

THE RISING TIDE

Finding Inspiration in Our Students and Our School Community

Administration

Kelly A. Hedrick, Ed.D., Principal

Janet Smallwood, Assistant Principal

Susanne Meyerholz, Assistant Principal

J. Denise Schmitter, School Counseling Department Chair

Matthew Voegel, Student Activities Coordinator

C. Eric Bone, School Improvement Specialist

**4633 Honeygrove Road
Virginia Beach, VA
23455**

Phone: 757.648.3240

**Student Hours:
8:35 a.m. - 3:39 p.m.**

**Office Hours:
7:30 a.m. - 4:10 p.m.**

Old Donation School is supported by the ODS PTA in countless ways. Please join and encourage extended family to support us as well: <https://www.brickellacademypta.com>



Old Donation School
Home of the Edward E. Brickell Academy for
Advanced Academics and Arts

We hope everyone in our school community endured the effects of hurricane Florence without too many problems. As we return to school today, every ODS staff member is focused on helping every child feel safe and help them establish school routines that will lead to success. Please contact us if your family needs our support.



Got Honor?

In the first week of school, Dr. Hedrick met with all students in the academic program, grades 2-8, to affirm our priorities as a school. Using the Old Donation School (ODS) Honor Code as the driving force in setting expectations for all students, staff, administrators, parents, and guests, Dr. Hedrick told students, "Everyone here at ODS is expected to live by our Honor Code. We will be kind, respectful, collaborative, honest, and diligent." Throughout the first weeks of school, teachers will work with

Mission, Vision, and Honor Code: What do we value as a school?

Vision Statement: Every student is engaged in a creative, collaborative, and challenging environment characterized by support and mutual respect for individual differences.

Mission Statement: Old Donation School, home of Brickell Academy, will inspire a passion for learning in all students through innovative opportunities and authentic tasks throughout our unique school community.

Honor Code: I will have the courage to act with integrity, choosing to demonstrate honesty, responsibility, self-control, and respect in my words and actions.

What do I do if there is a problem with bus transportation?

In the event a bus is late picking up your child in the morning, doesn't arrive at all, or is late in the afternoon, please contact the Virginia Beach City Public Schools Office of Transportation Services.

- Main number: 757-263-1545
- Bus routes and schedules (5 a.m.-5 p.m.): 757-263-1545
- After hours (5 p.m.-7 p.m.) 757-263-2949
- vbcpbusstop@vbschools.com

Note: At the conclusion of dismissal each day, the recording on the ODS machine is updated with the latest transportation information as we know it at the time of dismissal. Call 757-648-3240 and select option #4.

students to establish class routines and norms that help translate the expectations of the Honor Code into the classroom environment. Each month, ODS staff members will wear their Got Honor? shirts as a reminder of our commitment to living by the Code throughout our school.



Special Series for Parents

We are excited to announce a Special Series: *Parenting the Twice Exceptional Child*. This series will be offered monthly throughout the school year with the goal of providing parents of twice exceptional children an opportunity to come together and discuss topics relevant to their unique needs. The meetings will be held the third Thursday of each month (October 18, November 15, December 20, January 17, February 21, March 21, April 18, and May 16). Please contact Janet Smallwood at janet.smallwood@vbschools.com to let us know that you will attending.

Transportation at ODS

We want all parents to know how our transportation system works and to work with us to help ensure the safety of everyone at Old Donation School (ODS). Please note:

- Changes in transportation must be communicated in writing. Old Donation School will not accept transportation changes over the phone, by email or fax because we cannot verify the requestor's information.
- All transportation changes must be sent with students in the morning via a written note or dropped off by a parent to the office by 10:00 a.m.

Lunchtime Questions: Is it okay to have lunch with my child or bring a special treat for my child's class?

