

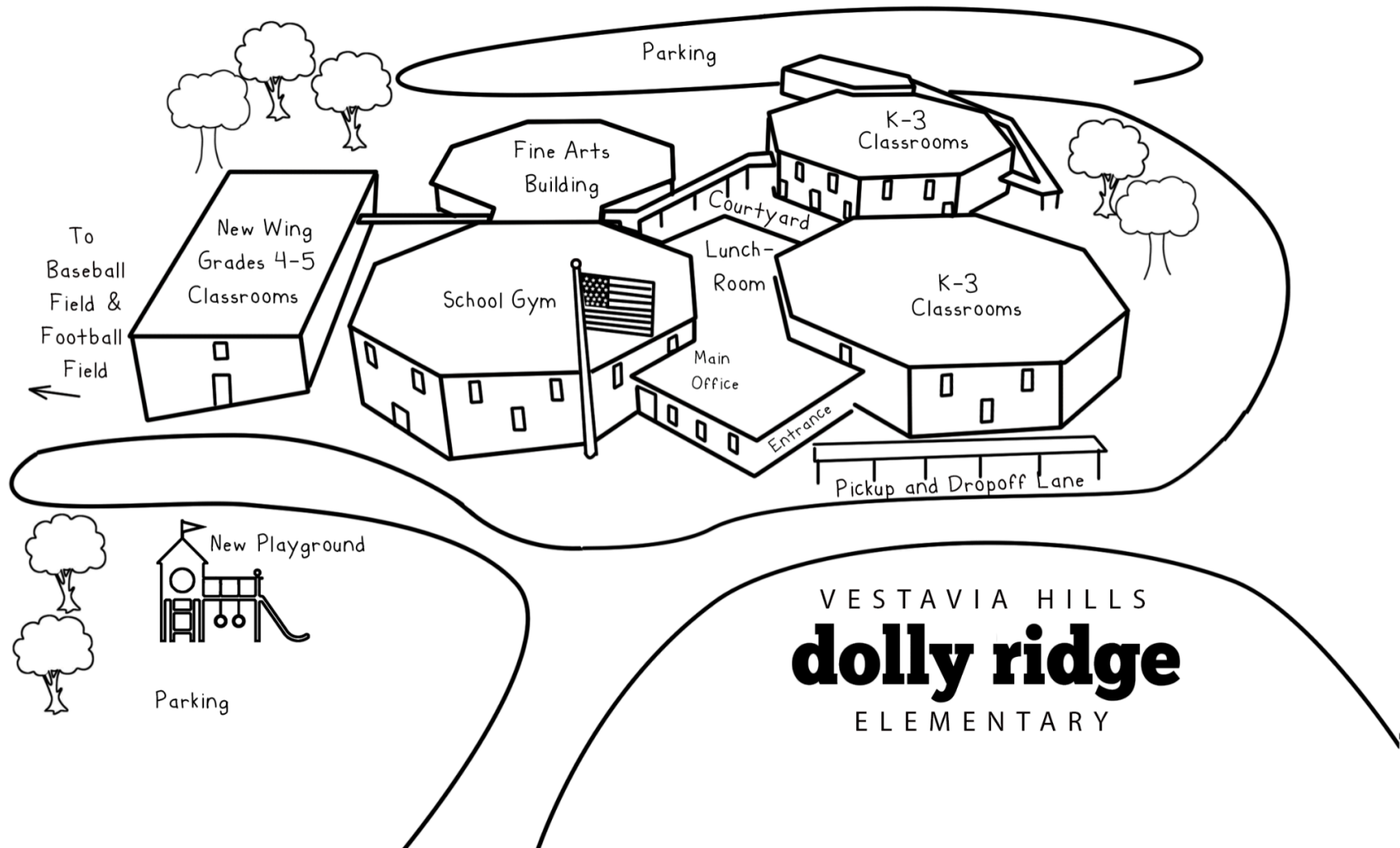


Parent Student Information 2024-2025

Telephone: 402-5325

The information contained in this book is subject to change during the school year. You will be notified of any changes when they occur.
This document is not intended to be comprehensive, and is meant to supplement the VHCS Student Handbook 2024-2025.

General Information



General Information

Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome to Vestavia Hills Elementary Dolly Ridge! We are pleased to present to you this VHEDR Parent-Student Information document. We hope that the information in this guide will be a valuable resource to you. Please read the information carefully with your child and use it as a reference during the school year.

The information contained in this book is subject to change during the school year. You will be notified of any changes when they occur. This document is not intended to be comprehensive, and is meant to supplement information in the VHCS Parent-Student Handbook -VHCS document for all VHCS parents and students.

The desire of our faculty is to work closely with parents and students to ensure fairness, understanding, and cooperation. This will help us achieve our mission which is to help students reach their potential. I am here to help you and I hope that you will not hesitate to let me know if I can help you in any way. We look forward to working with each of you. Thank you for being a part of the Dolly Ridge family!

Sincerely,

Ty Arendall, Ed.D.

Principal

Vestavia Hills Elementary Dolly Ridge

VESTAVIA HILLS CITY SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Vestavia Hills City Schools is to ensure each student learns without limits by pursuing knowledge and igniting curiosity about the world through a system distinguished by:

- A safe and nurturing environment
- The courage to be creative
- Unparalleled community support
- Appreciation of diversity
- Multiple paths to a bold future

STRATEGIES

Strategy I -We will provide multiple opportunities for students to choose pathways towards achieving their aspirations.

Strategy II -We will expose students to an array of opportunities to discover their unique gifts.

Strategy III -We will build staff capacity emphasizing individual responsibility.

Strategy IV -We will promote a dynamic of learning and teaching that promotes questioning and honors academic risk taking.

Strategy V -We will create a culture of inclusivity and respect.

Strategy VI -We will customize and create global learning environments to facilitate learning without constraints.

Strategy VII -We will intentionally cultivate reciprocal relationships within our community.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Every student will know, understand, and share his or her unique gifts.

Objective 2: 100% of students will possess confidence to lead positive change.

