

# **Garden Elementary School**

## **2021 - 2022**

### **FAMILY HANDBOOK**



**700 Center Road**

**Venice, Florida 34285**

**941-486-2110 / Fax 941-486-2610**

[www.sarasotacountyschools.net/garden](http://www.sarasotacountyschools.net/garden)

**School Hours: 8:15am- 3:00pm**

*It is the responsibility of each family to read, understand,  
and abide by the guidelines in this handbook.*

#### VISION

*The Garden Elementary community is dedicated to providing a supportive environment where all children have the opportunity to achieve their highest potential.*

#### MISSION

*The mission of the Garden Elementary community is to provide students with meaningful learning experiences using individualized instruction, technology, collaborative learning, and community involvement. Student success will be measured by ongoing assessments. Garden's mission will be accomplished through the collaboration of students, staff, and parents.*

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>
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ARRIVAL & ATTENDANCE .....	3	TECHNOLOGY AND INTERNET USAGE .....	9
ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS TO CLASSES .....	3	TOYS/ELECTRONIC DEVICES/CANDY.....	9
BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE.....	3	VISITORS .....	9
BULLYING POLICY .....	4	VOLUNTEERS.....	10
BUS REGULATIONS.....	4	WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES.....	10
CELL PHONES.....	4		
CHANGE OF CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENT .....	4		
CODE OF CONDUCT.....	4		
CONFERENCES.....	4		
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM – Parent Link (formerly known as Connect Ed).....	4		
CURRICULUM .....	5		
CUSTODY .....	5		
DISMISSAL PROCEDURES .....	5		
DRESS CODE POLICY.....	6		
DRILLS.....	6		
FIELD TRIPS.....	6		
FOOD PRODUCTS FROM HOME .....	6		
FOOD SERVICES- Cafeteria .....	7		
HEALTH ROOM PROCEDURES .....	7		
HEALTH SCREENING .....	8		
HOMEWORK.....	8		
INSURANCE - SCHOOL.....	8		
LOST AND FOUND .....	8		
MEDIA CENTER.....	8		
MESSAGES.....	8		
MOMENT OF SILENCE .....	8		
PARENT PORTAL.....	8		
POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS & SUPPORTS (PBIS).....	8		
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.....	9		
PTSO (Parent Teacher Student Organization).....	9		
RELIGIOUS BELIEFS.....	9		
REPORT CARDS.....	9		
SAFETY PATROL.....	9		
SCS STUDENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK.....	9		
SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC) .....	9		

## ARRIVAL & ATTENDANCE

Regular and punctual attendance is vitally important to a student's success in school. Florida State Law requires regular school attendance and it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that their student attends school daily. Parents are encouraged to keep children home when they are not feeling well.

Before Care begins at 7:00 AM  
Breakfast begins at 7:45 AM  
Classroom doors open at 8:00 AM  
School begins at 8:15 AM

Arrival will be conducted using the exterior campus doors, unless it is raining or below 50° outside.

Students who are registered in Garden's before care program or serve as safety patrols must be signed in by a parent or guardian in the front office. Students may be dropped off in our car loop/arrive at back gate if walking/riding starting at 7:45 AM each morning. Students who are found on campus prior to 7:45 AM will be taken to our fee-based before care program. Parents will be responsible for paying any cost associated with the use of this program.

Students arriving after 8:15 AM are **tardy** and must be escorted by a parent to the office before entering class with a late pass. Chronic tardy problems will be referred to our school social worker.

The Community Engagement Platform Parent Link, an automated attendance notification phone system, will contact you regarding your student's absence.

**Excused absences** may be granted for student illness, observance of a religious holiday, a medical appointment, or a death in the family.

Please remember, to receive an excused absence, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the school in writing and justify the absence of their child. Failure to do so within three (3) school days will cause the absence to be recorded as an **unexcused absence**.

In cases of excessive excused absences ( $\geq 9$  days) for illness, a parent will be required to provide documentation from a physician.

An excused absence may also be provided for "special and unique situations", pre-approved by

administration. To request an excused absence for a "special or unique situation", please write a letter to administration stating the reason why the student will need to be absent. Please note, students with excessive absences will not be excused without a note from a physician.

