continued until 2:10 p.m., and it is very disruptive to their learning when children are dismissed prior to that time.

### Arrival and Tardy Procedures

School begins promptly at **7:40 a.m.** Morning supervision of students will begin at 7:00 a.m. Please do not send your child prior to 7:00 a.m. as there are no staff members on duty at this time. This is a safety issue. School personnel will contact you if your child arrives before 7:00 a.m. Students are held in the cafeteria and gym until dismissed to their classes at 7:10 a.m.



### First Week

During the first week only, parents are free to walk their children to their classes. Please note the following:

- We open the doors at 7:00 am. The teachers are encouraged to arrive earlier than normal, this week to receive anxious students.
- Students should be in class and seated by 7:45.
- Morning announcements begin at 7:45 and afternoon announcements at 2:10.
- Once students are dropped off, we ask that parents to please exit the building. Teachers and staff are very busy supervising and assisting students. We need our hallways clear as quickly as possible.

Students are not permitted to leave campus after they arrive at school.

**Tardiness** - Promptness to class is very important. **Students are to be in their seats and ready to work when the bell sounds at 7:45 a.m.** Students who are tardy must be signed in at the office by their parent/guardian. The school counselor will make follow-up calls and implement contractual agreements regarding frequent tardiness.

## **Assistant Principal for Instruction**

The Assistant Principal is responsible for curriculum and instruction, testing/assessments, textbooks, transition from elementary to middle school, retention, and schedules.

## **Attendance**

Recognizing that good attendance is a vital habit that helps children to be successful in school reduces stress for children, families and teachers. **It is not necessary to contact the school office when your child is ill.** Upon their return, a note to the teacher explaining the absence, including dates, is required. An absence cannot be marked "excused" until the note is received.

The following attendance policies and procedures will be followed during the school year:

- **Excused absences** for students are illness, illness or death in the family, serving as a page in the legislature, and religious holidays. These absences are only excused when a parent provides a signed note.
- **Unexcused absences** include any absence for which a parent signed note is not provided including such absences as vacation, travel with parent, "take your child to work day," etc.
- Frequent absences will be referred to the school counselor.
- **Make-up work requests** for students who are absent for more than one day must be submitted to the homeroom teacher via e-mail (or call to the office) no later than 10 a.m. Assignments may be picked up in the office after 2:30 p.m. the following day.
- **Excessive absences, tardies and early check-outs may result in consequences as aligned to the DCSD Student Code of Conduct and noted as:**
  - 2 or more ab/tardy/early checkout results in a phone call home from the teacher**
  - 3 or more ab/tardy/early checkout results in a phone call home and or attendance letter**
  - 5 or more ab/tardy/early checkout results in a phone call home and or 2<sup>nd</sup> attendance letter and contract.**
  - Continued ab/tardy/early checkouts results in a phone call home and or referral to the school social worker and solicitor general's office**

DeKalb County's computerized call system will notify parents when students are absent. Parents do not need to respond to the call; this is just an informative computerized messaging system.

**Early Check-out:** For safety, Early Check-out must occur before 1:15pm. Instruction is continued until 2:10 p.m. and it is very disruptive when children are dismissed prior to that time. Appointments with dentists and doctors should be made after school, on Saturdays, or vacation days. If such an absence is imperative, the student should bring a written statement to the homeroom teacher explaining the reason and signed by a parent or guardian.

## Awards Program

Rock Chapel will have one awards program at the end of the school year. The DeKalb County Guidelines for Awards and recognition of students is listed below. Eligibility for the awards will be determined as follows:



### Principal's List

- All A's, S's, and E's.
- Satisfactory grades in Conduct (includes PE, Art, and Music and Conduct Summary) with no excessive **ab/tardy/early checkouts** or suspensions or expulsions.

### Honor Roll

- All A's, B's, S's, or E's.
- Conduct grades are not included.
- with no excessive **ab/tardy/early checkouts** or suspensions or expulsions.
- 

### Citizenship Awards

- All S's or E's in all Work-Study Habits and Conduct Evaluation Criteria, as well as, PE, Art and Music.

Establishing minimum requirements does not limit a school to giving only awards listed. Each school is encouraged to continue giving other awards and recognition to students (i.e., attendance, most improved, etc.) Rock Chapel will also give attendance awards. \*\* **Excessive ab/tardy/early checkouts may result in not qualifying for**

## Birthdays

**We do not celebrate teachers' or children's birthdays with parties.** Birthday treats can only be brought in at the children's scheduled lunch time and the parent must pass treats out to the students during the assigned lunch time as well as clean up. **Only store-bought treats are permitted.** No balloons, flowers, party favors, or goodie bags allowed. Party invitations may be distributed, at the teacher's discretion, **ONLY** if everyone in the class is invited.

## Books



Textbooks are furnished to your child by the DeKalb County School District. Students have full responsibility for the classroom textbooks loaned to them as well as for library books checked out to them. Students are required to pay for lost or damaged books.

## Breakfast

Breakfast is served at Rock Chapel between 7:00 and 7:30 a.m. Breakfast is free for all students. Breakfast is also served to the GA Lottery funded Pre-K students. Please complete lunch applications online.

## Bullying

State law prohibits bullying. The DeKalb County School System will not tolerate bullying and other forms of harassment, and therefore, reserves the right to punish students after the first incident and upon a finding of guilt. Punishment may include suspension, expulsion or referral to an alternative school.



