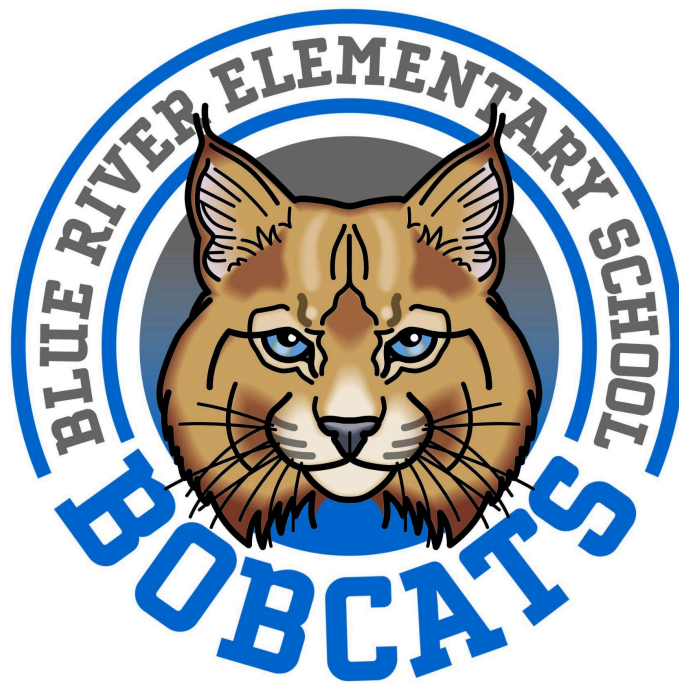


Blue River Elementary School

Parent Handbook
2024-25



5101 W 163rd Terrace
Overland Park, KS 66085
(913) 239-6000
(913) 239-6048 (fax)
913-239-6005 (attendance line)
Hours:
8:40am - 3:45pm

Ms. Melissa Blevins, Principal
mjblevins@bluevalleyk12.org

Mission

The Blue River Community will work together to foster academic excellence for lifelong learning as well as allow students multiple opportunities to make positive connections through the school environment.

Vision

We will respect all students for who they are, what they know and how they learn. We will demonstrate this by creating a safe, respectful environment, personalizing student learning, and advancing the personal and academic growth of all students.

Dear Blue River Elementary Families,

I am extremely honored to serve as the principal of Blue River Elementary and I am looking forward to a positive and productive 2024-2025 school year. Our goal is to ensure an equitable and safe learning environment for all stakeholders and to build a strong home/school partnership. The policies, guidelines and procedures detailed in this handbook will help us to do just that.

The handbook also contains a staff roster, a district calendar of events, schedules and more that you may find helpful when assisting your student(s) in planning for a successful school experience.

Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the contents of this handbook and refer to it when needed. It is always linked on our website under the “Families” tab.

The Blue River staff is committed to each and every student’s academic and social-emotional growth. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.

It’s a great day to be a Bobcat!

Melissa Blevins-Principal
mjblevins@bluevalleyk12.org
913-239-6015

Expectations in all Locations

Our ROAR expectations will be explicitly taught, reviewed and reinforced by every staff member throughout the school year. Further review of these expectations at home only strengthens our home-school connection and ultimately the learning environment during our school day. Thank you for your support!



