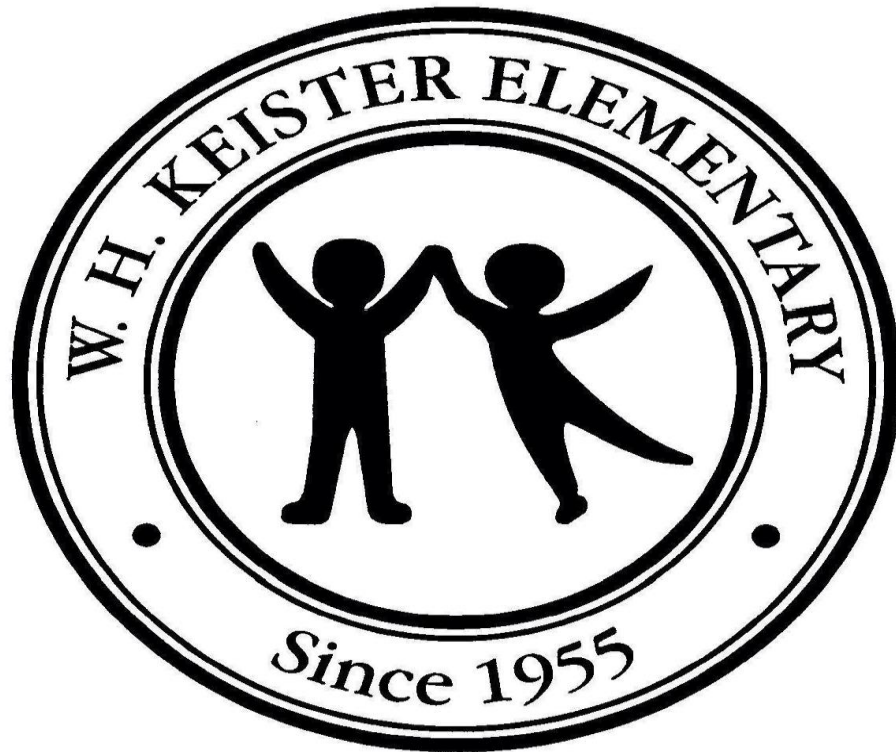


W. H. Keister Elementary School

2017-18

Student Handbook



Julie K. Zook
Principal

Mark R. Miller
Assistant Principal

W. H. Keister Elementary School

100 Maryland Avenue
Harrisonburg, Virginia 22801

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www.harrisonburg.k12.va.us/keister

Julie K. Zook
Principal

Mark R. Miller
Assistant Principal

August 2017

Dear Keister Friends,

Welcome to the 2017-18 school year. Each school year is filled with new experiences, new opportunities and new voices. We look forward to seeing familiar faces and meeting new families and students, as well. Together, we will work to create an inviting school community where learning is fun and meaningful for every student. We are glad you will be a part of our school this year.

I am proud to work alongside a wonderful office staff. Mark Miller (Assistant Principal), Glenda Buster (Secretary), Audrey Meadows (Bookkeeper, Secretary) and I are here to help you as we work together to ensure a successful year for our students. Our goal continues to be that every child is safe and every child is learning – everyday! We see ourselves as problem solvers and are available to answer questions or provide help at any time. Our office is open from 8:00 – 4:30, Monday through Friday. Please feel free to call or stop by if you feel we can be of help to you.

Please take a few minutes to read through our parent handbook where you will find information about our school policies and procedures, as well as the instructional program at our school. We have tried to include information that will be helpful in answering some of the basic questions you may have. Please feel free to call the school if you would like more specific information regarding any of the topics included in this handbook.

As school community members, I believe we share a common purpose for the 2017-2018 school year; that every child will experience the joy of learning and feel successful this year! Our Mission Statement is new this year, and we will be working on a “student friendly” version this fall. We hope you will read it and be able to make a commitment to it as a member of our school team. We will be introducing this statement to students during morning meetings in classes and during our school meetings throughout the year.

Warm wishes for a wonderful year!

Julie K. Zook

Julie K. Zook
Principal

W. H. Keister Elementary School

Mission Statement

Keister Elementary School is an inclusive environment with a dedicated staff who is committed to building positive relationships with all students, families and each other. We teach the whole child by focusing on social, emotional and academic growth. We listen to student and parent needs and are flexible with our thinking and actions. Students are encouraged to participate in the school community where learning includes hands on experiences and opportunities that prepare them to be lifelong learners.



Coming Together to Celebrate Learn

2017-18 Faculty and Staff—W. H. Keister Elementary School

Administration

Julie Zook, Principal
Mark Miller, Assistant Principal

Office

Glenda Buster, Secretary
Audrey Meadows, Bookkeeper
Kristen Ritchie, School Nurse
Jose Cardoso, Home-School Liaison

Preschool

Emily Chase
Lauren Weston
KiKi Wootten

Kindergarten

Jessica Jones
Jessica Ponton
Nicole Rath
Melissa Rush

Grade 1

Angela Briggs
Whitney Lawson
Barbara Sellers

Grade 2

Mary Ellen Dofflemyer
Samantha See

Grade 3

Wesley Dollins
Regina Hissong
Heather Pence

Grade 4

Megan Mlinarchik
Maddie Saunders

Grade 5

Mary Dean
Jackie Funkhouser
Mike Perry

Resource Staff:

Reading Specialist - Angie Baylor
Technology Specialist- Gerry Comer
Library - Amanda Dameron
ESL - Andrea Dayton
Instructional Coach/Gifted- Jackie Gulino
Special Education - Dawn Hall
Special Education - Alex Johnson
Reading Specialist - Laleta McCrea
Music - Maggie Nave

Physical Education - Brittany Rapert
Speech & Language - Amanda Reid
Counselor - Joel Rittenhouse
ESL - Jessica Strom
Technology Specialist- Tara Walters
TDT- Karen Wright
Art - Mary Yoder

Assistants:

