

## Welcome

On behalf of our team, welcome to the 4 year old kindergarten program in Dorchester District Two. We are looking forward to working with you and your child as we begin the school year! We are glad to be a part of your child's life at this special age when learning and discovery takes place every single day. We will work together as a team: parent, child, and teachers. We want your child's early school experience to be a positive one, so if you have any questions or concerns, please contact us as soon as possible. We will communicate through communication folders, e-mails, notes, telephone calls, and conferences. *4K1 times are from 7:15am (doors open at 6:55)-9:55am. 4K2 class times are from 11:20am-2:15pm.*

Keep this handbook to use as a reference throughout the school year. It is full of important information for our 4K program! ☺

## Staggered Schedule

Beginning school can be a very overwhelming experience for these young children. Because of this, we have devised a staggered schedule, which will give the students an opportunity to learn about the routines of the classroom in a small group setting.

Half of the children will come to school on Thursday, August 22<sup>rd</sup>. The other half will come on Friday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>. If your child is scheduled to start school on Thursday, he/she will not come to school on Friday. Likewise, if your child is scheduled to begin school on Friday, he/she will not attend school on Thursday.

*School begins on Monday, August 26<sup>th</sup> for **ALL** 4K students.* On this day and each day thereafter, all children will attend school except for ERDs. Please refer to the postcard given to you at orientation for your child's specific date for the staggered entrance.

Parents are allowed to walk students to the classroom for the morning class at 6:55-7:15 until Labor Day. After Labor Day, students will need to walk to class on their own. Car riders coming to school for the afternoon class will need to say goodbye to grown-ups outside when we pick students up in Loop 1.



**\*\*\*BUS RIDERS.....** The buses will be running their full routes on both staggered entrance days to learn the stops. The bus may stop at your house, but don't put your child on the bus if it is not their day to come to school. Don't be confused by the bus running their route. Refer to the specific dates given to you at orientation.

## Early Release Days

Children attending elementary school in Dorchester District Two will be released at **11:00** on certain Wednesdays throughout the school year to allow the teachers to plan with other teachers in their own grade level. These days are called Early Release Days (ERD). The following schedule will apply to 4K students.



Only the **morning** 4K1 students will attend school on the following Early Release Days: 9/11, 10/2, 10/23, 11/6, 11/20, 12/4

**4K1 students come to school from 6:55-11:00 on these days.**

Only the **afternoon** 4K2 students will attend school on the following Early Release Days: 1/22, 2/5, 2/26, 3/11, 4/1, 4/29

**4K2 students come to school from 6:55-11:00 on these days.**

WE WILL NOTIFY YOU OF ANY CHANGES IN EARLY RELEASE DAY EXPECTATIONS FOR 4K STUDENTS.

Basically if your child is a morning 4K student, he/she will be attending school on all of the ERDs at the beginning of the year until Winter Break. They will not attend school on the ERDs after Winter Break. It will then be the afternoon 4K group's turn to attend those Early Release Days. Right now this all sounds confusing, but be assured we will send home numerous notices and reminders about who comes to school and who stays home. When it is the afternoon class's time to attend ERDs, they will come from 6:55-11:00.

## Curriculum

Recent development in brain research constantly shows the importance of the first years of life. A child's potential is shaped by the experiences he/she encounters during the early years. The major goal of the 4K program is to provide those experiences in a developmentally appropriate sequence. With this in mind, the following curriculum will be used: SC State Standards, the "Big Day for PreK" curriculum by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, and Handwriting Without Tears. A great App to use at home for letter formation is the HWT "Wet-Dry-Try" app.

Students will be using Thinking Maps this year to enhance and organize their learning. Please take a look at the different types of maps displayed in our classroom.

 If you have access to the Internet, please let your child explore [www.starfall.com](http://www.starfall.com). We use this website in class to practice letter identification and it would be wonderful for students to use at home for added practice. There is also a Starfall App that can be used!

The 4K program in Dorchester District Two also offers each child 15-20 minutes of computerized instruction a day as part of the Waterford Learning® curriculum.

