



School Information Handbook

2025-2026

Welcome

OUR CHILDREN OUR WORLD OUR FUTURE



Our Mission

Heights Elementary IB World School is dedicated to developing balanced, lifelong learners through educational excellence, a global perspective, reflection, and action.

Our Vision

To be a world class school

Our PBIS Statement

We strive to be a school that models positive behaviors which develop the whole child and social skills. We have a common culture and language which supports student growth and high expectations to empower our students to become well-rounded global citizens through teaching and recognizing positive behavior.

Who We Are

Where We Are in Place and Time

How We Organize Ourselves

How We Express Ourselves

How the World Works

Sharing the Planet

Welcome to Heights Elementary School:

The faculty and staff have created an exciting and motivating learning environment for our diverse student population. We promote high academic achievement and an appreciation of internationalism, citizenship, responsibility, and community service. Our academic curriculum and extra activities challenge our students to perform at their very best! The Heights faculty and staff welcome all students and families, and we wish everyone a productive and successful 2024-2025 school year.

Doug Palow, Principal

Suzi Loughren, Assistant Principal (PreK-2nd grade and ESE)

Lindsey Thorstad, Assistant Principal (3rd-5th grade and Enrichment)

Kathy Morrow, School Counselor

Kate Kebhart, IB PYP Coordinator

Katie Bocchino, Reading Coach (Kg-2nd)

Mekenzie Trina, Reading Coach (3rd-5th grade)

Natasha Edinger, Math Coach

Bryanna Van Helden, Intervention Specialist

Alexes Young, Behavior Specialist

Questions?

After School Program: Lisa McElyea

MTSS and 504 Accommodations: Bryanna Van Helden

Contact information Changes: Jennifer Kurowski

Bookkeeper: Victoria Nestler

Transportation: Suzi Loughren

Gifted testing: Lisa Alexander

Clinic: Nurse Carey and Zuri Galvan

School Information

Address: 15200 Alexandria Court Ft. Myers, FL 33908

School Phone: 481-1761 Fax: 481-3154 Before/After School Program: 454-3972

Office Hours: 7:30 am – 3:30 pm Before School Program: 6:30 am – 8:15 am

School Hours for students: 8:40 am - 3:10 pm After School Program: 3:10 pm - 6:00 pm

Breakfast: 8:15am – 8:35 am

Important Dates

Date	Event	Date	Event
Aug. 11th	First Day of School	Jan. 19th	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Day (Schools Closed)
Sept.1st	Labor Day (Schools Closed)	Feb. 16th	Presidents Day (Schools Closed)
Sept. 23rd	Rosh Hashanah (Schools Closed)	Feb. 24th	Early Dismissal PD Day (12:10)
Oct. 10th	End of 1st quarter	Mar. 12th	End of 3rd quarter
Oct. 13th	Professional Duty Day	Mar. 13th	Professional Duty Day
Nov. 11th	Veteran’s Day (Schools Closed)	Mar. 16th-20th	Spring Break (Schools Closed)
Nov. 24th-28th	Thanksgiving Break (Schools Closed)	April 3rd	Good Friday (Schools Closed)
Dec. 19th	Early Dismissal Day	April 6th	Easter Monday (Schools Closed)
Dec. 19th	End of 2nd quarter	Apr. 28th	Early Dismissal PD Day (12:10)
Dec. 22nd-Jan. 2nd	Winter Break (Schools Closed)	May 25th	Memorial Day (Schools Closed)
Jan. 5th	Professional Duty Day (Schools Closed)	May 29th	Early Dismissal Day (1:10)
		June 1st	Last Day of School for students & Early Dismissal Day (1:10)

HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY IB WORLD SCHOOL

2025-2026

ACCELERATED READER PROGRAM (AR)

The Accelerated Reader Program is used school-wide as reading practice. Students are required to read independently or be read to or with. Students then take an AR test in their classroom to accumulate points. Each student has an AR goal that is based on grade level and school-wide expectations. Teachers and students have the ability to set new goals each quarter. The i-Ready Program is a progress monitoring tool that will be used during the school year to monitor student progress. Additional grade level/classroom specific AR information will be shared with students and parents. We will continue to use Renaissance Place and the AR program to monitor students and their comprehension for the books that they are reading.

Key Features of Accelerated Reader (AR):

- Students select and read a book, then take an objective A.R. test of 5, 10, or 20, multiple-choice questions.
- Points are earned if 60% or more of the questions are answered correctly.
- Students are also recognized for the levels of comprehension they attain throughout the year.

Benefits:

- Motivates students to read more.
- Increases comprehension and vocabulary skills.
- Provides practice at students targeted independent reading level.

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY GOVERNING STUDENT USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC MOBILE DEVICES

It is the intent of the School Board to permit the use of personal electronic devices during specified times. Students will be allowed to bring their own device to school. It is voluntary for students to bring their own personal electronic mobile devices to school. Students may utilize personal electronic mobile devices in designated areas for educational purposes when deemed appropriate by appropriate school personnel.

(1) For the purposes of this policy a personal electronic mobile device shall include, but not be limited to the following:

A privately-owned laptop, tablet computing device, netbook, notebook, e-Reader, iPod touch (or similar), or cell/smart phone.

- (2) Use of an electronic mobile device during the school day is a privilege. Therefore, all students must:
- Use only the district specific WiFi network for all network and internet access and refrain from destroying or damaging District data, networks, or other resources.
 - Use all District internet filters and posted network security practices.
 - Report network security risks or violations of network security to a school administrator.
 - Refrain from creating ad-hoc, peer-to-peer, or other wireless networks with District or student owned devices including the use of wireless hotspots or other similar devices.
 - Use the District network for instructional and school related purposes only.
 - Follow copyright laws which prohibit the reproduction of content, eBooks, music, games, or movies.
 - Refrain from intentionally accessing, transmitting, copying, or creating mobile apps, websites or other material that contains inappropriate information, content, advertisements, or any material that is illegal, not age appropriate or inappropriate for a school environment.