Olga Baltazar Monroy
Areyl Cleveland-PREK
Val Kaylor
Cicely Ellis- PREK
Sharon King
Heather Lankford
New- TBD
Carolyn Poirot-PREK
Hannah Pellegrino

Cafeteria:

Melody Yankey
Nancy McDonaldson
Karen Puffenbarger
Gail Sager

Custodians:

Rhoda Crider
Danny Dovel
Donna Eye

Table Of Contents

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL
ART EDUCATION
ATTENDANCE
BICYCLES/WALKING TO SCHOOL
BUS SAFETY / ACCIDENT
CHARACTER EDUCATION
CLASSROOM GUIDANCE PROGRAM
CLOSING OF SCHOOLS DUE TO WEATHER
COMMUNICATIONS
DISCIPLINE
DRESS CODE
FIELD TRIPS
GIFTED SERVICES
HISTORY, SOCIAL SCIENCE AND SCIENCE PROGRAMS
HOMEWORK
ILLNESS AT SCHOOL
INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY
INTERNET
KEISTER CAFE
LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM
LIBRARY SERVICES
LOST AND FOUND
MATHEMATICS PROGRAM
MEDICATION
MINUTE OF SILENCE
MUSIC EDUCATION
PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION
PARTIES AND GIFTS
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
PHYSICAL EDUCATION
PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM
RETURNED CHECKS
SAFETY AWARENESS
SAFETY DRILLS
SCHOOL ACCIDENT INSURANCE
SCHOOL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM
SCHOOL TELEPHONE
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS
SPEECH AND HEARING SCREENING
STANDARDS OF LEARNING (SOL) TESTING
STUDENT RECOGNITION
TEXTBOOKS
TOYS/ELECTRONIC DEVICES
VISITORS
WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL
WORLD-CLASS INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN AND ASSESSMENT (WIDA)

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Our school doors open at 8:25 a.m. each morning. **Please do not leave children unattended by the school doors prior to 8:25 a.m.** Children arriving between 8:25-8:40 a.m. will enter the cafeteria and take a seat. At 8:40 a.m., children may enter their classrooms.

- 8:25 – School doors opened
- *8:50 – Warning bell
- *8:55 – Tardy bell – classes begin
- 3:50 – Grades K-5 dismissed

Student Drop-off

Please follow these procedures when dropping your student off at school in the morning. All vehicles will enter the parking lot via the **single drop-off lane** and pull up as far as possible before unloading a student. It is important not to cross the double yellow line when entering the parking lot and coming up the hill. Please stay in the drop-off line until you are able to unload your child close to the door. If you plan to come into the school, please pull into a parking space and walk alongside your child across the parking lot. Please do not leave your vehicle unattended in the drop-off lane and please drive slowly through the parking lot.

Student Pick-up

In order to insure the safety of our students and families, a very structured dismissal procedure has been developed. Please note the following procedures that will begin the first day of school for afternoon pick-up.

Walkers and Bikers (with parents):

We very much encourage walking and biking to and from school. We hope you will consider this as you make plans for this school year. All students (Grades K-5) who are walkers and bikers will be released from school at 3:55 from the door at the end of the 1st-3rd grade hallway. Students will be seated along the hallway and will be called as walking and biking parents arrive for pick-up. Parents may wait at the picnic tables if they arrive before dismissal time. Student names will be checked off as they are picked up. Please be sure to indicate that your child is a walker/biker on the Primary Dismissal Form so we can have his/her name on the correct dismissal pick-up list. Any changes in the end of day dismissal routine for your child should be made as early as possible so that we can be sure to add names to the correct dismissal lists each day and get students to the correct locations.

With permission, students in grades 3, 4 and 5 may walk and bike home without a parent accompanying them. They will leave from the school entrance that provides the safest and most direct route home.

After School Car Pick-up:

Students who are being picked up and riding in a car will continue to be dismissed from our front parking lot. We have two afternoon parent pick-up lanes in front of the school. Cars will come up the hill in one lane and split into two lanes as marked at the top of the hill. Please do not cross the double yellow line as you are entering the lot. Cars will pull all of the way up and wait for students to be loaded into individual cars. On registration days, each family planning to pick up children on a regular basis will receive a student pick-up number printed on cardstock. This number should be displayed on the car dashboard at afternoon pick-up. Students will also receive a number tag for their book bags to remind them of their dismissal number. All students in grades K-5 who are car riders will be called to the cafeteria after 3:50 in order to facilitate a 3:55 dismissal. Using a walkie-talkie, staff on front dismissal duty will communicate the numbers displayed in the arriving cars to staff in the cafeteria, in the order of the car line-up. Additionally, special circumstances sometimes warrant a change in the way a student goes home and there will be times when regular bus riders or walkers will be picked up via car. Cars entering the parking lot without a number will communicate the name of the student(s) they are picking up to the staff member on duty. Students will be called from their cafeteria seats, their numbers/names will be checked off and they will walk out to be loaded into the appropriate car. Once loaded, cars will merge from two lanes back to one lane to travel on around the circle and exit the parking lot. A right and left turn lane are marked at the bottom of the lot for exiting. Please do not enter the parking lot via either of these lanes.

The front parking lot will be closed to traffic during this afternoon pick-up period. As you will see, the two pick-up lanes encompass the entire width of the parking lot between the front sidewalk and marked parking spaces. As the pick-up period ends and cars are no longer blocking entrance into the lot and parking spaces, the lot will reopen. We are not sure of the exact time that our front lot will be inaccessible during the afternoon dismissal process. If you need to access the building for an appointment with a staff member during this time, please utilize available parking spaces in the parking lot adjoining the kitchen loading dock off Central Avenue. However, please do not park here to pick up a walker who is being released at the end of that hallway.

Our hope is that this process will be safe, efficient and smooth over time. It generally takes a couple of weeks to work out any issues. We appreciate your feedback and patience as we continually work to improve our afternoon dismissal procedure.