There are many wonderful programs and apps for educational purposes, but please limit students' time on electronic devices. They really need to be involved in fine and gross motor activities such as playing with playdough, playing board games, supervised cutting experiences, playing outside at the park, or riding bikes to build muscles. The MOST important thing you can be doing at this age for your child is reading to them. This is essential for language development needed for pre-reading readiness and communication skills.

## Checklist

We all know that children learn at different times. A checklist of skills that come directly from the standards will come home with your child the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> nine weeks. We will schedule a conference with you in October to update you on your child's progress for the 1<sup>st</sup> nine weeks. It is our hope that you will work with us in partnership to help your child reach his/her potential.

## Attendance

It is imperative that your child attends school every day. When he/she misses school, you will need to send in a written excuse on the day your child returns. Please see the BHES calendar/handbook for

details. Remember that habits are being established that will remain with your child throughout his/her school career. **If your child accumulates 15 absences or a combination of absences and tardies, he/she can be dismissed from the program.** 4K is a program that many children would benefit from and if attendance becomes a problem, then the spot will be given to a child on the waiting list. Please don't let this happen. An attendance contract will be signed at the beginning of the school year.

## **Transportation**

A consistent transportation plan works best for all students. Please be sure to confirm how your child will travel to and from school on a regular basis as we want to keep all of our children safe at all times. Please fasten car rider tags to book bags if applicable. They are to stay on the book bag all year.

This will help to ensure that your child leaves school in the way you designated.

**Please notify us of any changes in your child's transportation arrangements in writing. We are not permitted to change the way your child leaves school unless we have notification from you in writing. You must send a note in your child's folder that morning or earlier of the change or you will need to fax the school at 843-821-3979 or email Mrs. Sandlin at [asandlin@dorchester2.k12.sc.us](mailto:asandlin@dorchester2.k12.sc.us). Teachers can't accept email notes because we don't often check our email until after school.**

**Bus drivers are not permitted to drop off except at a child's home address. If this is a concern, you must contact the transportation office personally ahead of time at 873-6196.**

\*\*\*For our 4K and kindergarten students, we have a bus tag system. Your child will receive a bus tag with their individual information on it that needs to be attached to their book bags at all times. The adult who meets them at the bus must have the corresponding bus tag number in order to get the child off the bus. This has to be presented every day of the school year when getting our young students off the bus. If the adult responsible for getting the child off the bus does not have the corresponding tag, the driver cannot release the child and must take the student back to school.

**The school will then contact you to come pick your child up. This will count as a tardy per our attendance policy.** This new system is to ensure the safety of our students and we appreciate your cooperation and understanding in its importance.

**Car Riders: All car riders will be assigned a car rider number and receive car tags; one for their book bag and one to hang in your car.**

**4K1 Students:** Students may begin being dropped off at 6:55am. Class starts at 7:15, so please have your child at school in time to get in and get unpacked before the 7:15 bell rings. Our morning class dismisses at 9:55am. When you are facing the school, please park in the parking lot to the right. Walk up to the blue benches to wait for your child. **Your child will be released to the adult that is there to pick up with the corresponding hanging car tag. It must be presented every day.** After 10:00, students will be taken to the office and you will need to come into the building to sign them out if they have not been picked up.

**4K2 Students:** When you are facing the school, please park in the parking lot to the right if you are bringing your child to school at 11:20. Walk your child up to the blue benches under the covered walkway. Please stay with them until we come outside to get the class at 11:20am. Also, have your child sit on the benches with you if you arrive early. It is important that they are calm and ready to line up quietly when we come to pick students up. Please do not allow them to run around on the walkways. If you arrive late and we are already in the building, you will need to take them to the office to sign them in. Students will be considered tardy after 11:20.

## Clothing

Children should be dressed in comfortable, washable play clothes. Every effort is made to protect clothes, but preschool learning includes using messy items such as glue, paint, crayons and markers.