- Comply with School Board Policy 2.20, Acceptable Use Policy Governing
- Internet and Technology Access.

(3) Failure to follow the directives outlined in paragraph 2 above will result in appropriate disciplinary consequences as outlined in the Code of Conduct for Students.

(4) Students that bring personal mobile electronic devices to school do so at their own risk. The district accepts no responsibility if a device is lost, stolen, misplaced, damaged, or confiscated. The district accepts no responsibility for viruses, malware or other computer related issues text associated with connecting to the district's network. The district accepts no responsibility for the costs associated with or that may result from the use of data or texting services by a student when using a personal mobile electronic device.

(5) Students are responsible for charging and maintaining their personal mobile electronic device(s) and the district assumes no responsibility for the same. This includes the use of anti-malware software, if applicable, on the personal mobile electronic device.

ADDRESS CHANGE

Parents are reminded to inform the school office if there is a change of address or telephone number to help facilitate mailing and communications between school and home. The school board will accept a lease agreement, mortgage papers or an electric bill with the parent's name and correct address. **Up-to-date telephone numbers and addresses are necessary in case of emergency.** Important School Messenger information is shared via phone and web during the school year.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Heights After School Program operates from 6:30-8:15 AM and 3:10-6:00 PM. A fun, safe and supervised learning environment is provided by school staff. Pamphlets are available in the School Office with additional information. If you have any questions, please contact the director of our program is Mrs. Lisa McElyea (lisadm@leeschools.net)

ARTICLES PROHIBITED IN SCHOOL

If any of the following items are brought to school, they will be confiscated and sent to the office and reported to the appropriate authorities. These items will only be returned to the parent.

- Weapons of any kind
- Fireworks
- Toy items such as toy guns, water pistols, bean shooters, and sling shots.
- Radios, portable speakers, iPods, Nintendo Switch, or any hand-held games.
- E-readers, iPads, (these items require teacher/principal permission).
- SMART Watches (If they become a distraction to the students learning)
- Skates, shoe skates, or skateboards
- Fidgets
- Controlled substances, tobacco products
- Glass containers
- Any item that substantially disrupts learning or the school day

ATTENDANCE

Students have the right to a free and appropriate public education, but they assume the responsibility and are expected to attend regularly and on time. Parents/guardians are responsible for the attendance of their student(s). Parents have the responsibility to inform the school of their student's absences and to explain the cause of the absence. Regular school attendance promotes academic success. Tardies and Early Sign-outs deprive students of important instructional time.

ABENCES

Attendance Policy: When your student is absent, please ensure you do **ONE** of the following:

- Send an email informing of the absence either to your student's teacher or directly to the Information Specialist.

OR

Upon your student's return, a written note or doctor's note should be sent in with your student.

Please include with all emails and written excuses:

- Your student's name.
- Your student's teacher
- Date of the absence(s)
- The reason for the absence

Please note: A phone call will not be accepted to excuse an absence. An email or a written note from a parent or guardian is a request that the student's absence be excused and may be denied at the discretion of the principal. When a student is absent 4 or more consecutive days for illness; a doctor's note is required for the absence to be excused.

ABSENCES-EXCUSED ABSENCES:

- Illness of the student
- Illness of an immediate family member
- Death of immediate family
- Religious holiday of the student's own faith
- Required court appearance or subpoena.
- Schedule medical or dental appointment

ABSENCES-EXCUSED TARDIES AND EARLY SIGN OUTS: *Any amount of loss of instructional time, including before 2:10 PM is considered a tardy/early sign-out, A tardy or early sign out will be excused by administration for the following reasons:*

- Sickness or injury (*leaving from clinic only*)
- Long term illness verified by a physician's note.
- Medical or dental appointments, only when a physician's note is provided.
- Death in family
- Student meeting scheduled by the school.
- Required court appearance or subpoena.
- Other unique situations as presented on a case-by-case basis to administration.

ABSENCES-UNEXCUSED ABSENCES, TARDY OR EARLY SIGN-OUT: An unexcused absence, tardy, or early sign-out is any absence which has not been rearranged and approved by the principal/administration and is not defined as an excused in this attendance policy.

- An absence from school without notice from a parent or guardian
- Trips or vacation
- Truancy
- Failure to comply with the necessary medical enrollment criteria unless specifically explained in a physician's note

An unexcused tardy or unexcused early dismissal shall be given, but not limited to, for the following reasons:

- Over sleeping, missing the school bus, shopping trips. Sports games, or picking up your students early to avoid a long wait, or personal reasons.
- A continued medical reason and the physician's note does not stipulate that the medical condition justifies the student's tardiness or early sign-out.

ABSENCES-EXCESSIVE ABSENCES, TARDINESS OR EARLY SIGN-OUT: All unexcused absences, excused absences where a student is at-risk academically, unexcused tardies, and unexcused early dismissal from school shall be considered when studying excessive absences.

- Five (5) or more unexcused absences within a 30 day period shall be deemed excessive.
- Six (6) or more tardies per quarter shall be deemed excessive.
- Excessive early sign-outs will be addressed on a case by case basis to determine if there is a pattern of non-attendance.
- Unless excused under the provisions of the school's attendance policy, accumulated early sign-outs will be recorded as unexcused absences.
- When a student accumulates an excessive number (19) of absences (excused or unexcused) and additional absences occur, a written statement from a physician verifying the absence was caused by an illness must be submitted.

ABSENCES-RETENTION DUE TO EXCESSIVE ABSENCES, TARDINESS, AND/OR EARLY DISMISSAL FROM SCHOOL

If a student accrues nineteen (19) or more excused or unexcused absences or excessive tardies (6 or more in a 9 week period) where the student is at risk academically within a school year, the student may be referred to the Child Study Team to be considered for possible retention. When a student's name is referred to the Child Study Team, all absences and all unexcused tardies, as well as early sign-outs, will be reviewed. (School Board Policy 4.16)

ABSENCES- MAKEUP WORK

Missed school and homework, due to an absence, may be requested only if the child has been out two (2) or more days. Please inform the school as early as possible if you request work. Schoolwork may be picked up after dismissal or by appointment only. This allows the teacher time to gather the child's books and assignments.