ART EDUCATION

A wide variety of media is available to provide students with opportunities for self-expression through exploring and experimenting in the areas of drawing, painting, construction, etc. All students have formal art instruction once each week for 55 minutes.

ATTENDANCE

Successful progress in school depends upon prompt and regular attendance. In recognition of this philosophy, the Commonwealth of Virginia has established a compulsory school attendance policy that applies to all children. If a child is absent from school, the parents must call in stating the reason for the absence or bring a parental note to school upon the child's return. According to an amendment of Section 22.1-258 of the Code of Virginia, whenever any student fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day and no notification regarding the student's absence has been received by school personnel, a reasonable effort to notify the parent, guardian or emergency contact person by telephone at home or their place of work will be made. **If your child is going to be absent, please help our office staff by calling and letting us know the reason for the absence.**

The only absences that may be excused are:

- Illness (more than 2 days will require a note from a doctor.)
- Court appearance;
- Death in the family;
- Religious holidays;
- Extenuating circumstances which are determined by the school administration **and have received prior approval.**

If you are planning a family trip, even for one day, please share this information with Mrs. Zook or Mr. Miller via phone, email or letter as soon as possible. All family trips are considered unexcused absences from school.

All students who have **tard** will receive a letter informing the parents of the present attendance situation. If unexcused absences continue, a meeting with appropriate school/community personnel will be scheduled.

Parents who make regular school attendance a priority are helping their children develop patterns of responsibility that will carry through their school years and beyond. We expect students to be in their seats, ready to learn when the school day begins at 9:00 each morning. Bus transportation is cost effective and ensures a timely arrival, so please consider this as an option if transportation is or becomes an issue for you. Whatever the method of transportation, please provide your child with every opportunity to be successful in school and make sure they arrive at school on time!

All students who **have been tardy 10% of the days school has been in session** will receive a letter informing the parents of the present attendance situation. If the tardies continue, a meeting with school administration will be scheduled.

BICYCLES/ WALKING TO SCHOOL

We hope that our students and families will consider riding bikes or walking to school. Students in grades 3-5 may walk and/or ride a bicycle to school if they do not need to cross a road with more than two lanes. For safety reasons, students are required to wear a helmet when riding a bicycle to school. Bicycles must have a suitable lock and be parked in the designated area. The school claims no responsibility for bicycle loss or damage. Pre-K through second grade students are encouraged to walk or bike to school with a parent.

We have designated Monday, Wednesday and Friday at Keister as **"Walking Mornings"**. Walking to school is a great way for kids to get exercise and is a great way to start the day! We will continue partnering with the

Healthy Community Council and Safe Kids to encourage students (with parents and caregivers) to walk and bike to school whenever possible.

School Police Crossing Guards for Keister Elementary School are located at:

Maryland Avenue/Central Avenue

Central Avenue/South Avenue

BUS SAFETY/ ACCIDENT

Procedures regarding bus safety and bus accidents will be covered with each student during the bi-yearly bus evacuation drills. Please refer to the division handbook for more information.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

Our character education program was designed by teachers. It includes morning meetings in every classroom and community school wide meetings where the focus is supporting the goals of kindness and respect. Our program is most effective when our parents, school staff and students value the rewards of being kind and respectful. Character words which are introduced and emphasized include: Respectful, Responsible, Caring, Fair, and Honest.

Additionally, HCPS Elementary Schools received a three year Olweus Grant from the Department of Education. Beginning in the 2013-2014 school year an anti-bullying committee was established and classroom teachers began holding weekly class meetings. During the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years, classroom teachers discussed character education and Olweus education during their daily morning meetings. We will continue the Olweus model for the 2017-18 school year.

CLASSROOM GUIDANCE PROGRAM

The Elementary Guidance and Counseling Program is designed to serve the needs of all elementary children at each stage of their development. The focus will be on the developmental needs of children in order to enhance healthy social, physical, emotional and intellectual growth. The objectives of this program are to help children develop self-awareness, and to prepare them to make choices and decisions that will lead to effectiveness as individuals, students and members of a community. In an effort to fulfill the purpose of this program, the counselor, in cooperation with parents, teachers and other adults, will give leadership to the four areas of the Elementary Counseling Program: counseling, consulting, coordinating and curriculum. Parents may contact the counselor at any time to review materials used in the Elementary Counseling Program. Questions or concerns about your child's participation in the Elementary Counseling Program should be directed to the counselor or the principal.

Talk It Out is a city wide conflict resolution program that teaches elementary students how to solve their own conflicts. Talk It Out focuses on resolving real life problems that most children experience, such as teasing, put downs, gossiping, leaving students out, or refusing to share. Students are taught to use the following steps:

1. Stop and cool off.
2. Talk and listen.
3. Think of ways to solve the problem.
4. Choose the idea you both like.

Some children use these steps independently to resolve conflicts. When needed, children are supported by adults to use these steps to resolve conflicts. Talk It Out helps teach children the skills needed to negotiate everyday conflicts and problems.

CLOSING OF SCHOOLS DUE TO WEATHER

The decision to close schools or open late due to snow or inclement weather will be made as near 6:00 a.m. as possible. The announcement will be made over the local radio stations and the local TV station. When no information is given over the radio or TV stations about the Harrisonburg City Schools, schools will be open. Announcements will be made only if we are going to close or if we are going to have a delayed opening. An automated telephone call will be made regarding school closings and delayed openings as well. If weather conditions deteriorate during the course of the day, please tune to a local radio or TV station for information about an early closing of schools. Additionally, a message on our school answering machine will reflect a school closing or delayed opening in both English and Spanish.

COMMUNICATIONS

During the school year at specified times, you will receive reports of your child's progress. Report cards are issued to students in kindergarten through fifth grade each nine weeks. These reports will be sent home with the children. Report cards are issued one week following the end of each reporting period. Additionally, interim reports will be sent home in the middle of the nine week period. Please review these reports carefully with your child. If you would like more information, contact your child's teacher by filling out the comments section on the back of the report card envelope.

