

Brown County Community Unit District #1



2025-2026 Elementary School Handbook

Welcome to Brown County Elementary School

Dear Brown County Families,

Welcome to the 2025–2026 school year! We are so excited to welcome our students back to school and to greet the new families joining our community.

Our teachers and staff have been working hard to prepare for a great year filled with learning, growth, and memorable moments. We are committed to creating a safe, caring, and engaging environment where all students can thrive.

We believe that strong partnerships between home and school make a big difference. We look forward to working together with you to support your child's learning. Be sure to check our school website, newsletters, and social media for updates and events throughout the year.

Thank you for your continued support. We can't wait to get started and look forward to an amazing year ahead!

Sincerely,

Lisa Hannel
Principal
Brown County Elementary

Table of Contents

District Phone Numbers	4
Brown County Elementary School Staff	4-5
Brown County Board of Education	5
Brown County Elementary School Mission Statement	5
Parent Involvement Policy	5
Building Procedures	6
Attendance	7
Excused Absences	8
Pre-Arranged Absences	8
Unexcused Absences	9
Emergency School Closing	9
Change of Address/Phone Number	10
Lunch and Breakfast Programs	10
Parent Involvement Policy	11
Arrival and Dismissal Procedures	11
Student Services	12
Grades	13
Additional Educational Programs	13
Testing Program	13
Dress Code	14
PBIS/Discipline	15-16

Brown County Elementary School 2024-2025 Handbook

DISTRICT PHONE NUMBERS

District Office	(217)773-7401
Brown County High School	(217)773-7701
Middle School	(217)773-7601
Elementary School	(217)773-7501
Transportation	(217)773-7401

District Website	www.bchornets.com
------------------	--

STAFF

Superintendent	Dr. Lan Eberle
Principal	Lisa Hannel
School Secretary	Kristen Ransom
Transportation Secretary	Casey Perry

Certified Staff

PreK

Ms. Annie Fullerton
Ms. Katelynn Coyle
Ms. Madelynn Obert
Ms. Diane Settles, PK coordinator
Ms. Kris Taylor, 0-3 P.I. Educator
Ms. Nicole Hester, 0-3 P.I. Educator
Ms. Stacy Scheer, 0-3 P.I. Educator

Kindergarten

Ms. Kara Cox
Ms. Megan Kunkel
Ms. Lynn Tomlinson

1st Grade

Ms. Kourtney Kassing
Ms. Melissa Ransom

2nd Grade

Ms. Mary Ingram
Ms. Kristen Wagner

3rd Grade

Ms. McKaylia Fields
Mrs. Jessica Flynn

4th Grade

Ms. Melanie Harvey
Ms. Anne Oliver

Special Services

Ms. Morgan Waterkotte, Special Education
Ms. Gabby Kempf, Special Education
Ms. BJ Yelliott, Special Education
Ms. Cassie Kindhart, Speech Ms.
Ashley Long, Speech Ms.

Tiffany McClintock, Title
Ms. Heather Miller, Title
Ms. Chris Spohr, Counselor

Specials

Mr. Joseph Feenstra, Music
Mr. Dave Phelps, PE

Technology

Mr. Kris Gallaher

School Nurse

Mrs. Mrs. Christi Goudschaal

Support Staff

Molly Lenover, Paraprofessional	Deb Kemper, Cafeteria
Cindy McNeff, Paraprofessional	James McCay, Head of Maintenance
Jenny Sorrells, Paraprofessional	Johnathan Thomas, Maintenance
Madison Thomas, Paraprofessional	Troy Roberts, Groundskeeper
Leslie Wiese, Paraprofessional	
Paytan Stech, Paraprofessional	
Lacey Bradbury, Paraprofessional	
Melissa Barfield, Paraprofessional	
Rebecca Welchert, Paraprofessional	
Crystal Roley, Day Custodian	
Alicia Grady, Head of Cafeteria	

Board of Education

Dawn Hughes, Board President	Kurt Reische, Member
Mark Gregory, Vice President	John Eichelberger, Member
Todd Koch, Secretary	Perry Wilkerson, Member
Garrett Ingram, Member	Dr. Lan Eberle, Superintendent

BROWN COUNTY CUSD #1

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide an educational opportunity which will allow each student to develop those skills, understandings, and capabilities which allow them, as graduates, to become productive and competent individuals and members of society.

