

T.C. Miller Elementary School for Innovation



Parent/Student Handbook 2023-24 **#TCMSOARS**

Telephone (434) 515-5300

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**T.C. Miller Elementary
Faculty and Staff 2023-24**

Principal	Christen Rhodes
Secretary	Lisa Ortiz
School Counselor	Courtney Hudson
Instructional Coach	Kristin Smith
School Nurse	Clara Pieteron
Behavior Coach	Damien Hubbard
Kindergarten	*Sara Howell
	Mckenna Flint
	Rebecca Thompson
	Theresa Robey
First Grade	*Cathy Webb
	Brittany Murdock
Second Grade	*Beth Brown
	Daja Foxx
Third Grade	*Samantha Cecil
	Julia Patterson
Fourth Grade	*Madeline Smyczek
	TBD
Fifth Grade	*Michaela Salerno
	Kimberly Norman
Resource Staff	*Lauren Hoffman
	Kelly Marroquin
Music Teacher	Angie Coleman
Strings Teacher	Bill Claytor
Art Teacher	TBD
STREAM Teacher	Rachel Parr
Movement Education Teacher	Chelsea Poole
Media Specialist	Berkley Simmons
Title 1 Literacy Teacher/Coach	Rebecca Scott
Title 1 Reading Teacher	Victoria Marroquin
Reading Intervention	Shannon Nivens
Custodial Staff	*Dora Landa
	Quentin Stephens
	Sara Bateman
Cafeteria Staff	Tami Abbit

T.C. Miller Elementary School for Innovation Parent/Student Handbook 2023-24

This handbook has been developed in coordination with the division-wide Parent/Student Handbook. We encourage you to read both handbooks carefully. Together, they are comprehensive resource guides. Parents are also encouraged to visit the school often so that they will have a better understanding of the total school program.

The T.C. Miller Community

T.C. Miller Elementary School's address is: 600 Mansfield Avenue Lynchburg VA 24501

The T. C. Miller Elementary School for Innovation student population is made up of both zoned students and invited students. TCM's zone includes the neighborhood around the school. The community's interest in education is evidenced by its desire for quality education for its children and by its willingness to make available resources to enhance the educational opportunities for all students.

Vision Statement

The Vision Statement of T.C. Miller Elementary School for Innovation is that we are: "A unique place for all to Learn, Lead, and Soar!"

Priorities

1. English, mathematics, science, and social studies comprise the core curriculum.
2. Students shall function at or above grade level expectations in English and math.
3. Students shall show an annual improvement in all areas of instruction based on scores on SOL tests, standardized tests, and teacher-made tests.
4. Students shall be instructed according to their academic needs and levels of achievement.
5. In all instructional areas, instruction shall be consistent with the school's philosophy, goals, and priorities.

Organizational Structure

Resource – Reading and special education resource teachers work with students identified as having special needs.

Music, Art, Stream, and Movement Education – The school has the services of a vocal music teacher, a violin teacher, a movement education teacher, a STREAM teacher, and an art teacher.

Counselor – A full-time school counselor is available for counseling, student support, and career education awareness. The form to exclude your child from personal/social counseling is available in the counselor office.

Library Program – Students are scheduled to check out books on a regular basis. This time allows the librarian to help students with book selection and skills related to the library.

Gifted Program - Gifted services are available to identified students in all schools. All schools offer accelerated and advanced classes and various enrichment activities. The primary intent when educating students is to provide each student with sufficient challenge and opportunities in the specific academic area of his or her giftedness. Teachers working with gifted students must differentiate the content, process, and products of instruction for their gifted students while at the same time ensuring that students meet the minimum content standards of the Virginia Standards of Learning.

Policies Related to Students

Arrival and Dismissal

The school day begins at 8:35 a.m. Students who walk or are brought by automobile should not arrive before 8:20 a.m., unless special arrangements have been made with the principal. If students arrive after 8:40 a.m., they will be considered tardy and should report to the office to ensure he/she is counted present. The school day ends at 3:35 p.m. Students leaving prior to 3:35 p.m. must be signed out in the office before being dismissed from class. No student will be released to the care of anyone other than the custodial parent(s) or guardian unless written permission is submitted to the principal or his designee.