We encourage all parents to attend parent/teacher conferences and/or to schedule appointments with teachers as additional concerns arise. Two conference days (November 6th and March 1st) have been scheduled for you to meet with teachers during the year. We hope you will take advantage of these days to gain a more complete understanding of your child's progress. Please keep us informed of any achievements or difficulties your child may have. Ongoing communication between the home and school helps create the healthy environment necessary for a quality education.

Effective communication is important to all of us. Any problem or concern you may have is important to us. We encourage parents to address classroom concerns with the appropriate teacher before contacting an administrator.

DISCIPLINE, RULES, AND REGULATIONS

Our school-wide discipline plan is based on the character traits of caring, fairness, honesty, respect and responsibility. Classroom teachers create positive learning environments that reinforce skills and positive behaviors demonstrated by students and teach strategies to help students recognize and replace inappropriate

behaviors with positive behaviors. We continue using a five STEP discipline plan in classrooms. The following steps are helpful as we work to maintain positive learning environments.

1. A statement from the teacher that specifically identifies any inappropriate behavior.
2. An oral or written explanation by the student of the inappropriate behavior and a positive statement of anticipated improvement.
3. Conference with teacher, parent and student to discuss problem(s) being encountered.
4. Discipline referral is completed and the student is sent to the office.

If behavior presents an immediate threat to pupil safety, we may proceed directly to Step 4.

General School Rules

1. Students should show respect for each other and for all adults by exhibiting proper behavior and by using proper language.
2. Students should respect all school property.
3. Students should demonstrate proper behavior in the hallways by walking **QUIETLY** and by keeping their hands to themselves.
4. All food should be eaten in the cafeteria during lunchtime unless it is part of a special occasion.
5. Toys, radios, CD players, MP3 players, hand-held games, fidget spinners and other electronic devices are not permitted at school during the school day. An exception could be made for a special occasion if teacher approval has been obtained.
6. The use of cell phones, pagers, beepers and other communication devices is prohibited from the time students arrive on school property until the end-of-school dismissal bell. Students may have cell phones in their possession, but they must be turned off and kept out of sight at all times.
7. High heeled shoes and flip flops are not appropriate given the activities students participate in throughout the day. Students should wear tennis shoes to school each day to insure their safety when playing on the playground during recess and participating in physical education class.

Disciplinary Referral Plan

Fighting

1 st Offense	Conference with student and parent notification Consequence: will be determined based on details
2 nd Offense	Conference with student and parent notification Consequence: will be determined based on details

Possession of a Weapon or Look Alike Weapon

Any offense	Conference with student and parent notification. Notification of superintendent and possibly law enforcement officer. Consequence: Out-of-school suspension (up to 10 days). May recommend long-term suspension or expulsion to the Superintendent.
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Sexual Harassment

1 st Offense	Conference with student and parent notification Consequence: In-school or out-of-school suspension (up to 10 days) and possible referral to central office, depending on severity and frequency of actions.
2 nd Offense	Conference with student and parent notification Consequence: Out-of-school suspension (5 days up to long term) and possible referral to central office, depending on severity and frequency of actions.

Classroom Disruption

1 st Offense	Conference with student and parent notification by teacher or admin. Consequence: will be determined based on details
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2 nd Offense	Conference with student and parent Consequence: will be determined based on details
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Bus Misconduct

1 st Offense	Conference with student and bus driver. Consequence: Formal referral to parent with copies for the bus driver and school.
2 nd Offense	Conference with student, bus driver and school administrator. Consequence: Formal referral and possible suspension from bus for one day.
3 rd Offense	Conference with student, bus driver and school administrator. Consequence: Formal referral and possible suspension from bus for one to four days.
4 th Offense	Conference with student, bus driver and school administrator. Consequence: Formal referral and possible suspension from bus for five to ten days. Further referrals may result in permanent removal.

EACH SCHOOL WITHIN THE DIVISION IS A DRUG, ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND WEAPON-FREE ZONE. Please refrain from smoking on the school premises!

DRESS CODE

A student’s dress and appearance shall not be such that it causes disruption, distracts others from the educational process or creates a health or safety problem. Any clothing that is considered a disruption to the learning environment will not be allowed. Students must comply with specific building dress regulations of which students will be given prior notice. The following are examples; not an exclusive list of inappropriate dress at school:

- Halters, see-through shirts, tank or tube tops that bare the midriff, no shoes, no shirts, apparel which conveys an inappropriate message such as violence, symbols for illegal substances, gang affiliation insignias, displays of offensive or obscene language, or clothing that reveals undergarments, etc.

All hats and head coverings are to be removed when entering the school building, with the exception of those related to religious beliefs.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are a means through which a teacher enhances classroom instruction. Field trips are planned for the benefit of our students. Parents and guardians are encouraged to chaperone at the teacher's discretion.

Administrators reserve the right to revoke field trip privileges if concerned about the safety of the child or others when out of the school building, based on the student’s behavior. Since this is quality time for our students, siblings are not permitted to attend. No student will be denied access to any field trip for financial reasons. **Students who do not participate in a field trip are still required to attend school on the day of the trip.**

Chaperone Guidelines:

- Please notify teachers in advance if wanting to chaperone a trip.
- Provide positive affirmation to students following the guidelines and help reinforce and model appropriate school behaviors.
- Know where your group is at all times. Children cannot go off by themselves.
- Discipline of any sort will be handled by the teacher.
- Please No Smoking on field trips.
- Have fun learning!

GIFTED SERVICES

We have a formal identification process in place to identify gifted students in the areas of language arts and math. This will be expanded to include other curriculum areas in the future. Our instructional program offers a differentiated curriculum in all areas. Within the regular curriculum, students will be extending their independent study and research skills. They will also participate in learning activities to increase their ability to think critically and solve problems. Our Differentiation Specialist works with classroom teachers to provide appropriately challenging instruction and activities for all students. For more information regarding the identification or appeals process for our gifted program, please contact Mark Miller, Assistant Principal or Jackie Gulino, Gifted Coordinator.