The teacher shall work with the student to allow the student to make up any missed assignments, tests, homework, etc., whether for excused or unexcused absences.

The missed school work is due in the same number of days that the student was absent plus 1 additional day (i.e. missed two (2) days the student has three (3) days to turn in the work).

Immediately upon returning to school from an absence, the student shall be given the number of days missed plus one additional day to submit make-up work for full credit.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION POLICY

Heights Elementary celebrates success! All students will be recognized for their many talents and academic achievement. The following awards will be given at the end of the school year.

"A" Honor Roll

Student must receive an "A" or an "S" in each academic area.

"A - B" Honor Roll

Student must receive an "A", "B", or "S" in each academic area.

Citizenship

Students must receive all S's in Personal Development and effort and in Enrichment classes (PE, & Art, Music).

Perfect Attendance

Student must be in attendance at school each day that the school is in session. Student with three or more tardies or early sign-outs, per quarter, will not be eligible for an award.

BEHAVIOR PLAN: The school board has set forth rules and expectations addressing student safety and security. These standards address the safety and security of both children and school staff. All district rules related to safety and security are always in effect at school. We have established “Essential Agreements” for our school and classrooms. Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS) will also assist with creating a positive learning culture for our students. Positive Attitude, Act Responsibly, Work Together, Show Respect (PAWS) is the framework for the Heights PBIS program.

SCHOOLWIDE:

1. Treat others with the same respect with which you are treated by the adults in this school.
2. Your actions, dress, possessions, etc. may not cause a problem for anyone else.
3. If your actions, dress, or possessions cause a problem for anyone else, you will be asked to solve that problem.
4. If you cannot or choose not to solve the problem, appropriate consequences will be imposed by staff members. These consequences will depend upon the situation and the person or persons involved. Staff members will use their best judgment based upon the information they have at the time.
5. If students and /or parents feel that the consequences appear not to be fair, request a “due process” hearing. A due process hearing does not need to be formal in nature. It is simply a time for concerned individuals to meet together and share information. In the event that this discussion provides additional information that sheds different light on the situation, or shows the consequences to be unfair, the consequences may be changed or eliminated to better fit the unique situation.

CLASSROOM:

1. Treat me, as your teacher, with the same respect with which I treat you.
2. Your actions may not cause a problem for anyone else.
3. If you cause a problem, you will be asked to solve it.
4. If you cannot solve the problem or choose not to, I will do something. What I do will depend upon the situation and the person involved.
5. If I do something that appears to be unfair, whisper to me, “I’m not sure that’s fair,” and we will talk about it.

The classroom teacher is the center of an effective school discipline policy. He or she will continually emphasize to students and parents the importance for the students to follow the rules. Classroom Essential Agreements will be agreed upon by students and teacher.

The role of the principal and assistant principal is to help monitor and update the discipline policies and procedures, help staff implement classroom and school management techniques, and assist staff with handling severe misbehavior or chronic recurring problems by implementing consequences.

Parents are encouraged to participate in the education of their children and be interested and supportive in their progress.

BIRTHDAY and CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS

Student birthdays are very important to recognize. We encourage parents to celebrate student birthdays at home. If treats are brought into school, they will be *distributed during the assigned class snack time in the classroom*. We highly recommend - healthy food items, pencils, stickers, mini cupcakes, or cookies. Celebrations involving favors, toys, balloons, flowers, etc. are unacceptable items during school hours, including lunch time. Parents must contact the teacher if they wish to bring in a treat. **Treats must be store bought with the ingredients label visible.**

Invitations to private student birthday parties may not be handed out during the school day unless the entire class is invited, or all girls/all boys are invited.

We highly recommend any of the following items only:

Healthy food items

Mini cupcakes (store bought only)

Stickers, pencils, notepads

Animal crackers, cookies, pretzels, crackers, popcorn, cereal (store bought items only)

Pudding, Jell-O cups, cheese sticks, yogurt

**Make sure you have enough for the entire class. You should confirm this number with the teacher.*

Please refrain from sending in the following items:

- Cakes or large cupcakes
- Donuts
- Pizza
- Anything requiring cutting
- Presents
- Balloons
- Flowers
- Candles, matches, lighters
- Home-made items

Although we appreciate your child's excitement for their birthday, the school setting is not the appropriate place for a birthday celebration. Keep the treat simple and easy for staff to distribute and clean up.

BOOKS

All lost textbooks and lost library books must be paid for. Call the Bookkeeper at 481-1761 for the price. Please make checks payable to "Heights Elementary".

BREAKFAST

The Breakfast Program starts at 8:15 AM every morning. The breakfast program closes promptly at 8:35 AM, except for students arriving on a late bus. The cost is free to all students.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

The telephone number for the School District's transportation is 344-0211. Each child will ride a designated bus and is not permitted to change buses. Students are not allowed to ride on buses other than their own. Students are only transported to/from their own home. The bus driver has the following guidelines posted and will review them with the students.

- Students must conduct themselves in an orderly manner and stand off the roadway while awaiting the bus.
- Students must be on time. The bus cannot wait for those who are late.
- Students must keep their assigned seats at all times when the bus is moving.
- The driver is in full charge of the bus and the students unless a certified staff member is present. Students must obey the driver or staff member in charge.
- The driver has the right to assign students to certain seats to promote order on the bus.
- Students must keep their arms and heads inside the windows.
- Absolute silence is required at all railroad crossings.
- Students may not eat, drink, smoke, or chew gum on the bus.
- Radios, iPods, iPads, and cell phones must not be carried on the bus.
- Students must not use profanity or abusive language on the bus.
- Animals, glass containers, sharp objects, balls, bats, cutting instruments, fireworks, and other similar objects are not permitted.
- Large objects that interfere with seating and the safety of others will not be permitted on the bus.
- When leaving the bus, students must walk 10 feet in front of the bus and wait for the driver's signal before crossing the road.