Personal Property/Money

Students are prohibited from bringing toys, games, etc. to school. They are discouraged from bringing money to school except for money needed for a specific school related purchase. Any money or personal property brought to school by a student is the responsibility of the student and not the staff of the school. At no time should money be left in a cubby or desks, but on the person of the student. All personal items such as coats, hats, lunch boxes etc., should be labeled with the child's name in some manner.

Dress Code

Students are expected to dress appropriately for a K-5 educational environment. Any clothing that interferes with or disrupts the educational environment is unacceptable.

Clothing with language or images that are vulgar, discriminatory, obscene, or clothing that promotes illegal or violent conduct, such as the unlawful use of weapons, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or drug paraphernalia or clothing that contains threats such as gang symbols is prohibited.

Clothing should conform to standards of safety and be appropriate for the learning environment. Clothing that does not meet these standards includes the following:

- Loose fitting clothing that could cause safety hazards
- Flip-flops and other footwear that are tripping hazards or injury risks
- Clothing that exposes an excessive amount of bare skin
- Hats and other head coverings, unless for religious or health purposes

Parent(s)/guardian(s) of students requiring accommodation for religious beliefs, disabilities, or other good causes should contact the principal. Students not complying with this policy will be asked to cover the non-complying clothing or change clothes.

School Property/Property of Others

Pupils are expected to care for textbooks, library books, and any equipment or materials at their disposal. If any item entrusted to a pupil's care should be lost or damaged, an appropriate fee will be charged. If a lost item is found and returned, the pupil shall be reimbursed. Students are also expected to respect the property of others. Willful damage to another student's property can result in the requirement of restitution for damages incurred.

Student Conduct

It is the school's responsibility to provide each student with the maximum opportunity to acquire an education. No student has the right to interfere with this opportunity by his/her lack of consideration of others; therefore, students are expected to be responsible for their own behavior. Each student should place personal emphasis on the development of respect for self, respect for adults, respect for other students, and respect for property. Each student should practice good citizenship by:

1. Accepting the leadership of teachers, the administration, and other staff members.

2. Taking care of school property and equipment.
3. Using only acceptable language and never using profane or vulgar language.
4. Continually showing the proper respect for the rights of other people.
5. Completing assigned work on time.
6. Being attentive in class and becoming involved with the activities of the class.
7. Walking in the school building before, during, and after school.

There are three major rules that are mandatory for all students at T.C. Miller Elementary School. Violation of these rules may result in disciplinary action by the school staff, which may include suspension in accordance with School Board Policy JFC.

1. Students should keep hands, feet, and other objects to themselves. Fighting is not allowed.
2. Students should be respectful to adults. Rudeness and disobedience are not acceptable.
3. A student may not destroy another student's opportunity to learn. Class disruption will result in removal from class and/or school.

Students may not bring toys, collectable cards, tapes, music players, game systems, etc. to school. Please discuss this with your child.

***Please read the Lynchburg City Schools Parent/Student Handbook. This handbook contains crucial information regarding policies on assault, drugs and alcohol, use of tobacco products, weapons, and student suspension/expulsion.**

Emergency/Safety Drills

Fire Drills: Two fire drills will be conducted during the first 20 days of school with at least two additional drills occurring over the course of the year.

Lock-Down Drills: Two lock-down drills will occur during the first 20 days of school with two additional drills taking place later in the year. Lock-down plans and drills are in compliance with the Statewide Fire Prevention Code, Va. Code § 27-94 et seq.

School Bus Emergency Drills: An emergency bus evacuation drill will take place during the first 90 days of school. Additional practice drills may occur if necessary.

Tornado Drills: Each school will participate in at least one tornado drill during the 2023-24 school year.

It is important that students participate in all practice drills as if a real emergency were taking place. Students should remain quiet during the drills and follow all instructions given by the teacher.

Accidents/Student Illnesses

In case of an emergency, first aid is given by the school health assistant or other trained personnel. In all cases of serious accident or illness, every effort will be made to contact a parent or guardian. **Please contact the school office to ensure your telephone numbers are up-to-date (434) 515-5300.** If we cannot reach you, we will use the emergency contact information you have provided.