Brown County Elementary School Parent Involvement Policy

Brown County School District will involve parents in regular, two-way meaningful communication addressing student achievement and ensuring:

- that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning
- that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education
- that parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, to assist in the education of their child

Building Procedures

School Day – The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m.

Arrival Procedures

Pre-K – 4th grade

BUS RIDERS are dropped off at the front of the building and enter through the main entrance. An adult will greet them at the door.

CAR RIDERS should be dropped off at the rear of the building. **Please do not drop your child off prior to 7:30.** Enter the lower/cafeteria side parking lot via the east drive from Lincoln Street/closest to the building. Please stay in your car and form a line. Students **SHOULD NOT** be let out of the car before they are at the sidewalk in front of the rear entrance. To keep the line moving smoothly, unbuckle your student(s) and gather their belongings after you enter the parking area and before they are greeted at the door. Once your child is safely on the sidewalk, proceed through the parking lot out the west drive and turn right onto Lincoln Street to maintain the flow of traffic. Students will enter through the entrance nearest the cafeteria. Staff will be on hand to assist.

A.M. Pre-K Arrival

Bus students are dropped off at the front of the building and enter through the main entrance. Students not riding a bus should arrive in the car rider line in the rear of the school. Staff will also be available to help direct your child.

P.M Pre-K Arrival

Arrival is at 12:30 p.m. **Busses** are at the Main Entrance in the **front** of the building. **Parent drop-off** will be at the main entrance. Parents and students should wait at the front door, inside the foyer, until the Pre-K teacher greets them.

Early Childhood Special Education students should arrive at the main entrance, no earlier than **8:00 a.m.** They will be greeted by a staff member to enter the building.

Dismissal Procedures

Morning Pre-K and Early Childhood Special Education students will be dismissed at 10:30 a.m. Parents will need to meet their student(s) at the main entrance. Parents may wait in the foyer.

K – 4th grade **bus riders** will be dismissed to the main entrance to the bus area.

K – 4th car riders will be picked up at the lower/cafeteria side parking lot via the east drive from Lincoln Street/closest to the building. **Pull all the way forward** when entering the parking lot.

A staff member will ask you which child(ren) you need and bring them to your vehicle.

Stopping early causes delays in the pick-up line. **Do not park and come and get your child.**

Remain in your car and wait in the pick-up line. The staff will gladly help get your students to your vehicles and help buckle them in. **Do not park in the alleyways or on the side of the road.** The Mt. Sterling Police Department will be patrolling the area and issuing warnings for those blocking the road.

Bicycles

All bicycles are to be parked in bike racks. Bicycles are not to be ridden on school grounds during school hours.

ATTENDANCE/ABSENTEEISM

The **Illinois School Code** requires: Whoever has custody or control of any child between the ages of seven and seventeen years shall cause such child to attend some public school in the district wherein the child resides the entire time it is in session.

Section 26-2: "Any person having custody or control of a child who is below the age of 7 years or above the age of 17 years and who is enrolled in any of grades 1 through 12 in the public school, shall cause him to attend the public school in the district wherein he resides when it is in session during the regular school term." This statute defines a chronic truant as any child who has been truant from school 5% or more of the previous 180 school days.

It is difficult for a child to learn if he or she is not consistently in the classroom. The student who is absent, for whatever reason, misses classroom content and activities and no amount of effort can recreate these educational experiences for children. Therefore, careful consideration should be made before a child is absent from school and concerned parents should not allow their child to miss school except for unavoidable reasons. Removing students from school for any reason is discouraged. Careful planning in accordance with the school calendar will ensure that the student's best interests are being served. Attendance rules and procedures are designed to develop students' punctuality, self-discipline, and responsibility. School is the primary occupation of students, and, as in any occupation, regular attendance is expected.

The Brown County School District shall not be liable for the educational progress of students who fail to maintain regular attendance habits, nor for the progress of students who are removed from the school for extended periods of time contrary to law or good educational procedure.

