

Avondale Elementary an IB PYP School & COGNIA STEM Certified
8 Lakeshore Drive Avondale Estates, GA 30002
678-676-5202

Dear Parents/Students,

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year. Our staff is very excited about this school year, as we look forward to working with the students, parents, and the community. This handbook was designed to give you information about our school, programs, and policies. We expect your child to have a great year of learning at Avondale Elementary.

The Avondale Elementary Staff and Administration are dedicated to creating the best learning environment possible. It is our goal to provide all students with the opportunity to excel academically, enabling them to become positive contributing members of our school and community.

Sincerely,
Dr. Dontae Andrews, Principal

OUR MISSION AND BELIEFS

Vision:

Avondale Elementary will be a school where students realize that knowledge is power.

Mission:

Avondale Elementary School will provide students with authentic real-world experiences that challenge them to be caring communicators, collaborators, and critical thinkers with local, national, and global awareness acquired through inquiry and problem-based learning.

Beliefs:

1. We believe the focal point for the school is student learning.
2. We believe a safe and physically comfortable environment promotes student learning.
3. We believe students learn best when they are actively engaged in the learning process.
4. We believe students learn to make appropriate decisions given a supportive and challenging learning environment.
5. We believe students need to apply their learning in meaningful contexts.
6. We believe understanding the existing cultural diversity in our school can increase students' acceptance of their peers.
7. We believe a student's self-esteem is enhanced by positive relationships and mutual respect among students and staff.

AVONDALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

1. The right of the individual student to learn will be protected at all times. Any student behavior, which interferes with this right, will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action as outlined in the DeKalb County School's Student Handbook.
2. All students must adhere to the mandatory school uniform each day. Sagging pants, halter tops, spaghetti straps, low cut shirts, clothing with profane, negative, or derogative statements, shorts and skirts more than four inches above the knee and open-toe shoes, are not permissible.
3. Avondale is a "No Place for Hate School" Bullying will not be tolerated.
4. Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Reflective. It's the Avondale Way: Stop, Think, & Self-Correct.

SCHOOL-WIDE ESSENTIAL AGREEMENTS

Halls

- Walk quietly
- Stay in Line
- Hands by your side

Restrooms

- Keep It clean
- Wash hands
- Respect School Property

Cafeteria

- Enter and exit quietly
- Follow Directions
- Keep table & floor clean

Mandatory School Uniforms

ONE'S DRESS REFLECTS ONE'S ATTITUDE

*****All students are required to come dressed daily in the school uniform. All students must come with their shirts tucked in their skirts or pants, pants pulled up and wear a belt.**

Uniform Colors:

Solid White, Solid Yellow, Solid Light or Solid Dark Blue Polo Style Shirts (Collared)

Blue or Khaki Pants, Skorts, Skirts, or Jumpers Solid White, Yellow, Light Blue or Navy Blue Sweaters

No jeans. No t-shirts. No multi-colored or bright socks or leggings. No sweatshirts. No open-toe shoes. No light-up tennis shoes. Dark tennis shoes or other dark closed-toe shoes are allowed. Students must wear socks. ***

- Shirt tails **must** be tucked inside skirts and pants.
- The waist of the trousers should be securely fastened so that they do not drop below the hips.
- Students are not to wear cut-offs, see-through apparel, midriff-type apparel, headbands, or any other article of clothing that would create a distraction.
- No undershirts are to be worn as outerwear.
- Clothing shall not display lettering or numerical figures which carry a connotation of immorality, vulgarity or obscenity, or alcoholic beverages.
- Caps, hats, head rags, bandanas, etc. are not to be worn inside the building.
- Shorts and skirts of reasonable length may be worn.
- No flip-flops, Slide-ins, thong shoes, open-toe sandals, or wheeled shoes are allowed.

*****Students who do not dress appropriately will be required to return home to change clothes. Parents will be called if the student arrives inappropriately dressed, and out of uniform. *****

Prohibited Items

Students are not to bring personal pencil sharpeners, mechanical pencils, radios, electronic games, laser pointers, basketballs, footballs, bats, skateboards, or any other recreational items or equipment to school. All toys and "toy-like" objects must be left at home, including handheld video games, CD players, trading cards, etc. Such items are frequently distracting to the instructional program. Cell phones are permitted, but may not be turned on or used during the school day and must stay in their bookbag. The school will not be responsible for any items misplaced or stolen at school. Any items confiscated will be returned to parents only. Items may be picked up from the office. All items left at the end of the school year will be given to charitable organizations.

Students are not to bring candy, gum, drinks, or junk food to school to sell or consume. If students are selling or buying from other students, or consuming candy, gum, drinks, or junk food, he/she could be disciplined and the items will be confiscated and not returned.