Objective 3: 100% of students will achieve personal aspirations at the next level.

Objective 4: 100% of students are emotionally secure.

General Information

Objective 5: Every student develops, owns, and exercises his or her personal set of values.

STRATEGIC PLAN BELIEF STATEMENTS

- Each person deserves to be safe.
- Diversity strengthens community.
- All people have the right to learn without limits.
- Succeeding is an intentional pursuit.
- Trusting relationships are the essence of a strong community.
- All people deserve respect.
- Every person has the responsibility to be a good steward of resources.
- Community service is a civic duty.
- Every voice deserves to be heard.
- Society is strengthened by educated people.
- A person's uniqueness is a gift.
- Work ethic builds character.
- Every person has value.
- Leading positive change is the mark of a thriving community.
- Faith is vital to one's life.
- Transparency inspires trust.
- Every person is responsible for his/her actions.
- Health and wellness are vital to quality of life.

CORE VALUES

The core values of Dolly Ridge define our school culture and guide all of our decisions. They were established with input from parents, students, teachers, and staff. We teach these core values explicitly to all of our students through lessons that were developed by our teachers. Students learn to recite the Dolly Ridge Promise along with hand gestures.

TOUCHSTONE:

Our touchstone is Dolly Ridge: A Place to Grow, which exemplifies our commitment to growth mindset, continual improvement, and our desire to leave a legacy for our students.



VESTAVIA HILLS ELEMENTARY DOLLY RIDGE PROCEDURES

APPOINTMENTS

Arrangements for appointments with teachers may be made by leaving a message with school office personnel or by contacting the teacher by email. The teacher or staff member with whom you wish to meet will return your call or email to make the appointment at his/her convenience. You may also have your child hand deliver a note requesting an appointment. The teacher will inform you in writing, by email, or by phone of an available conference time.

ARRIVAL

School doors open at 7:15. Children will wait in the gym (or may eat breakfast in the cafeteria) until 7:35 when students are dismissed to their classrooms.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

See VHCS Parent-Student Handbook 2024-2025

ADDRESS/TELEPHONE CHANGES

Changes in your home address or phone number should be reported to the school office. Any cell phone number change or change in your place of employment or employment phone number should also be reported to the school office so that we will be able to reach you in the event of an emergency. Always update contact information/numbers. This is essential especially in the event of an early dismissal from school.

CANCELLATION/EARLY DISMISSALS/DELAYED OPENINGS

School may be canceled or dismissed early due to weather or other emergency conditions. Students and parents are expected to plan in advance for this possibility and discuss what to do and where to go in this type of situation. The decision to cancel school, open late, or dismiss early will be determined by the school superintendent.

Procedures

We will take whatever measures are necessary to maintain everyone's safety. In that effort, we request that parents help us keep the school lines free by monitoring other sources of information about closings, so that we can make and receive contact from our Board of Education, civil services agencies, etc. Remember please add your carpool driver(s) to your child's checkout list.

If dangerous weather conditions (snow, icing) or other serious situations develop during school hours and the superintendent has closed school, VH Connect, the Rapid Communication System will be activated by the superintendent to notify parents. Please listen for announcements regarding Vestavia Hills City Schools (not Jefferson County). The Vestavia Hills City Schools website is frequently updated with important changes.

When parents arrive after the superintendent has closed school, normal dismissal/carpool rules apply. As always, if the superintendent has not dismissed school, regular checkout procedures apply. *See check in/check out procedures.

It is very important that you keep us updated of any changes in contact information/phone numbers so that you will be contacted in the event of a change (ParentSquare message).

If our school has an early dismissal due to weather, travel conditions may deteriorate to the point where it is not safe for students to walk home or make it difficult for parents to come get their child from school. If the situation is judged to be too dangerous, students will be held at school. Staff members will remain at school to ensure the safety of the children. If there is any doubt about safety, we will err on the side of caution and hold the students at school.

CARPOOL BASICS

For the safety of our students we ask the cooperation of all parents and drivers. Study the Dolly Ridge map on the following pages for a visual of how our carpool system works. Our goal for our carpool is to be 1) Safely, 2) Orderly, and 3) Efficient.

Load and unload students from the right side of the vehicle so students step up on the sidewalk without crossing into traffic patterns. We double-stack cars in the carpool line. The entire line is a no-passing zone. Do not change lanes at

Procedures

any time. During carpool time, parents are not permitted to park in spaces in the front lot and walk up to pick up children, or have children walk to them.

The City of Vestavia Hills enforces Ordinance 2550 which prohibits distracted driving within 1,000 feet of a school. Distracted driving is defined as, “any activity that could divert a person’s attention away from the primary task of driving, including, but not limited to talking, texting, emailing, or other use of a cellular phone, tablet/iPad, or other electronic device, reading books, newspapers, etc., pets, loud music, food, or any other distraction that might divert a driver’s attention.

Very Important Safety Guidelines:

- Stay off your cell phone in the carpool line.
- Stay in your car in the unloading zone. Do not get out of your vehicle.
- Always display your carpool number hang tag. This hang tag is given out at Meet the Teacher.
- Please leave your furry friends at home (they are cute, but can lead to distracted driving).
- Please slow down and watch for kids and employees.
- Never let children hang out of windows or out of sunroofs.
- Please load and unload from the passenger’s side only.
- When loading or unloading during carpool, please pull your car down as far as possible (Station 1) so other vehicles may load and unload at the same time. Don't leave gaps in the line.
- Be respectful of our neighbors. Make sure they are able to access the entrance to their neighborhood and their driveways.

Morning Drop Off:

- Please have your child ready to go with all of their belongings (backpack, water bottle, etc.).
- If your child needs extra assistance getting unbuckled from a carseat please pull all the way forward (past the first cone).