Blue River Elementary Expectations Matrix



	Classroom	Hallway	Pods	Cafeteria	Bathroom	Recess Playground	Bus	Arrival/ Dismissal
R Respect Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen and pay attention to the speaker Follow directions Use kind words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use appropriate voice levels 0-Silent 1-Whisper 2-Partner, 3-Outside Acknowledge others in the hallway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use appropriate voice levels - be mindful of others 0-Silent, 1-Whisper 2-Partner, 3-Outside Respect other students/adults using the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow directions Raise your hand if you need help Use appropriate voice levels 0-Silent 1-Whisper 2-Partner 3-Outside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give others privacy Remain in own stall Use appropriate voice levels 0-Silent 1-Whisper, 2-Partner 3-Outside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be kind to peers while playing games Respect others personal space Respond immediately when teacher or adult calls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use kind words Respect the bus driver Use appropriate voice levels 0-Silent 1-Whisper, 2-Partner 3-Outside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control temper in conflict situations Respond immediately when teacher or adult calls
O Own Your Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay calm Control your actions Be truthful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect materials Stay calm Control your actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the space as instructed by your teachers Stay calm Control your actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean up after yourself Stay calm Control your actions Wait patiently in line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take care of your own business and return to class promptly Flush the toilet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control your actions Follow the rules of the game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to and follow bus rules Stay calm Control your actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring to school and take home all necessary materials Arrive on time Stay calm Control your actions
A Act Safely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep your hands, feet, and objects to yourself Follow the directions given for drills & emergency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow the directions given for drills & emergency Keep your hands, feet, and objects to yourself Face forward and walk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk Clean up after yourself, including papers and pencils Push your chair or bench seating in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep your hands, feet, and food to yourself Keep your area clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep school supplies out of the bathroom Wash hands with soap Throw away trash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay in your assigned area Use equipment correctly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remain seated Be alert and watch for your stop Keep hands and feet to yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay in your assigned area Pay attention and listen to the adults
R Rise to the Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperate with others Give your best effort Try first, then ask for help Keep a positive attitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be a role model to other students Report problems and unsafe behaviors to an adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be a role model to other students while using the area Complete the task to the best of your ability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use manners Include everyone at your lunch table Help clean up your table area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report problems and unsafe behaviors to teacher Help keep the area clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include others in your activities Report problems and unsafe behaviors to the teacher Resolve the conflict peacefully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the right thing Use positive words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the right thing Be a role model to other students while using the area

Blue River Elementary School Staff Roster 2024-25

Principal:	Melissa Blevins	Art:	Danielle Thorup
		Music:	Lindsay Prater
Office Staff:	Laura Stroud	P.E.:	Savannah Reece
	Amanda Lyons	Spanish:	Mark Lange
		Counselor:	Kala Pelate
Kindergarten:	Sara Bastemeyer	Librarian:	Erin Feldmann
	Lisa Culbertson	Reading:	Jennifer Duke
	Kristin Masten	Nurse:	Jennifer Barlows
	Chris Nichols	Occupational Therapist:	Mallory Hickey
First Grade:	Caroline Breckenridge	Psychologist:	Jodi Gagnon
	Natalie Lemanski	Gifted:	Clayton Prater
	Lizzy Sindelar	Speech:	Becki Healy
	Greyson Woerpel	Speech (.2):	Jenifer Colligan
Second Grade:	Susan Conway	Resource:	Bethany Almloff
	Sarah Hickey	Resource:	Christine Woods
	Carrie Lahey	Resource:	Tonya Hilliard
Third Grade:	Samantha Brekke	Resource:	Ashley Giebler
	Brenda Lundeen	Resource:	Katie Mandracchia
	Lexi Weber	ESOL:	Michelle Tomlen
	Chloe Hart	SER:	Kia Warren
Fourth Grade:	Liz Dolan	Computer Para:	Bree Hansen
	Kylee Kopatich	Reading Support Para:	Radmila Dahlstrom
	Natalie Washington	Math Support Para:	LeeAnn Ramahi
	Rachel Williams	Special Ed. Para:	Julie Castor
Fifth Grade:	Amanda Akridge	Special Ed. Para:	Jennifer Dunton
	Bethany Berry	Special Ed. Para:	Janet Hurt
	Delia Shepard	Special Ed. Para:	Kelly Thomas
	Anne Sobba	P/T SPED Para-Int.:	Ketaki Ghanekar (am)
Social Worker:	Suzy Rein	P/T SPED Para-Int.:	Kathryn O'Brien (pm)
Inst. Design Coach:	Jill Lange	SPED Para-Int.:	Ambar Flores
Building Sub:	Karen Schmidt	SPED Para-Int.:	Kathy Tripp
P/T Lunch Para:	Beth Newcomer-job share	SPED Para-Int.:	Farhana Rahman
P/T Lunch Para:	Jessica Butler Bell-job share	SPED Para-Int.:	Christy Svoboda
P/T Lunch Para:	Erin Lawson	SER Para:	Irea Brown
P/T Building Para:	Laura Geary	SER Para:	Alonna Speer
P/T Building Para:	Stacy Ahlrichs		
Custodians:	William Dotson (day)	Maria Avila (night)	
	Josh Hall (Lead)		