SCHOOL HOURS, ABSENCES, AND EARLY DISMISSAL

Regular school hours are **7:35 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.** Children should not arrive at school before **7:00 a.m.** Students may report to class beginning at 7:25 a.m. Students are expected to attend school and be on time every day. Study hall in the cafeteria, media center, Spanish Room, computer labs, or other designated room is required for all students 7:00-7:25 a.m.

Tardies:

Students who arrive after the morning announcements, which ends at 7:45 a.m. are considered late. All students coming late must sign-in with parent/guardian and receive a tardy pass before going to class. Students who are chronically late will be referred to the counselor and school social worker.

Absences:

Parents must provide the school upon arrival with a written excuse notice when their child has been absent. It is the responsibility of the student and parent to make arrangements with all teachers to make up missed assignments. The classroom teacher will allow children to make up work when absent only if it is a legal/approved absence.

Legal absences as approved by the State and County are:

- Personal illness
- Death in the immediate family
- Religious holidays
- Instances where attendance would be hazardous (weather)
- Serving as a page in the General Assembly

Excessive absences contribute to low academic performance and will be reported to the appropriate agencies. Therefore, it is imperative that your child is present every day. Parents can make a difference in these areas of concern by working in conjunction with the school.

Student Attendance due to COVID-19:

Students who provide written documentation from their healthcare provider advising them to refrain from attending school due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) will be fully accommodated in accordance with Board Policy JB. Families of these students should coordinate with their school's administration for additional guidance. For all other students, normal school attendance policies remain in effect.

Early Dismissal:

If a student is to leave the building before 2:15 p.m., a parent or guardian must sign the child out in the office. **Parents will not be allowed to check out students after 1:45 p.m. due to the dismissal and safety protocols. The school must have permission in writing before we can release a student to anyone other than a parent or legal guardian.** Proof of identification will be asked for by the office staff. Please limit frequent changes to emergency contact situations due to the disruption of learning. Students reporting to school after being absent must present a valid written excuse signed by his/her parent or guardian. This excuse should state the reason for the absence and the date.

SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ACADEMIC RECOGNITION

Students who demonstrate above-average academic performance will be honored by being added to the Honor Roll or the Principal's List. To be included on the Honor Roll, a student must make all A's, B's, or S's in all academic areas. To be included on the Principal's List, a student must earn all A's, S's.

Students will have many additional opportunities to receive recognition, such as:

- Awards in Academic Areas
- Most Improved
- Book It / 600 Minute Club
- Perfect Attendance
- DeKalb Board Scholars
- Citizenship
- Student of the Month
- President's Award
- Rising Scholar
- Kindergarten Award
- Extracurricular Awards
- PBIS Recognition
- IB Awards

HOME/SCHOOL CONNECTION

Each grade level uses ClassDojo as a communication tool for the home to classroom connection. Parents are to respond to all teacher communications. Monitoring student progress is essential for both teachers and parents. Essential school documents and information will be electronically emailed to parents and graded student work will be sent home via courier on Thursdays.

Parents must sign up and use Infinite Campus Parent Portal to monitor their child's instructional progress and attendance. Also, parents can use Parent Portal for communication with teachers. PTO Meetings, Curriculum Night, Title I Parent "Make It, Take It Night", and Title I Parent-Teacher Conference Nights are held for the benefit of parents. Georgia Performance of Excellence in Reading, English, Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies are presented with indicators for success.

CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are always welcome and should be pre-arranged. The teacher, parent, or administrators may initiate conferences. Standard conferences are held on Parent-Teacher Conference Evenings or before and after school. However, Monday afternoons are reserved for faculty/staff Professional Development meetings.

Parents and teachers need to establish a cooperative relationship, which is favorable to a child's progress. At such conferences, the teacher and parents may review the child's learning experiences and explore ways to improve them. **The hallway or classroom in the presence of students is not appropriate for conferences during school hours.** Teachers have been instructed not to have meetings in the presence of students because of instructional time limitations, supervision responsibilities, and confidentiality issues.

Parent-Teacher Conference Dates and Times:

3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. September 21, 2023
3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. November 30, 2023
3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. February 15, 2024
3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. April 11, 2024

DISCIPLINE BROCHURE

Each student will receive a Student Rights and Responsibilities booklet, which outlines the District's policies and procedures on student conduct. Please take time and become familiar with this book. It describes the due process in various situations throughout the school setting. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in disciplinary actions. **The parent must sign and return the 2023-2024 Parent/Guardian Signature Page within three days to entering school.**

DISMISSAL

Students will be sent home according to the arrangements specified at the beginning of the school year unless parents send a note that morning indicating a change. Please refrain from contacting the school 30 minutes before dismissal at 2:15 p.m. to indicate a change in how your child will go home. Dismissal is a very busy time of the day for the front office and the school as we prepare to send students home safely.