A student, who has an excused absence or an absence resulting from a suspension, shall be expected to make up work missed. Make-up work must be completed within a time frame equal to the number of days absent. If you wish to submit a request for make-up work, please allow 24 hours to allow the teacher time to gather assignments. You may e-mail the teacher to submit a request and make arrangements for make-up work.

If a pattern of non-attendance develops, parents will be asked to conference with school staff and participate in efforts to remedy the situation. If **unexcused absences** continue, truancy procedures will be initiated. Students will be referred to the school social worker/truancy worker.

Please visit: <https://www.sarasotacountyschools.net/Page/2562> for the SCS's Attendance and Enrollment Policies.

## ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS TO CLASSES

All class assignments are the responsibility of the principal and are made in consultation with the support staff and the professional teaching staff.

**Classroom assignments are tentative at the beginning of the school year based on enrollment and compliance with the Florida Class Size Amendment.** Parents will be notified if a change in class assignment is made. Every effort will be made to help your student make a smooth transition, should a change be required.

## BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE

The Before School Program is available 7:00 AM until 7:45 AM. The After-School Program is available from 3:00 PM until 6:00 PM. These programs are available at a nominal fee to students attending Garden Elementary School. For additional information for the Garden Before Care and After School Care Program, please visit our website or call 941-486-2110.

<https://www.sarasotacountyschools.net/Page/3140>

## **BULLYING POLICY**

State & District Laws and Policies will be followed when reports of bullying are received by administration. <https://www.sarasotacountyschools.net/Page/2667>

### **What Is Bullying?**

- **An Imbalance of Power:** Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others.
- **Repetition:** Bullying behaviors happen more than once, they are repetitive.
- **Targeted:** Students who bully make a choice to hurt a specific person intentionally.
- Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically, verbally or digitally, and/or excluding someone from a group on purpose.

If there is not an imbalance of power, if it is not repetitive nor targeted then it is not Bullying. It is considered teasing, conflict, and/or an incident that occurred once and will be addressed following our code of conduct.

## **BUS REGULATIONS**

Families are asked to pre-register to use the school bus. <https://www.sarasotacountyschools.net/Page/1352> Parents may use the Where's the Bus App <https://www.sarasotacountyschools.net/Page/3459> to track the exact location of their child's school bus in real time.

Students are expected to exhibit safe and appropriate behaviors on the bus, as outlined in the SCS Student Code of Conduct. Failure to comply could result in the privilege of riding the bus being denied.

A student who is suspended from riding his/her bus is suspended from all buses. It then becomes the obligation of the parent to transport the student to and from school. The following action may be taken for misbehavior on the bus:

- |               |                       |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| • 1st Offense | 1-day bus suspension  |
| • 2nd Offense | 5-day bus suspension  |
| • 3rd Offense | 10-day bus suspension |

Additional incidents may result in bus privileges being revoked for remainder of school year.

## **CELL PHONES**

Students who bring cell phones to school must keep them powered off and in their backpacks throughout the instructional day. Violation of this policy is grounds for confiscation of the cell phone. Garden Elementary will not be liable for any lost or damaged items brought to school.

## **CHANGE OF CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENT**

Parents who prefer that their student not remain in the classroom to which they are assigned may request that the student be moved to another teacher. The request must be submitted on a Request for Removal of Student from Current Classroom Assignment form. Requests will be approved or denied by the school principal within two weeks. If the request is approved, the teacher with whom the student is to be placed will be determined by the principal.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Garden students are expected to comply with the SCS Code of Student Conduct:

<https://www.sarasotacountyschools.net/Page/2548>

## **CONFERENCES**

Parents/guardians are always encouraged to contact the school to discuss the progress of their student. Teacher conferences should be scheduled in advance. Please report to the office prior to the conference to sign in. All classroom concerns should first be addressed with the teacher before contacting administration. If a resolution is not reached, contact the Behavior Specialist, Assistant Principal, and Principal in that order.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM – Parent Link (formerly known as Connect Ed)**

The Community Engagement Platform – Parent Link service enables the school to keep parents/guardians informed of safety and educational issues through personalized telephone messages. Types of messages may include school or district emergencies, your student's absences, school news or special events. It is important to keep all telephone numbers and email addresses current on the Parent Portal.