The clinic cannot administer any medication without permission from a physician. The clinic is for emergencies and brief waiting periods. A student too sick to stay in the classroom needs to be at home. It is the parent's responsibility to see that his/her child gets home if the child becomes ill at school.

Use of School Telephones

Please make arrangements for after-school activities prior to coming to school each day. Student messages are discouraged. **Students may not be pulled from class to receive nor make a telephone call except in cases of an emergency.** Parents wishing to speak with their child's teacher should call before 8:35 a.m. or

after 3:35 p.m. It is very difficult for teachers to leave their classrooms during the instructional day. We appreciate your cooperation in regard to this matter.

Conferences

Communication is the key to success. No form or written report is as effective as a conference with your child's teacher. You may request a conference by contacting your child's teacher or calling the office to make an appointment. The most effective conferences are those that are scheduled in advance.

Student Attendance

Lynchburg City Schools believes that school attendance is directly related to academic achievement and to the development of good habits that are important in the work world. Optimum student attendance is a cooperative effort, and Lynchburg City Schools expects parents and students to take active roles in accepting that responsibility.

The principal will ensure that teachers are accountable for checking and documenting attendance daily; communicating and documenting contact with a student's parents, school counselor, and administrator if poor attendance is affecting the student's performance; and accurately verifying regular attendance reports. Reasonable efforts to notify a parent or guardian will be made when a student has an unexcused absence.

Compulsory school attendance is required by the Code of Virginia § 22.1-254. The Code states that every parent or guardian having control or charge of any student five to 18 years old shall be responsible for such student's regular punctual attendance at school. School attendance is the responsibility of the students and their parent(s) or guardian. At the elementary level, attendance will be documented daily.

A. Absences

1. Excused absences will only be granted for the following reasons:
 - a. Personal illness
 - b. Personal required court appearance with documentation from the court
 - c. Death or serious illness in immediate family as defined by Administrative Regulation 5-38. Principal will also consider each individual case and any extenuating circumstances
 - d. Medical condition or appointment verified by a note from a medical professional or dentist
 - e. Religious holiday
 - f. Conditions beyond the control of the student, parent/guardian, or the school as approved by the school administration
2. While absences are excused, they will still count against the number of days out as noted in section C. 1.
3. Unexcused absences are those that result from the following:
 - a. Any absence that does not meet the conditions of an excused absence.
 - b. Absences will be unexcused if notes signed by the parent or guardians are not received by the school within two school days of the student's return to school even if the parent or guardian has called. E-mail will not be accepted for a note.
 - c. Any absence that is the result of a suspension from school is unexcused. Individual disciplinary suspensions exceeding three days will only count as three days with reference to this policy. A five-day suspension, therefore, would count as only three days of unexcused absence.
4. An approved school-sponsored event will not be counted as an absence.
5. Students who do not complete one-half of their school day will be counted as absent. Whether such absence will be deemed excused or unexcused shall be determined by the criteria set forth in sections A. 1. and A. 2.

6. Pre-planned Absences

- a. The parent/guardian must request approval in writing for pre-planned absence by filing a request in advance with the principal/designee. **Principals may grant approval for pre-planned absences up to five days per student during the school year. These absences would be excused only if they meet the definition of any excused absence in Section A.** Students are expected to make up missed work. Such requests will be signed and filed by the principal/designee. Planned absences of this nature are highly discouraged as they could adversely affect student performance. While absences may be approved, they will still count against the number of days out as noted in section
- b. If approval for more than five days is sought, a petition must be filed with the superintendent or his designee. If approved, these absences would be excused. Students are expected to make up missed work. Planned absences of this nature are highly discouraged as they could adversely affect student performance. While absences are excused, they will still count against the number of days out as noted in section C.

7. Procedures for documenting a student's absence by a parent or guardian

- a. Upon a student's return to school, the student shall bring a note signed by the parent/guardian to explain the reasons for the absence and the dates of the absence. The school should receive the note on the day of the student's return to school.
- b. Absences will be unexcused if notes are not received by the school within **two** school days of the student's return to school even if the parent has called.

8. Make-up Work

- a. Elementary school teachers will provide assignments upon the student's return to school.
- b. All work must be completed within three school days from return to school or as agreed upon with the teacher/principal.
- c. If a student has been absent three or more excused consecutive days, a parent may request assignments. The assignments should be available at the end of the school day following that request depending upon teacher availability.
- d. Students have the opportunity and are encouraged to complete make-up work regardless of the reason for the absence.

