

Jane Robin Ellis Elementary School **2008-2009 Student Handbook**

Mission Statement

Ellis Elementary School is committed to meeting the individual needs of our diverse population through an environment that is nurturing, supportive, safe, and based on high expectations for all. We are dedicated to providing relevant instruction based on assessment and consistency of curriculum between grade levels so that students will have the skills, knowledge, and behaviors necessary to become productive citizens in our ever-changing society. At Ellis, parents and teachers are equal partners in the educational process, and therefore, we work as a team to encourage our students to be confident, self-motivated and sound decision makers so that they will realize the joy and value of being responsible lifelong learners.

Non-Discrimination Statement

The Arlington Independent School District (AISD) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, religion or disability in education programs, admissions/enrollment decision or activities which it operates, as required by Title IX, Title II and Section 504.

Confidentiality Statement

The Arlington Independent School District, in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) restricts access to protected student records as required by law. Directory information on students will be released upon request without a parent's consent, unless the parent elects to restrict directory information. The form on which parents can indicate their election is sent home each year.

Address and Phone Number Changes

Please notify the school office if you have a change of address or telephone number at home or at work at any time during the school year. Changes must be made on the original enrollment record card in the front office. Proof of residency (lease agreement, utility bill) may be required. Current information is critical when a parent or guardian must be reached in case of emergency.

Arrival and Dismissal

School hours are from 8:20 AM until 3:20 each day. Students are allowed to enter the building at 7:45 AM for breakfast and 7:50 AM for a silent reading period on their grade level hallway. Students are dismissed at 3:20 PM. There is no supervision prior to 7:45 AM or following school dismissal. Parents should check with daycare facilities regarding the time their child is being picked up or call the school office for specific information. Students will only be released to parents and individuals listed on the enrollment card. Please notify the office if anyone else is scheduled to pick your child up at school or come by the school to update the enrollment card in person.

We do require parents to escort children into the front office and sign them in when they arrive after the 8:20 AM bell. This ensures the student's safety en route to the classroom, as well as allows parents an opportunity to turn in medical documentation or explain the reason for the delay. Promptness is important every day. Students lose valuable instructional time when they arrive late and when they leave early.

We will not interrupt the end of day class activities after 3:00 PM to dismiss students early. Students must be picked up prior to 3:00 PM or parents will be asked to wait until the 3:20 PM bell. Teachers use this valuable time to close lessons, gather assignments, return papers, check student folders, complete tests, make final announcements, and a number of other essential tasks. Students are required to be in school the entire day to meet Texas attendance laws. Consistent early dismissals are not allowed. Please understand that at Ellis we will enforce the daily attendance policy including parental sign in requests at late arrivals as well as restricted early dismissals.

Attendance / Absences

Attendance accounting is completed at 10:15 AM each morning. Students not present at this time will be counted absent. Please call the school office before 10:00 AM on the day of the absence to report that your child will not be in school. A medical or dental note should be brought to school with your child if you sign them in after 10:00 AM. Anytime a student is absent a medical / dental note or parental note should be sent to the main office at Ellis to document the reason for your child's absence. Absences can be approved, late arrivals are not excused unless for a medical / dental appointment. Homework may be requested prior to 10:00 AM on the day of the absence and picked up after school in the front office. Please review the AISD Attendance Policy in the Student Code of Conduct for specific information on compulsory school attendance and punctuality. Students with excessive numbers of tardies or absences will be referred to the campus Attendance Committee. Excessive absences and tardies result in a great deal of lost or interrupted instructional time. When students repeatedly arrive late, they tend to fall behind on the lessons for the day and this is often reflected in their grades as well as in their behavior.

Belongings

It is beneficial to label articles of clothing and other belongings that your child brings to school. A "Lost and Found" area is located in the cafeteria. Please check this area when students report missing items. Items are cleared from this box at the end of each six weeks period and donated to local charities. Toys, sports equipment (footballs, skateboards, basketballs, etc.) yugi-o cards, gameboys, MP3 players, IPOD's, CD players, etc and not acceptable at school and will be collected by teachers and held for parent pick-up in the main office.