Riding the school bus is a privilege-it should not be abused. Please make certain that your child understands the school bus regulations. These regulations are in the interest of student safety and comply with Florida State Law and School Board Policy. If a student chooses to violate a bus rule, the

driver will issue a bus referral. The referral will be handled by the administration, which has the authority to suspend that student from bus transportation.

CAFETERIA

Heights will participate in the USDA Community Eligibility Provision Grant. The Food Service Department will provide a free and nutritious, well-balanced breakfast and lunch daily. All students may eat free each day, with no cost to all families. Students may also bring lunch from home. **Glass, carbonated drinks, large bags of chips(4 oz or smaller only) or food to share with other students are unacceptable items to send to school for breakfast or lunch.** We encourage parents to eat lunch with their child during their class lunch period. Parents should not share food with other students during this time.

CALENDAR

Heights Elementary school calendar is located on the school website. Please refer to this calendar and monthly newsletters sent electronically for updated information about school events and special dates.

CHANGE OF DISMISSAL PLANS

Please notify the Heights Office immediately when you know your child will be going home a different way than normal. The required and best way to do this is in person or in writing. Parents should call the Heights office and notify the teacher through email or note of any changes. **All changes in dismissal plans must take place prior to 1:30 to guarantee the student and teacher receive the updated change prior to dismissal.**

CHARACTER EDUCATION

The Heights Staff will use the International Baccalaureate Program Attributes. These positive characteristics include Inquirer, Communicator, Thinker, Reflective, Caring, Principled, Knowledgeable, Open-Minded, Risk-taker, and Balanced.

CHILD STUDY TEAM (Multi-Tiered Systems of Student Support/Response to Intervention)

Our Child Study Team meets weekly to discuss special concerns regarding the academic and behavioral progress in our children. The team may include the principal, assistant principal, intervention support specialist, school counselor, curriculum specialist, school nurse, school psychologist, school social worker, speech/language pathologist, specific learning disabilities teacher, gifted teacher, and the child's classroom teacher. Parents may contact the school counselor or intervention support specialist for more information. You are encouraged to participate in the meetings to learn about reports and evaluations concerning your child and also help the school personnel plan for your child's individual educational program.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

One of our school goals is that all students meet or exceed District and State academic standards. To achieve this goal, teachers consider the needs and diversity of students. It requires that all K– 5 students be assigned a teacher based on individual needs which may include academic and/or performance/social level. Students will be evaluated to determine reading and math achievement levels. A student may be moved to a class designed to address the student's current academic performance and behavior. This allows for placement of students as their academic and/or behavioral needs change.

CLINIC – MEDICATION – FIRST AID

A student who becomes ill must report immediately to the clinic with a pass from the teacher. Any injury a student sustains on school property, or in conjunction with a school-sponsored activity, must be reported to the administration and the clinic. When a child becomes ill or injured at school every effort will be made to notify the parent/guardian. Medication should be given by parents and taken at home, if possible. If medication is to be taken at school, the parent must provide written permission on the form

supplied by the school (MIS398). Prescription medication must be in its original, labeled container from the pharmacy, kept in the clinic, and taken under supervision of authorized school personnel. Non-prescription medication (aspirin, cough medicine, cough drops) may be given only if ordered by a physician in writing. The container must be labeled with the student's name and directions concerning dosage. No over-the-counter medicines (such as aspirin or cough medicine) will be given without a written statement from the doctor. If medication is to be given in school for longer than two weeks, a statement from the attending physician must also be provided on the form supplied by the school (MIS 401). Students may not bring medicine to school to take on their own; it must be administered in the clinic. This includes aspirin, cough drops, sore throat lozenges, vitamins, etc.

Sun Protection

To help prevent students from the year after year exposure to sun, caps and sunglasses are approved by the School Board and should be included in school attire during outdoor activities only. When students come indoors these articles must be removed and placed in the student's own book bag or other designated storage area which keeps these items separated. Sunscreen is also a beneficial protection against sun exposure. If parents wish to have their child protected, sunscreen should be applied at home before student dresses for school. This will provide protection to the student during the time going to school as well as throughout the day.

COMMUNICATION ENVELOPE

One of our goals at Heights Elementary School is to keep you informed on a regular basis about events at school and your child's academic progress. On Monday of each week the Heights Communication Envelope, containing our school/classroom information and your child's work samples, will be sent home. Please review all material, sign the envelope, and have your child return it to school on Tuesday morning. Communication between school and family is the key to providing a quality education for all students. Kg through Fifth grade students will also receive a Student Agenda Book to keep them organized and promote school/family communication.

CONFERENCES WITH SCHOOL STAFF

If you need to speak to your child's teacher, please make arrangements by email, note or telephone. It is best to set a time when you are able to sit down to discuss your child in privacy and without distractions. Conferences are usually arranged before or after school, or on professional duty days. PTA meetings and Open Houses are times for general discussion and are not the time to ask detailed personal questions about your child. The principal, assistant principal, curriculum specialist, enrichment teachers, intervention support specialist and school counselor are also available for conferences. We encourage you to ask for a conference when needed. You may receive assistance in setting up conferences by calling the school office.

CUSTODY

Current custody papers are part of the enrollment process and must be updated as changes occur. This will ensure your child's safety.