## Cafeteria Services

Nutritious, hot lunches and breakfast are served daily in the cafeteria. Students may receive these meals or bring their lunches from home. If they choose to bring lunch from home, they have the option to receive milk at school. A monthly breakfast and lunch calendar is available online at <http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/school-nutrition>.

All students eat free at Rock Chapel. Adult lunches are \$3.00.

Teachers will not be able to heat students' food.

Applications for free and reduced meals are distributed to students at the beginning of the school year. Application information is also available at <https://schoolcafe.com/>

Home-prepared lunches should not contain glass or metal containers. If a sack lunch is brought during the day for a student, it will be delivered to the student by the office staff.

Guests are welcome to join their children for lunch. Please do not bring outside food, such as pizza, McDonalds or Chick-fil-A.

## Calendar

For your convenience the academic calendar along with PTA and school activities is provided on the PTA website. Take a moment to look it over and add dates to your family calendar.

## Carpool

Parents who drive to drop-off or pick-up their student(s) should adhere to the following directions.



- Use the driveway at the main entrance to the school. Stay in the far lane and drive up near the side of the cafeteria door. Entering within any other direction or driveway is unsafe, illegal and prohibited.
- Staff will assist your child with exiting the car. Parents DO NOT leave your car.
- Continue straight and exit through the Rock Chapel Park.
- Approximately 7:10 am the traffic will be routed to the front of the building. You will then exit through the second entrance of the school.
- **Do not let children out of the car until you reach the front of the school. An adult or a patrol will open the car door for your child.**
- **Do not release your child at the corner of the driveway for them to walk up unsupervised.**
- **Do not park to walk across the flow of carpool traffic.**

**Please follow instructions given by our safety patrols and staff members on carpool duty. Their job is to keep everyone safe and maintain order.**

### DISMISSAL PROCEDURES:

**EARLY CHECK OUT** Cut off 1:15 so that we may prepare for a safe dismissal. A designated adult must be present for us to apply the early dismissal protocol. Parents must present the school issued dismissal card.

This is the requested mode of operation. In the event, the requesting adult does not have the current school year dismissal card, with the school-issued dismissal card or state photo I.D.

**Dismissal changes** must be communicated by calling the front office before 1:15. The teacher may be provided a Dojo message or emailed as a BACK-UP ONLY. It is critical to call the offices as this circumvents errors that may occur in the event of teacher absences. You will be required to email your ID and request to RCEStransportation340@dekalbschoolsga.org.

**Dismissal cards** are provided (2) to all parents for each student upon enrollment. *There is a \$3 dollar fee to replace cards. RCES printed cards are the only valid cards for dismissal.*

**For carpool:** Place the dismissal card in your dashboard in a visible space. Remain in your car. Dismissal cards are required for carpool dismissal.

**For early release:** Bring the dismissal card and present it to the front office staff.

**For ASED/CHAMPS Aftercare program:** Bring the dismissal card and present it to the aftercare staff.

**For all other dismissal afterschool events:** Bring the dismissal card and present it to the RCES staff.

**Dismissal without the presence of a dismissal card** requires a state issued photo I.D. of a person approved for check-out within Infinite Campus via Parent Portal. It is a bit more labor intensive when parents do not update Infinite Campus as verifying each person NOT noted in Infinite Campus requires the parent to email the school a written statement that includes a parent/guardian photo I.D.

*Please arrange for students to be picked between 2:10 & 2:35 p.m. Students should be picked up no later than 2:45 p.m. There is no supervision available for students who remain on campus after that time.*

**LATE PICKUP** After 2:35 any student remaining on campus will be taken to the After School Program and assessed a **\$25.00** registration fee and a **\$15.00** drop-in fee. Payment must be made upon arrival when picking-up your child.

**\*Please do not use cell phones while driving on school property.**

## **Class Parties**

The DeKalb County Board of Education policy permits two class parties per year. Parties will begin at 1:00 p.m. and must be coordinated for each grade level by the Homeroom Teacher. RCES permits a Winter Holiday Party and a End of Year Party. To attend to instruction and maximize time, no other parties are approved. Birthday parties are not permitted. Birthday invitations for parties beyond school time are allowed at the teacher's discretion with consistency and permitted ONLY when every child in the class receives an invitation. Only store-bought birthday cupcakes are allowed when 1) scheduled with the teacher and ready for distribution during the child's designated lunch time. No treat bags, candy, snacks, balloons or any other associated party favors are allowed.

## **Cell Phones**

We kindly request that cell phones be turned off during carpool arrival and dismissal as well as while visiting within the school building.

Students are not permitted to have cell phones on or used during school hours which includes field trips, the bus ride to and from school and on field trips. Infractions may result in confiscation of the cell phone.

Parents will be required to schedule a pick-up and that child is subject to consequences aligned to the Student Code of Conduct.

## **Clinic**

Should your child become ill at school, we ask that you promptly pick him/her up once you have been notified. Students with 100.4 temperature or suspected to be contagious will not be allowed to remain at school. If the illness is contagious, a doctor's note must be provided before the student is allowed to return to school. Students must be free of all symptoms, without medication, for 24 hours before returning to school.