In accordance with Policy 7:70, administrators may excuse students for up to 14 days annually which will be divided into 7 days per semester (includes single periods). Excused absences, pre-arranged absences, unexcused absences, etc., are all included in the 14 days. Written notification will be mailed to the parents after the 6th absence each semester. Medical verification is then due on the 8th absence day each semester. Situations not included within the 9 days are as follows: medically verified absences, religious holidays, or a death in the immediate family.

Students are expected to be at school unless they are ill. If a student has a doctor's appointment, or religious observance and cannot attend school for some specific reason, parents are to notify the office prior to the absence. If a student is absent for illness, the parent must call the office before 10:00 a.m. on the day of the absence. Failure to call to report an absence will cause the absence to be deemed unexcused.

EXCUSED ABSENCES - Excused absences are absences for "valid cause", which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Personal illness (Parent Contact): Students are allowed 7 days/occurrences of absence per semester which can be excused with a parent phone call and/or note (beginning January 4, 2022, per State of Illinois addition to allowable absences; Public Act 102-0266) This includes mental health days.* If a student reaches seven parent contact absences in a semester (a partial-day occurrence or a full-day occurrence will both be counted for purposes of personal illness/parent contact days as 1 day of absence), all subsequent absences will be considered unexcused.
- Death in the immediate family.
- Family/home emergency (approved by administrator/reviewable).
- Court appearance (Court dates are excused absences if the student has a note from the probation officer or judge saying they were required to appear in court).
- Religious observances.
- Parent/Guardian indicating student is ill (reviewable).
- Medical (a documented, health-related absence, i.e., medical or dental appointments).
- school-sanctioned field trips.
- Out-of-school suspension (Administrative removal from school property for a school day or portion thereof for violations of school disciplinary policies);
- In-school suspension (an in-building administrative reassignment from a class period or periods for violations of school disciplinary policies).
- Administrative approval.
- Pre-arranged approved absences (see procedures below)
- NOTE: The above absences are examples of "valid cause" absences, i.e., absences cited in the Illinois School Code and/or District #1 School Board policy.
-

PRE-ARRANGED APPROVED ABSENCES

Permission for a pre-arranged absence must be secured in the office at least **3 days** in advance of the absence. Pre-arranged absence could include the following:

- 1) Religious Program of Instruction or Conference – A parent/guardian must notify the attendance office approximately two weeks before the absences.
- 2) Family-Related/Family Time Absences – Parents/guardians should make every attempt to schedule family-related/family-time absences around the school schedule. However, when such trips must be made while school is in session, an application for pre-approved family-related activities will be reviewed and considered for excused status when students are absent from school. These absences are to be reviewed by, but not limited to the following: an assistant principal and principal. Pre-planned family-related/family time are limited to one per semester. Please refer to the school calendar if planning such an absence.

* Pre-arranged absences requested by the parents or guardians are not to exceed five days per school year and may be excused with the permission of the principal for family time. At least

three school days prior written notice is required to pre-arrange an absence. Schoolwork missed is to be made up according to the classroom teacher's policy. Only family time or family-related absence qualify as excused absence. **Failure to pre-arrange in the required timeframe will**

* A day of school includes any part of a school day. For example, an excused absence under this section for an afternoon counts as one day of the five days allowed.

***Requests for an absence that would exceed five pre-arranged days in a school year, requests for students in danger of failing any class, and requests for absences for students who have extensive absences due to other reasons are not normally approved.**

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES/TRUANCY

An unauthorized absence is any absence caused by a failure to follow prescribed school procedures or reasons not accepted by the school. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- No phone contact with parent
- Oversleeping
- Missed school bus or lack of ride to school
- Car trouble
- Undocumented health-related absences
- Non-approved family-related activity or pre-approved family-related activity days exceeding the pre-approval limit
- Shopping
- Working
- Animal appointments or animal illness
- Weather-related reasons (raining, etc.)

NOTE: Any unexcused absence is reviewable by the administration.