Proper supervision of all students is required at all times; therefore, **all students must be picked up by 2:45 p.m.** If services are needed for before and after school care, please contact the daycare center of your choice. Avondale Elementary provides an after-school extended day program for a weekly cost of \$60/student. The after-school extended day program hours are Monday-Friday, 2:30-6:00 p.m.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION: FIRE, BOMB, INTRUDER AND TORNADO DRILLS

Every precaution is taken to ensure the safety of students during school hours. Periodic fire, tornado, and other safety drills are executed to make sure students learn the proper way to adhere to all guidelines and procedures. In the event of extreme weather conditions, a weather alert radio is located in the main office and is in operation 24 hours daily. Furthermore, the school will also receive guidance

from the Office of the Superintendent. It is not necessary for parents to call the school and provide us with a weather alert. Parents are invited to read the Safe School Initiative Plan for the school.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are a part of the instructional program. Permission slips to go on these trips are given to parents to sign. Parents will always be notified in advance of all trips. Parents are encouraged to attend field trips. On DeKalb County funded trips, such as Fernbank, parents will have to provide their transportation.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

Homework will be given to students in grades Pre-K-5. Homework is mandatory and represents 5% of the grade. The homework will be appropriate for each level. The purposes of homework include:

1. Reinforcing skills and concepts introduced
2. Providing an opportunity for drill and practice of skills
3. Building study habits
4. Practicing reading, writing, and math skills
5. Teaching the student that he/she shares in the responsibility for his/her education
6. Providing an opportunity for parental involvement

Homework may be given Monday through Thursday. Specific assignments may be provided over the weekend. Of course, long-range assignments can be worked on at any time. If particular assignments are complete, it is suggested that parents continue a study time by doing one or more of the following:

1. Check over the calendar, point out upcoming long-range assignments, and begin preparation work.
2. Check over assignment sheets and papers to review with your child the concepts covered (this includes graded assignments).
3. Read together daily with and to your child.
4. Review weekly spelling words.

Specific expectations as to the amount of time for homework vary from level to level due to the maturity of the students.

Students should start the first day of school with the following EXCELLENT study habits:

1. Plan a nightly study time.
2. Study in a quiet place without distractions using a table or desk.
3. Start your study time with all needed materials and books.
4. Complete written work or do the assignments that are the most difficult first.
5. Take a break between subjects.
6. Review daily assignments that are completed.
7. Organize all materials and assignments to be brought to school the night before.
8. Get a good night's rest and eat a good breakfast.
9. Set your goals for grades and conduct.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS AND ADDRESSES

DeKalb County School System Web Site:

*****www.dekalbschoolsga.org*****

Avondale Elementary Web Site:

***** www.avondalees.dekalb.k12.ga.us

*****www.avondaleelementary.org

Transportation Department (678) 676-1333 or (678) 676-1305

Avondale Elementary School (678) 676-5202

Avondale Elementary Cafeteria (678) 676-5228

Avondale Elementary Clinic (678)676-5207

DeKalb County School System District Office 1701 Mountain Industrial Blvd.

Stone Mountain, GA 30083 (678) 676-1200

Regional School Superintendent

Trenton Arnold

678-676-0671

School Board Members:

Michael A. Erwin - District 2 Representative

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Parents are requested to listen to radio and television stations concerning the emergency operation of the school system. When severe weather creates hazardous conditions, the daily school schedule may be modified. If in a parent's judgment, weather conditions represent a threat to the child's safety, the parent will keep the child at home. Parents can also stay informed by downloading the free DeKalb County School District app on iTunes or Google Play.

INTERRUPTIONS OF CLASSES

The instructional environment in the school is critical, and safety is paramount. Therefore, before going anywhere in the building, report to the office to sign in and get a visitor's badge. Furthermore, please report to the office if you need your child or if you wish to leave a message. Parents should not interrupt instruction by taking the teacher away from duty between 7:35 a.m. and 2:45 p.m. Students cannot be called to the telephone or use their cell phone during the school day. In extreme emergencies, please contact the front office at 678-676-5202 for assistance.

LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER

Available resources in our Library Media Center include:

Student and parent collections

Internet access

Access to DeKalb Co. Public Library catalog

Reference aids available in print and CD-ROM

LOST AND FOUND

Any articles of clothing or books lost at school are taken to the LOST AND FOUND. All unclaimed items of clothing are given to a charitable organization in December and at the end of the year (May). All students are urged to label all personal possessions clearly. Any lost textbooks are placed in the main office.