Bus

All transportation arrangements should be made through the AISD Transportation Department. Please call 682-867-7850 for information about bus stops, bus numbers, and bus driver information. Your child must have prior approval in order to ride the AISD school bus. Riding the bus is a privilege and students exhibiting inappropriate behavior are subject to suspension from the bus. They are given permission to ride the bus that

picks up students closest to your residence. Students can NOT ride buses or get on at another bus stop without prior permission from Transportation.

Cafeteria

Breakfast is served each day 7:45 – 8:10 AM. Specific grade level lunchtimes are available in the school office or from your child's teacher. You may send a check to the school cafeteria and the money will be placed in your child's account. You may also access your child's account online at the AISD homepage and click on "PAMS Lunchroom" or at www.pamslunchroom.com/. Your child will receive a note when his or her account is low. Students will a "short meal" consisting of a vegetable, milk and crackers if the student has a negative balance. Please feel free to discuss your child's cafeteria account with the cafeteria manager at 817-652-7908. Menus are sent home each month. Parents are welcome to eat lunch with their student(s), but we ask that all visitors sit at the guest table. Because we are unable to monitor the approved volunteer status of cafeteria visitors, students are not allowed to include friends at the guest table. Parents are not allowed to each lunch with children other than their own.

Cell Phones

Cell phones are often necessary and your child is allowed to have one per the AISD Student Code of Conduct. These devices "shall NOT be visible" and must remain "off" during the entire instructional day, which is from the time they enter the building until they leave. It is suggested that your child secure the phone in a backpack / locker until they leave the building. They should not share with other students where they keep their phone or loan their phone to others. They should never have the phone on vibrate / silent or in their pockets. Parents are required to pick the phone up and pay a \$15 fee if the phone is collected by a teacher or administrator. Teachers will NOT turn the phone off; give the battery or the SEM card to the student upon the phone being confiscated. The entire phone device will be turned in to the main office and locked up securely. Repeat offenses involving a cell phone may result in disciplinary action. Students should inform a teacher when there is a need to contact a parent during the school day. The district will dispose of unclaimed cell phones at the end of the school year.

Conferences

Communication between home and school is an essential part of successful student performance. Your first contact person should be your child's teacher. In most cases they can share information and answer any questions that you might have about your child's progress at school. We encourage you to request a conference with your child's teacher at any time you have questions about your child's attendance, grades, or behavior. Please call the school office to schedule a conference. Remember that teachers must devote their full attention to students when school begins. Mini-conferences at the classroom door or discouraged to enable the teacher to devote his / her full attention to classroom supervision as the day begins and ends. Teachers are responsible for monitoring children at dismissal time. Please come to the office if you would like to visit with a teacher.

Discipline

Parents are encouraged to carefully review the AISD Student Code of Conduct with their children. We strictly adhere to the consequences outlined for behavioral infractions in the district code. Grade levels may also issue guidelines specific to the grade. Please review all information given to parents at "Meet the Teacher" night or ask your child's teacher for a copy of what was presented. We teach the Boys Town Social Skills Curriculum at Ellis and invite parents to contact teachers or our school counselor for more information. Harassment of any type is NOT tolerated. Respect and responsibility are expected of all Ellis students. School rules are consistent for all students. Please help your child understand and follow them each day.

Distribution of Materials

Students are allowed to distribute materials to other students after school outside each grade level entry / exit doors.