### **PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE**

...We ask that you keep a change of clothes for your child in a Ziploc bag in their book bag every day including shirt, pants, underwear, and socks. If a child gets wet at the water table, has a spill, or an accident, we need clean clothes for them. We will have to call you to bring clothes if this happens and there is not a clean change in the student's book bag.

It is VERY important that your child wear **safe shoes** that are good for play. Dress shoes, flip-flops or heavy boots are not appropriate for preschool. Sneakers are best. When the weather turns cooler, make sure to put names in jackets and coats and switch out the extra change of clothes kept in your child's backpack.

## Supplies

It is important that your child have something to carry his/her work in every day. A book bag works best. Make sure it is **large enough to carry a standard sized notebook. Please do not send book bags on wheels or the tiny book bags.** Also make sure your child's name is on his/her book bag. **Please keep an extra change of clothes in your child's backpack each day to include shirt, shorts or pants, underwear, and socks.** There are no other supplies your child will need to bring. Our program will supply all that is needed. The only items we may ask for are "Beautiful Junk" items at times. For example, we may ask for empty tissue boxes, water bottles, caps from containers, etc.

*\*We do collect aluminum tabs from the top of soda cans. We save these all year, and donate them to the Ronald McDonald House at the end of the year. Start saving your tabs! We like for our students to learn that even though they are little, they can help others. The Ronald McDonald House uses the money made by recycling the tabs to help families staying at their facility while their sick child is at MUSC. You can send these in at any time throughout the year. We have families that continue to bring us tabs even when their students are in fifth grade! We always welcome the help!*

*\*If you are interested in donating something to the classroom, we are always in need of tissues and Clorox/Lysol wipes. We will send out a sign up for special classroom activities/snacks (holidays) throughout the year if you would like to contribute.*

## Personal Items from Home/Toys/Stuffed Animals/Etc.

Personal items from home at times can get broken, destroyed, lost or stolen. For this reason, we ask that you not allow your child to bring toys and other objects from home. We cannot assume responsibility for anything brought to school.

## Conferences

It is important that we communicate frequently throughout the year about your child's progress. Conferences will be scheduled in October and as needed or requested. These visits are very

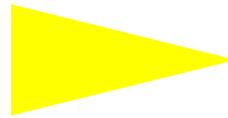
important to our program and to your child's success. Please don't hesitate to email or call us with any concerns at any time.

## Behavior

It is our belief in Dorchester Two that every child deserves the opportunity to successfully function in an atmosphere conducive to learning. In order to guarantee all students this environment, no child will be allowed to display behavior that interrupts instruction or prohibits any other child from feeling safe, important, or comfortable at school. Our school wide guidelines have been developed so the children will not only have the correct behavior at school, but also throughout their lives. An explanation of the guidelines can be found in the school calendar/handbook. Key words we will use in class are the importance to "control our voices and bodies" while at school.

## Our school wide MOTTO is to "SHINE"!

**S**afe  
**H**onest  
**I**ntelligent  
**N**urturing  
**E**mpowered



**Discipline Plan:** Each student will have a clothespin in our "Stoplight" class behavior chart. We will encourage each child to stay in the green section each day. We like to use positive reinforcers to encourage good behavior. However when a child is not following our school guidelines, the following will occur:

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense: The child will receive a verbal warning.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> offense: The child will have to move his/her clothespin to the yellow section of the chart and we will document this on the behavior chart in the communication folder. They may have to visit the "thinking chair" so we can individually address how they can change the behavior.
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> offense: The child will have to move his/her clothespin to the red section of the chart. The child will need to spend more time in the "thinking chair". This could be in the classroom or during recess depending on where we are in our daily schedule.
- These are basic consequences. Teachers and administrators may make accommodations as necessary for individual students. We understand that for some children this is their first experience in a school setting. In the event of a severe misbehavior, a conference or phone call with the parent, teacher, or administrator will be necessary and may result in the removal of the child from the 4K program.

Each month your child will receive a "Behavior Calendar". Each day before going home, we will put a colored dot on the calendar indicating what type of day your child has had.