DISMISSING STUDENTS DURING SCHOOL HOURS

A parent, guardian, or a person approved by the parent (this should be done by a note sent with the child to the office) must come to the office to sign out the child. Anyone picking up a student before the dismissal bell will need present their photo ID to the office staff. The office staff will then check the emergency card to see if the name appears. This is necessary to ensure the safety of your child. The Heights staff asks that parents and volunteers refrain from signing out their child early daily. **Sign out are only permitted until 2:40pm.** This practice should only be used for emergencies or a doctor's appointment. This causes a child to miss out on valuable instructional/teaching time at the end of the day. At that time-of-day teachers are reviewing classroom work, checking homework assignments, updating important information, and preparing for the next day's activities. Your child's grades, awards,

eligibility for promotion, etc., may be affected by early sign-out.

DRESS CODE

Heights Elementary prides itself on the appearance of the facility as well as the students and staff. The following dress requirements reflect our belief that our school is a place for teaching and learning.

Students may wear:

- Any pants or jeans, fastened at the waist when needed.
- Any shirt except see-through, open-sided, or those that advertise drugs, tobacco, alcohol, or have any profanity, obscenity, graphic violence, or gang insignia.
- Any long shorts (below the fingertips with the arms held at the sides).
- Girls may wear skirts, dresses, capri pants, culottes or split skirts that are an appropriate length (below the fingertips with the arms held at the sides).
- Closed-toe shoes with back ankles straps, tennis/running shoes.

Students should refrain from wearing:

- Oversized apparel, including baggy pants, overalls with unfastened straps and pant legs worn below the shoe NOTE: Florida Statute requires schools to adopt dress codes barring clothes that “expose underwear or body parts in an indecent or vulgar manner.”
- Tank tops, halter tops, low necklines, sun dresses, bare midriff, strapless tops, pajamas.
- High heels, platforms, flip flops, slides, croc style shoes, slippers.
- Body paint and/or body writing, sunglasses, hair paint/gel, unnatural/dyed hair color, extreme hairdo that is disruptive to class.
- Intentionally altered or ripped clothing,
- Apparel such as hats, hair nets, excessive/large jewelry, fake fingernails
- Any form of make-up
- Apparel, emblems, insignias, badges, or symbols that promote the use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco or any other illegal activity or that discriminates against race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, or religion.

This list is meant as an example and is not intended to be all inclusive. According to Florida State Statute, the principal has sole discretion over what is or is not appropriate attire for school functions. Any items of clothing that are deemed as interfering with the educational process will be dealt with in accordance with procedures set in the Student Code of Conduct. The school administration shall have the right to appraise any current fashion or fad and determine whether it is appropriate for school wear.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP OF STUDENTS

Students that are transported by parents should be dropped off and picked up at the designated area in front of the school. You may be asked to drive onto the bus ramp after buses leave. This will act as the secondary Parent Drop-off and Pick-Up to help dismissal progress quickly. All cars must have the appropriate Heights hang tag displayed to pick-up students. Parents should refrain from using School Street as a drop-off or pick-up area. This area is designated for walkers. Please do not leave your car unattended and parked in the morning drop-off/afternoon pick-up area. After consulting with Lee County School District’s safety officials and Lee County DOT, we have collaboratively designed a plan we hope to better serve our parents and staff with the traffic congestion during morning drop-off. Please keep in mind: traffic will always be heavy due to the single entry for cars *and* buses along with the large number of families using their personal vehicles for school transportation. We appreciate your patience and cooperation.

The goal of the drop-off system has three objectives:

1. To keep a steady flow onto the bus ramp door and front door drop-off areas
2. To give parents a choice on which area they would like to drop off.
3. To alleviate the need and subsequent safety issue that comes with staff directing traffic flow pattern.

As you enter campus, merge one at a time and come upon the 3-way stop. At that point, please follow the directions which are posted on the sign. You have two options: to continue straight on the bus ramp

drop-off area where you *must* exit onto Gladiolus Drive (no parking) or turn left to the front drop area or parking lot. If you choose the front drop off or parking area, you *must* exit campus on to School Street. This plan allows for two separate continuous flow patterns during morning drop-off.

Please refrain from pulling into or parking in a handicap parking if you do not have the authorization to do so. It is a \$250 fine, and a ticket may be issued by the school's resource officer.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

New update to the 2025-2026 School District of Lee County Code of Conduct - - Wireless Communication Devices– Display or use of a personal electronic or telecommunication device during school hours. Students may possess personal wireless communication devices (WCDs) while on school grounds during regular hours. **This includes, but is not limited to, cell phones, and/or auxiliary/ancillary devices such as watches, earbuds, or smart glass. At all levels, all personal WCDs must be turned off and in the student's book bag at all times.** WCDs are permitted when the device is approved to monitor a health condition documented through medical records and indicated as needed in a health plan. As of 7/1/23, the following meet the criteria for prohibited applications as established in Section 112.22(1)(f)*, F.S.: QQ, TikTok, WeChat, VKontakte, Kaspersky. See Board Policy 5136.

Chromebooks: Students must return Chromebooks, power supplies, and sleeves at the end of the school year, or when transferring out of a school. Chromebooks must be in good working order and free from physical damage. If you are missing any part of the Chromebook package, you will be assessed replacement fees for the items at the following rates:

Chromebook Cost: \$358.40 Sleeve Cost: \$17 Power Supply: \$36

If any of the items are physically damaged, you may be assessed a repair or replacement fee if not covered by existing warranties.

ENRICHMENT CLASSES

All K-5 grade students will participate in Heights Enrichment Classes. These classes consist of Physical Education, Art, Music, Cultural Studies, and STEM. A student will attend at least one of these classes each day for 45 minutes. We believe these classes provide supplemental opportunities to help make each student a well-rounded global citizen.

FOOD ITEMS

All shared food items must be store-bought. This procedure is for your child's safety. Many bacteria and viruses are spread by sharing homemade food items. Please help us keep our students safe. Student lunches from home may not be shared with other students during lunch time. Carbonated beverages (soda, fruit drinks), candy, and large bags of chips must remain at home and are prohibited in the cafeteria during breakfast, snack, or lunch time. If you are bringing/sending in a large bag of snacks for the class snack time, please contact the teacher before sending them in.

