



## 2024-2025 Parent/Student Handbook

### Greetings From Principal Brittany Brooks

Welcome to Keystone Optional Elementary School! You are embarking upon a journey of success that is child centered and project driven. Our school climate is positive and nurturing but charged with learning accountability and responsibility for individual growth. Because we are a family of learners, we welcome parents, extended family and other community of stakeholders to join us in our mission to achieve excellence in academic pursuit today and every day. Should you have questions that are not answered within the text of this writing, please feel free to contact the school by phone, email, or visit us during school hours by appointment. Our Vision this year is Community in Action: Aligned Attitudes, Priorities, and Goals. Best wishes to every Keystone Cougar for happy learning and great success!

### School Hours

**Monday – Friday 8:15AM-3:15PM**

**Doors open at 8:00 AM**

**Students are Tardy at 8:30 AM**

**Note: For student safety, no students should exit cars prior to 8:00AM.**

**Dismissal: 3:05-3:30**

### Keystone Vision:

**Keystone Elementary will be an exemplary student-focused school with dedicated staff, outstanding programs, and a nurturing environment.**

### Keystone Mission:

**At Keystone Elementary, our mission is to collaborate with families and community members to provide a safe learning environment that fosters academic emotional, social, and physical growth for all students.**

### Keystone Philosophy:

**Our philosophy at Keystone Elementary is founded on our belief in the important of life-long learning and the essential work and unlimited capacity of every student.**

### Student Creed

**I pledge to do my best for Keystone Optional Elementary School. I will show pride for my school and community. I will remember, “good-better-best, never give let it rest, until your good is better, and your better is best.” I am a Scholar that exemplifies Respect, Organization, Acceptance, and Responsibility.**

### Keystone Optional Program:

In Keystone's Optional Program, learning is accelerated and enriched through innovative, hands-on teaching and learning strategies, unit plans of study, supplemental books, field trips, visiting artists, and science, engineering, and technology programs. Students must test into the Optional Program with a 50% Success Rate. Attendance and Behavior are also key indicators in the application process. Optional Program Enrollment typically takes place at the beginning of the year. Parents may apply online when the window opens, and the school will conduct the testing with parent consent.

### Keystone CLUE

Keystone Elementary School also offers a CLUE program for our scholars. Students in grades K-2<sup>nd</sup> Grade must be reading 2 grade levels above. Students in 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade must have 1 TCAP score in the 95 percentile or above or 2 scores in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentiles, this will qualify them for screening. Students can be referred to Clue via parent letter or teacher referral. CLUE is an accelerated program designed to give our scholars exposure to extension activities, project-based learning, and a differentiated setting. Link: <https://bit.ly/CLUE2023-24>

### Behavior Expectations and Student Discipline

Keystone is a peaceful learning community. We embrace and encourage peace among our entire school family. Peace breakers may lose their citizenship rights or privileges at Keystone Elementary. No one is allowed to prevent teachers from teaching or students from learning. We believe that our insistence upon peace renders rewards of high achievement in a positive, safe and orderly climate. Everyone is happier when we practice peace. Behavior expectations for everyone at Keystone are centered in the following principles:

- Obedience – obey those who have authority over you.
- Respect- respect yourself, others and the person and property of others; respect the boundaries established to maintain order.
- Responsibility- assume responsibility for your actions and act upon the stated expectations for your role; be responsible for your environment.
- To remain at Keystone, students must continue to meet academic, behavior and attendance requirements as outlined by the MSCS Optional Schools guidelines.

### Arrival

Children are NOT to be dropped off before 8:00 AM. Unless they are in the Y-Care Program. Otherwise, they will be unsupervised, which is not safe for your child. To offer the teacher an opportunity to use early bird time for planning, parents conferences do not occur before school. PARENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED BEYOND THE FRONT LOBBY UPON ARRIVAL UNLESS THEY HAVE A SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT, OR OTHER BUSINESS IN THE OFFICE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

### Dismissal Procedures

Dismissal will begin daily at 3:05PM and all students must be picked by 3:30PM. Walkers will be escorted to the crosswalk by staff to dismiss from campus. Walk-ups are not allowed to retrieve students. For safety and security reasons, students are not allowed to return to the classroom once they have been dismissed. PK students must be signed in and out daily. All students should be picked up from 3:30PM. After 3:30PM they are LATE.