HISTORY, SOCIAL SCIENCE AND SCIENCE PROGRAMS

Our history and social science program is based on the Virginia Standards of Learning which include the development of student understanding of local, state and world geography, local, state and world history, world resources, economics, current issues, career choices and citizenship. The curriculum is rich and diverse and is taught using a variety of resources. Instructional field trips are taken in conjunction with the social studies program.

The Science program develops attitudes, values and understandings about the environment, develops skills to seek and evaluate information, and encourages experimentation, discovery and research with a variety of materials to strengthen basic concepts and processes. Our science program uses the adopted texts from Fusion-Houghton Mifflin (Grades K through 5). Teachers use a hands-on approach to make learning science more meaningful. I-STEM lessons are a valuable part of this program as well.

Family Life Education curriculum is taught in Kindergarten through fifth grade. Informational letters outlining objectives for your child's grade level are sent home each year. Topics include safety at home, building self-esteem, and the dangers of substance abuse. The complete Family Life Curriculum is available for review in the school's media center.

HOMEWORK

Homework is an integral part of the learning experience, and its completion is the responsibility of each student. Assignment of homework is planned in terms of student needs. A recommended schedule for elementary homework is:

Kindergarten/Grade 1: Assignments are informal and may include daily reading

Grades 2-3: Assignments may total 1.5- 2 hours per week and will include daily reading

Grade 4: Assignments may total 2.5-3 hours per week and will include daily reading

Grade 5: Assignments may total 3.5-4 hours per week and will include daily reading

ILLNESS AT SCHOOL

If a student becomes ill or injured at school, he or she will be taken to the clinic where the following procedures will be followed:

1. Parents will be required to pick up their child if he or she is too ill to remain in class.
2. Students leaving early must be signed out in the school office.
3. If a parent cannot be contacted, the school will call the emergency contact.
4. If a serious injury occurs, parents will be notified and students will be transported to the hospital by the Rescue Squad.
5. Accident reports are completed and placed in the cumulative file.

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Keister has one PC lab, as well as 2 wireless mobile labs and ipads that are available for student and classroom use. These computers are networked and have Internet access. In addition, students may use classroom computers as well as the ones provided in the Media Center. Students also have access to digital/flip cameras, Smart Boards, Personal Response Systems and IPADS as appropriate for instruction.

INTERNET

Internet access is provided. Students are supervised while using the Internet. A filter is in place to block inappropriate websites; in addition, available websites are periodically evaluated. To access the school's webpage, go to: <http://www.harrisonburg.k12.va.us/kes>. There you will find general information about the school and individual staff websites.

A notice on technology usage by students is included in the school division handbook. Parents are required to read this notice and return the form found in the handbook each school year if they do not want their child participating in the use of various technologies.

KEISTER CAFÉ

The Keister Café can be found in the lobby outside the library. It is a wonderful, welcoming space with tables available for a variety of activities including lunch, tutoring and small group instruction. If parents choose to eat in this space, their child can only invite one friend to join them. If parents choose to eat outside at the picnic tables with their child/family, they are not to bring a friend with them for safety reasons.

LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM

Reading and language instruction is aligned with the Virginia English Standards of Learning and is organized within thematic units, following the scope and sequence of the Houghton Mifflin Reading Series K-5. Our reading program includes instruction in phonics, phonemic awareness, comprehension, oral fluency, and vocabulary development. Our language program includes specific instruction in the writing process as well as language usage and mechanics. Students also work to develop oral language proficiency, listening skills, study skills and handwriting skills. There is an individual language arts folder kept on each student that monitors progress and skill proficiency.

We are fortunate to have a reading intervention program that is federally funded through a Title 1 grant. This program concentrates on needs predetermined by the student's performance in the area of reading and is set up to supplement a student's regular classroom instruction in reading. Reading specialists work collaboratively with regular classroom teachers to address individual student's areas of need in order to improve student achievement. Additionally, students who are reading significantly below grade level participate in a Tier 3 intervention program that may include either Corrective Reading or Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI). These are systematic approaches to the teaching of reading with a concentration in the areas of decoding and phonics instruction.

In a Title I Schoolwide program, parents may request information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers, which will include, at a minimum, the following:

- whether the teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
- whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
- the baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher and the field of discipline of the certification or degree and
- whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications. 20 U.S.C. 6311(h)(6)

Schools receiving Title I funds must also give timely notice that the parent's child has been assigned or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified, as defined by NCLB 20 U.S.C.6311(h)(6)(B) (ii).

LIBRARY SERVICES

The goal of the library staff is to promote a love of reading and lifelong learning. To meet this goal, a variety of programs are offered through the library including book fairs, buddy reading programs that involve the Rotary Club and older students paired up with younger students, and reading incentive programs. The library also partners with community programs that support reading by promoting the Gus Bus, Barnes and Noble, and Massanutten Regional Library.

All students have scheduled library classes and checkout times. Library lessons focus on locating and selecting books, information skills, using reference materials, and lessons that enrich and extend classroom learning objectives. Students may come to the library any day to return/checkout books or to engage in activities that support classroom instructional objectives (with the permission of their classroom teacher). Once a student checks out a book/books, those materials are due on a weekly basis, but may be renewed as many times as needed as long as the materials have not been reserved by another student or teacher. If a student has lost or damaged a book beyond reasonable repair, the student or his/her parents will be expected to pay the current cost of replacing it. Donations are gladly accepted in the library with the understanding that if the materials are not needed for the library collection, they will be offered to classroom teachers. Volunteers are also needed. If you are interested in volunteering in the library, please contact Amanda Dameron.