Afternoon Pick Up:

Procedures

- **Do not change lanes in the double stack zone.** We alternate lanes every ten vehicles. If drivers change lanes it throws off our system.
- Keep your tag hanging from the rear view mirror at all times. Leave it displayed until after your child is in your vehicle.
- If your child needs extra assistance getting buckled in a carseat in the afternoon, please pull all the way forward and help them in the parking lot (past the first cone).
- If you don't see your child at a cone, please pull past the front of the line, where we will use a radio to call for your child and walk them down to you.



CHANGE OF AFTERNOON PLANS

Routines are essential for a safe, orderly, and efficient dismissal. Last minute changes can cause confusion. Establish a consistent dismissal routine with your children. When students know that they always go home a specific way, they are less likely to get confused and more likely to get home safely and on time.

If arrangements for normal afternoon pick-up change, please notify your child's teacher by note or email prior to the day of the change. Please do not call the office with a change of plans unless it is a true emergency. These messages are difficult (at times impossible) to get to teachers and students. For safety reasons, teachers cannot take the word of a student that plans have changed. Unless teachers are officially notified, students will be directed to follow their regular dismissal procedure.

CHECK-INS

A parent/guardian must come into the school office to check-in your child when he/she is tardy (7:55 AM). The student will take the sign-in slip to their teacher after the parent/guardian has signed them in. Parents do not go with their child to the classroom, as this disrupts the classroom instruction.

CHECK-OUTS

Parents must go to the office and sign the correct form to check out their child. Inform office personnel that the student is being checked out and who their classroom teacher is. Office personnel will request a picture identification of the parent/guardian prior to checking out the child. Office personnel will contact the classroom teacher and request the student come to the office. The parent should meet the student in the office. Office personnel can not call a student prior to the arrival of the parent/guardian. Avoid checking out children after 2:00 as teachers have begun end of day procedures. This is a busy time, so sending a child so close to dismissal is not practical or safe. Because of the campus layout of Dolly Ridge, it is very difficult to get student to the office close to the end of the day.

CODE OF CONDUCT

See VHCS Parent-Student Handbook 2024-2025

Procedures

COMMUNICATION

We encourage open, frequent communication between school and home. Regular contact between the home and school helps our children see that both parents and teachers care about them and their progress. Dolly Ridge teachers communicate regularly, many on a weekly basis, with parents. Teachers will communicate information regarding homework, curriculum updates, important dates, field trip information, and so on. If you have questions or concerns, please communicate with your child's teacher first. A conference may be needed and can be requested by the teacher or the parent. If, after consulting with the teacher, parents continue to have concerns, they may then choose to contact administration.

DAILY SCHEDULE

7:15 Doors open. Students are supervised in the gym and lunchroom. Breakfast is served. Carpool begins.

7:30 Students go to hallways where they are supervised

7:45 School begins. First bell rings.

7:55 Tardy bell rings. Students not in their classroom are tardy and must be signed in in office

LEARNING!

2:20 Day Care, Multi-family, Walkers

2:25 Carpool/EDP bell rings. Afternoon carpool begins

DISMISSAL PLAN

Carpool Line:

Procedures

Dismissal in the carpool line will be 1) Safe, 2) Orderly, and 3) Efficient. We will not put convenience before the safety of students. We have a large number of car riders, so we will need everyone to be patient and follow the rules in order to achieve a safe, orderly, efficient dismissal.

The carline will loop around the upper parking lot on campus. Cars will “double-stack” in both lanes and wait there. Pull all the way forward and follow the signs. Wait at the stop sign until you are directed to proceed. School personnel will alternate the flow of the two stacked carlines and they will direct you when it is time to move to the loading zone in the front of the school. DO NOT CHANGE LANES. This throws off our count and will mean your child is not at their spot.

We will utilize a carpool web-based application to record parent arrivals and to get your child safely to your vehicle. When someone from the school approaches your vehicle, they will key in your carpool on a device. Have your hang tag with your number displayed at all times. The carpool number is linked to your child’s name, carpool number, and photograph -which will be displayed in the gym. This system will allow us to get ahead -recording vehicles in advance. It also makes it easier for us to assist students in lining up for dismissal.

Students will wait in the gym. Once their information is displayed, we will assist them to their loading stations outside (1-10). Because students will wait in the gym, there will be no difference between rainy days and dry days.

If you do not see your child at a station, simply pull forward past the first station, and we will bring your child to your vehicle. Do not get out of your vehicle.

Walking

Walking is permitted only to a residence immediately adjacent to the school campus. Please contact a school administrator for approval. **Walkers are not permitted to walk to a street and be picked up by a vehicle. Students are not permitted to walk to parents parked in spaces in the front of the school.** We will not hold walkers for rain; we may hold students in school for lightning. In this event, students who normally walk will be supervised in the gym. We will notify all parents using VH Connect. When walkers are held due to lightning, parents or walkers are to come to the school, park, and pick up their child.

Procedures

DRESS CODE

See VHCS Parent-Student Handbook 2024-2025

ELECTRONIC DEVICES: IPODS, VIDEO GAMES, CELL PHONES, SMART WATCHES, ETC.

Students are not allowed to use their electronic devices to send or receive communication with their parents or with other students during the instructional school day. This includes their phones, smart watches, and other personal electronic devices. We realize that these devices are often used as a safety precaution that will allow parents to track and communicate with their child before and after school. We recommend that devices be set to disable communication (Do Not Disturb) during normal school hours (7:45-2:20).

Please remind your child about this rule that is covered in the Vestavia Hills Parent-Student Handbook under section 1.14: "Violation of local school rules and regulations regarding the use of electronic communication devices." Also See VHCS Acceptable Use Policy

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

See VHCS Parent-Student Handbook 2024-2025

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are scheduled to provide educational experiences that are pertinent and appropriate for each grade level. Field trips are correlated with the Alabama Course of Study and teachers develop specific learning objectives for each field trip. Individual teachers or grade levels plan field trips.

Preparations for the Field Trip

- Parent/guardian is responsible for the cost of the field trip. This money is collected at registration.
- Parent permission slips are required for field trips. These forms are collected at registration.

Procedures on the Day of the Field Trip

- All students must leave the school and return to school with the group.
- Only teachers, chaperones, and students from the class will be allowed to participate in the field trip.