HEAD LICE

It is the policy of the School District of Lee County to control the spread of pediculosis among school age children with minimal interruption of the learning process. Screening for pediculosis is necessary only when infestation of live lice or nits are identified on an individual student or at the request of the school principal. Should your child have head lice, you will be contacted and requested to pick up your child. Parents are responsible for treatment of the head lice before the student may return to school. After treatment, children should report to the clinic, accompanied by a parent, to be checked and provide proof of treatment. If you have any questions, please contact the school nurse or clinic assistant.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS/ PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

Children entering a Florida public school for the first time must present certification of a school entry health examination performed within one year prior to enrollment in school or evidence of exemption for religious reasons provided in writing. This policy applies to new students upon initial entrance to a Lee County school, new students from out-of-state public or non-public schools, but not those who have been previously enrolled in a Lee County school or another Florida public or private school.

HOMEWORK POLICY

Homework is an important part of the academic program. At the beginning of the year the teacher will inform the parent of the homework policy for the grade level. Please try to provide a regular time and place suitable for homework completion. Avoiding distractions such as TV, Cell phone use, and social media will also help. Please check to see that assignments are neatly completed. Spending a little time each day studying at home will help your child develop strong study habits and reinforce skills and concepts.

INSURANCE

School insurance is available to parents (optional) through an independent company. Claim forms are available at the school office. The school does not handle the claims. All dealings are between parents and the insurance company directly.

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM

Heights Elementary staff and students participate in a program called Primary Years International Baccalaureate Program. This program is designed for student's ages 5 to 12 and focuses on the development of the whole child. We accomplish this task by meeting each child's needs academically, socially, physically, emotionally, and culturally. We provide experiences for each child to learn in the classroom, as well as through outside world experiences. Our goal is to develop a child who is aware of and sensitive to the experiences of others. In addition, the students at Heights, will become good inquirers, thinkers, communicators, and risk takers. Heights students will also be seen as reflective, well-balanced, open-minded, caring, and knowledgeable individuals.

LIVESCHOOL

LiveSchool is an app that helps your child's school create a positive learning environment. Teachers can award points for good behavior and hard work, as well as document negative behavior and comments. By working hard on a regular basis, your child will be able to earn rewards and participate in fun events. Research shows that one of the biggest factors on your child's learning is the classroom environment. Using Live School, teachers can create a more positive learning environment for your child. Parents and students will receive an access code during the first two weeks of school. Once you have your access code you will be able access Live School from parent.liveschoolinc.com from your phone, tablet, or computer. You can download LiveSchool as an app to your phone or tablet.

LOST AND FOUND

Any clothing found on campus will be placed in the lost and found area in the cafeteria. At the end of each quarter all unclaimed items will be donated to charity.

PARENT PICKUP (CARS)

An increasing number of parents transport their children by car to and from school. To accomplish this in an orderly and safe manner, we ask for your cooperation in following our procedures. To promote safe and prompt movement of students, staff, and visitors, we ask that you please follow these guidelines:

1. All parents must drop off and pick up their child in the designated area at the front of the school or the bus ramp for dismissal. **Please remain in your car to pick up your child.**
2. Double parking is prohibited since it encourages children to run between cars.

3. Do not leave your car unattended. If you wish to leave your car, it must be parked in a designated parking space. It should not be left along the curb, drive or grass.
4. Children will not be permitted beyond the loading area. Please do not call your children past this area.
5. All adults picking up a child must have the **Heights Elementary Hang Tag with the student's dismissal number** hanging from the rear-view mirror. This ensures you have been cleared to pick up your child. Without this tag, you will be asked to park and enter the office to show ID.
6. Parents/guardians should refrain from dropping students off prior to 8:10 am. Lee County District Schools provide supervision of students 30 minutes before and after the school day (8:40 AM-3:10 PM) and school activities the student is authorized to participate in. Parents should not rely on school supervision beyond these times. Students will be dismissed at 3:10 PM and brought to the parent pickup area. Please listen for directions from the adults on duty to ensure all children's safety.
7. Parents are prohibited from parking on School Street or blocking a driveway of a neighbor to the school to pick up their students.
8. We encourage Heights families to carpool!

PARENT PICKUP (WALKERS)

This designated area is for parents walking their children home (no car). The designated area to meet a student is at the School Street gate, nearest the cafeteria. **Parents are prohibited from parking on School Street or blocking a driveway of a neighbor to the school to pick up their students.** Also, parents are prohibited from waiting in the cafeteria or hallways to pick up their student. Parents are still required to have their car tag when picking up a student at the gate. If a parent is volunteering and wants to pick up their student, they must wait outside the cafeteria doors with their car tag.

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

The Heights Parent Teacher Association (PTA) has played an important role over the years in promoting the welfare of the students and staff at Heights Elementary. Parents, teachers, and other community citizens are urged to join and participate in this active group. It meets during the year to discuss school needs and to assist with school-wide projects. No special skills are necessary because everyone helps one another and learns together. The dates of our PTA meetings are listed in the Heights calendar.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS - LABEL

All personal belongings including outdoor clothing, pencil boxes, book bags, and lunch boxes should be labeled. All items found with a label will be returned to the owner. All unlabeled items go into the Lost and Found which is located in the cafeteria.

PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports):

PBIS is a process for creating safer and more effective schools. It is a systems approach to enhancing the capacity of schools to educate all children by developing research-based, school-wide, and classroom behavior support systems. The process focuses on improving a school's ability to teach and support positive behavior for all students. Rather than a prescribed program, PBIS provides systems for schools to design, implement, and evaluate effective school-wide, classroom, non-classroom, and student specific plans. PBIS includes school-wide procedures and processes intended for all students and all staff in all settings. PBIS is not a program or a curriculum. It is a team-based process for systemic problem solving, planning, and evaluation. It is an approach to creating a safe and productive learning environment where teachers can teach, and all students can learn.