LOST AND FOUND

Each year a considerable quantity of unclaimed clothing and articles accumulate in the guidance counselors classroom/office. After a period of several months, the items are appropriately donated. To provide more efficiency in returning lost goods, all articles such as books, purses, clothing, lunch boxes and equipment **should be plainly marked with the child's first name and last initial**. This will be a great help to us in identifying and finding the proper owner. Names on clothing are especially helpful in the primary grades.

MATHEMATICS PROGRAM

Math in Focus: The Singapore Approach focuses upon skills that are critical to mathematics success in the elementary grades. Among them are understandings of number, number sense, and place value. Math in Focus stresses mastery, coherence, and focus. Students master foundational math skills early and carry those skills with them as they progress through the grades. With each new concept learned, students build on what they have already learned. This systematic approach to mathematics is particularly evident in the program's approach to teaching place value. From grade level to grade level, place value is developed, honed, and applied to operations. As a result, numbers are demystified and students excel in mathematics because, for them, numbers become tools for solving problems rather than obstacles that cause frustration. This program includes a visual approach to word problems. Model drawing, often called "bar modeling", is a systematic method of representing word problems and number relationships that is explicitly taught beginning in second grade and extending all the way to secondary algebra. Students learn to use the bars to model problems that involve the four operations both with whole numbers, fractions, and ratios. The use of the rectangular bars and the

identifications of the unknown quantity with a question mark help students visualize the problem and know what operations to perform. In short, students will be able to view all problems from an algebraic perspective beginning in early elementary grade levels. This program fosters both good number sense and the ability to solve complex problems. Additionally, Keister teachers use a systematic calendar program called *Calendar Counts* that utilizes calendar activities to promote concept understanding. An individual math folder is kept on each student that monitors their progress and proficiency in mastering the Commonwealth of Virginia's Standards of Learning.

MEDICATION

Harrisonburg City Public Schools personnel may only administer medication to children with a completed Medication Authorization, signed by both the physician and parent or guardian. Such medicine, whether prescription or nonprescription, must be in the original container. In the case of prescription medications, the original container must contain the student's name, the name of the medication, the required dosage, and when the medication is to be administered. School personnel must follow the Harrisonburg City Public Schools procedural guidelines for administration of medicines. Students are not allowed to transport medicine to and from school. All medication will be kept with the nurse in the school clinic.

MINUTE OF SILENCE

The daily observance of one minute of silence in each classroom is required by state law (Code of Virginia 22.1-203). During the one-minute period of silence, the teacher shall take care that all students remain seated and silent. The teacher further shall ensure that no student disrupts or distracts other students during the minute of silence.

MUSIC EDUCATION

The purpose of the music program is to develop an understanding and appreciation of music through the use of the voice and rhythm instruments. Students experience making music, performing, listening, and reading music. All students have formal music instruction once each week for 55 minutes.

PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION

W. H. Keister Elementary school has an active P.T.O. and encourages all parents to join and participate in the various programs and activities. Our goal is to work jointly with parents, teachers and staff to build partnerships that will enhance communications and improve the educational process for the benefit of our children.

2017-2018 Officers

President- Ingrid Manning

Vice President- Lauren Huber

Secretary- Katie Overfield-Zook

Treasurer- Samantha(Sam) Prins

PARTIES AND GIFTS

Each year, classes have instructionally related “special events” that are successful because of careful planning and parent assistance. We are not able to deliver birthday invitations, flowers or balloons to classrooms during the instructional day. If private birthday invitations are provided for all members of the class, the teacher may send them home with all children. As we work to protect our instructional day, we ask that birthday snacks are shared with others during the lunch period.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

A well-rounded program of movement, beginning game skills, and physical fitness characterize our physical education program. Our program provides sequential development experiences based on the student's abilities and needs. Activities are designed to develop body fitness and attitudes of fairness and sportsmanship. All students have formal physical education instruction, at least once per week for 55 minutes. A written note from parents or the family doctor is needed in order to be excused from physical education. **Tennis shoes are required of all students.** Competitive sports of a varsity nature are prohibited in the elementary schools in Harrisonburg.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All students are required by state law (Code of Virginia 223.1-202) to learn the Pledge of Allegiance and to demonstrate such knowledge through daily recitation in the classroom. No student, however, shall be compelled to recite the Pledge if he/she, or his/her parent or legal guardian objects on religious, philosophical, or other grounds. Students who are thus exempt shall remain quietly standing or sitting and shall make no display that disrupts or distracts others who are reciting the pledge.

PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Keister has three preschool classrooms, funded by the Virginia Pre-school Initiative (V.P.I.). Children participate in a variety of educational activities promoting physical, social and emotional development, and academic skills. All of our pre-school programs use *Frog Street* which is a writing and reading program promoting phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension in a meaningful context.

RETURNED CHECKS

A service charge of up to \$10.00 will be imposed on all checks returned to us by the bank for insufficient funds.

SAFETY AWARENESS

Due to many changes in society in general and in our community, everyone – teachers, parents, students and staff members – must be vigilant in overseeing safety procedures in our building and on our grounds. For this reason, we ask your support of the procedures listed below:

1. **Visitors** - All visitors must sign in at the office to get a visitor's pass. Staff members have been asked to

stop persons in the hallway who do not have a pass.

2. **Buddy system** – All students will be accompanied by an adult or use the “buddy system” when walking through the Keister hallways.
3. **Doors locked at 9:00 a.m.** - Visitors are to use the Main Entrance.
4. Students daily means of dismissal will be monitored and documented by KES staff members.

SAFETY DRILLS

To ensure our students’ safety, several safety drills are performed throughout the school year. Fire drills are practiced monthly. A severe weather alert drill, intruder drill, and bomb threat drill are each performed once during the school year. The procedures for each are as follows:

Fire Drill: Faculty, staff, and students follow fire drill routes to exit the building quickly and safely. If the children will be out of the building for an extended period of time, transportation will be contacted and school buses will take everyone to Waterman Elementary School.