Dress Code

Guidelines for appropriate school dress are outlined in the AISD Student Code of Conduct. At Ellis, we closely monitor pants at waist level (no sagging), inappropriate logos or pictures on shirts, shirts that do not cover the midriff, skirts / dresses / shorts, or skirts of an inappropriate length and

inappropriate shoes for safety. Pajamas and slippers are not to be worn except on designated days (some grade levels have a pajama day). Spray-on hair color or gel or any unnatural color is not permitted. The combination tennis shoes / skates are not allowed at school.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Acts (FERPA) Guidelines

Parents are allowed to prevent the release of their child's directory information. Forms are sent home each year and must be returned within ten school days. Please know that your child's name will not be listed in any location (honor roll, PTA program, newsletter, etc.) nor will your child be photographed in group classroom photos when directory information is completely restricted. Please review this form carefully and call the principal with any questions.

Field Trips

Written permission using the AISD field trip permission form is required to participate in any field trip. Appropriate dress, head covering (hat) and sunscreen is recommended depending upon the weather. Please monitor the weather the day of the trip and send your child to school appropriately equipped. All parents who attend field trips MUST be on the AISD Approved Volunteer List. Please sign up on-line each September so that you can participate the entire year. This process must be done each school year in AISD. You may check the AISD website for the volunteer application and other parent information (www.aisd.net).

Food at School

Students or parents are not allowed to bring food to school for other students. Because instructional time is valuable, birthday parties and other individual celebrations will not be conducted at school. Teachers are allowed to provide one nutritious snack per day as appropriate to the grade level. Texas Agricultural Department (TAD) guidelines relevant to food at school are available from the principal.

Illness

Children should not be sent to school when sick. Students with temperature of 100 degrees or more will be sent home until they have been free of fever

for 24 hours. The nurse will contact parents when a child becomes ill at school. Parents are expected to pick children up at school as soon as possible when notified. Children who are sent home with head lice must return to school with a parent to be checked by the nurse “prior” to being readmitted to school.

Leaving School during the Day

In the event of an appointment must be scheduled during the school day, a parent must come to the school office and sign the student out of school. Upon return, please bring a medical or dental note to the front office so that your child can be given a readmit slip to class. Students must be signed out in the front office whenever they leave the building. This includes lunchtime. Remember classes will not be interrupted for early dismissals between 3:00 and 3:20 PM.

Telephone Use

Please make arrangements for after school transportation prior to leaving your child at school. We will be happy to take a message when plans change, but we are unable to call students to the phone during the instructional day.

Textbooks

One text is issued per student by the state. It is mandatory that texts be covered during the school year. Students will be charged for lost or damaged textbooks. Please remember to thoroughly inspect textbooks issued to your child at the beginning of the year. If your child does not notify the teacher that his / her textbook is damaged or lost, a fine will be assessed at the end of the year. Extensive damages may result in a full replacement cost charge. Parents are responsible for making sure that textbooks are properly cared for while assigned out to their children.

Traffic

The front drive through is reserved for buses in the morning as well as in the afternoon at dismissal time. Please do NOT park in the bus lane at any time. Traffic is often congested on the north side of our building due to a number of students being dropped off or picked up within a short span of time before

or after school. Please do not stop in the drive-through lane. It is imperative that this lane be reserved for moving traffic. We ask that you demonstrate courtesy toward others and set an appropriate example for our students.

Visitors

All visitors to our building must stop by the main office to register and get a visitor's badge. All visitors must enter the building through the front doors closest to the main office. All other entrance doors are for student and staff only. This includes lunchtime. Visitors without a badge will be asked to return to the main office. Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only upon approval of the principal and teacher, and provided that the duration and frequency of the visits do not interfere with instruction. All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct.

Volunteers

Volunteering at school is encouraged! Prior to volunteering in any capacity, a volunteer application must be completed along with a criminal background check. Volunteer applications are available from a PTA representative, online (www.aisd.net), or in the school office. Please remember that attendance at parties and accompanying students on field trips are considered volunteer activities and require this process. Complete your applications early each school year and be prepared for parties and other fun events.

Withdrawals

Parents should notify the school office at least one day prior to withdrawal. This allows the office and teachers a 24 hour time period to complete the necessary paperwork needed for your child's next school.

Thanks for your support and cooperation !