We encourage parents and grandparents to join their ODS student for lunch. With our scratch cooking menu, we welcome your participation and feedback as we refine recipes. Students enjoy having visitors. You may sit with your student and their friends, or sit at the counter. We do ask:

- Respect for student privacy: Please do not take photos. Some of our students cannot be photographed for safety and privacy reasons.
- Keep in mind that students have to be on time for class and your visit cannot delay their prompt departure from the cafeteria.
- Visiting for lunch gives you access to the cafeteria only. Resist the temptation to visit other areas of the school without first checking back in at the security desk.
- Provide food and treats for your child only. We have students with a range of life-threatening allergies so sharing of food is not allowed.
- Birthdays among our elementary students are great fun at ODS, but they pose a challenge for keeping all students safe. We also have students whose parents prefer a more restrictive diet and school cannot be the place where students are at risk for ingesting items that are not doctor or parent approved. Options:
 - Purchase ice-cream through the ODS cafeteria. Our Cafe Manager, Jennifer Winner, can help you. Your child's teacher can distribute coupons to students who are allowed to have ice-cream and work with the parents of all others to have a comparable treat for them.
 - Since neither homemade nor store bought treats can be completely safe for all children, consider a non-food celebration. Wouldn't it be fun to bring your child's class into the Atrium to read them a story or play a game of Simon Says and then sing Happy Birthday? Share your idea with your child's teacher in advance so we can make arrangements.
 - While treats at lunch are great, how about volunteering in your child's classroom on his or her birthday? Talk with your child's teacher in advance to find out how you can volunteer in honor of your child's birthday. Parents of twins or triplets may want to visit during PE when the entire grade is together.

- All changes must be communicated by 10:00 a.m. on the day of the change. Weekly and monthly schedule changes with the expectation that staff remember to remind the child(ren) are not feasible.

- Changes after 10:00 a.m. cannot be processed. Once the dismissal process begins (3:39 p.m.), we cannot make a change (i.e., pulling a child off of the bus or out of line to ride home with a parent) due to safety guidelines.

- In the event a parent/guardian decides to pick-up a child rather than having them ride the bus and this change occurs without written notification by 10:00 a.m. on the day of the change, parents/guardians must arrive by 3:15 p.m. for early dismissal and should not park in the front of school loop. Please use spaces in the staff/visitor parking area only.

Why are these processes in place?

Inevitably, someone each day asks ODS staff to make an exception to these processes in order to meet their individual needs. We do our best to be as accommodating as possible while maintaining order and adherence to all safeguards for safety. Perhaps some details about the processes may help everyone understand why an individual request for a change in processes is not always granted.

The procedure for making a transportation change is that a parent sends in a note on the day of the change, the child gives it to the teacher and the office processes the change. Understanding that sometimes parents or children forget, we do accept notes from parents delivered in person by 10:00 a.m. Security staff collects the notes from all classrooms beginning first thing in the morning and submits them to the office when finished which is by 10:00 a.m.

With 50 to 100 transportation changes in a school with students from all over Virginia Beach, it takes one to two staff members at least one to two hours to process the notes, record the changes for the day, and make copies of the notes for bus drivers. They have to have the notes in teacher mailboxes for pickup and distribution by noon each day. Once this task is completed, they resume other job duties.

The deadline of 10:00 a.m. is not meant to be harsh or rigid, but rather to ensure that everyone is accurately informed that a child will be taking a different method of travel home.



What is the reason for the afternoon routine?

At 3:15 p.m., we begin shifting staff members to initiate dismissal procedures. At that time, office staff and guidance staff change work locations to cover phones and the front desk security folks move to the bus loop. There, we have to ensure that the daily bus changes which are typically 50-100 changes a day between buses and parent pick-up are communicated to all staff on duty and to the bus drivers. This is not easy since our drivers do not all arrive prior to dismissal. Remember, our buses travel over every high school zone in VA Beach. The pressure to ensure we know where every child is traveling amidst daily changes is a daunting task. We accept the challenge and the parameters we must have in place.