Procedures

- Siblings are not permitted to go on field trips. Parents who are chaperoning should make other arrangements.
- For everyone's safety and protection, no student will be allowed to join a group at the site of a field trip unless prior approval has been arranged with an administrator.
- All money and permission slips must be turned in during the designated time because arrangements are made in advance. No late money will be accepted once tickets have been ordered.
- Students not attending field trips will stay in another classroom at school. The absence of a student from school due to non-participation of a field trip will be unexcused.

Field Trip Chaperone Guidelines

- All chaperones must arrive at the time designated by the teacher.
- Report to the front office first to sign in and receive a visitor's badge.
- You will receive instruction on the designated area to wait for the teacher and class to arrive.
- The teacher will provide instruction on the volunteer's responsibilities before or during the field trip.
- If room is unavailable on the bus, chaperones are asked to provide their own transportation to and from the destination. You may want to consider carpooling with another volunteer.
- All chaperones must pay admission costs unless otherwise notified.
- Chaperones are depended upon to assist during the entire field trip.
- Remain with the class/assigned group at all times.
- Inform the teacher of any students who misbehave, would not follow directions, etc.

FORGOTTEN ITEMS

During School Hours

Homework, books, lunches, or other items left at home that a student may need during the school day should be brought to the office to be picked up by the student. The instructional process in the classroom may not be interrupted by parents for the delivery of forgotten items. Please do not take items directly to the classroom.

After School Hours

Procedures

For safety and security reasons, students will not be permitted to go back to the classroom after dismissal to retrieve textbooks, homework, jackets, electronic devices, etc. The building is kept secure in the evenings so that these items can be retrieved the next morning.

GRADING

See VHCS Parent-Student Handbook 2024-2025

HOMEWORK

Homework is an extension of the classroom assignment. The purpose of homework assignments are:

1. To complete assignments not finished in class.
2. To make up work missed due to excused absences or illnesses.
3. To enrich various experiences through related home activities.
4. To reinforce various skills that have been taught and provide practice and application.
5. To stimulate initiative, self-direction, independence, and responsibility.

LOST AND FOUND ARTICLES

Please write your child's name in all your child's clothing. Students take jackets off at recess and PE and then forget about them. Jackets, pullovers, water bottles, gloves, hats, etc, are often left outside. Many pieces of clothing are left unclaimed. If not claimed before the winter holidays, and at the end of the school year, unclaimed items will be donated to charity. Dolly Ridge lost and found is in the concession stand area by the gym. Ask your child to check the lost and found area immediately if an item is lost. Parents may also check the lost and found box for misplaced items, but please check in with the main office first.

MAKE-UP WORK

Reasonable make-up work may be required of students who are absent. If your child has been absent only a day, you might have them check with a classmate for that day's assignment. Arrangements can be made only if your child has been absent for 2 days or more and the request must be received by 10 a.m. on the date you want to pick-up assignments. Make-up work may be picked up from the office after 2 p.m., or taken home by another student designated by the person requesting assignments.

PARTIES/CELEBRATIONS

In school parties: Parties during school hours should be limited to winter, Valentine's Day, and end-of-the-year. The school principal must approve any other parties. Party favors are not allowed. Please avoid sending treats that are too sugary or unhealthy. Keep in mind that some students may have various food allergies. Check with the teacher about what treats would be best for the entire class.

Birthday celebrations will be celebrated on the first Wednesday of each month. Parents may send a small snack to share with the class on that day. The teacher will decide the best time for the class to enjoy the snack.

Passing out invitations to after-school functions, such as birthday parties, is permitted only if every child (boys & girls) in the classroom is invited and with permission of the teacher. If the party is limited to a few, the invitations must be handed out elsewhere or mailed. Please be sensitive to the feelings of all students at Vestavia Hills Elementary Dolly Ridge as you plan celebrations for your child.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are sent home each nine weeks. Our report card is designed to present, as nearly as possible, an accurate picture of how your child is progressing. Questions regarding the report card should be discussed with the teacher at a scheduled conference.

SNACKS

Children may bring a nutritious snack to school each day. Please do not send carbonated beverages for snack time. Children can bring water bottles and fill them at school. All foods made available on campus will comply with the current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Alabama State Department of Education Wellness Policy, and advertising messages for these foods will be sensitive to school environment goals and objectives. Age-appropriate, healthy food and beverage selections will be offered during school meals, classroom snack times, celebrations, rewards, and fundraisers.

SMART WATCHES

Procedures

Students are not allowed to use their electronic devices to send or receive communication with their parents or with other students during the instructional school day. This includes their phones, smart watches, and other personal electronic devices. We realize that these devices are often used as a safety precaution that will allow parents to track and communicate with their child before and after school. We recommend that devices be set to disable communication during normal school hours (7:45-2:20). Please remind your child about this rule that is covered in the Vestavia Hills Parent-Student Handbook under section 1.14: "Violation of local school rules and regulations regarding the use of electronic communication devices."

TELEPHONE

Students may use the telephone for emergencies only and they must have the permission of their teacher, the school secretary, or the principal. It should not be used for forgotten homework, lunch money, etc. Afternoon transportation plans or social plans should be made prior to the child coming to school. Teachers will not be asked to interrupt instruction to come to the telephone. The secretary will take phone messages and email them to the teachers who will return your communication at their convenience.

VISITORS: IDENT-A-KID

All parents and visitors must report to the main office when they arrive at Vestavia Hills Elementary Dolly Ridge. The front door is the only door that should be used for access during the school day. You will be "buzzed in" to the school. Other doors will be kept locked.

We utilize the Ident-A-Kid Visitor Management Software system to screen all visitors to our school. When you visit the school, we will scan your driver's license using the system in the main office. We will then print a label that has your picture, the date and time, and your reason for visiting the school. This label serves as your "pass." You must keep the label on in the school building at all times.