Medication cannot be brought to school or administered unless a physician has completed the DCSD Physician Request for Administration of Medication available from the school. Students are not allowed to be in possession of any medication's herbs, vitamins, creams, etc. If these items are brought to school, they will be confiscated, and the parent will be contacted immediately.

The school nurse will not call each time a child is referred to the clinic. She will use her professional judgment when to notify parents.

## **Communications**

Rock Chapel School offers many communication avenues. Please see the listing and explanation below.

**Please do not send personal or private information via email.**

### **School Communication with parents:**

- Primary school communication is School Messenger (for access phone numbers and email addresses must be accurate in Infinite Campus)
- Secondary school communication is Dojo (for access the parent must sign-up for Dojo via their child's homeroom teacher)
- Ongoing updates will be found on the school's website via the front page AND Parent Resource tab.

### **Teacher and Staff Email Addresses/Websites**

Email is an effective way to communicate with faculty and staff in a non-emergency situation. The email addresses and websites for staff members can be located on the school website. The staff will check email when time allows during the school day; however, this is for **non-emergency** communication. Email can be used to report absences, request conferences or homework assignments. Teacher websites are updated with classroom schedules, upcoming events, assignments, and resources which may be helpful to you and your children.

### **School Website**

<http://www.rockchapeles.dekalb.k12.ga.us/> is the DeKalb County School District website for Rock Chapel Elementary School. This site is updated by school staff.

### **Email Blasts**

The PTA sends out emails which highlight PTA, school and community news. Notices from the school administration or the DeKalb County School District will also be distributed when required via email blasts or Dojo.

### **Connection (Parent-School Connect):**



RCES Parent Liaison is eager to support with becoming involved with PAC (Principal Advisory Committee), PTA (Parent Teacher Association), Room Parent support, collaborations, volunteer opportunities, support with Infinite Campus and more.

Please email [hilda\\_tate@dekalbschoolsga.org](mailto:hilda_tate@dekalbschoolsga.org).

### **External Communication Protocol**

- Remain confidential and professional in all communications.
- Engage only in communication that will ultimately produce positivity and productivity for Rock Chapel
- All funding request should report directly and only to the principal (see request forms to use). This Principal will direct the request to the appropriate funding source i.e., PTA.
- Seek administrative guidance when considering business partners, collaborations, partnerships or Requests for services from any outside entity.

### **Internal/Interpersonal Communication Protocol**

- Remain confidential in all communication.
- If comments, questions or concerns arise, first address the staff/parent/community stake holder with the Greatest relevance or influence on the subject or matter at hand. The sub sequential options/resources For mode of operation are, in order, your grade chair/lead, TSS representatives, AP and principal.
- Note: You are ALWAYS WELCOME TO SPEAK TO ADMIN AS A 1<sup>ST</sup> LINE OF RESOURCE.
- Do not email district level staff unless directed to or approved by administration.
- There are 3 calendars: Staff (O365), School (Website) and PTA (O365 also merged with staff calendar).
- Be sure that all meetings/programs/events impacted anyone beyond your personal space is emailed to the secretary no later than the last Thursday of each month for approval and to be placed on the master calendar.

### **PTA Email**

Email the Rock Chapel PTA for PTA inquiries.

### **PTA Website**

This site is updated on a regular basis regarding information on school and PTA activities. In our effort to “Go Green”, forms and important information for our families will be available on the website.

### **Facebook Page**

The PTA provides information via our Facebook page.

### **Remind**

The principal has a Dojo account that will be used to send out text messages to parents. Please make sure you have joined the Dojo list. The classroom teacher will also have a Dojo account for your child’s class only.

### **K12 Alerts**

The DeKalb County School District provides timely school-related alerts through email, text message and telephone. Sign up on the DCSD website.

### **Conduct**

Rock Chapel’s three rules to follow daily are:

## Be Safe ~ Be Respectful ~ Be Responsible

Improving student academic and behavior outcomes is about ensuring all students have access to the most effective and accurately implemented instructional and behavioral practices and interventions possible. We use a decision-making framework that guides selection, integration, and implementation of the best evidence-based academic and behavioral practices for improving important academic and behavior outcomes for all students.

Additionally, each teacher has an individual classroom management plan. Consequences for breaking these rules are clearly stated. Rock Chapel students are responsible for their own behavior; they should use self-control and be good citizens.

Students at Rock Chapel are expected to:

- Act in a safe and healthy way
- Treat all property with respect.
- Respect themselves and the rights and needs of others.
- Take responsibility for learning.

Each student will receive a copy of the DeKalb County Schools' Rights and Responsibilities brochure. Additional information concerning management procedures will be provided at the beginning of the school year.

### Conferences



Parents are encouraged to meet with their child's teacher(s) at least twice each semester. Conferences may be scheduled by email, sending a note with the student or calling the office. Every 9 weeks, 2-hour blocks of time are set aside for after school conferences from 3:00-5:00 p.m.

If a concern arises, please attempt to work with your child's teacher before contacting an administrator. This allows the teacher the opportunity to correct a problem or explain any misunderstanding. **There should be no impromptu conferences.** Please remember that teachers have student responsibilities and cannot leave classes unsupervised. This is especially important in the morning when students are entering class and in the afternoon during dismissal. Please do not expect the teacher to stop and have a conference with you at those times as they must give their full attention to their students.