Severe Weather Alert Drill: Faculty and staff will move all students into interior hallways where everyone drops to their knees and covers their heads.

Intruder Drill: Faculty and staff lock classroom doors and move students to a location in the classroom where they are no longer visible.

Bomb Threat Drill: Faculty and staff evacuate students along fire drill routes to a designated location away from the school building. Again, if students are out of the building for an extended period of time, arrangements are made to move students to Waterman Elementary School.

SCHOOL ACCIDENT INSURANCE

School accident and dental insurance is available to your child. This insurance covers injuries caused solely by accidents while a student is on the school grounds, on a field trip, or going to and from school. It is offered as a service to parents, but the actual contract exists between the company and the parent. The school system receives no remuneration for the service and does not submit the claim forms. Parents are responsible for the completion of forms and forwarding claims, medical bills, etc.

SCHOOL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

We invite you to be a part of our school community and are excited to have parental involvement whenever possible. You are invited to participate in your child’s classroom, **but ask that you make prior arrangements with the teacher in this regard.** (The class visit should not be considered a conference time as the teacher cannot provide direction to the class and also give full attention to a personal conference.) Please turn off all cell phones before entering the building. This will help us to maximize instruction and to eliminate disruption of our instructional time.

Our printed school newsletter, The Keister Chronicle, and a web-based newsletter, Keister Connects, will be sent home four times each year with information about the school program and activities. You may choose which format you'd like to receive school news. In addition, classroom newsletters are sent home periodically throughout the school year. Volunteer sign-up begins at fall registration for parents and community persons to volunteer their time, talents and interests to enrich school activities during the year.

SCHOOL NUTRITION

Harrisonburg City Public Schools cafeterias serve nutritious breakfasts, lunches, and after school snacks (to students participating in an approved after school activity) through USDA National School Lunch, Breakfast and Snack Programs. The School Nutrition Department's goal is to offer nutritious meals that are acceptable to students at a reasonable price for parents. In addition to providing healthy foods, the program has the goal of educating students about the importance of healthy eating. Menus are posted in each room and are also available on the HCPS and individual school websites. Additional nutrition related information is available on the School Nutrition website at www.harrisonburg.k12.va.us/Departments/School-Nutrition.aspx.

PROCEDURES FOR MEAL PAYMENTS

Lunch prices are as follows:

Full Price – Elementary \$1.90, Middle \$1.90, High \$2.05

Reduced Price – \$0.40 all levels

Adults – \$3.50

Breakfast prices are as follows:

Adults – \$1.50

Breakfast is free for all students

A la carte prices are as follows:

Extra entrée \$1.75

Ice Cream \$1.00

Bottled Water or Juice \$1.00

Milk \$0.50

Small Juice \$0.35

Extra Fruit/Vegetable \$0.75

Payments can be made for any given period of time: a day, a week, a month, or even the entire school year and can be made with cash or check. Credit or debit cards are not accepted at the school level. Parents may set up an account to check meal balances and purchases and to add funds to an account using a credit or debit card at www.myschoolbucks.com If you would like to check your child's account balance you may also call or email the cafeteria manager at their school or call or email Andrea Early, School Nutrition Program Director at 437-3300 or aeearly@harrisonburg.k12.va.us.

- Please put payments in an envelope with the student's name and account number (ID number) on the envelope. It is helpful to write the student's name and ID number on all checks. Please have students bring payments to the cafeteria.

- No cash will be returned to a student who presents a check for meal payment. Refunds from student accounts will be made only if a request in writing or by email is made by a parent or guardian. Funds will not be transferred between siblings in a family without prior written authorization from a parent or guardian.
- Account balances from the previous year will roll over to the new school year. Parents of students who are graduating or leaving the district should make a request in writing or by email for a refund of an account balance. Notices will be sent to parents of graduating seniors who have a positive balance. Balances remaining on accounts of graduating seniors after June 30th will be transferred into a hardship fund. This fund will be used by the Director of School Nutrition to offset meal charges on a case by case basis.
- Meal charges are also reflected in the student's meal account balance. Students with meal charges will not be allowed to charge or purchase a la carte (extra) food items
- Security for this system relies in students not sharing their individual account number.
- Students who receive free or reduced lunch also qualify for free or reduced breakfast. Please note that free and reduced status applies to full meals only, not individual items (milk for example).

PROCEDURES AND POLICY FOR MEAL CHARGES

A meal charge is defined as a short-term loan for a child to eat because the child has forgotten or lost money for that day. The School Nutrition Program is self supporting and relies on revenue generated from meals that are served. Therefore, charges must be kept to a minimum.

Cafeteria Managers, through the use of the computerized school nutrition accounting system, will allow and record charges, collect monies for payment of charges, and issue charge notices as deemed necessary. Parents will be notified by automated phone call when their student's account is in a negative status.

Full meals will always be provided to elementary and middle school students regardless of amount owed. High school students may accrue no more than \$20.00 in charges. High school students with more than \$20.00 in charges should not go through the regular serving lines, but should go directly to the kitchen to receive an alternate meal (sandwich and drink). Students with meal charges will not be allowed to charge or purchase a la carte (extra) food items. Parents are expected to pay meal charges in a timely manner at all school levels. School staff may accrue no more than \$12.00 in charges.

If a hardship has occurred, please submit a new application for free/reduced meals immediately. Please note that parents are expected to pay charges accrued to a student's account prior to their being approved for free and reduced meals. A hardship fund is maintained and may be used to offset these charges on a case by case basis.