## CURRICULUM

Garden Elementary School instructional staff follow the state standards and Sarasota County Curriculum when planning lessons. Grade level curriculum standards and objectives may be found on the District's website at:

<http://www.sarasotacountyschools/cia/k12curriculum.html>.

## CUSTODY

It is imperative that we have any court ordered custody agreements or parenting plans on file.

These documents must be signed by a judge.

Unsigned orders or orders signed by a lawyer will not be accepted. In the absence of a court order, the student's birth certificate will determine who possesses custodial rights and decision-making responsibilities. Decisions regarding the authorized pick-up/emergency contacts list, medical issues and participation in extra-curricular activities will be determined by the registering parent.

## DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Our goal is to maintain a safe, orderly and efficient dismissal experience where everyone departs campus each day with a smile.

Dismissal = 2:50 PM – 3:15 PM, daily

Student dismissal is broadcasted each afternoon on the Kids News Network. Students remain supervised in their classrooms and are released to their dismissal destination by their teacher. Parents are responsible for informing their child's teacher of the dismissal plans for their child(ren). If a change is necessary for your child's daily dismissal plan, you must **notify the teacher of the change in writing**. Children should give the notice of the dismissal change to their teacher in the morning. In the event of a family emergency, dismissal changes may be made by calling the office by 1:50 PM.

Parents are asked to be respectful of instructional time by not taking students out of school during the school day. If a medical appointment requires an **early dismissal**, please notify the teacher on the day of the appointment. An early dismissal will not be permitted after 2:30 PM. Any adult coming to the campus to pick up a child for an early dismissal must report to the office, present their photo ID and must be listed in the Student Information System (SIS).

Dismissal options for Garden Elementary include: Car Rider, Bus Rider, Walker, Bike Rider, Garden After Care. The car loop is the most complicated component of our daily dismissal. We have more than 300 children who exit the campus every day in the car loop. Safety will always be our top priority. The car loop dismissal experience takes up to 25 minutes, on good days. Your preparedness, patience, support and cooperation are critical components of success, during our daily dismissal in the car loop.

If your child will be a **car rider** for dismissal, you will need to have your **Garden Car Tag** hanging from your rearview mirror every day. Vehicles enter the parent pick up loop at the Horse and Chaise traffic light across from the Pelican Pointe subdivision. All motorists are to **remain in their cars**, adhere to the 5-mph speed limit and drive with extreme caution. A staff member will read the hang tag and relay your child's name via KNN, so they may be dismissed by their teacher. Students will then report to the car loop where adults will assist them with finding their vehicle. Garden Car Tags will be provided at the beginning of each school year. If additional tags are needed, please call the office.

Vehicles that do not have a Garden Car Tag will be directed to park to verify the adult ID. Once the adult is verified as being on the pick-up list, the student will be released to the approved adult.

Students who ride the **bus or a private day-care van** for dismissal will receive a colored tag for their backpacks to help the adults on campus verify they are boarding the correct bus each afternoon. When a bus or day-care van arrives on campus, students will be dismissed from the classrooms. Students will report to the bus loop and staff will assist students to their bus.

At the 3:00 PM dismissal bell, **Garden After Care** students are dismissed to the cafeteria and students **walking** or **riding their bikes** home will be dismissed to the Bal Harbor gate. Students must wear a helmet, if riding a bike/scooter. Students should remain on the sidewalk and walk or ride safely home. A staff member will monitor the gate. We strive to maintain positive relationships with our neighbors. If you choose this dismissal option for your child, please be respectful of the properties surrounding the campus.

If stormy weather is occurring during dismissal time, Garden staff will implement the “**Stormy Weather Dismissal**” procedures to help ensure the safety of our students. Walkers/bike riders will not be permitted to walk or ride home in unsafe weather. Attempts will be made to notify parents by 2:30 PM through our automated messaging system when the stormy weather dismissal plan is being executed. Please be sure to keep your contact info current in the Parent Portal.

Students are not to be on campus after 3:15 PM, unless enrolled in the Garden After Care program or a school sponsored activity.