### Contact Information

The Emergency Contact Form must be accurate and up to date at all times. If address, phone or contact information changes, please communicate with the front office in writing of the changes. Students will NOT be allowed to be picked up by anyone not listed on the Emergency Contact Form.

### Counselor

The elementary counselor works to help your child learn to be his/her best.

The elementary counselor:

- works with individuals and with small groups.
- instructs in classroom guidance.

- consults with parents, teachers, administrators, social workers and others on a wide variety of topics relevant to our students' wellbeing.
- coordinates school-wide events and activities to promote a positive school climate.
- coordinates special testing services.
- maintains confidentiality.
- encourages students to recognize and make the best of their own unique capabilities.
- helps children cope with emotional crises.

## Curriculum Night

This "parents only" event is held in August. The evening event begins in the cafeteria. It includes a short meeting of the PTA and an introduction by the principal of all staff members as well as an overview of the instructional curriculum. Parents are invited to attend brief gatherings of the grades/grade levels to meet the teachers and staff and learn about their child's teacher and the expectations of the classroom for the year.

## Deficiency Reports

A deficiency report is a method of reporting to parents or guardians that a child is not progressing satisfactorily, either in academic work or in conduct. You will be informed during the semester when it is believed your child is in danger of failure or is not producing up to his/her capabilities.

## Deliveries



Lunches and homework oftentimes get left behind. If you bring something to school for your child, please leave it at the front office. Delivery of these items will be done by office staff so as not to interrupt the important learning going on in classrooms. Our goal is to have as few classroom interruptions as possible, and your understanding of this policy is appreciated.

Please arrange for students to be picked between 2:10 & 2:35 p.m. Students should be picked up no later than 2:45 p.m. There is no supervision available for students who remain on campus after that time.

**LATE PICKUP** After 2:35 any student remaining on campus will be taken to the After School Program and assessed a **\$25.00** registration fee and a **\$15.00** drop-in fee. Payment must be made upon arrival when picking-up your child.

## Dress Code

Students are expected to wear clothing that is suitable for school and adheres to the student dress code. This includes but is not limited to ensuring:

- Clothes cannot be see-through including but not limited ripped jeans and shirts
- Shorts, skirts dresses and shirt-dresses must be fingertip length.
- Skin is covered at the upper-body, and mid-body area i.e., stomach and waist; Shoulders are covered; Hips are covered.
- Garments must settle at or longer than fingertips while standing.
- Undergarments should be worn and covered
- If leggings/tights/stockings are worn, the buttock is covered at least a dollar bill length past the buttock (from the longest side)

- Shoes are safe for school and extensive activities (no crocs, flip flops, slides, bubble-slides, house shoes or any of the like; no heels/skates, distracting shoes ex. active lights)
- Any clothes considered distracting to the learning environment. Fridays are school spirit days. Show your Rock Chapel spirit by wearing your Rock Chapel shirts or our school colors (blue and white).

Students are not permitted to wear any look-alike garments that are illegal (i.e., bullet-proof vests, etc.) on school grounds or at school events. ALL students are expected to wear clothing that limits safety concerns and that adheres to the student dress code found on pages 79- 80 of Student Code of Conduct (found online) and any additional requirements listed in local school regulations. The penalties outlined in the DCSD SCC apply to ALL student dress code violations: Number of Offenses Actions of the School First Offense Verbal reprimand; parent contacted to bring suitable clothing or student may change into other suitable clothing if available. Second Offense Required parent conference; parent must bring suitable clothing or student may change into other suitable clothing if available. Third Offense For repeated dress code violations, the student will be charged with violating Rule #25 Student Dress Code, Rule #8B – Refusal to Follow Instructions of Faculty or Staff Member/Insubordination and Rule #19 Repeated Violations

## Drills

Fire, tornado, lockdown and intruder alert drills will be held during the school year in order to accustom the students to disciplined behavior in case of an emergency.



## Enrollment/New Student Registration

Registration of new students is ongoing throughout the year. For details regarding new student registration, please visit the DeKalb County School Website <http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/> or contact the Rock Chapel office.

Rock Chapel accepts K through 5th grade students. A lottery takes place in the late winter or early spring for the GA Lottery funded Pre-K program for the following year. DeKalb School District announces the countywide date and time. Kindergarten Round-up is held each winter for upcoming kindergarten parents to provide information about the Rock Chapel Kindergarten program.

## Field Trips

Most classes take one or two outside field trips per year. All field trips require signed permission slips from a parent.

Trips to the Fernbank Science Center are not considered outside field trips because Fernbank is operated by the DeKalb County School District. Parents will be notified of these trips.



## Grade Reports

All DeKalb County students will receive two grade reports during the year, issued at the completion of each semester. Progress Reports will be issued each 4.5 weeks. The envelopes containing these reports should be signed by the parent and returned to the teacher. The second semester grade report card, the last one of the year, should be retained for the parent's records.

The following grades will appear on Progress Reports:

- E – Excellent
- S – Satisfactory
- N – Needs to Improve
- U – Unsatisfactory
- X – No Evaluation

## Food

The cafeteria has a job of promoting and increasing sales of the food items sold in the cafeteria. Only cafeteria food and food from home i.e., homemade food is allowed in the cafeteria during its hours of operation. If you bring your child food from an outside restaurant, please put it in a paper bag. **Food Delivery:** Delivery services such as UBER EATS are not permitted to be delivered for children.