If you have questions, please call the cafeteria manager at your student's school or call Andrea Early, School Nutrition Director at 437-3300.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

CAFETERIA PROCEDURES

Last year we made changes in our cafeteria to create a lunchroom environment that is more conducive to students eating a healthy lunch and conversing with friends. We will continue to work on this during this school year as well. Only one grade level is in the lunchroom at a time for the majority of their lunch period. This has drastically cut down on the overall noise, stimuli and confusion that students encounter as they eat lunch. Children are encouraged to finish eating as they talk quietly. We have three cafeteria monitors to support our students at lunch and to help foster a positive environment. Our students appreciate that we are creating a more positive atmosphere where they can relax and enjoy eating lunch with friends. We hope you will continue to join us for lunch throughout the year. If you choose to eat down the hall at the Keister Cafe, your child may invite one friend to join you.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Harrisonburg City Public Schools are committed to providing a full educational opportunity for identified disabled individuals. This commitment is demonstrated, in part, through the following efforts:

- An ongoing child find effort is made to locate and identify disabled individuals from birth through age 21
- A free and appropriate public education is provided to all disabled students, ages 2 through 21 inclusive, in the least restrictive environment. All federal and state regulations are either met or exceeded by local school practices
- An active and involved advisory committee meets on a regular basis to review programs and the special education annual plan. The committee is composed of parents and community agency representatives. These meetings are open to the public and are publicized

Parents are involved throughout the educational process. Parental permission and notification of procedural safeguards are obtained before an evaluation takes place. Parents are also invited to attend child study and eligibility meetings, and participate with educators in jointly developing their child's individualized education program.

SPEECH AND HEARING SCREENING

Each year all students in kindergarten have their hearing and speech screened by the speech therapists in the school system. All new students entering the system receive both speech and hearing screenings. Parents will be notified if their child fails any of the screenings and a follow-up on the child will be recommended. If you do not wish for your child to be screened, you must contact the school office within two days after school starts or within two days of their enrollment date.

STANDARDS OF LEARNING (SOL) TESTING

Harrisonburg City Public Schools use the Virginia Standards of Learning as the core of their academic curriculum. Keister Elementary uses the Virginia Standards of Learning as defined for grades K through 5. For

information regarding the academic standards, curriculum framework, test blueprints and released tests, please visit the Virginia Department of Education website at: www.doe.virginia.gov.

Students at Keister will take SOL tests in May each school year as mandated by the Virginia Board of Education in the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia. The exact dates will be communicated to parents when the school division schedule is determined.

Students in grade 3 must take the SOL tests in two core academic disciplines of Mathematics and English. Students in grade 4 will take tests in Reading, Mathematics and Virginia Studies. Students in Grade 5 will take tests in Reading, Mathematics and Science. Alternative tests/forms as well as specific accommodations may be provided to students with disabilities and/or students identified as limited-English proficient. Student test results must be used as one of multiple criteria developed by the Harrisonburg City School Board to determine promotion or retention at grades 3 - 8.

STUDENT RECOGNITION

Appropriate praise and positive reinforcement play an important part in building healthy self-esteem that promotes academic success. The following awards are given during the school year and at our end of year awards presentations:

- **Excellent Attendance:** It is very important that students be on time and attend school regularly. The school presents excellent attendance awards to students who have been present every day. Attendance is taken at 9:00 each morning.
- **Honor Roll:** Each nine weeks, all students who receive all A's and/or B's and NO C's in the areas of reading, spelling, language, mathematics, social studies, science, and health qualify for the school honor roll. The "A" Honor Roll is used to distinguish those students having straight A's for each nine weeks throughout the school year in every area. This is not an average. The "A/B" Honor Roll is used to distinguish those students having only A's and B's in every subject for each nine weeks throughout the school year. To be eligible for a nine weeks' recognition, there must be at least one "A" each nine weeks. This is not an average. Students are recognized and rewarded by having their names published in the DAILY NEWS RECORD.

- **Rotary Club Code of Ethics Award:** This award honors one male and one female student in fifth grade as part of its activities to recognize the importance of ethics in our community. The criteria include truthfulness, consistency, dependability, integrity, service to and concern for others, friendliness, depth of commitment, and reverence.
- **President’s Education Awards Program:** The Office of the President of the United States awards certificates to those students meeting the highest academic standards. These standards include designated grade point averages and achievement on standardized tests.

Additionally classrooms will work to earn “Keister Cougar Paws” throughout the year. A class can receive a “paw” print when they exhibit appropriate behaviors in the common areas: hallways, cafeteria and specials classrooms. Each class will determine the award that will be earned when they reach their goal.

TEXTBOOKS

These books belong to the public schools of Harrisonburg and should be handled with the same care as one would his own. If mistreated or unduly worn or damaged, a proportionate part of the cost of the book will be charged to the student. Since textbooks are expected to last for a six-year period, students are asked to handle their books with care.

TOYS/ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Toys/electronic devices and fidget spinners are to be left at home. This includes, but is not limited to walkmans, MP3 players, trading cards, and hand held computer games. If a toy/electronic device is brought to school, a staff member may confiscate the item. The item will be returned by sending it home at the end of the day with a note to parents, calling parents to come pick it up, holding it until the next conference you have, or trying any other reasonable solution to get the item home.

VISITORS

Visitors are welcome at W. H. Keister Elementary. All visitors must report to the main office to log in on the computer for a visitor’s pass. Visitors must also sign out in the main office. Unauthorized persons, including suspended students, will be requested to leave school grounds by the building administrator.

WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL

Parents should contact the school office before withdrawing a child. This allows us to complete withdrawal procedures that are in the best interest of your child.

WORLD-CLASS INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN AND ASSESSMENT (WIDA)

Harrisonburg City Public Schools uses the WIDA English Language proficiency standards for English Language Learners in Pre-K through Grade 12 to assess oral and written language fluency. The assessment

component (ACCESS Test) will be administered to all English Language Learners during the spring to assess their proficiency in meeting these standards. This test is given to all pre-K through 12 students whose first language is not English.

Important Phone Numbers:

W. H. Keister Elementary School Office

Phone: 434-6585

Fax: 434-4452

Harrisonburg City Public Schools Central Office

434-9916

Harrisonburg City Public Schools Welcome Center

433-3644

Harrisonburg City Transportation Department

432-0492