### **DRESS CODE POLICY**

At Garden Elementary School, we believe that students learn best in a professional learning environment where they are safe and free of distractions. A student who is appropriately dressed and carefully groomed comes to school prepared to learn and shows respect, both for self and others. Parents are expected to act as guides and advisors in matters of proper school dress.

### **Fridays are Garden Gator school spirit days.**

Students are encouraged to wear a Garden Gator shirt, green and white or their Venice team jersey/uniform shirt.

### **Student Dress Code**

- Shirts should provide appropriate coverage. Straps must be a minimum of 1”.
- Skirts/dresses/shorts must be worn above the hips, inseam and out-seam must be below the mid-thigh. Students are encouraged to wear shorts under skirts and dressed for PE and recess.
- Shoes must have backs to be safe and should be comfortable and appropriate. Tie on or velcro shoes are encouraged. Sneakers are required on P.E. days and for some playground equipment. No rubber cleated, wheel or high heel shoes.
- Hats/caps may not be worn inside school buildings.
- Graphics and messages must be age appropriate
- No exposed undergarments
- No pajamas or slippers
- No see-through clothing or midriffs

Primarily, the classroom teachers will enforce the general dress code. Teachers will make every

attempt to handle enforcement discreetly and explain to the student the reason why his/her attire does not comply with the dress code. Children may be sent to the clinic and provided with an alternative clothing option, if available. When necessary or repetitive, clothing and hairstyles deemed to be inappropriate or disruptive to the learning environment will be handled individually and discreetly with each student by Administration.

### **DRILLS**

State and SCS requirements will be followed for all drills. Prior to holding the drill, time will be spent on KNN to help the students understand what they can expect during a drill. Staff are asked to review the expectations with the students prior to the drill. The following drills are required each school year:

- 11 Fire Drills
- 2 Severe Weather Drills
- 1 Non-Fire Evacuation Drill
- 11 Lockdown Drills (Limited Lockdown procedures will also be discussed and practiced on occasion)

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips of an educational nature are a part of the school program. All bus rules and student conduct rules apply when students are on field trips. Signed permissions slips are required for students to attend a field trip. Verbal permission will not be accepted at any time.

All field trip chaperones must comply with and meet the background check requirements through the Volunteer and Partnership volunteer program. The process takes a minimum of two weeks. Please plan accordingly. More information is available in the Volunteers sections and at <https://www.sarasotacounty schools.net/Page/1369>.

### **FOOD PRODUCTS FROM HOME**

The Health Department has determined that foods prepared in a private home shall not be used, sold or offered to students or staff. Any food items to be shared with students or staff must be commercially prepared and packaged with all ingredients listed on the front label. Individually wrapped items are preferred. Due to increasing student sensitivity to peanuts, any item manufactured or packaged in a facility that has peanut products of any kind may not be distributed.

## **FOOD SERVICES- CAFETERIA**

**Student breakfast and lunch will be FREE for all students for the 21-22 school year.** Students will receive a barcode card which will be scanned when items are obtained from the Garden cafeteria.

Applications for free or reduced-price meals should still be completed to support school funding initiatives. <https://scsfr.sarasota.k12.fl.us/fma/>. A new application form must be submitted online each year.

Payment for a la carte items can be made online at <http://www.myschoolbucks.com/>. We also accept checks and cash at the register in the cafeteria. A locked drop off box located on the wall in the cafeteria is provided when service is closed. When sending in money, please seal in an envelope/ziploc and include the following information: the student's first and last name, student's PIN number, and amount included.

**NOTE: HEALTH REASONS PROHIBIT THE EXCHANGE OF FOODS BY STUDENTS.**

If your child has a medically necessary dietary restriction, please contact the Registered Dietitian at the FNS Central office 486-2199 to ensure proper documentation is on file.

If you pack your child's lunch, please be sure to write their name on their lunchbox. Please use containers and packaging that are easy to open. Please be considerate of known allergies of your student's classmates (ex. peanuts) when packing lunches.