Keep in mind that the front office staff is limited and consumed with the daily work of managing the front office and business of the school. Calling students to the front office to pick up lunches left at home and staff delivering food (lunch) to students in classes are disturbances to staff work flow and a distraction to the student learning environment.

## Gum/Candy/Snacks

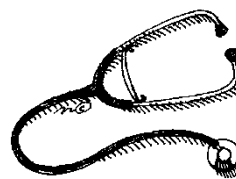
Chewing gum at school is prohibited. Students are also asked not to bring candy to school. Unsanctioned snacks/candy/gum or any food may not be shared or sold on school property.

## Health Care

Updated records must be on file at the school. Immunization Form 3231 and Hearing, Vision and Dental Form 3300 are required to be current each school year.

During the school year, qualified professionals screen children according to the following schedule:

Hearing	Grades 1 & 2
Vision	Grades 3 & 5
Dental	Students new to DeKalb
Second MMR	By grade 6



## Homework Assignments

During 2023-2024, elementary students in the DeKalb County School District will have homework assignments provided by the teacher. Homework guidelines are based on current research for teaching and learning using core content standards.

Homework will be comprised of either: (1) practice work on previously taught skills, (2) preparation work to be ready for learning activities that will take place in the classroom, and (3) extension work for long-term assignments that parallel class work and require students to apply skills which may include projects, papers or other activities.



Students should expect the following amount of content homework per night.

Kindergarten students: 15 to 30 minutes,  
1st grade students: 20 to 30 minutes,  
2nd grade students: 20 to 40 minutes,  
3rd grade students: 30 to 45 minutes,  
4th grade students: 40 to 60 minutes,  
5th grade students: 50 to 75 minutes.

## Infinite Campus

Campus Portal is a confidential and secure website that provides parents, students, and staff with real-time access to information to better understand, monitor, and participate in the educational process. To register for Campus Portal, go to <http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/www/infinite-campus/>

Campus Portal provides access to the following:

\* Daily Planner \* Assignments \* Attendance \* Grades \* Schedule \*

## Library/Media Center

The Library/Media Center is open daily from 7:45-3:00. Students, staff, and parents are welcome to utilize the library's materials and facilities. Students may visit the library throughout the school day (with their teachers' permission) to borrow books for both information needs and pleasure reading. Please consult with the Librarian regarding use of the Library/Media Center for meetings or other school related uses.



## Lost and Found

Any found clothing or items are taken to the lost and found area in the cafeteria. All unclaimed articles are given to a charitable organization at the end of each month. Families are urged to clearly label all personal possessions so that they may be reclaimed.



## Medication

Students needing medication should take it at home whenever possible. If it should become necessary for medication to be taken at school, it should be prescribed, bear the name of the student and the time and amount to be taken.

**An Authorization for Medication form, available from the school office must be filled out and signed by a parent and the prescribing physician before a student can be given medicine at school.** This also includes all over-the-counter products such as Tylenol or Motrin. All medication must be left in the office with the clinic assistant.

## Open House

Open House for all students is held on a designated day prior to the start of the school year. Families can meet the teachers, join the PTA, fill out the required school forms, and provide their current proof of residency, sign up for after-school programs, purchase school and spirit items, and get valuable information from the staff and the PTA.

## Parking

Parking at Rock Chapel is in the front and down the hill by the gym. Parking in the bus lane at the front of the school (yellow or red curbed area) is prohibited. **Please do not leave your car unattended during arrival and dismissal.**

## Pets

Animals/pets should not be brought to school without permission from the principal. Please refrain from bringing leashed pets to the school during arrival and dismissal.



## Progress Reports

Progress Reports are issued each 4.5 weeks.

## Report Cards

Report cards are issued twice per year January and May.

## Returning Students

**Proof of Residency:** All persons enrolled in any DeKalb School must show proof of residency in the correct attendance area of DeKalb County for the current school year. A current utility bill (gas or electricity only), a current lease, or current mortgage agreement are the only acceptable proofs of residency. Phone bills, water bills, personal checks, credit card bills, driver's licenses, expired leases, or old closing statements are not adequate proofs of residency.

## School Tours

Please contact the school office to schedule a tour.

## Spirit Days

Every Friday is Spirit Day. Students are encouraged to wear Rock Chapel t-shirts or blue and white clothing with slacks, shorts, skirts or jeans.



## Staff Lounge

The staff lounge is provided for the convenience of the instructional staff. Children are not permitted in the lounge.

## Telephone Use

The school telephone number is (678) 676-3802. It is a business phone and cannot be used for personal calls. Delivering messages to children consumes valuable time and should be requested only for emergencies.

## Terrific Thursday

Throughout the year, homeroom classes treat our staff to a Terrific Thursday meal to show our appreciation for all they do.

## Toys/Games/Valuables

All toys, games, audio and video items, excessive amounts of money and expensive jewelry must be left at home. Such items are distracting to the instructional program. Rock Chapel will not be held liable for the loss or damage of any such property belonging to the students. Teachers will collect these items and they will not be returned to the student. Parents may request to pick these items up from the school office. All items left at the end of the year will be given to charitable organizations.