B. Tardiness or Early Dismissal

1. In all cases of tardiness to school or early dismissals, students must present that day a written note from a parent/guardian to the school stating the reason for the tardiness or early dismissal. Excused tardies/early dismissals are granted only for the following reasons:
 - a. Personal illness (written excuses should contain a description of the illness)
 - b. Personal required court appearance with documentation from the court
 - c. Death or serious illness in immediate family as defined by Administrative Regulation 5-38. Principal will also consider each individual case and any extenuating circumstances
 - d. Medical condition or appointment verified by a medical professional or dentist
 - e. Religious holiday
 - f. Conditions beyond the control of the student, parent/guardian, or the school as approved by the school administration
2. When tardy, the student must report to the school office with a parent to obtain a pass to class.
3. Students who accumulate a combination of five unexcused tardies or early dismissals per semester will receive an overnight suspension/mandatory parent conference. In addition,

students could face further disciplinary action or other sanctions after each subsequent tardy or early dismissal.

4. Students who arrive late or leave early are missing instructional time. When possible, appointments need to be scheduled so that they do not conflict with school hours. Students who do not complete one-half of their school day will be counted as absent. Whether such absence will be deemed excused or unexcused shall be determined by the criteria set forth in section A.

C. Truancy – Elementary Schools and Middle Schools – All Absences

1. If a student is absent five days (unexcused) during the year or 12 days (excused or unexcused) for the year, the parents will be sent a letter, which will indicate an attendance problem. If possible, the principal/designee will make a reasonable effort to ensure that direct contact is made with the parent, either in person or through telephone conversation, to obtain an explanation for the pupil's absence and to explain to the parent the consequences of continued nonattendance.

2. If a student is absent six days (unexcused) for the year or 15 days (excused or unexcused) for the year, the school may notify the parent/guardian and the student that they need to attend a truancy review conference. An overnight suspension may be used to ensure the appearance of the parents but only after other efforts to set up the conference have failed.

- a. If these attempts to improve attendance, including truancy conference participation, are not successful, a referral could be made to the Department of Student Services.
- b. The Department of Student Services will review the truancy referrals, contact parents and make the appropriate referrals to the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. A letter from the city attorney's office will be sent to the parent.
- c. The Interagency Truancy Review Team will meet with the parent and students to develop recommendations prior to the case being heard by the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. These recommendations are forwarded to the court for consideration.
- d. A doctor's note may be required for students who have excessive absences.

3. Students who are absent 16 days for the year (excused or unexcused) may be referred to Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court, court services unit, and/or Lynchburg Department of Social Services.

4. The 16-day limitation for the year will refer to all types of absences. There may be extenuating circumstances which could create an extension to the 15-day limit, i.e., extended illness with verification from a doctor, death in the family, etc.; however, all extensions must be approved by the principal. Where extensions are granted, the principal will impose a probationary contract which will strictly limit further absences for the semester.

5. A referral will be made to the Department of Student Services if a student has seven unexcused absences. The Department of Student Services will follow the procedures listed in C.2.b. and C.2.c. above.

6. Students absent 15 consecutive days from school are dropped from the school's attendance roll. The principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to notify the parent/guardian by telephone and in writing that the student has been dropped from the roll (VAC10-110-13). The school shall notify the Department of Student Services when a student is withdrawn because of 15 consecutive days of unexcused absences.

Weapons

Students are **prohibited** from **bringing weapons or look-alike weapons** to school. Should students ignore this instruction, they would be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in School Board Policy JFCD.

Grading Scale

All classroom teachers are responsible for the grading and evaluation of his/her student's achievement in class.