- All visitors must bring a valid driver's license when visiting the school, which will be scanned when you arrive.
- If you want to enter the school for a meeting, or any other reason that requires leaving the lobby area, you will need to leave your license at the front desk. You will pick up your license when you leave the school.
- If you are not leaving the front office area to go into the school, we will not hold your license.

Procedures

- If you are simply dropping something off with the school, then we will not need to scan your license.
- If you arrive at the school without a license, and wish to go into the building, then you will need to see an administrator or administrator designee.

VISITORS FOR LUNCH

Parents are welcome to join your children for lunch. Please meet your child in the lunchroom at their lunch time. It is a good idea to check with the teacher the day before your visit to make sure they are eating in the lunchroom at their regular time. Do not visit the classroom before or after your lunch visit. Prior arrangements must be made with the teacher if you would like to visit your child's classroom.

VOLUNTEERS

We encourage parent/guardian participation in our classrooms. You will have the opportunity to sign up for a variety of volunteer opportunities throughout the year. Individual classroom teachers request volunteers and our PTO also organizes volunteers for a variety of reasons. You may help with bulletin boards, in the media center, with special projects and fundraisers, reading aloud to children, to name just a few.

GENERAL INFORMATION

SCHOOL SAFETY

Fire, tornado/shelter, lock down, drills will be practiced regularly. Personnel from Vestavia Hills Police Department and Vestavia Hills Fire Department supervise drill procedures and regularly inspect the building.

A Vestavia Hills Police SRO (School Resource Officer) is at our school to help ensure safety. All exterior doors are kept locked. Please help us maintain security by not opening the doors for visitors or leaving doors propped open.

We are equipped with a FEMA Certified Storm Shelter that will accommodate all of our students. A weather monitoring system provides us with the prevailing weather conditions. If we are alerted to a tornado warning near the end of the school day, we recommend that parents come into the building for their safety. Students will be dismissed once administrators receive information that the situation is safe.

The school has a comprehensive Safety and Security Plan for emergencies. A crisis team is in place to ensure that a safe course of action is taken during any emergency.

Students may not remain on campus after regular school hours unless they are involved in teacher-supervised activities.

DOLLY RIDGE EXPECTATIONS

The Dolly Ridge staff has established school-wide expectations that will be explicitly taught to all students. We would appreciate you reinforcing these expectations in your home.

Safety/Health/Behavior

| | Classroom | Hallway | Cafeteria | Bathroom | Recess/ Common Area | Arrival/ Dismissal |
|-----------------------|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| Be Respectful | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Be kind to others in actions and words -Celebrate others' successes -Honor our unique qualities Follow directions the first time every time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Silent as you travel (Level 0) -Keep hands to yourself | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Offer help when needed -Use Level 2 voice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Give others privacy -Stay silent (Level 0) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Treat others the way you want to be treated -Respond immediately when called by teacher or adult -Keep hands, feet and objects to self | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Stay seated and quiet -Resolve conflict peacefully -Use positive, kind words |
| Be Responsible | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Take care of your property, the school's property, and the property of others Respect the learning of others and the learning environment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Walk -Follow instructions for drills and emergencies -Report safety concerns | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use your manners -Sit correctly -Eat your own food | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Wash your hands with soap -Flush toilet -Return to class promptly -Report problems to teacher | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Stay in established area -Report problems/unsafe behavior to teacher immediately -Play approved games -Use equipment appropriately -Follow directions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Stay in designated area -Keep all materials in your backpack -Listen carefully and respond quickly to your carpool number -Follow directions |
| Take Ownership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Work hard and stay engaged -Own your learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use self-control -Be focused on where you are going | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Know your lunch number -Clean up after yourself -Enter and leave quietly and calmly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Clean up after yourself | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Keep playground clean -Share equipment and play area -Include others -Control your temper -Exercise and have fun | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Know your carpool plan |

DISCIPLINE AND THE STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

See VHCS Parent-Student Handbook 2024-2025

CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM

The Dolly Ridge Kitchen offers breakfast before school. A student may come to the cafeteria beginning at 7:15 and purchase breakfast. Breakfast is \$1.75. Vestavia Hills City Schools follow the nutrition guidelines as outlined by the National School Lunch Program. The Alabama State Department's Child Nutrition Program is responsible for holding each school within the state accountable for implementing and administering school lunch.

K-5 Lunch cost is \$2.50. Vestavia Hills City Schools Child Nutrition Program expects school meals to be paid for in an efficient manner by prepayment or by paying during meal service. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to pay for the meals a child purchases. However, in emergency situations, elementary students will be allowed to charge a maximum of three reimbursable meals. Students will not be allowed to charge any a-la-carte items at any time.

Food from outside restaurants is not allowed in the cafeteria. Because we accept Federal monies for the Child Nutrition Program, we have an obligation to abide by this Federal requirement.

Non-sufficient fund checks or account closed checks used for meal payments will automatically be sent to a collection agency by the bank used by the Vestavia Hills Board of Education. Vestavia Hills City Schools may apply fees for uncollected checks. The fees collected for return checks may be used for related expenses and recovery of uncollected checks by Vestavia Hills City Schools or by a contracted agreement with a check collection agency. If two or more non-sufficient fund checks are received from one household, only cash or a money order will be accepted for meal payments. Uncollected fund balances for returned checks will be reimbursed to the Child Nutrition Program from the non-public fund.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

See VHCS Parent-Student Handbook 2024-2025

MEDICATION

See VHCS Parent-Student Handbook 2024-2025

Safety/Health/Behavior

All medications must be turned into the school nurse by the parent/guardian. Do not send medication to the school with your student.

MENTAL HEALTH

See VHCS Parent-Student Handbook 2024-2025

PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

ART

The art curriculum offers a wide variety of media and projects. Fine and gross motor skills are strengthened through: using scissors, folding paper, gluing projects, weaving, working with clay, and papier-mâché'. Art history and appreciation for the aesthetics begin in kindergarten through grade three, with a more in-depth look in the fourth and fifth grades. Starting in kindergarten and continuing up to fifth grade, students are introduced to an art vocabulary with emphasis on the elements and principles of art.