We have a small support staff, so there is a team of teachers and administrators in the front for the almost 200 parent pick-ups and the remaining available staff are in the bus loop. Both areas and throughout the school include duty stations for all teachers who do not have a class at the end of the day. From 3:15 p.m. until the time students are dismissed, all staff in each area are briefed on changes which include sub busses, double-loads, and special situations like cabs for our homeless children and students who ride the special needs bus. The security desk and front office staff listen to all changes via the radio in the event there is an emergency.



All teachers know that we will not call into the classrooms for early release after 3:15 p.m. This means they prepare students for the end of class and the trip home. Teachers often let students use the restroom since some of them have long rides home. As the end of day routines begin to shift and teachers wrap-up classes until the end of the period, our middle school band and orchestra students leave class a few minutes early to get to lockers and pick-up instruments in the performing arts areas. All of these moving parts are happening simultaneously. Calling for a child after 3:15 p.m. means students would be making their way to the front desk amidst the shift to dismissal.



Why is the early release deadline at 3:15 p.m.?

When we first moved to the new school in April 2017, we tried a later time. The size of the building and the challenges of finding students amidst end of day activities meant they were often coming down at the same time our parent pick-up students were coming to the same location. We had as many as 20 parents in the lobby while students were coming down to line-up for parent pick-up. There were many days where parents wanted to avoid the car lane and they parked in the lot, and walked up to the front office. Doctors appointments, athletic teams, music lessons, and "I don't want to sit in that long line" were among the reasons the lobby was so crowded. In many cases, students and parents were walking out at the same time staff members were taking parent pick-up students out.

Staff members on duty in this area were concerned because they could not tell what parents had actually shown identification and checked out a child and whom had not. We even had some parents who took advantage of this confusion and attempted to walk up and take their child from the pick-up area. Given the custody situations of some of our children and the possibility that anyone could walk-up and take a child, we decided this was too much of a risk.



The Salad Bar is Open in the ODS Cafe Daily

We backed the time up to 3:15 p.m. and focused on communicating the new time to all parents. Since that time, the only problem is in situations where the time causes difficulty for individuals. No one wants to appear rigid or dismissive of individual needs. In truth, if we were to try and navigate individual situations we would be making exceptions every day creating an unreliable process and putting students at risk. There are those rare situations when an emergency warrants a break in protocols, but these are extraordinary circumstances. Thank you for working with us. Our focus is on keeping every child safe.

Are those bees? ODS has a beehive on the green roof. While students will not work in or near the hive, Mrs. Smallwood who is our resident beekeeper will film the processes so students and teachers can use the bees in their studies. The honey will be used in a variety of ways, including adding flavor in scratch cooking in the ODS Cafe.



Staying Informed

Keep up to date on what is going on at Old Donation School with the **Daily Update Email**. This daily email includes the morning announcements and is distributed to subscribers by noon each school day. You can sign up by going [here](#).

Daily Updates on Twitter:

- Dr. Hedrick [@Principal4GT](#)
- Old Donation School [@OldDonationSchool](#)
- PTA [@brickellpta](#)

School Web site: <http://www.brickellacademyvbschools.com>

AlertNow: Do we have your current contact information? AlertNow messages are used for a variety of communications, including emergency situations.

Teacher Webpages: <http://www.brickellacademyvbschools.com/pages/aboutus/staff/> Web: www.brickellacademypta.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BrickellAcademyPTA>

Email: BrickellAcademyPTA@gmail.com

Mark Your Calendar and Join Us:

Friday, October 12 Middle School Parent Workshop: *Keeping Adolescents Safe on the Internet* 6-8 pm
A middle school dance sponsored by NJHS will be held at the same time.

Friday, October 19 Outdoor Community Concert featuring our Middle School Band and Chorus 6 pm
Bring a picnic lunch and lawn chairs. Doors open at 5 pm.
Concert features a tribute to our military forces (Anchored 4 Life celebration).
All ODS students and families are invited to this event, including art and dance.