LUNCHROOM

The school operates a lunchroom where children are given well-planned, hot lunches and breakfast. Breakfast is served from 7:00-7:30 a.m.

LUNCH AND BREAKFAST COST

DeKalb County School Nutrition uses SchoolCafe.com for meal payments and Free and Reduced Application Processing. SchoolCafe.com allows parents to add money to their children's account using a credit or debit card. Once an account is established, parents can check balances and fund their children's accounts online via their secure website. **SchoolCafé** will provide better communication between DeKalb County School Nutrition and our community. Parents can provide feedback on menu items, complete Free and Reduced Applications, even monitor their child(ren)'s account, all from one location! **SchoolCafé** even has an application for you to download on your smartphone for your convenience.

LUNCHROOM RULES

1. No carbonated drinks, candy, or sunflower seeds allowed at school.
2. Students are expected to follow the Essential Agreements in the lunchroom.
3. Food from "Fast Food" restaurants is not allowed.

LACTOSE INTOLERANCE

A physician's statement must support a dietary request for Lactose Intolerance and should be signed by a recognized medical authority. School Nutrition Managers must keep the documentation for audit and review.

MAINTAINING CLEANLINESS IN THE SCHOOL BUILDING

Students are expected to cooperate in maintaining cleanliness in the classrooms, lunchrooms, corridors, restrooms, and on the playground. Furthermore, students must exercise proper care in the use of school furniture and equipment. A student will be expected to make financial restitution for the deliberate destruction of school property.

MEDICATION

Medicines will be given to students only after medical forms have been filled out by the parent and doctor. The forms may be obtained from the secretary or school nurse. Medicines must be kept under lock & key and given only by the school nurse, principal or his designees. The pharmacy must clearly label medicine containers. Other medications not prescribed by a doctor should be provided on a schedule outside of school hours.

PAC, (Principal Advisory Council), PTO (Parent / Teacher Organization), and AESEF (Avondale Elementary School Foundation,Inc)

The PAC, PTO, AESEF are an integral part of our school community. It represents the partnership between the school and the home on behalf of our boys and girls. In addition to fund-raising activities, many excellent programs and activities are sponsored by the AESEF. All parents should consider joining the PAC, PTO, and/or AESEF. Volunteers are needed, and parents can volunteer to assist in the classroom, media center, and in the many PTA functions. Parents may contribute to the beautification of building and grounds, classroom projects, cultural arts, library, music, art, PE, or technology fund. Avondale Elementary PAC, PTO, and AESEF officers may be reached using the school's website.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Volunteers are needed to assist with a variety of school activities, i.e., reading & math activities, media center, copying, making learning center games, working in the garden and around the school grounds, etc. If you would like to volunteer, please contact the school at (678) 676-5202. Your input and assistance are essential and valued! All parents should consider to volunteering at least 5 hours per semester. For school security purposes, all volunteers are requested to sign in and out each time they come. Volunteers will receive a volunteer pass when signing in. There are many opportunities available for volunteers, so don't hesitate to become involved.

PARENT MEETINGS

Avondale Elementary School will be hosting several parenting meetings to enhance parents' knowledge of how they can adequately support their children at home and throughout the year. The meetings are designed as an open forum where parents can freely discuss issues of concern, and participating members of the group work collaboratively to assist in solving problems or providing insight. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend.

REPORTS TO PARENTS

Avondale will follow the progress report and report card guidelines as designated by DeKalb County School System. All teachers will send home written communication concerning academic and behavior issues. Deficiency reports may be sent home at any time to inform parents of academic, attendance, or conduct concerns.

PROGRESS REPORT DATES

September 14, 2023
October 16, 2023
November 17, 2023
January 12, 2024 - REPORT CARDS
February 14, 2024
March 20, 2024
April 30, 2024
May 31, 2024- REPORT CARDS

A report card shall be prepared for each student each semester of the school year with progress in each course designated. Students in grades 1-5 will have grades displayed by letter. The grading scale for the DeKalb School System will be as follows:

| | | | | |
|--------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| A - 90-100 | C 71-79 Average | F –below; failing | | |
| B - 80-89 | D 70 Poor | | | |
| E =Excellent | N=Needs Improvement | I =Incomplete | U=Unsatisfactory | X=No Evaluation |

All reports should be signed and promptly returned to the homeroom teacher. In particular instances, students may receive weekly, or daily progress reports in the area of an academic or discipline need.