## Transportation

**Bus Riders:** Each student will be placed on his/her scheduled bus each day, unless **written** permission is received to allow another means of transportation. Students are **not** allowed to board another bus without **written permission signed by the principal or his/her designee.**

**Car Riders:** Parents who elect to provide transportation for their children are asked to use the appropriate drop-off/pick-up location at the front of the school. Students should NOT be dropped off before 7:00 a.m. **When picking up your child, we ask that you wait patiently in your car until he/she is released. Make sure you have your car rider number or a picture ID.**

**Transportation Changes:** Parents must send a note to school regarding any transportation changes. If there is a last-minute change in afterschool dismissal plans, please call the office by 1:00 p.m. to allow adequate time to notify the teacher.

## Visitors

Parents and community members are welcome with prescheduled times. Parents should schedule class visits with the teacher in advance, so testing and special schedules are not interrupted. The security of our students and staff is extremely important. Upon arrival, all visitors must stop in the office to sign in and obtain a visitor badge and upon departure sign out.

## Volunteers

Volunteers are a key component to the success of our school. We welcome and need volunteers. Volunteers can serve on a PTA committee, volunteer through the counseling office to work with an individual teacher or as a student's mentor, volunteer in the classroom, shelve books in the media center, help in the teacher workroom, and help clean up our campus on beautification days, volunteer for lunch duty and more. Check with the school parent liaison, PTA officers or the front office for volunteer opportunities.



## Volunteers

Parents are encouraged to assist with special activities. There are three tiers of identifiable volunteers, Parents should schedule class visits with the teacher in advance, so testing and special schedules are not interrupted.

Volunteers will be categorized as Level I, II, or III. Each school will be provided with a standard Volunteer Application that must be completed by all Volunteers. Level III volunteers must complete DCSD volunteer training and go through a background check with the DCSD Department of Safety. Level I and Level II volunteers do not require criminal background checks. Listed below will give you a description of each Level.

Level I volunteers are non-district personnel who will have no interaction with students and will not encounter students. Volunteers at this level may be people working on playground construction projects or assisting with facilities maintenance when school is not in session.

Level II volunteers are non-district personnel who will have supervised interaction with students before, during, or after school. Some examples of Level II volunteers include, but are not limited to, book fair volunteers and classroom volunteers.

Level III volunteers must be approved by Public Safety and the local school principal prior to the volunteer participation in activities involving direct, unsupervised interaction with students. Examples of Level III volunteers include chaperones on overnight field trips, chaperones or volunteers for local school events, volunteer tutors, office/media center volunteers, or any other volunteers who will have any unsupervised interaction with students. Level III volunteers shall be fingerprinted by the district and have GBI/FBI criminal background checks on file prior to rendering volunteer services.

As we gear up for the school year, it is important to ensure that all Level III volunteers have completed the needed application, training and background check to support our students. Reach out to our Parent Liaison to get started!

You may view Board Policy IFCD: School Volunteers by clicking here <https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/ViewPolicy.aspx?S=4054&revid=SwAusMVevRbWZslshCT4Rt1sQ==&ptid=amlgTZiB9plushNjl6WXhfiOQ==&secid=&PG=6&IRP=0>

## Weekly Information Packets

Every Thursday a courier envelope will be sent home with each student in Grades K - 5. All communication contained in the packet must be approved by the building principal or designee. The envelope may include student work, school notices, testing information, PTA news and county information. It is the student's responsibility to take the papers home and review them with parents. Parents should return the envelope to homeroom teachers on Monday.



## Withdrawal from School

A note should be sent to your child's teacher and the front office secretary at least 24 hours before the intended withdrawal. The note should state your child's last day, your new home address, and the name and address of the new school your child will be attending. All school fees such as lost textbooks, lunch fees or library materials must be paid prior to withdrawal. The parent is required to come to the office to sign the child's withdrawal form on the last day the student attends Rock Chapel.

## Weather/School Emergencies



When hazardous conditions are created by severe weather, the regular school day may be suspended to ensure your child's safety. It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to monitor news reports via WSBTV and radio. Announcements are usually broadcast beginning at 6 a.m.

When the possibility of inclement weather exists, the school staff monitors the weather radar and the emergency weather radio. Should hazardous weather occur during the school day, appropriate precautions will be taken. Rock Chapel has a Dojo Account which will be used in case of a weather emergency.

## Yearbook

The PTA oversees the publishing of a yearbook which is delivered to students in May.



## School Sponsored Clubs/Organizations



Honor Chorus (grade 5) Provides an opportunity for education through singing.



Garden Club (grades 3 – 5) To give children in grades 3 – 5 a chance to “explore their own backyard” with a greater understanding of plants and animals in our area and to have direct experiences with nature.



National Junior Beta Club (grade 5) Recognizes students who excel academically. An academic honor society, members must have a 3.75 GPA for the 2 previous semesters of study, S's in conduct and work habits and a score of 85 on the ITBS Induction is usually held in the fall. Members participate in various activities and “lead by serving others.”



Safety Patrols - Fifth and fourth grade students are selected to assist with arrival and dismissal, to help control the halls and cafeteria in the morning and afternoon, to make morning announcements, to help children safely cross driveways, and to put up and take down the flags.

## PTA Committees and Volunteer Opportunities

*Please join one or more today!*

**Book Fair Committee:** Oversees the complete efforts in planning, set-up and take-down of a Book Fair held in the fall and a used book sale held in the winter.