~ A green dot indicates he/she stayed on green. Great day!  
~ A yellow dot means they were given a verbal warning and then did not correct the behavior. Still a good day...we are definitely not all perfect!  
~ If a child continues to break rules, and is on red, you will find a sad face on the calendar as well as a short explanation. Please speak to your child about these to help correct the behaviors and contact us at any time if you have any questions.

If a child receives any combination of green and yellow dots for Monday through Friday, he/she may choose a treasure from the "Treasure Box". A student will lose the chance to visit the treasure jar if they receive a red dot during the week.

## **Birthday Celebrations**

As stated in the BHES student handbook, snacks in small quantities are allowed to be sent in for birthdays. We may have several allergies that we need to be considerate of this year, so please follow the policy of checking with us a week in advance to let us know what you would like to send in. We need to be sure it is safe for all of our students to eat. **Please submit a written request to send in a treat for a birthday one week prior. This has to be submitted to the office where Mrs. Kemble keeps your note in a binder. She refers to this when you bring in treats. If a note is not on file, she can't send the treats down to our class.**

## **Communication Folders**



The communication folders will serve as a means of communication between home and school. The folder will be sent home daily. **PLEASE CHECK YOUR CHILD'S FOLDER NIGHTLY, SIGN THE DAY, AND RETURN IT TO SCHOOL THE NEXT DAY. Please notify us of a change in phone number or address as soon as possible.**

We will check the folders each day when the children arrive for any communication from you. If you would like to ask a question, have something clarified, and/or offer a suggestion, use the notebook paper inside the folder. We will respond in the same place.

One side of the folder is a "Return to School" side. **The behavior chart should remain on this side at all times. Please do not remove it from the folder.** This will also contain any notes or information that will need to be returned to school. The other side of the folder will be a "Keep at Home" side. Please remove any papers on this side daily.

We do not check book bags. The students are responsible for unpacking their folder each day. Please don't put notes loosely in their book bags. Place all communication inside their folder.

## **Schoolwide and Classroom Updates**

You will receive a school newsletter weekly in your child's folder. It usually comes home each Wednesday, and I can't stress how important it is to read these to stay up to date with schoolwide events. There's always a lot going on at the Beech!

I will send out a weekly class email to inform you of skills we are working on as well as other happenings in the 4K world!

## **Food**

The 4K1 morning class has the option to buy breakfast at school. Please fill out the provided form to let us know if they will be eating breakfast, so we can order one for them each day. This needs to be consistent each day. The cost of breakfast is **\$1.45**.

The 4K2 afternoon class has the option to buy a lunch at school. Please fill out the provided form, so we can have their lunch ordered each day. This needs to be consistent each day. The cost of lunch is **\$2.35**.

We have a **Free/Reduced lunch form** available that needs to be turned in as soon as possible as you are responsible for paying for meals until the form is processed.

You have the choice to feed your child before they come to school, or to buy their meal here at school. No lunchboxes or snacks can be sent in. If your child is not going to be eating at school, they will be involved in other activities while other students are eating.

You will be responsible for keeping your child's account up to date and paid in the cafeteria. You may do so online at [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com) or send in money/check in your child's folder. It needs to be in an envelope/baggie labeled so we know who it belongs to and that it needs to go to the cafeteria.

**School Website:** [http://www.edlinesites.net/pages/Beech\\_Hill\\_Elementary\\_School](http://www.edlinesites.net/pages/Beech_Hill_Elementary_School)

Mrs. Gaede and I look forward to working with you and your child this year. Please contact us with any questions, concerns, and comments as often as you wish. We are here at the school from 6:55am until 2:50pm. The school phone number is 821-3970. You can also email us at [mseitz@dorchester2.k12.sc.us](mailto:mseitz@dorchester2.k12.sc.us) or [lgaede@dorchester2.k12.sc.us](mailto:lgaede@dorchester2.k12.sc.us) . Please allow 48 hours for a response. We want to work with you as a team to make this a memorable school year for your child. Thank you for sharing your child with all of us in the 4K program!

Sincerely,

Megan Seitz  
Lorraine Gaede