Grades K - 2:

E = Exceeds the Standard (student demonstrates knowledge and skill 94 percent or more of the time)

M = Meets the Standards (student demonstrates knowledge and skill 80 percent or more of the time)

P = Partially Meets the Standard (student demonstrates knowledge and skill 70 percent or more of the time)

U = Unsuccessful in Meeting Standard (student demonstrates knowledge and skills less than 70 percent)

All other areas in grades K-5 (handwriting, art, music, movement education, technology and character/conduct) will use the following evaluation:

S = Successful

I = Improving

NY = Not Yet Successful

Grades 3 - 5:

The following grading scale will be used in grade levels 3-12 for all students:

A = 90 – 100

B = 80 – 89

C = 70 – 79

D = 60 – 69

F = 59 and below

Approved by School Board: June 19, 2012

Quarter and Report Card Schedule 2023-24

	Interims	End of Quarter	Distribute Report Cards
1 st Quarter	9/20/23	10/19/23	10/27/23
2 nd Quarter	12/1/23	1/12/24	1/19/24
3 rd Quarter	2/16/24	3/15/24	3/22/24
4 th Quarter	5/1/24	5/31/24	5/31/24

Infinite Campus

As part of our continued effort to provide parents and guardians with information about their student's progress, Lynchburg City Schools utilizes an online parent portal called Infinite Campus. Infinite Campus is a single source for parents to track student data including contact information, schedules, attendance, grades, and notifications. Please contact the school to get your activation key.

Homework

A major goal of the Lynchburg City Schools is to assist students in becoming committed to the process of learning. Learning is not restricted to the classroom but is a continuous process occurring every day. Homework and home study are vital components of a student's education. A scheduled time and a quiet place for your child to complete his/her homework will help ensure your child's success in elementary school. The time spent structuring and supporting your child's work at home will help build solid study habits that will lead to their educational success.

The basic objective of homework is the reinforcement and application of previously learned concepts and skills. Therefore, homework assignments will be designed to reinforce and apply knowledge that has already been introduced and explained in the classroom.

At T.C. Miller Elementary School, homework is assigned Monday through Thursday and occasionally on Friday when teachers feel a need. In grades K-2, homework should not usually exceed thirty minutes. In grades 3-5, homework should not usually exceed an hour. In addition to nightly assignments, students may be given long-term projects requiring some overnight work. Throughout the year, elementary school parents are asked to review homework to ensure their children have put forth their best efforts. To strengthen each child's reading ability; parents are requested to have their children read from library books for at least fifteen minutes each night and for 30 minutes on the weekend.

School Lunches

T.C. Elementary School for Innovation will be implementing an option available to schools participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs called the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).

All T.C. Elementary students are eligible to receive a healthy breakfast and lunch at **no charge**. Children will have the opportunity to receive these meals without having to pay a fee or submit a meal application. Students will be charged for additional meal servings or "Smart Snacks" sold during lunch.

Lost and Found

Items that are found by students are to be turned into the coat rack outside of the cafeteria. Students who have lost items should check there periodically to determine if the item has been found.

Traffic Patterns

Consistent flow of traffic during arrival and dismissal times is crucial for the safety of students and patrons. Buses unload and load in front of the school from 8:15 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. **No other vehicles should be in the bus line and loading/unloading zone during these times.** Parents who bring students to and from school should drop and pick up students in the car rider loop, which starts at the bottom of the parking lot and continues to the back of the school building. Parents who bring their children to school in the morning who need to enter the building for a meeting or to volunteer should also stay out of the bus line and park in a designated parking space and enter through the front of the school.

School Security

For safety and security purposes, anyone entering the building must sign in at the security desk or main office. Visitors and volunteers are asked to show photo identification and wear identification badges while in the building. The badge is to be worn where it is clearly visible. Anyone not wearing a badge will be questioned and directed to the main office. When leaving the building, visitors are asked to please sign out.

Visitors/Volunteers

Badges are required when volunteers are in the school visiting or volunteering for events other than assemblies and open houses. Classroom observations or tours should be scheduled through the building principal.

School Closings

In the event of inclement weather, LCS will communicate with families by email, phone, and text through School Messenger. Updates will also be shared on the LCS website at www.lcsedu.net, LCS social media pages, and through local media outlets.



PTO Organization 2023-2024

T.C. Miller Elementary School for Innovation has an active PTO. Parental input and involvement is encouraged and utilized. The executive board of the PTO serves as advisors to the school staff and manages the day-to-day operation of the organization.

Members include:

President: Mrs. Abby Skinner

Secretary: Mrs. Jaime Runnels

Treasurer: Mrs. Kelly Proebsting

Staff Representative: Mrs. Beth Brown (2nd grade)