BROADCAST: RIDGE REPORT

Dolly Ridge students begin each day with a school broadcast. Students in fourth and fifth grade can apply to be a part of the Broadcast Team. The Pledge of Allegiance, Dolly Ridge Promise, moment of silence, lunch choices for the day, slideshows of students learning, and school-wide events are included in a typical school broadcast. Daily Broadcast is a great way to make everyone in our school feel connected.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

At Dolly Ridge, we believe that character development is just as important as academic growth. The core values of Dolly Ridge define our school culture and guide all of our decisions. They were established with input from parents, students, teachers, and staff.

CURRICULUM

We follow the Alabama College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS). We encourage you to take advantage of opportunities to learn more about our curriculum. There are a number of resources for parents on the Vestavia Hills City Schools website.

DOLLY RIDGE CORE VALUES

- Honesty/Integrity

Programs and Resources

- Perseverance
- Love & Acceptance
- Family/Relationships
- Serve & Respect Others
- Excellence

These core values will be taught to all students K-5 through a series of lessons that our teachers have developed. They will be our bedrock principles as we continue to build and implement a comprehensive character program.

In 2019-2020 we established a cohort that participated in Hope Institute. We have now had three separate cohorts of Dolly Ridge teachers to participate in Hope Institute. Hope Institute was founded in 2016 by Liz Huntley and Drayton Nabers Jr., former CEO of Protective Life Corporation and Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court, in partnership with Samford University's Orlean Beeson School of Education. Their goal is to help bring to schools in Alabama the best practices for developing good character in students. In the spring received national Promising Practice recognition from the leader in school character education, character.org

CHILD FIND

Vestavia Hills City Board of Education is committed through IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) to identify, locate and evaluate children ages birth through 21 who, regardless of the severity of their disability, need special education and related services. These services also apply to private school students located within our city zone as well as migrant and homeless students who are suspected of having a disability and are in need of special education even though they are advancing from grade to grade. For more information contact the Special Education Director at 402-5316.

COUNSELING

The elementary school counseling program is a supportive service to the teachers, students, and parents. Students have the opportunity to learn life skills through programs offered for large groups, small groups, and individual conferences. The counselor is involved with committees and other groups who support students as they become responsible learners

Programs and Resources

and develop habits that will help them become successful in life. The counselor introduces specific, character centered topics through special activities. A parent or student has the option of discussing everyday concerns by scheduling an appointment. The goal of the counseling program is to provide support services to students and parents, thus helping students develop their greatest potential.

EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM: EDP

The Vestavia Hills City Schools Extended Day Program provides childcare to meet the needs of Dolly Ridge students and families. Dolly Ridge EDP serves our students on campus from the end of the school day until 6:00 PM. For more information regarding EDP tuition and registration, please contact our site director:

Vicki Bruce

Phone: 402-5335

email: brucve@vhcs.us

ENGLISH LEARNERS (E.L.)

Once registered, students who have a home language listed other than English are screened to determine the type, intensity, and/or amount of English language instruction and other academic support that may be necessary to allow them to be successful in the general education classroom. Recommendations regarding placement and services are developed and implemented by teachers and counselors, working with the parents.

GIFTED EDUCATION SERVICES

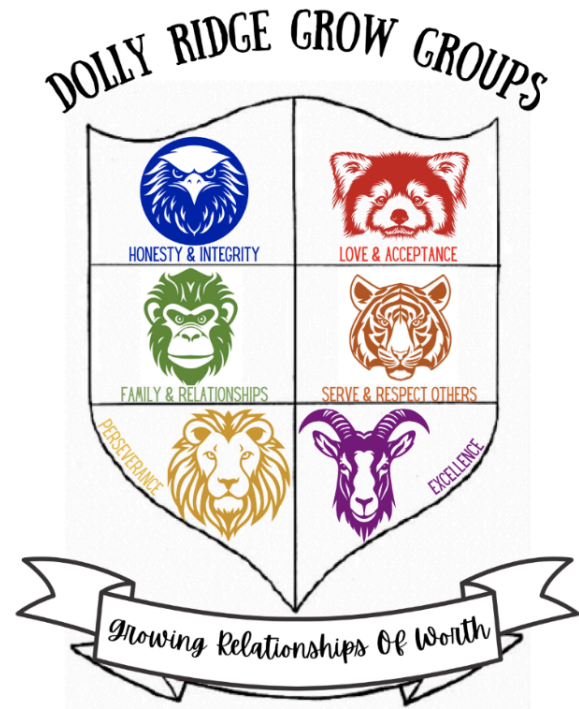
Dolly Ridge offers a gifted educational program for students who perform at high levels in academic or creative fields when compared to others of their age, experience, or environment. Teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or any other individuals with knowledge of the student's abilities may refer a student for consideration for gifted services. Referrals should be made to the Gifted Education Teacher at the school. A gifted referral screening committee reviews each referral and decides whether to accept the referral and arranges further assessments if needed. Dolly Ridge follows the eligibility criteria set forth by the Alabama State Department of Education. Students who qualify for gifted educational services, according to state guidelines, will receive specialized services as written in the Gifted Educational Plan (GEP).

GROW Groups: Growing Relationships of Worth

Our GROW groups are a dynamic, exciting and proven way to promote a positive climate and culture for students and staff. Using our GROW methods will help us confidently implement a process that builds character, relationships, and school spirit! These groups are built around one of our six Core Values and have a unique name and color. A representative animal, handshake, and chant were selected by our students. Each student and staff member will be assigned a GROW Group that they will be a part of throughout their time at Dolly Ridge. These multi-aged GROW Groups will meet periodically throughout the school year.

Founding Principles:

- Building relationships across grade levels with students and adults in the building
- Promoting creativity and a passion for learning through community.
- Pushing each other to be leaders.
- Creating excitement about our school community & Core Values. Promotes a culture belonging for all.