Blue River Lunch Schedule 2024-2025

Grade	Lunch Time	Classes	Drop Off	Pick Up
KDG	10:30-11:00	Bastemeyer/Nichols	10:30-10:40-FB	10:40-11:00-Cafe
		Culbertson/Masten	10:30-10:50-Cafe	10:50-11:00-FB
1st Grade	11:00-11:30	Breckenridge/Lemanski	11:00-11:10-FB	11:10-11:30-Cafe
		Sindelar/Woerpel	11:00-11:20-Cafe	11:20-11:30-FB
2nd Grade	11:30-12:00	Conway/Hickey	11:30-11:40-FB	11:40-12:00-Cafe
		Lahey	11:30-11:50-Cafe	11:50-12:00-FB
3rd Grade	12:00-12:30	Brekke/Hart	12:00-12:10-FB	12:10-12:30-Cafe
		Lundeen/Weber	12:00-12:20-Cafe	12:20-12:30-FB
4th Grade	12:30-1:00	Dolan/Kopatich	12:30-12:40-FB	12:40-1:00-Cafe
		Washington/Williams	12:30-12:50-Cafe	12:50-1:00-FB
5th Grade	1:00-1:30	Berry/Shepard	1:00-1:10-FB	1:10-1:30-Cafe
		Akridge/Sobba	1:00-1:20-Cafe	1:20-1:30-FB

FB = Fitness Break Cafe = lunch (eating) time

Recess Schedule 2024-2025

Recess		
KDG	9:30-9:45	12:45-1:00
1st	10:00-10:15	2:30-2:45
2nd	10:15-10:30	1:30-1:45
3rd	9:45-10:00	2:15-2:30
4th	9:15-9:30	2:00-2:15
5th	11:00-11:15	2:45-3:00

Absences: Please call the absence line at 913-239-6005 if your child will not be at school. To request homework you will need to email the teacher directly by noon. The information left on the absence line is for attendance purposes only and does not go to the teacher.

In the event that you take a family vacation during the school year please understand that teaching staff cannot forecast every lesson they will complete while you are away, Therefore, missed assignments will be available upon a student's return to school. Please do not request assignments in advance as this places additional work on the classroom teacher.

Arrival: The first bell rings at 8:30 and that is when students will be allowed to enter the building. Staff members are not on duty prior to 8:30. The bell signaling the start of school is 8:40. All students arriving after 8:40 need to be escorted into the office and signed in. The tardy will not be excused if the student is not escorted in by a parent.

If you bring your child to school in the morning you have two choices:

1. You may pull into the school and stay in the right lane and drop your students off at the curb. They need to exit to the right and **NOT** get out of the car on the left side. Other cars are passing by and could hit your child. If your child cannot exit to the right, or you have to get out of the car to assist your child, please park in the parking lot and walk them across the street.
2. If you would rather avoid the line of cars in the drop off lane you can park your car in the parking lot and walk your child across the street. You may not pull into the parking lot, drop off your children, and have them walk across on their own.

Bicycles, Scooters, Skateboards and Roller Blades: Students may ride bikes and scooters to school, however, we recommend they lock them on the bike rack as we have had several instances of theft with scooters and bikes. While we will work diligently to assist in finding lost/stolen items, we are not responsible for them. Skateboards, roller blades and electric scooters may not be ridden to school for safety reasons.

Birthday Treats: Birthdays are very special times for our children. This school year we are trying to celebrate birthdays without edible treats. Many parents have raised a concern about the excess sugar their kiddos are getting in the form of birthday treats throughout the year. This, coupled with the increase in food allergies that has sometimes made it difficult for parents to know what to bring, has caused us to reexamine how we address honoring and celebrating birthdays. We would like to avoid food related birthday treats this year. Several teachers tried this last year with success. Instead, teachers will offer the students other ways to celebrate their special day so they can be honored and feel special to their peers.

Below are just a few examples of choices students might be given:

- special privilege (line leader, teacher helper, choose seat)
- drawing for a coupon to have a special activity
- five minutes of extra class recess (this one has made the birthday kiddo quite popular!)
- time in class to play a game as a class
- free homework pass
- sit in the teacher's chair all day
- show and tell coupon
- choose a brain break for the class
- wear a birthday hat
- birthday book-everyone signs a book for the birthday child and that person gets to take it home
- special letter-everyone writes the birthday child a letter and they get to take them home

These are a few examples to show that we really want to honor each child's birthday but that maybe doing it without a cookie cake will reduce some parent stress and give students a choice on how they would like to celebrate.