**Building and Grounds Committee:** Responsible for sprucing up the interior and exterior of the building and school campus. The development of the campus should enhance opportunities student participation in outdoor environmental education projects. These events give families opportunity to work together and build community spirit while enhancing the Rock Chapel learning environment.



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**Cultural Arts Committee:** Brings educational shows to the school, working to enhance the exposure of students to multi-cultural experiences and to enrich the arts.

**Directory and Membership Committee:** Responsible for publishing the student directory including collecting and compiling the directory information and updating the directory database. Also, organizes the PTA Membership drive, which begins at Open House. The committee works at Open House and Curriculum Night to collect forms and to distribute PTA membership cards and other PTA information. The committee also compiles and maintains the PTA membership list and submits the appropriate paperwork to the State PTA organization.

**Fall Festival Committee:** our annual fall event. Each committee has an important job. We need ALL Rock Chapel parents to volunteer for this event!

**Event Coordinators** – oversees entire event.

**Food** – coordinates and plans the food and refreshments.

**Games** – coordinates all plans relating to the games and activities including working with club sponsors.

**Crafts** – contacts and schedules a variety of crafters.

**Publicity/Sponsorships** – coordinates all advertising and publicity for event.

**Volunteer coordinator** – coordinates all volunteers for the day, also responsible for getting necessary information from all other chairpersons regarding workers.



**Field Day Committee:** working with Mr. Cocks, coordinates and executes this fun-day of field events, crazy races, and cool activities. In addition to committee participation, a large number of volunteers are needed to help run the activities during Field Day.



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### **Grade Level Volunteers**

**PTA Parent Coordinator:** Responsibilities include providing the grade level parents details regarding the two school parties, supplies, Terrific Thursday, craft parents, and classroom readers. The following positions are needed for each classroom:

**Classroom Grade Level Parent** – work with other classroom grade level parents to plan classroom parties, collect class dues, and work with teacher to provide parent volunteers in the classroom when requested.

**Hospitality and Staff Appreciation Committee:** oversees events where food is required (except those that fall under the monthly programs) and coordinates all activities that celebrate and honor our wonderful

teachers and staff. This committee also coordinates the **Holiday Lunch Volunteers**. Our Thanksgiving luncheon needs volunteers to collect reservations, decorate, collect money, serve drinks and clean up.

**Library/Media Center Volunteers:** assist in the Library/Media Center by shelving, tagging books, and helping students.



**Reflections Committee:** coordinate the National PTA Reflections program for our children.



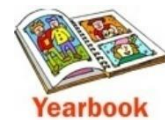
Reflections is a PTA program for students with an interest in the arts. The program is open to all students and takes place during the fall semester. Students prepare an entry in visual arts, literature, music or photography. Entries are judged at the local level, with the top winners in each category moving on to the next level(s) of competition (i.e., county, state, and national competitions).

**Safe Routes to School Committee:** initiative to encourage walking to school to promote a healthy student and a healthy environment.

**School Pictures Committee:** coordinates the photo sessions, provides assistance during the photo sessions, collects the money and distributes the photographs. Individual pictures are taken in the fall and spring. Class pictures are taken in the fall. In addition to committee responsibilities, parent volunteers are needed to assist with the photo sessions.

**Website Committee:** maintains the Rock Chapel PTA website, working with the principal and PTA to include the latest information on the events and activities.

**Yearbook Committee:** coordinates yearbook production, sale and distribution including photographing Rock Chapel events.



**5<sup>th</sup> Grade Celebration/Completion of Elementary Studies Committee:** in conjunction with the faculty, coordinates the events related to the 5th grade celebration. Planning for these events begins in late winter, with input from parents and students desired. In addition to committee responsibilities, a large number of volunteers will be needed for these events.

## **Fundraising and Fun Opportunities (we would like to do)**

**Grocery store cards** – a percentage of your purchases is donated back to Rock Chapel when you use your Publix or Kroger commitment cards. You can pick these up on Open House or in the office.

**Target credit card** – a percentage of your purchases is donated back to Rock Chapel.

**Spirit Nights** – On specific nights throughout the year Rock Chapel families visit local eateries and a percentage of the sales is donated back to Rock Chapel.

**School Dance** – The proceeds go back to Rock Chapel.



## Rock Chapel Activities & Events

(dates on the PTA website & in the email blasts)

**Summer PTA Meeting** - Rock Chapel PTA meets during the summer to plan for the upcoming year. The budget and events are discussed at a pot-luck dinner for all interested PTA members. Come and meet the officers and help make plans for the year.

**Open House** - Rock Chapel opens its doors to all parents and students on the Wednesday before the first day of school. All families are required to provide Proof of Residency at this time. This is an opportunity to see the school, visit the classrooms and meet the teachers, sign up for the PTA, purchase school spirit clothing and volunteer.

**Curriculum Night Held in August** – PTA Meeting, then meet the teachers and staff and learn about the curriculum offered in each grade level and department. (Parents Only)

**Campus Clean-Up Days** - Several times a year Rock Chapel invites parents, teachers, students and the community to help spruce up around our school.

**Reflections** – Reflections takes place during the fall semester. Students prepare an entry in visual arts, literature, music or photography. Entries are judged at the local level, with the top winners in each category moving on to the next level(s) of competition (i.e., county, state, and national competitions).