Programs and Resources



Meaning: Being the BEST you can be

Color: Purple is the color of Royalty/Excellence

Name in Chinese: Zhuoyue (pronounced "joy yay")



Meaning: able to be trusted

Color: Blue represents trust

Name in Hindi: Imanadari (pronounced "E mon dari")



Meaning: a feeling of affection or inclusion

Color: Red is associated with love and kindness

Name in Spanish: Aceptar (pronounced "A sep tar")



Meaning: people with a connection

Color: Green represents growing together

Name in Russian: Sem'ya (pronounced "Sim e ya")



Meaning: persistent in doing something despite the difficulty

Color: Yellow represents optimism to succeed and energy to persevere.

Name in Japanese: Guritto (pronounced like "Burrito")



Meaning: regard for the feelings or wishes of others

Color: Orange - oranges have segments that are meant to be shared

Name in Swahili: Huduma (pronounced "Who do ma")

MEDIA CENTER

The hub of the school is the media center. Students are encouraged to pursue individual interests, discover new ideas through books, and use reference sources in print and electronic format. The Media Specialist plans cooperatively with faculty members to implement a viable enrichment program for research and literature appreciation. Information literacy skills and the research process are emphasized including locating, evaluating, and using information. Additionally, STEM

Programs and Resources

skills (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) are taught with an emphasis on creativity and critical thinking. Students may return books to the library and check out additional books on a daily basis if necessary. No overdue fines are charged, but parents are expected to pay for lost or damaged materials.

MORNING MEETING

Morning meetings are a schoolwide classroom practice used to establish a positive culture and to address students' needs on a daily basis. Every morning, teachers gather their students in a circle (for 15 to 30 minutes) to interact with one another and kick-off the day. Character education and core values are often taught and reinforced during morning meetings.

MUSIC

The elementary music curriculum includes music symbols, music history, music in different cultures as well as reading and performing age-appropriate rhythms on pitched and unpitched instruments and singing. Emphasis is placed on experiencing the elements of music via active involvement in poems, rhymes, games, songs, and dances. We will use a variety of Orff instruments, ukuleles, guitars, and 5th graders will learn to play the recorder, all to reinforce melody and rhythm reading and increase music vocabulary.

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

Dolly Ridge partnered with [Alabama Outdoor Classroom](#) during the 2023-2024 school year to plan and build an outdoor classroom. Our outdoor classroom is located in the back of the school behind the fine arts building. All students K-5 at Dolly Ridge will have a chance to participate in hands-on, inquiry-based activities at learning stations that are aligned with their course of study standards. Our students will also be able to be a big part of the maintenance of the outdoor classroom -watering the plants, pulling weeds, filling the bird feeders, etc. We think it is important that students have a deep appreciation for the diversity and beauty of nature and that they learn how important it is to take care of our natural resources at an early age.



Programs and Resources

The core learning stations include:

- Butterfly Garden
- Weather Station
- Pollinator Garden
- Frog Bog
- Songbird Garden
- Measurement Wall
- Sensory Garden
- Cardinal Directions

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The physical education curriculum provides appropriate, sequential, engaging physical activities through movement. Physical Education focuses on the whole child, emphasis on the mental, social, psychomotor, cognitive, and emotional aspects. Students will participate in cooperative games, sports education, rhythmic movement, learn locomotor and non-locomotor skills and learn the value of living an active lifestyle. Large group instruction and small group instruction are utilized daily for each grade level. The Fitnessgram Test measures, cardio endurance, abdominal strength, muscular endurance of the upper body and flexibility. The test is administered two times a year (fall and spring). Students will receive 30 minutes of physical education daily in compliance with Alabama Code 16-40-1. Our curriculum follows the Alabama Course of Study.

Students are expected to participate in physical education activities daily. If a student is unable to participate, a note from the parent or doctor is requested. Appropriate assignments will be given in place of physical activity. Be sure to speak to the teacher directly if a serious medical problem exists. Also proper footwear is required to participate.

RECESS

We believe unstructured play is important for students and we set aside twenty minutes for each class to go to outdoor recess if weather permits. Typical recess activities include the playground, field, gaga ball pits, or outdoor basketball

Programs and Resources

courts. Safety is the responsibility of all students. Equipment must be used properly. Safe shoes for running and play should be worn to school. Generally, loose fitting and open sandals are not safe.

SAFETY SQUAD

Students in fifth grade can apply to be a part of the Safety Squad. These responsible, safety-minded students, help the younger students get where they need to be and assist us with safely loading or unloading vehicles.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

As a service to parents, school supplies are purchased through the school at registration. This ensures that your child has the correct supplies they need. Your child's teacher will have the school supplies ready for your child on the first day of school.

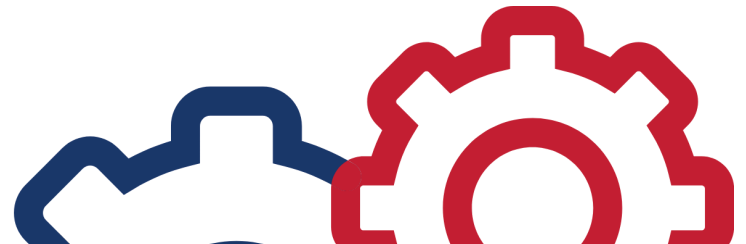
SST (STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM)

SST is a school-based, problem-solving team whose members may be composed of regular educators, counselors, administrators, and other individuals as needed. This team meets to discuss issues related to specific needs of teachers and students and offers teachers assistance in resolving academic, social, and behavioral student issues within the regular classroom setting. The team documents the development of an action plan to remediate the referring concerns and, if appropriate, recommend a referral for special education testing following implementation of interventions for a minimum of 40 school days. Staff members and parents may make a referral to the SST any time throughout the school year. Contact the SST facilitator at the school.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Eligibility for special education and related services is based on a referral, diagnosis, and the state-wide placement process. To meet the needs of children with disabilities certified special education teachers and related service personnel provide services. Anyone can make a referral for special education services regarding a particular student to the SST or you may contact the Special Education Director, Sandy Richey at 402-5316.