## Late Arrival

Students that arrive after 8:30AM will be required to report to the main office and get a tardy slip. Students that are habitually late will be targeted for state level intervention (see MSCS truancy policy). Instruction starts promptly at 8:30 AM, so it is important that your child arrives at school on time. It is unfair to the child for them to miss quality educational time unless there is an emergency.

## Walker Dismissal

Walkers are dismissed at 3:05 PM. All walkers KK-5 will be escorted by staff members to the crosswalk where the crossing guard is. Once the crossing guard gives the clearance, students will be escorted across the street by staff members. Anyone waiting to escort a walker home must meet them in the walker area at the front of the school by 3:10. For safety, any walkers not picked up by 3:10 will be returned to the building and will not be released via walk up dismissal. Parents will have to join the car rider line to get their children. When we have parents walking to the porch-area to get children during car dismissal, it greatly disrupts the car rider line and forces us to have to divide our attention from safely getting students loaded. Parents should meet any walker no later than 3:10. All walkers must exit the campus by 3:10.

## Changes in Transportation

If you need to change the way your child gets home for an emergency or out of the normal circumstance, parents must email the teacher and the office secretary by 2:00pm. Please inform these staff members one day in advance of the change in transportation.

## Dismissal Of Students During the School Day

Students are not allowed to leave the school grounds except when going home at the regular dismissal time. If it becomes necessary for a student to leave school early, the parent or guardian MUST report to the school office, show valid ID, and sign the student out. Parents are encouraged to send the teacher a note by the child if he/she will be leaving school early. The note should include the time the child will need to be ready and the name of the person who will be picking the child up. This advance notice will allow the teacher time to get the student and their things ready. Please understand that frequent early dismissal will be handled in a like manner as excessive tardiness because your child is missing valuable learning time. **No early dismissal after 2:15PM . Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.**

## Absences

A written excuse should be sent after absences. The written excuse should be sent the day the child returns to school, stating the dates the child was absent and the reason for the absence. We cannot except written excuses if they are sent after 2 days of the child returning. Any absence that does not have a written excuse is considered an unexcused absence. In case of communicable diseases (ringworm, pinkeye) , a doctor's written notice is required to return to school. Students are expected to attend school every day. However, if your child is sick with a contagious disease, please keep them at home. We do not want to spread germs to other students or teachers. Five unexcused absences will be reported to the Truancy Department.

## YMCA Child Care

This service is offered before and after school services for 6-8am and 3-6pm (before care \$30 and after care \$50 ; both before and after care \$65 per child per week). DHS certificates are accepted. Y-Care will be in the cafeteria this school year. At dismissal, Y-Care staff will pick up students from their assigned locations. Parents may begin Y-Care checkout no earlier than 3:45PM.

## School Emergencies

It is essential that we have accurate and updated contact information on every child. We will gladly contact you or a responsible designee whenever your child becomes ill or is injured at school. Major school emergencies such as early dismissal for the whole school will be handled through public broadcast. However, for day-to-day events, we need multiple numbers to call to serve the children's needs. Please notify the persons whose names and numbers you submit so that they are aware of the agreed upon procedure for handling emergencies or contacting you. Also, it is important that you and your designee know your child's teacher by name.

## Locked Doors

For security reasons, all doors of the building will be locked. If you need to enter the school, please buzz in at the front door. This is an effort to keep students safe from any unauthorized visitors during the school day. MSCS policy requires that all visitors sign in. You will be asked to leave a form of identification when signing in. You must adhere to this policy. It is important to everyone's safety that we know who is in the building. Parents and other visitors are always welcome to our school, but you must sign in at the office before going to any classroom and will need to have made prior arrangements with the teacher, counselor, or principal for confirmed conference times.

## Our Uniform Policy and Dress Code

Uniforms are mandatory for all students in grades K-12. Listed below, you will find the basics of the dress code:

- Pants, skirts, jumpers, and walking shorts must be khaki, navy or black. No jeans, leggings, or ripped pants.
- Walking shorts, skirts/skorts, must come to the knee.
- Blouses and shirts must have sleeves and collars (polo, golf, or dress style) and they must be plain yellow-gold, white or blue.
- Solid color jackets and hoodies (navy, white, yellow, or black).
- Tennis shoes are permitted. For student safety no sandals or open toe shoes. Crocks must be worn with the strap behind the heel "sports-mode."
- No colored undershirts or distracting leggings/tights during the winter months. Please allow child to wear a solid-colored jacket.