**After LABOR DAY**, if you plan to have lunch with your child at school, please notify the school via their teacher in advance. You may eat with your child in the outside dining area under the green awning. In café dining options are not currently available, due to seating capacity. Prior to reporting to the cafeteria, please report to the single point entry, present your ID and receive a Raptor Visitor's badge. After lunch, return to the office to sign out and return the Raptor Visitor's Badge. Adult lunch is available for purchase for \$4.00.

## **HEALTH ROOM PROCEDURES**

You will be contacted if your student has a health problem that needs your immediate attention. Students need to be picked up if they have live lice, are vomiting, have diarrhea, or their temperature is 100 degrees or more. Otherwise, students will remain in the clinic, checked periodically, and when ready they will be sent back to the classroom. If you are contacted and requested to pick up your student due to illness, it is imperative that the student be picked up as soon as possible. Students may not return to school until free of fever, vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours without use of medication. If there is an emergency, it is important that we have accurate contact information in SIS. **Please keep all contact information current in the Parent Portal.**

When possible, give medication at home. School personnel are permitted to give medication to children only if the following conditions are met:

- Medication **must** be in the original, labeled container with name, type of medication, dosage, and time to be given. This includes over-the-counter medications.
- Note from physician **and** a signed medical authorization form by the guardian.
- Medication must be delivered directly to the aide in the clinic.
- Students are not permitted to administer or keep medication in the classroom.

Parents are requested to notify the classroom teacher and the clinic personnel regarding your student's physical and/or medical problems that require special attention and give specific information to be followed during emergency situations.

**Please be sure to:**

- Alert the Clinic staff of medical needs
- **Keep your child home if he/she shows any signs of illness**

## **HEALTH SCREENING**

Every year a routine health screening is conducted for all kindergarten, first, third grade students as well as second, fourth and fifth grade students new to the state. The Sarasota County Health Department conducts the screening. The students are screened for height, weight, vision and hearing. Parents are notified if screening results do not meet minimum expectations.

## **HOMEWORK**

District policy states homework is to be a regular part of the instructional process. Teachers, under the direction of the principal, are responsible for assigning homework commensurate with course content as well as the maturity level and needs of individual students. Teachers will address homework expectations. Parental support in seeing that all homework is completed on a regular basis is requested.

## **INSURANCE - SCHOOL**

The Student Accident Insurance Program is offered by Sarasota County Schools as a service to parents. Information will be sent home the first week of school. Should your student be injured at school, the District does not have an insurance medical plan that provides coverage for students and the District is not responsible to pay medical bills. This voluntary program is a good option for those families concerned about their out-of-pocket medical expenses associated with accidental injuries. <https://schoolinsuranceofflorida.com/>

## **LOST AND FOUND**

The school will keep a lost and found area in the clinic. Unclaimed articles will be donated to charity periodically. Marking of clothing, lunch boxes, water bottles, etc., will aid your child in identifying a lost item. Check with your child's teacher before an item of personal value is taken to the school for educational purposes.

## **MEDIA CENTER**

Classroom teachers reserve a media time for their students each week. Students may return and check out books (K-2 = 1 book and 3-5 = 2 books) on their designated media day. The Media Center is open daily from 8:45 AM - 2:30 PM. You may

assist us by reinforcing the rules about borrowing and caring for books and returning materials on time when your student brings them home. Lost or damaged books must be replaced or paid for before additional books can be checked out. This also goes for all textbooks checked out to the student at the beginning of the school year.

The Reading Counts program is used to celebrate, recognize and encourage students to read. Students may take quizzes from 7:45 AM - 4:00 PM. All students are expected to participate.

## **MESSAGES**

Important messages, materials, etc., for students and teachers should be brought to the office. Office staff will see that they are delivered at the appropriate time. Our intent is to minimize disruption in the classroom instructional environment. Please help your student to develop a routine of placing things that must be brought to school in a designated place so that money, books, and homework will not be left at home.

## **MOMENT OF SILENCE**

Our daily KNN broadcast will be used to honor FL HB 529 offering all staff and students a daily moment of silence.