STEM -Science Technology Engineering & Math



Programs and Resources

VHCS STEM is defined as “an educational approach merging Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics to foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and the application of these disciplines into real-world situations, encouraging innovative solutions.” A new program for the 2024-2025 school year, STEM is being added as a 40 minute weekly special for all students

K-5. Mrs. Katie McDaniel will be the Dolly Ridge STEM Teacher.

Benefits of STEM:

- Focuses on design thinking process/engineering design process
- Provides cross-curricular experiences
- Incorporates more project/problem-based learning
- Uses a common language
- Provides opportunities for real-work connections
- Uses of an instructional partner/coach to leverage the expertise in the building
- Enhances student communication and problem solving skills

The STEM initiative for VHCS has a two-fold purpose: to deliver intentional high-quality STEM-specific courses, pathways, classes, and extracurricular activities; and to strengthen the performance of our students in science and mathematics to best prepare them for college and career choices they are choosing after graduation. VHCS will sustain a robust K-12 learning experience in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) through community and corporate partners.

TECHNOLOGY

Vestavia Hills City Schools utilizes interactive classrooms. Teachers and students have access to up-to-date technologies for teaching and learning. These components encourage increased interactivity, creativity, and inquiry for students and teachers. The classroom includes an integrated voice enhancement and sound system, interactive ActivePanel technology, a document camera, and a mounted projector to enhance learning in the classroom. Students in grades 3-5 have a Chromebook assigned to them. Student Chromebooks will be stored at school this year. Please ask your child's teacher if you have questions about their expectations regarding Chromebook use.

TEXTBOOKS

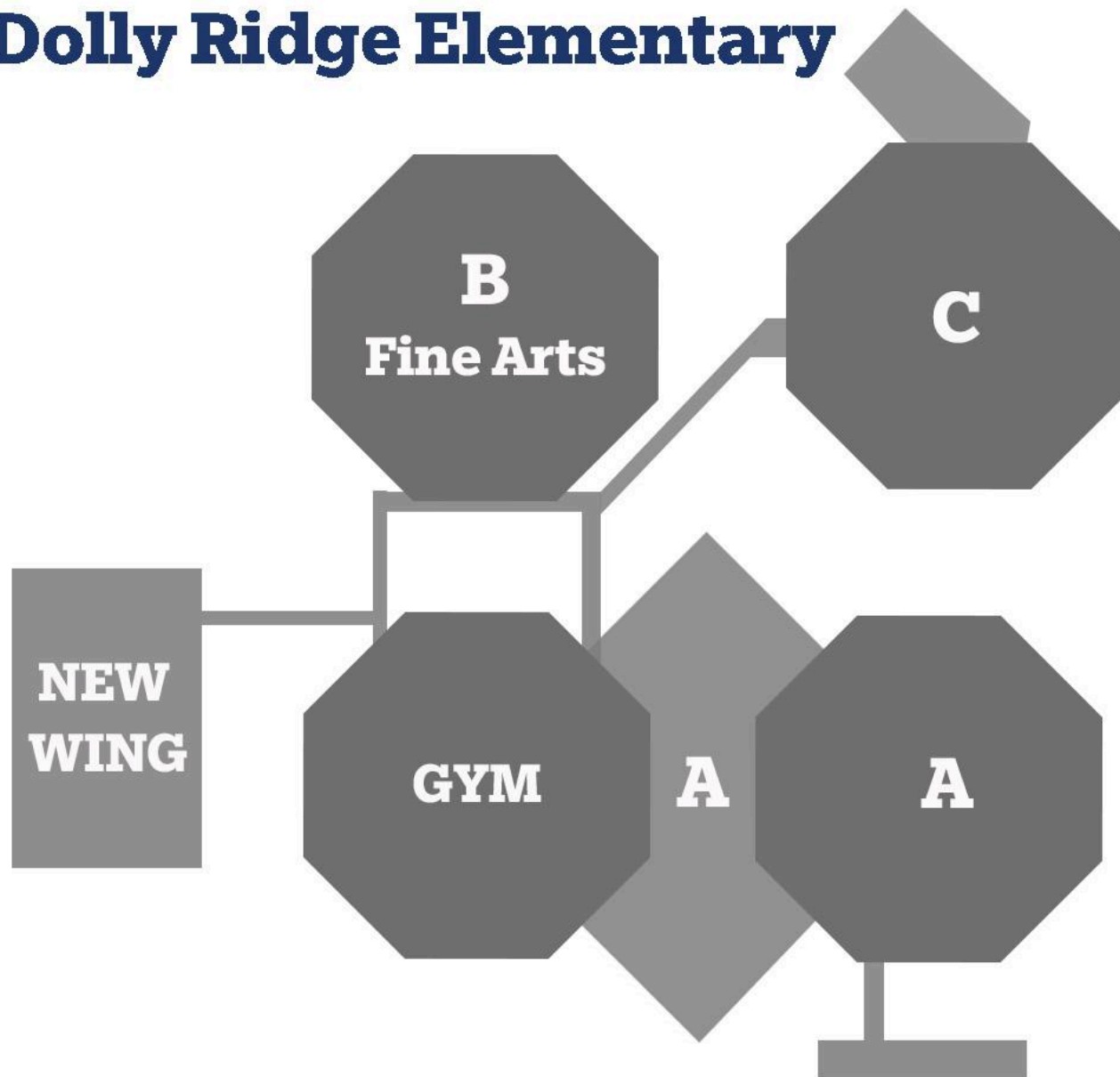
Programs and Resources

Textbooks are issued to the students free of charge. These books are the property of the State of Alabama; therefore, the student or parent has the responsibility of paying for lost or damaged books.

504

Section 504 is a general education statute that protects students with disabilities from discrimination. These disabilities are physical or mental impairments that substantially limit one or more major life activities. The impairment(s) must adversely affect educational performance and cause the child to be unable to function as an average child in the general population. The school 504 committee determines eligibility and whether or not accommodations are needed to prevent or eliminate disability-related discrimination. Parent input and physician recommendations are always considered in decision-making.

Dolly Ridge Elementary



Programs and Resources