If your child comes to school out of uniform, you will be contacted to bring the proper attire to the school. Repeat offenders will lose privileges such as the right to participate in spirit groups or other extracurricular activities.

## Breakfast

Breakfast will be served from 8:00 AM-8:15 AM . All students may eat breakfast at no charge. **Students will not be allowed to eat after 8:15 AM.**

## School Lunches

Students will receive a free hot lunch daily. The lunch period is part of the regular instructional program; therefore, no child is permitted to go home for lunch. Your child may bring his/her lunch. Please do not send glass bottles or soft drinks to school. No parent food drop off or deliveries from Door Dash, Uber Eats, etc. **If students bring a snack, it must be in a lunch box or container, and can only be eaten at lunch.**

## Parent Participation

Keystone is a member of Partners in Education (PIE). We ask that all parents join the PIE. PIE supplies teachers and students with various items throughout the year, through various fundraisers. Please come to the monthly meetings so that you are aware of what is happening in our school. Also, be advised that we hold several Title I parent meetings. Watch the home school communication materials for announced dates. Listed below are additional ways to help your child succeed at school:

- Become involved in your child's education . Supervise and check homework. Read and respond to flyers and check backpacks daily.
- Establish procedures and routines at home in the evening on the weekends that support learning and success in school.
- Provide resources at home for reading and learning.
- Stress the value of education by discussing its importance with your child.
- Encourage children to do their best in school.
- Support school rules and goals.
- Contact your child's teacher early if there is a problem.
- Attend scheduled Parent/Teacher Conferences and Family Night events.

## Articles Brought to School

Cellular phones, electronic games, CD players, headsets, radios, toys, expensive jewelry, and large amounts of money should not be brought to school. The school will not assume responsibility for these items if they are lost or stolen. If cellular phones are out in class, they will be confiscated, and parents must pick them up.

## Campus Guidelines

Due to traffic congestion at KES, the following regulations are being made for the safety of everyone especially our children.

- All campus traffic is one way beginning with the entrance ramp into the parking lot/campus. Please wait in the traffic line and circle around to exit behind the flow of traffic. Otherwise, you will be facing oncoming traffic.
- When letting children out of the car, please do not block the crosswalk. Children should not exit the vehicle on the driver's side.
- Children should be dropped off and released from cars in the "right lane." The left lane is a passing lane only.
- Please follow the directions of the school staff who will be at the crosswalk to aid in traffic control.



## Homework

During our Annual Open House, your child's teacher will explain homework expectations. In general, homework is a time for skill practice, enrichment, or more in-depth attention to a given unit of study or subject area. Rules concerning homework cannot be made since individual teachers may vary slightly in assignments. However, best efforts are directed by the teacher to establish uniformity for each grade level. Everyone at KES has assignments that are appropriate for each grade level. Time should be spent reading every night. Check Class Dojo and homework folder regularly for updates.

## Report Cards

Report cards are issued every nine weeks. The purpose of the report card is to help parents identify student strengths and weaknesses and to help teachers evaluate and plan instruction accordingly. Conferences are encouraged and may be requested either by the teacher or the parent as needed. School-Wide conference will be administered quarterly.

## Progress Reports

Progress reports are used by teachers to report student progress during the mid-point of a grading period. A parent teacher conference will be requested for any student that receives an unsatisfactory or failing grade. Information about work habits may also be requested on progress reports. A parent signature is requested on all progress reports.

## Formative Assessments

Formative assessments will be administered at regular intervals during the year according to the district teaching calendar. This include but are not limited to:

1. I-Ready Assessments
2. Diagnostic Screeners
3. Mastery Connect

## Textbooks

All basal textbooks, workbooks, library books, and device/chargers are issued without a charge to students for use during the school year. Students who do not return library books will be charged a fee.

## Birthday Celebrations:

If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday with his/her classmates, you are welcome to do so. However, we ask that you follow a few simple guidelines :

- Ask your child's teacher in advance so that the class and lunch team can prepare.
- ALL parties must be conducted at Lunch Time.
- Parents are responsible for setting up, serving, and cleaning up.
- You may serve any commercially prepared item and you must include the entire class. Food items must not contain nuts or nut oil.
- Balloons are not allowed.