We have adopted a unified set of classroom rules. These rules define our expectations for behavior in our school. You will see these rules posted throughout the school and your child will be learning them during his or her first days at school. Our unified classroom rules, found in every classroom and non-classroom setting in the school, are as follows:



Heights Elementary School PBIS Mission Statement:

We strive to be a school that models positive behaviors which develop the whole child and social skills. We have a common culture and language which supports student growth and high expectations to empower our students to become well-rounded global citizens through teaching and recognizing positive behavior.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education is an important part of our school curriculum. State Law requires that all students participate in 150 minutes of physical education activity per week, unless there is a serious reason that they are unable to do so. In such cases, a daily note from parents is necessary. For prolonged excuses (more than three consecutive days), a statement from the doctor should state the reason and the period of inactivity. If your child has a note due to recuperating from an illness or has a medical excuse from a doctor, he/she may be excused from PE classes. Students will be allowed to utilize hats and sunglasses when outdoors but will be expected to put them away when indoors. Students will also receive “brain breaks” throughout the school day (5-10 min).

RECESS

All PreK-5 grade students will participate in 20 minutes of recess each day. This time, either outdoors or in the classroom, will allow students a “break” from classroom instruction, allowing them to socialize with their classmates and teacher, participate in playtime or independent learning.

REGISTRATION

To register a child in Lee County public schools, it is necessary to register through the Student Assignment Office at 2855 Colonial Blvd., Fort Myers (337-8247). You will need to provide the following: a birth certificate, a Florida Immunization Certificate, a record of a recent physical, a social security card, proof of residence such as a lease, electric bill, or deposit receipt, and proof of custody if a child does not reside with both parents. Along with these requirements you will be asked to complete several registration forms.

REPORT CARDS

A report on the progress of each student is issued each nine weeks. All interims and report cards will be available in FOCUS. Interim reports are posted in the middle of each quarter to keep you informed of

your child's progress. IB Learner Profile Reflection Report Cards will be sent out at the 2nd and 4th quarter interim times. Please review this with your child, sign and return the next day.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Heights has an assigned SRO to our campus daily. When entering the office area visitors will need to push the door bell and they will be asked to show their ID and identify why they are visiting the campus by the Heights office staff. When visiting, picking up a student early, or entering the building all visitors are required to show their ID.

Open Gate System

The safety and security of your student is our top priority. To enhance the safety and security of our school campuses, we will be using the OPENGATE® weapons detection system. OPENGATE® is designed for the automatic screening of people with backpacks and bags for Threat Detection. It will also identify other contraband items that are not allowed on school property.

All students and all visitors will be subject to search as they enter a campus during regular school hours. If OPENGATE® detects any contraband items that are not allowed, a secondary search will be conducted. Contraband discovered during the secondary search will be confiscated and could lead to school discipline and/or legal consequences.

OPENGATE® screening is: Fast and automatic, requires no removal of backpacks, bags or purses, & is designed for easy walk-through flow.

Students should prepare to pass through the OPENGATE® system by removing their Chromebooks from their backpacks. We recommend students come to school with plastic water bottles as metal containers may cause an OPENGATE® alert.

Visitors will need identification to enter a school. We recommend leaving unnecessary bags or purses in their car if they wish to avoid a secondary search when entering the school.

Florida Law and Lee County School Board Policy allow that upon reasonable suspicion school officials may search students, lockers, vehicles, or other areas for prohibited or illegally possessed substances or objects. For further details, please refer to page 16 of the Student Code of Conduct.

SAFETY PATROL

This year a number of mature, dependable fifth graders will be chosen to serve on the school patrol. Teachers and the administration will choose these exemplary students to serve on a quarterly basis. These students will provide a real service for the safety and well being of the other children at our school. All students are expected to cooperate fully and completely when reminded by a member of the patrol to obey rules.

SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC)

The purpose of the School Advisory Council is to promote communication and understanding among the school's administration, faculty, students, the School Board, parents and community as a whole; to promote the interest and involvement of citizens, in a meaningful way, in educational affairs and operational problems and needs of individual schools and the school system; to promote the utilization of valuable human resources within the County for the purpose of improving upon the effectiveness and the efficiency of individual schools, school programs and the school system as a whole. Membership on the Advisory Council is open to all parents and interested citizens in the attendance area of the school. Meetings are held monthly to involve the community and staff in planning for the expenditure of funds available to the school and in personnel and curriculum decisions. Please contact the principal if you

would like to serve on Heights SAC.

The functions of the Advisory Committees may include but are not limited to:

- Participating in the decision making process by advising in and assisting with educational needs, establishing priorities, planning the educational program and budget resources, defining goals, and evaluating the school and its academic effectiveness.
- Facilitating communication among school, parents, and community.
- Informing and advising school staff of community conditions.
- Assisting in providing support to parents, teachers, students and community for school programs.
- Participation in the preparation of the School Improvement Plan.
- Advising of the impact of property development and zoning changes in the vicinity of the school.
- Defining problems or issues.
- Developing a speaker's bureau of parents, students, and school staff, to operate community events.

SEVERE WEATHER

During the school year when storms are upon us, we will not release any students if there is lightening. All bus riders, walkers and bike riders will wait out the storm in the school. Any parent pick-up students will wait in the cafeteria or in the front office. Please remain in your vehicles as we will release students as soon as the threat has passed. Administration will update all parents and guardians using School Messenger on any severe weather in the area that might delay pick up or buses leaving the campus.

SCHOOL MESSENGER:

The Lee County School District is using School Messenger as it's communication platform with families. You will need to create a FOCUS account in order to receive messengers through School Messenger.

Create your Focus Parent Portal Account

Go to <https://lee.focusschoolsoftware.com/focus/>.