Building Security: All exterior doors at BRE will be locked during the school day and all visitors, including families, will need to use the buzz-in entry system. Visitors will be asked to use the outside intercom and security camera to show their government-issued ID or Blue Valley Schools Photo Identification Badge and share the purpose of their visit before being "buzzed in." Once inside, visitors will continue to sign in at the office and wear a visitor badge while in the school.

Main entrance doors will be unlocked for a short period of time during arrival and dismissal. Staff are asked to assist with building security by making sure all doors to the outside stay closed and locked throughout the day.

All staff are required to wear a Blue Valley Schools Photo Identification Badge while onsite at any district facility. Staff members who misplace or damage their badge will need to contact the Safety and Security Department at District Office to secure a replacement.

Student personal devices (cell phones & smart watches): In an effort to provide the most effective learning spaces possible, the following guidelines are in effect concerning personal cell phones and associated personal technology devices (CP/PTD) at the elementary school level: CP/PTDs are defined as any device designed for personal communication, digital information transfer, or electronic gaming/play. CP/PTDs are not allowed to be in use by elementary school students during the school day. The school day is defined as anytime the student is on campus property on a day in which school is in session. CP/PTDs are to be kept in backpacks out of sight and are to be powered off. Should the need arise for a student to contact parents during the school day, the main office phone or the classroom phone should be used for such a call. Should the need arise for parents to contact their child, the main office phone should be used for such a call. CP/PTDs may be used by the student at the request of the classroom teacher or other staff members. CP/PTDs used to monitor identified student health needs such as blood sugar levels are allowed and must be approved by the principal.

Delivery of Items to School: It is natural that students may occasionally forget items which they need at school. If you are bringing items to school for your children please bring them to the front office. Our school secretaries will determine the most appropriate time to deliver the item to the classroom teacher in order to minimize classroom interruptions.

Discipline: Students at Blue River are expected to follow the virtues and be respectful of adults and peers at all times while at school. Teachers have classroom expectations as well as consequences and rewards for behavior. The principal will intervene when students prove they cannot follow classroom expectations or if they have issues throughout the building,

The Blue Valley School district has policies adopted by the Board of Education related to unacceptable behavior and consequences up to, and including, suspension. We work very diligently with students to modify inappropriate behavior and assist them through the process of making appropriate choices. However, if this is not possible, the board policy will be followed.

Dismissal:

- Bus riders will be called to report to the gym as their bus arrives at BRE.
- Walkers will be called to exit the doors on the far side of the music room by all of the benches by 3:42pm.
- Students being picked up in the courtyard (where the benches are) will be dismissed around 3:45 pm.
- Students being picked up in the car line will be called as the parent arrives. Please place the provided sign (it will be sent home with your child the first day of school) that displays your last name in your front window so that staff on duty can quickly call for your child. Please remember, school ends at 3:45pm.

Again, parents have two choices regarding dismissal:

- You may wait in the car line that forms to the right. Students will enter the car the same way they exit in the morning. Once the line gets moving, it doesn't take as long as you might think.
- If you choose not to wait in the carline, you may park in the parking lot and walk across the street to pick up your children. You cannot pull up in the parking lot and have your children cross the street and get in the car, Also, you may not bypass the car line, pull up closer to the middle school and have your child meet you there. This is unsafe and not fair to those parents following the established procedure. We have completed dismissal every day thus far by 4:00pm so it really does go smoothly if everyone follows these guidelines. Please remember to pick your children up on time, Thanks for your cooperation. **Please always come to the office to sign students out early.**

Dismissal Changes: Your children should know how they are getting home before they ever leave the house in the morning. This avoids the many phone calls students make at the end of the day, stating they're calling to see how they should get home or checking to see if they can go home with someone else. We tell them those decisions have to be made in the morning before they leave home.

If, however, you have to change the normal after school procedure in the case of an emergency, those calls need to be made to the office (913-239-6000) **before 3:00**. It gets extremely busy in the office between 3:00-3:45 and the secretaries have their hands full. It is very difficult to get the correct message to the correct teacher when everyone is preparing for dismissal. Additionally, if you have a dismissal change, please call the office as opposed to sending an

e-mail to the teacher or secretaries. The staff does not always have the time to check e-mail throughout the day and the message may not get to your child.

Dress: Dress and grooming should be neat, clean and in good taste so as not to interfere with the teaching/learning process or create a risk to health and safety. We do request that t-shirts carrying negative messages not be worn. Shirts should cover the stomach and have straps. Comfortable play clothes are fine for most school activities.