Tardies

Any student arriving at or after 8:10 a.m. will be considered tardy unless they have a note from a doctor excusing them. A parent will need to sign the student in to the office. Students will then go to their classrooms on their own. Parents/guardians must sign students into the building.

Emergency School Closings

Brown County CUSD utilizes an automated phone system (Alert Now) to notify parents of school closings or early dismissal. Parents should update any changes in their telephone contact information with the personnel in each individual school building. In cases of bad weather and other local emergencies, local radio or television stations will be advised of school closings or early dismissals. If bad weather or other emergency occurs during the day, please listen to local media stations for possible early dismissal information. For your child's safety, make certain your child knows ahead of time where to go in case of an early dismissal. If we dismiss early for an emergency, all after-school functions are automatically canceled.

Change of Address or Phone Number

Any change in a student's or parent's address or phone number should be reported to the principal's office or submitted via Skyward as promptly as possible. This enables the school to send all mail to the proper address and to contact the home at any time.

Lunch and Breakfast Program

Brown County Elementary School has breakfast and lunch available for every student in the building. Additional milk at lunch, milk for students bringing sack lunches, or milk for milk break may be purchased. The classroom teachers and/or the office will collect lunch and milk money. Please send money in an envelope with the student's name stating what the money is for and the amount enclosed. Lunches and extra milk should be paid for in advance.

We encourage students to eat lunch as this is vital for effective academic performance in the afternoon. A student may participate in the hot lunch program or bring a sack lunch from home. Menus are sent home at the beginning of every month to make it easier for parents. Sack lunches should include a main entrée (sandwich, cheese and crackers, cheese stick), fruits and veggies. A bag of chips and a small dessert are a nice addition, but please make sure that those treats are not the main components of the lunch. Soft drinks are not permitted at lunch. Do not send food items that require an adult to prepare at school. If you send an item that needs to be warm, please warm it at home and put it in a thermos to send to school. A school lunch will be available if the teacher discovers a child's lunch is missing vital nutritious components.

FREE/REDUCED TEXTBOOKS

Information and applications are available at each school office or can be downloaded from the school website at www.bchornets.com. All families are encouraged to apply just in case their students are eligible to be exempt from paying school fees.

Lost or damaged school textbooks and/or school property will be charged to the student at replacement costs

All registration fees must be paid in full using credit card, debit card, personal check or cash **or** a blank, voided check must be provided in order to set up payments of the fees on either a 3-, 6- or 9-month payment plan. Please do this with your child's school office. **Checks returned for insufficient funds may result in the writer being required to pay in cash or use a credit card for all future debts.**

Brown County Elementary School Parent Involvement Policy

Brown County School District will involve parents in regular, two-way meaningful communication addressing student achievement and ensuring:

- that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning
- that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education
- that parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, to assist in the education of their child

****For more information, visit our website and click on the TITLE 1 parent involvement policy.**

Building Procedures

School Day – The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m.

Arrival Procedures

Pre-K – 4th grade

BUS RIDERS are dropped off at the front of the building and enter through the main entrance. An adult will greet them at the door.

CAR RIDERS should be dropped off in the rear of the building. **Please do not drop your child off prior to 7:30.** Enter the lower/cafeteria side parking lot via the east drive from Lincoln Street/closest to the building. Please stay in your car and form a line. Students **SHOULD NOT** be let out of the car before they are at the sidewalk in front of the rear entrance. To keep the line moving smoothly, unbuckle your student(s) and gather their belongings after you enter the parking area and before they are greeted at the door. Once your child is safely on the sidewalk, proceed through the parking lot out the west drive and turn right onto Lincoln Street to maintain the flow of traffic. Students will enter through the entrance nearest the cafeteria. Staff will be on hand to assist.

A.M. Pre-K Arrival

Bus students are dropped off at the front of the building and enter through the main entrance. Students not riding a bus should arrive in the car rider line in the rear of the school. Staff will also be available to help direct your child.

P.M Pre-K Arrival

Arrival is at 12:30 p.m. **Busses** are at the Main Entrance in the **front** of the building. **Parent drop-off** will be at the main entrance. Parents and students should wait at the front door, inside the foyer, until the Pre-K teacher greets them.