Where it says "Attention Parents", click "Create a Focus Parent Portal Account." You must register with an email address that you have on file with Heights Elementary. If you had already registered last year, you still need to register an account for this school year.

IMPORTANT: If you are receiving the error message "The student you requested could not be found", this most likely means your child's social security number is not on file with the district. Simply leave the box for the Last 4 Digits of Social Security Number blank, and as long as all other information is accurate, you will be able to continue with registration.

- Once registration is complete, please allow time for an administrator to verify your account.
- To add additional children to your Focus Parent Portal account, go to the Focus login page and select "Click here to add a child to an existing Focus Parent Portal account".

SCHOOL CLOSED FOR EMERGENCY

Unusual conditions such as a hurricane might require the school to close. The school will be closed during any emergency. The School District of Lee County will always consider student and staff safety of primary importance when deciding to close schools when severe weather threatens. Unless there is a clear threat of danger, the decision to close school will be made around 4:00 a.m. and announced through School Messenger, local radio and TV morning news shows and via NOAA Weather Alert Radios. Parents and staff should listen to local media beginning at 4:00 a.m. for the latest information pertaining to school closing during severe weather months.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Heights has one school counselor who works with children in the classrooms and with teachers and parents. The school counselor is available to assist parents and serve as a liaison between community agencies and families. The duties of a school counselor include: providing guidance classes to students, meeting with small groups of students, meeting with an individual student, coordinating all state/district assessments and serving on the Heights Child Study Team.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Heights Elementary will provide all materials and supplies for basic instructional activities. Each teacher may send home an optional supply list that will allow students to have an enhanced educational program. This list is also posted on our website. No student will be penalized in any way if they can not bring in the articles on the optional supply list. We appreciate your commitment to the education of our students and with your help, we can provide an excellent instructional program for our children.

STAND UP FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT

It is the policy of The School District of Lee County that all of its students and school employees have an educational setting that is safe, secure, and free from harassment and bullying of any kind. The district will not tolerate bullying and harassment of any type. Conduct that constitutes bullying and harassment, as defined herein, is prohibited. Bullying means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees. It is further defined as unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by a student or adult, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation; and may involve but is not limited to: Teasing, Social Exclusion, Threat, Intimidation, Stalking, Physical violence, Theft, Sexual, Religious or Racial Harassment, Public Humiliation, and Destruction of Property. The Lee County School District expects students to conduct themselves as appropriate for their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of school facilities and equipment. Please reference the Code of Conduct for further information or contact the Heights Administration or School Counselor.

STUDENT GRADES AND REPORT CARDS(FOCUS)

The School District of Lee County uses the Focus Parent Portal to provide parents/guardians a real-time view of their child's assignment grades, attendance information, as well as current averages in all classes. For the protection of your child's confidential information, we have created the following secure procedures for parents/guardians to register for a Focus Parent Portal account online.

TO REGISTER FOR A FOCUS PARENT PORTAL ACCOUNT, YOU WILL NEED: → Your Email address - The email address used to create your Focus Portal Account should be the one you have on file at your child's school.

Be sure to provide your new/updated email address to your child's school so they can update your emergency contact information in the district's official system of record. → Your child's Student ID → Your child's Date of Birth

STUDENT SUPERVISION GUIDELINES

In accordance with Florida State Statute 1003.31, school authorities are responsible for supervising students no longer than 30 minutes before or after school hours or authorized school-sponsored activities. Therefore, parents cannot rely on school supervision outside of these limits.

TARDIES

Students must check in at the front office to receive a late pass before going to the classroom. Students are considered late after the 8:40 AM bell rings. Please see that your child arrives to school between 7:30-7:55 AM each day. Three tardies are equal to one unexcused absence. At 8:40 am cones will be placed at the entry way of the drop off area. Parents/guardians will need to park and walk their child into the school to sign them in if their student is tardy.

TELEPHONE USE

The school will notify home in case of an emergency. We request that students NOT use the cellphones for such things as permission to visit a friend or a ride home on the bus with a friend. Arrangements must be made with parents prior to coming to school. Students are not permitted to use cell phones during the school day. Cell phones must remain in the student's backpack. Parents may contact the school administration with special circumstances to receive written approval.

VISITORS

Anyone wishing to visit a teacher or classroom must first obtain permission from the front office. Please call first to set up a convenient day, time, and length of visit. Upon your arrival, stop in the office first, sign in, and receive a visitor badge. **No one is permitted to go directly to a classroom.** This includes during morning arrival when bringing your child to school. Please assist us in teaching your child to be independent and responsible. Please do not seek to engage the teacher in conversation during a classroom visitation. This policy is for the protection of your child. Any unfamiliar person without a visitor badge will be asked to report to the School Office or asked to leave the school.

VOLUNTEERS

During recent school years, our Heights Volunteers logged almost 6000 hours of school participation each year! Becoming a volunteer can be a very rewarding experience. We invite our PARENTS, SENIOR CITIZENS, AND OTHERS to become a part of our Volunteer Family. Whether you can give one hour per week or many hours, WE NEED YOU! No previous experience is required. The following is a list of jobs that volunteers perform: work with individual students and/or with small groups in the classroom, listen to students read and/or read to students, assist in the library, assist teachers with clerical work and bulletin boards. Shortly after school begins, we will have an orientation for our volunteers. If you are interested in learning more about our Volunteer Program, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Mrs. Thorstad(Assistant Principal) at 481-1761.

WEBSITE

Heights Website is at <http://het.leeschools.net>. Visit the website to view our calendar, staff websites, school and district information and other important news.

Also follow us on **Twitter:** @HeightsIB **Facebook:** Heights Elementary

WITHDRAWALS/ TRANSFERS

Students withdrawing from Heights must first return all library books, chromebooks, textbooks, pay any debts owed and clear with the office. Advance notice of the date of withdrawal would be very helpful. The office will provide you with a withdrawal slip to take to your child's new school. When your child is enrolled in another school, that school will request your child's records sent by mail.