Tennis shoes are required for safety in P.E. classes. We encourage them for school since all students have a fitness break and a recess each day. Flip flops can be dangerous, especially those with heels. Ankles can easily be twisted from the flip flop coming off. Wheel shoes can be worn but the wheel part cannot be used at any time at school or on the playground.

E-Mail: E-mail has become our primary means of communication. Please be sure you have given us all of the e-mail addresses you wish to receive email on so you stay up to date on all communications. Please try to check email daily for updates. I will also use this tool for emergency information in the event it is needed. If you have not been getting emails from me, please call the office so we can get your e-mail address or send you a paper copy of notifications,

Fundraisers: The PTO works diligently to keep fundraisers to a minimum. However, we have many scout groups, committees, and other school groups who engage in community service projects to benefit various charities. We know that families cannot support every effort nor do we have an expectation that you will do so. Please feel free to participate in causes close to your heart and know that we appreciate your assistance.

Inclement Weather: Because of the role humidity plays in this area, it is difficult to give an exact degree setting that should keep students in the building rather than outside for recess or physical education. The following guidelines will be followed when it comes to student participation in outdoor activities:

- If the temperature/heat index reaches 100 degrees, recess and P.E. will be held inside. Temperatures upwards of 95 will be monitored.
- If the temperature/wind chill is below 0, students will be kept inside. If the temperature is in the teens or below, recess will be monitored and might be shortened. Students should always dress appropriately for the current weather conditions.

- If the weather should turn snowy/icy during the school day please watch your email where we will update you of any dismissal changes. However, the district rule of thumb is that the students are safer here at school than to be dismissed early. You are welcome to pick your children up if you would feel more comfortable, but rarely does the district call school early.
- If a bad thunderstorm (lightning/hail) hits at dismissal we will keep the students in the building until the threat of bad weather passes. Again, we will keep you abreast of any changes via email and text.

Lunch: You are welcome to come to school and have lunch with your child whenever you would like after Labor Day. Please sign in at the office. We ask that you eat lunch with your child but allow them to go outside for the fitness break with their class. The socialization that takes place at this time between friends is important and, if parents are there, they tend to stay with their parents and not play with their friends. When eating lunch with your child, you are welcome to sit outside in front of the school on the picnic tables or in the breezeway between the elementary and middle school.

Middle School Students: If you have middle school students at home, please remind them that they are not allowed to come to BRE after school. If they need to use the phone, they need to use the middle school phone before leaving the building. The teachers at BRE are still teaching and cannot stop to talk to the middle school students. If they need to pick up elementary siblings, they need to wait outside on the landing for the elementary students to be dismissed.

Pets: Please refrain from bringing your pets to school at arrival/dismissal or when entering the school. Some students are very allergic and others are afraid of animals. Even the friendliest pets can get anxious around so much commotion and have been known to nip at someone when you never expected they were capable of doing so.

Safety Drills/Emergency Procedures: Fire drills are held four times per year. Tornado drills are held two times per year. We also have LockDown drills that allow us to plan for a situation when staff/students should remain in the building or the classroom. We hold these drills monthly.

Each classroom has an emergency kit in the event of a situation where students cannot get to the nurse. Staff reviews emergency procedures yearly. We also have a crisis team that will organize in the event of an emergency.

Emergency Safety Interventions (ESI)

ESI Board Policy

Emergency Safety Interventions (ESI) refers to the use of seclusion or physical restraint. District personnel may use seclusion and/or physical restraint only when less restrictive alternatives were determined by a school employee to be inappropriate or ineffective, and when a student's behavior presents an immediate danger to self or others. Violent actions that are destructive of property may necessitate the use of ESI. The use of ESI shall stop as soon as the immediate danger of physical harm ceases to exist.

Staff Members: From time to time many of you have asked about teachers' likes and dislikes in order to remember them on special occasions. This especially happens during Staff Appreciation Week and holidays. Your PTO has developed a sheet that staff members have filled out that lists favorite snacks, drinks, candy, restaurants, etc. A copy of the "favorites" list can be found on the BRE website, on the front page under Parent Quick Links. It is also found under the parent tab, then handbook. Here is a link to the page for faster access: [BRE Staff Favorites](#)

Visitors: Please remember to bring your government issued identification card (driver's license, passport, etc.) when coming to school for any purpose.