Early Childhood Special Education students should arrive at the main entrance, no earlier than **8:00 a.m.** They will be greeted by a staff member to enter the building.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Morning Pre-K and Early Childhood Special Education students will be dismissed at 10:30 a.m. Parents will need to meet their student at the main entrance. Parents may wait in the foyer.

Any student arriving at or after 8 a.m. will need to be signed into the office. Students will then go to their classrooms on their own.

Once students arrive at school in the morning, they are not to leave school grounds until the end of the school day unless they secure the permission of the principal. Parents/guardians must sign students out of the office.

School dismisses at 3:00 p.m. Bells will ring at 2:55 p.m. to signal all students/teachers to leave the school building. Please do not arrive early to pick up your student. **Pull all the way forward** when entering the parking lot. A staff member will ask you which child(ren) you need and bring them to your vehicle. Stopping early causes delays in the pick-up line. **Do not park and come and get your child.** Remain in your car and wait in the pick-up line. The staff will gladly help get your students to your vehicles and help buckle them in. **Do not park in the alley ways or on the side of the road.** The Mt. Sterling Police Department will be patrolling the area and issuing warnings for those blocking the road. Middle School students do not arrive at the elementary school until after 3:00 p.m. If you are picking up a middle school student, it is best to wait until later to enter the pick-up line.

Parents need to stress to their child the importance of crossing streets carefully and only at crosswalks.

Bicycles

All bicycles are to be parked in the bike racks. Bicycles are not to be ridden on school grounds during school hours.

Lost and Found

Articles found in and around the building should be brought to the office. Identifying labels should be put on all personal articles. A lost and found service will be maintained in the office. Items that remain in lost and found will be donated after Parent-Teacher Conferences in the fall and spring and at the end of the school year.

Report Cards

K – 3rd grades use the standards-based grading system as follows:

4	Exceeding	Exceeding the Standard
3	Mastery	Meeting the Standard
2	Approaching	Approaching the Standard
1	Emerging	Not Meeting the Standard

In your child's report card, you will find specific information regarding how they are progressing toward meeting standards. The purpose of this type of information is to create a more specific, accurate and understandable description of student learning individualized to represent your student's progress. These requirements may not apply to students with disabilities whose course of study is determined by an Individualized Education Program.

The 4th grade system is as follows:

A	94 – 100	D+	67 - 69
A-	90 - 93	D	63 - 66
B+	87 - 89	D-	60 - 62
B	83 – 86	F	59 & below
B-	80 - 82		
C+	77- 79		
C-	70 - 72		

Additional Educational Programs

Brown County Schools have the following educational programs available which can help to meet the individual needs of students: Title I (remedial reading/language arts and math), early childhood education, counseling services, special education, speech/language therapy. If at any time you believe that your child would benefit from additional services, please discuss this with his/her classroom teacher. All parents have the right to receive, upon request, a copy of the rights of exceptional children and rules pertaining thereto.

School Assessments

Kindergarten – Grade 4: Accadience Benchmark Assessment for Reading Comprehension, Fluency, Writing, and Math, NWEA Map testing for Reading and Math three times a year.
Grade 3 - 4: IAR - Illinois Assessment of Readiness.

Dress Code

It is the obligation of parents and the responsibility of students to see that reasonable and proper dress and appearance be maintained at all times in school and at school activities. Clothing shall not create or hold the likelihood of **creating** a disruption in the classroom order or school order. When a student's style of dress or appearance presents a clear and present danger to the students' health and safety, causes an interference with schoolwork, or creates a classroom or school distraction, he/she will be asked to correct the condition. The following dress requirements have been established by the Brown County Board of Education:

- 1) Shorts and Yoga Pants: Shorts are acceptable attire and can be worn to school if they are an acceptable length (fingertip length). Yoga pants/spandex/tights/legging can be worn only if they are worn under something (ex. shorts) or if a shirt or dress is worn over them and is acceptable length (fingertip length).
- 2) Clothing which promotes or mentions alcohol, tobacco, drugs or drug paraphernalia may not be worn to school. Clothing shall be free from provocative or obscene reference, writing or graphics, conveyed either expressly or implied. This determination shall be at the discretion of individual staff members and/or administration.
- 3) Appropriate footwear must be worn at all times.
- 4) Jeans that show underwear or buttocks are not permitted.
- 5) Hats or other head coverings and sunglasses (unless prescribed by a physician) are not to be worn in the school building before or during school hours or carried in the classroom or hallways between classes and are to remain in the lockers until dismissal time. Students will be given one warning by staff members on a hat/head covering violation. A second incident will result in the confiscation and detainment of the item for retrieval at the end of the day.
- 6) Accessories that present a potential safety factor for the wearer or others, or that could damage furniture or property, are not acceptable at school. Examples of these are chains on wallets, spiked necklaces, spiked bracelets, hair picks, boots with cleats, **Heelys** etc.

If there is any question about dress and appearance, the building principal will make the final determination.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS)

What is Positive Behavior Support?

The application of evidence-based strategies and systems to assist schools

- To increase academic performance
- Increase safety
- Decrease problem behavior and establish positive school cultures

PBIS Big Ideas

- Positive Behavior Support is a process for teaching children appropriate behavior and providing the supports necessary to sustain that behavior.

Brown County Elementary PBIS Purpose Statement

It is the mission of the staff at Brown County Elementary School to facilitate the effective teaching and learning of positive behavioral expectations. It is our mission to help each child reach their greatest potential. Through positive behavioral supports, we aspire to teach life skills that enable children to deal confidently with the complex and rapidly changing world.

Brown County Elementary Kick-Off

The kick-off will be used to teach the Hornet Tools behaviors we will be targeting this semester. Classroom teachers will be responsible for implementing these Hornet Tool behaviors throughout the school year.

Incentive Information

“Hornet Bucks”

We will use the Hornet Tools behavior matrix to support our behavior system at Brown County Elementary. Students will be given bucks for demonstrating the goals on the matrix. The bucks will be universal throughout the school. Each staff member is encouraged to catch the students following the behaviors, award them with a Hornet Buck, and verbally praise them for the specific behavior. Hornet Bucks should NOT be taken from any student as a consequence for an undesirable behavior.

“Golden Hornet Bucks”

These bucks are to be used when a student does something above and beyond, without being prompted. This reward needs to be behavior related. Examples are: A student finds money and gives it to you. One student, without being told, helps another child in need. A student in your classroom helps to make a new child feel welcome at our school.

The Use of Hornet Bucks

When a student receives a Hornet Buck, they are responsible for placing it in a safe place. The bucks will be used to shop at the Hornet Store. The Hornet Store will be open on a quarterly basis..

Discipline

Using our PBIS system, most discipline areas are taken care of in the classroom. For those discipline areas that cannot be handled in the classroom, the following steps are taken:

- The teachers use an office referral system that clearly identifies the classroom issue, the perceived cause, those involved, and steps taken in the classroom to avoid the referral. This form is sent with the student to the principal's office.
- The principal conferences with the student(s) to determine consequence(s), if needed. These consequences can be, but are not inclusive to counseling referral, removal from the classroom for cooling down, lunch detention, after-school detention, or suspension. Each referral receives a parent notification. Each of these referrals is documented in Skyward.
 - The classroom is where students need to be to maintain learning, and every effort is made to keep the student in the classroom. However, there are instances where this cannot be done.
- In some cases, the referral warrants out-of-school suspension.
 - Those cases come from any time a student is violent and/or hurts a student or staff member.
 - When there have been at least two previous attempts with after-school detention that have not resulted in the improvement of the referred behavior.
 - Following an out-of-school suspension, the principal or counselor will conference
- Repetitive behaviors that result in multiple after-school detentions/out-of-school suspensions may result in student(s) being denied the opportunity to attend field trips or school functions.

It is important that students get off to a good start academically. You can help your child develop good learning and homework habits by providing him/her a quiet time and place to study and read.

We are here to help your child become prepared for life's challenges. We will go to great lengths to help our students, but the responsibility is ultimately his/her's. Failure to assume this responsibility and complete the assigned work is the leading cause of failure. Please create a partnership with your child's teacher which will help your child succeed.