**School Pictures** - Smile! Individual pictures are taken twice a year. Class pictures also will also be taken during the year.

**Book Fairs** - A Scholastic Book Fair in the fall where students and parents can shop for books and a used book fair in the winter.

**Thanksgiving Lunch** - Enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving lunch with your child(ren) and be thankful for our wonderful school.

**Holiday Program** - An evening of music by the PreK-2nd grade students.

**3/4/5 Grade Musical Program** - Special musical event by the students.

**Kindergarten Round-up** - Rock Chapel staff and administration provide information for upcoming kindergarten parents about the kindergarten program at Rock Chapel. Meet the teachers, get a glimpse into what kindergarten is like, provide all the paperwork required to enroll your child and meet other kindergarten-to-be parents.

**Field Day** - Classes spend the day outside with their teachers and peers participating in a variety of athletic and fun events.



**Awards Day** – An end-of-the year event to celebrate the achievements of all of our students, usually held in the morning.



**Rock Chapel PTA** *everychild.one voice.®*

Rock Chapel has a very active PTA which has helped to support many programs and activities designed to enhance our children's educational experiences, advocate for all children and bring families together for fun and fellowship.

Our PTA Business meetings are held several times during the year. All parents/guardians are invited to attend meetings to make decisions, find out what is happening, see how they can be involved and actively plan Rock Chapel's future. Only PTA members are eligible to vote on business issues. PTA memberships are available at Open House or by contacting the membership chair. The PTA sponsors many family events throughout the year.

Check the calendar on the website for a listing of planned activities and watch for the weekly email blasts for dates, times, and locations. Sign up for PTA email blasts on the PTA website.

Many dedicated people help to make these events possible for our children, but it doesn't take much to be involved. Please join us in making these elementary school years a strong, vital foundation of success for our children. Join our PTA today!

### **Rock Chapel PTA Officers 2023- 2024**

*Presidents: Michelle Christian*

*Vice Presidents: Hilda Tate*

*Treasurer: Chileeta Shepperd*

*Secretary: Shondolyn Richburg*

#### **PTA Member Hub Link:**

<https://rockchapelpta.new.memberhub.store/store>

## Rock Chapel School Council 2023-2024

Principal: Jamela Lewis [jamela\\_lewis@dekalbschoolsga.org](mailto:jamela_lewis@dekalbschoolsga.org)



Teacher Representatives:

- Tennille Haywood – Secretary

Parent Representatives:

- Jalissaya Heard - Chairperson
- Valencia Thornton – Vice Chairperson
- Akeeli Martin
- Aaron Wright

In accordance with House Bill 1187 – The A+ Reform Act of 2000, all public schools must have a Local School Council (LSC). They are meant to bring communities and schools closer together in a spirit of cooperation to solve educational challenges, improve academic achievement, provide support for teachers and administrators and bring parents into the school-based decision-making process.

Meetings for the 2023 -2024 School Year:

**To be announced**

### Rock Chapel Parent Expectations

- Demonstrate support for the vision and values of our school.
- Support our parent organization (PTA) which provides financial and accountability support for the school.
- Participate in the life of the school by attending programs, volunteering service, and assisting in the processes that have been designed to enhance the various aspects of the school.
- Call upon the school to establish effective two-way communication that both provides information and seeks feedback.
- Play an active role in the education of your children, monitor children's academic performance, and work with teachers to emphasize the importance of education.
- Schedule with teachers conference times that are convenient and plan ahead of time. Please do not interrupt a teacher's classroom instruction.
- Provide for your children a means of transportation that allows them to be at school on time and also to be picked up on time. If you find that circumstances prevent you from achieving this, please call the school and let us know. If you are late getting your child to school, please sign your child in on the QR code outside the front door. Parent conferences will be scheduled with parents when habitual tardiness or absences becomes excessive.
- When taking a child out of school early, please sign out in the front office. We will call for your child to come meet you.
- Upon your child's return from being absent, please send in a letter explaining reason for the absence.

## Classroom Observation Guidelines for Parents or Legal Guardian

1. The DeKalb County School System is an open system and encourages parent participation and involvement.
2. To assure safety of all students, parents must sign in at the front office and receive a name badge upon arrival at the school.
3. Parental visits should not be for the purpose of “monitoring” a teacher and should not exceed **thirty minutes in length** and pre- scheduled with teacher and/or administrator. If the parent has questions regarding the competence of a teacher, this matter should be properly addressed to the principal who may request an instructional coordinator to conduct an evaluation.
4. The principal or his/her designee may choose to sit with the parent during the visit. If necessary, other DeKalb County school personnel may also be invited and in attendance. The teacher should never leave the parent(s) with students unsupervised.
5. If, at any time during the visit, the principal considers the parent’s activities to be other than in the best interest of the students being served, he/she may terminate the visit.
6. To maintain an optimal learning environment, parents should arrange classroom visits with the office in order to avoid testing days, field trips, or other similar planned group activities.
7. While visiting the classrooms, parents should limit activities which would distract students, such as walking around the room, talking to the teacher, or talking to students. The rights of all students to privacy and to the proper learning environment must be strictly observed. In addition, please remember to turn off your cell phones while in the classroom.
8. If, after a visit, the parent wishes to meet with the teacher, a conference may be scheduled for the parent by the school secretary or the secretary may take a message and have the teacher call and schedule a conference with the parent.