SCHOOL CLINIC

The school clinic is only for minor injuries that can be addressed by the school nurse or principal's designee. Following treatment, the student is returned to class. All concerns beyond minor injuries will be referred to parents or the DeKalb Emergency Medics.

SCHOOL PARTIES

School parties may only be held for Winter Holidays, Valentine's Day, and the end of the year. These parties must be well organized and therefore have the approval of the principal. Although birthday parties are not allowed at school, parents may send store-bought treats for every member of the child's class. The parents can only distribute treats to every student during lunch. **Students are not allowed to distribute treats in absence of their parent.** Furthermore, teachers or staff members are not allowed to distribute treats to students during lunch because of the duty-free lunch policy.

STUDENT SUPPLIES

Individual student supply lists may be obtained from your child's teacher. Please secure a list from your child's teacher before purchasing supplies. It is a good idea to label all supplies.

TELEPHONE USE

The school phone number is (678) 676-5202. Delivering messages to children consumes valuable time. The following suggestions are made:

1. Please call the school to give messages to your child **IN CASE OF EMERGENCY ONLY.**
2. Have an understanding with your child in the morning as to what he/she is to do in the afternoon for transportation. If there is a change in transportation, the parents must send a letter to the teachers. Otherwise, teachers will send students home according to the original arrangements made at the beginning of the year. This is very important!
3. Do not ask that the teacher be called to the telephone. Leave a voice message for the teacher to return your call within 24 hours or first available opportunity.

TEXTBOOKS / LIBRARY BOOKS

Students are not required to buy textbooks as the State of Georgia provides these for children attending public schools. All textbooks are inspected at the time they are issued to students and when the books are returned. It is to be understood that the student, parent, or guardian must pay for the loss, defacing and/or mutilation of books. This also applies to library books.

Please make sure that all library books and textbooks are returned to the school before moving. Before we can give you a withdrawal form and send records to the new school, the following must be accomplished:

1. All textbooks returned or paid for if lost.
2. All library books returned or paid for if lost.
3. All lunchroom charges cleared.

TRANSPORTATION: BUS RULES AND INFORMATION

Bus transportation is considered a privilege and is authorized according to school policy and regulations. The same general rules that apply to students while at school also apply to students while riding the bus. The bus is an extension of the classroom. The bus driver has complete authority over the students on the bus. Any misbehavior which distracts the driver is a very serious violation and jeopardizes the safety of everyone. Transportation's mission statement speaks to "Working Together" to accomplish its task. Student behavior, while on the bus, requires students, parents, bus drivers, and school administrators to work together. Students who arrive at school calm and on time will be more productive. All rules must be followed.

A seven-step process will be implemented by the driver, which will include, but not limited to, seat assignments, parent contacts, student conferences, bus referral, and suspensions.

- Students are expected to be at their bus stop 5 minutes before their assigned time. Safety factors prohibit drivers from making unscheduled stops for latecomers.
- Students are not allowed to eat or drink while riding on a bus.
- Students are to remain seated at all times and must keep noise to a minimum.
- Parents are not allowed to board the bus.
- Students need to get on and off the bus at the same stop each day.
- All bus areas, on campus as well as bus stops in the community, fall under school jurisdiction and are subject to school policy and discipline.
- Students are to follow the directions of the bus driver.
- Students must ride only their assigned bus.
- Students must observe all safety rules posted on the bus.
- If there is a problem with bus transportation, please refer to the important numbers section of the agenda book.

Failure to follow these rules will result in consequences ranging from a warning to school bus suspension.

VISITORS

Parents and other visitors are always welcome at Avondale Elementary School. All visitors, INCLUDING parents, must sign in at the front office before going to other sections of the campus. Visitors will receive a visitor's badge that must be worn while on campus. Please remember this procedure is for your child's protection. We appreciate your cooperation.

Classroom Observation Protocol

Avondale Elementary School classrooms are open for observations which are scheduled in advance. The Administrators will schedule the observation. Please do not bring pre-school age children when conducting a classroom observation. All visits must begin in the front office where the visitor will sign-in. At this time, the principal or designated person will explain the guidelines for observations. Guidelines are for the protection of the students and instructional time.

During observations, the teachers will not be available for conferences. An Administrator will be available during the observation to answer any questions. **Observations are limited to 20 minutes.** Visitors must return to the front office before leaving the building and sign out.

WITHDRAWAL

A note should be sent to the student's homeroom teacher several days before the intended withdrawal. The letter should state the child's last day, the area moving to and the name of the new school. This notification is necessary for the teacher and secretary to get all forms prepared for forwarding to the new school.

**As policies and procedures change, parents will be notified in
Class Dojo.**