## **PARENT (FAMILY ACCESS) PORTAL**

Please keep all contact information current in the Family Access Portal. This is the primary resource used by school staff to reach families. <https://parentportal.sarasotacountyschools.net/>

## **POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS & SUPPORTS (PBIS)**

Garden Elementary teachers and staff provide a supportive learning environment where all students have the opportunity to achieve their highest potential. PBIS is a commitment to teaching expected student behaviors. Students achieve improved social and academic outcomes, schools experience reduced disciplinary infractions, and school staff can maintain the instructional focus in a safe and orderly environment. PBIS is reinforced by daily implementation of the Celebration Ladder and/or other classroom reinforcement systems, monthly and quarterly PBIS celebrations.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Florida law requires that the Pledge of Allegiance must be recited at the beginning of the day in every Florida public elementary, middle and high school. The law also grants students the right not to participate in reciting the pledge. Upon written request by a parent or guardian, a student must be excused from reciting the pledge, including being excused from standing and placing the right hand over his or her heart.

### **PTSO (Parent Teacher Student Organization)**

The Garden Elementary PTSO is a vital part of our school program. Parents, students and teachers work together to support the school's academic goals and provide much needed resources through fundraising activities. We encourage our families to support our PTSO by becoming active members and participating in PTSO sponsored events. PTSO meetings are held monthly at 3:30 PM. Please visit <https://www.sarasotacountyschools.net/Page/3439> for more information.

### **RELIGIOUS BELIEFS**

It is the parents' responsibility to inform the teacher that they desire their child's religious beliefs be respected in the classroom.

### **REPORT CARDS**

Report cards are issued four times a year at nine-week intervals for all Sarasota County Elementary students. The report cards will be available electronically through the Parent Portal (<https://parentportal.sarasotacountyschools.net/>).

### **SAFETY PATROL**

Garden Elementary is proud to have 5th grade students as members of our school's Safety Patrol. The purpose of the patrol is to help keep our campus safe by preventing accidents from occurring and to develop leadership qualities in our members. All students are expected to cooperate when reminded by a member of the patrol to obey school rules.

### **SCS STUDENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK**

Garden students are expected to adhere to the policies and procedures in the Sarasota County School's Student and Family Handbook (<https://www.sarasotacountyschools.net/Page/2548>).

### **SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC)**

The School Advisory Council (SAC) is a group of parents, staff, administration, and community members who meet regularly to advise the principal on school policies, instructional issues, and school improvement. All meetings are open to the public.

### **TECHNOLOGY AND INTERNET USAGE**

Students have a responsibility to be mindful of the acceptable and unacceptable use of computer and electronic resources.

Acceptable use of computers and computer electronic services are activities which support learning and teaching in Sarasota County.

Students who misuse the technology and internet usage privilege and engage in unacceptable or illegal use of this resource subject themselves to disciplinary action. For specific information, please refer to the Section 3 in the Sarasota County School District's Student and Family Handbook.

### **TOYS/ELECTRONIC DEVICES/CANDY**

School policy prohibits gum chewing, candy, and toys at school (this includes electronic toys or games). Please do not allow your child to bring any of these items to school. Items not related directly to the school program should not be sent to school without the teacher's permission. If students do bring prohibited items to school, Garden will not be responsible for the loss or damage of these items.

### **VISITORS**

For the safety of our students, all visitors (parents, school volunteers, and non-school personnel) entering the school for any reason must first report to the school office and present a valid photo I.D. to be scanned by the Raptor System. Visitors are welcome on campus for educationally relevant purposes.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Garden volunteers serve as PTO and SAC members, classroom volunteers, tutors, mentors, library helpers, and chaperones. Volunteer opportunities are available before, during, after school, as well as, some evenings. All volunteers must be approved prior to working on campus. This requires a yearly application/reapplication. Parents and volunteers may apply via the front office computer or through Community Relations at <https://www.sarasotacountyschools.net/Page/1369>.

The application provides permission for a background check to ensure the safety of all our students. Please remember that all volunteers must sign-in and wear a name tag (which is obtained by having your Driver's License scanned at the front desk).

## **WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES**

When moving out of the Garden Elementary school district, please notify the school registrar as soon as possible so that the necessary paperwork may be completed. Please verify the student's lunch account is current and return all textbooks to the teacher. Library books need to be returned to the Media Center before the student's last day of school.

