

# Parent Handbook

## 2022-2023

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Grand Prairie TX 75050  
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Austin's outdoor features include a one-of-a-kind chicken coop and awesome traditional garden beds. The indoor features in our recently constructed facility include interactive wall displays, environmental science classrooms, and hydroponic growing walls. Additionally, Austin Environmental Science Academy offers a large variety of after-school clubs and organizations, state-of-the-art technology, and full-time environmental science staff members.

## **OUR MISSION**

Austin Environmental Science Academy will provide a positive, safe, and secure environment that will empower students to learn while building self-esteem. Students will be afforded the opportunity to experience success and mutual respect, which will prepare them to be life-long learners. The community will cooperate to produce responsible individuals who are able to adapt to an ever-changing society.

## OUR VISION

Our vision is to provide students with various 21st-century skills that will allow them to be competitive in our society. Austin Environmental Science Academy students will have opportunities to collaborate, increase creativity, build leadership skills, use problem-solving/critical thinking skills, and awaken global environmental awareness.

## Welcome to Austin Environmental Science Academy

The teachers and staff here at Austin ESA would like to welcome you to the 2022-2023 school year. We want this to be a year filled with fun and interesting educational experiences for our students. We look forward to working with you to make this a great learning year. The Parent/Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board Policy and the Student Code of Conduct that is adopted by the School Board. Please be aware that the handbook is updated annually with policy adoption and revision taking place throughout the calendar year. Changes in policy that affect the provisions in this handbook will be made available to students and parents through newsletters and other communications. Below is our main office and support staff information.

Tanya Gilliam, Principal	tanya.gilliam@gpisd.org
Dalia Aguilar, Assistant Principal	dalia.aguilar@gpisd.org
Stephanie Sanders, Assistant Principal	stephanie.sanders@gpisd.org
Patricia Barrientos, Administrator Intern	patricia.barriento@gpisd.org
Sarah Caballero, Campus Secretary	sarah.caballero@gpisd.org
Cindy Gallegos, PEIMS clerk	cindy.gallegos@gpisd.org
Brigitte Finnell, School Nurse	brigitte.finnell@gpisd.org
Rachael Butts, Instructional Coach	rachael.butts@gpisd.org
Felicia Richards, School Counselor	felicia.richards@gpisd.org

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# Campus Specific Safety Procedures

Dear Austin Families,

Welcome to the 2022-2023 school year in GPISD! We cannot wait to see you and your family as we return to school. The purpose of this handbook is to share important information as it relates to safety plans we will follow this year along with helpful information about our campus.

## **Here are five important things you will need to know:**

1. In order to enter the school building you will need to ring the doorbell and show your ID both outside the building and again when you enter the office to check in. Campus staff will buzz you into the building and we will then use our Raptor Identification system to print a visitor badge for you.
2. Routine monitoring of every exterior school door will occur this year. All schools in Texas will report weekly on door monitoring to the Texas Education Agency.
3. All classroom doors are to remain closed and locked at all times.
4. All exterior doors are to remain closed and locked at all times.
5. Students and staff MUST have an ID Badge on at all times.
6. Monitor your students' social media and electronic communication.
7. If you see a safety issue or concern please email me [tanya.gilliam@gpisd.org](mailto:tanya.gilliam@gpisd.org), and I will investigate.

One final thing, for your convenience we have a QR code you can scan to access the electronic student check out form if you need to check out your student for an appointment. You can always show ID and enter the building to check out your child as well. Please note that early student check out ends at 2:45 pm.

Thank you for your consistent support of our school and efforts that you make toward maintaining the highest level of safety for our students.

Sincerely,

*Ms. Tanya Gilliam*

Campus Principal

## Student Attendance

Student attendance is extremely important. In order to ensure that our students are consistently growing and improving we need them here at school. If your child needs to be absent due to illness please adhere to the following procedures:

- Call and inform the front office (972) 343-4600.
  - Give your child's first and last name
  - Teacher name
  - Reason for absence
    - If your child went to the doctor please send the doctor's note with your child when they return to school.
  - Date of possible return
- Inform your child's teacher
  - Use email, Remind app, or Dojo

## Student Check out Early QR Code

Scan the QR code to access the leave early google form for students. Please do not check your child out after 2:45 pm. Schedule appointments in advance.



## Arrival and Dismissal

The beginning of the school year is always an exciting time for parents and students. Student arrival and dismissal on the first day and week of school is always extra busy and crowded as our new parents and students learn the process for arrival and dismissal at Austin ESA. Please give grace to us and each other as our new and returning parents learn our traffic pattern and process.

***On August 15th and 16th parents will be allowed to walk students to class. Beginning August 17th, students and parents will follow the procedure below:***

### ***Arrival***

- Staff members are available to monitor students beginning at 7:30 am daily. *Parents please do not leave students unattended.*
- Austin will continue with student car tags this year for both student arrival and departure.
- Parents are encouraged to dismiss students from the car every year.
- Staff members are strategically placed by door 1 and 2 to greet PK-5th grade students. Students are escorted to the cafeteria and monitored by staff members until 8:00 am. **Staff members are monitoring the door at all times.**

### ***Dismissal:***

- Austin staggers dismissal times as follows:
  - PreK-2 grade - 3:20 pm and 3rd-5th grade -3:30 pm.



- Austin will continue to use the electronic car tag procedure to dismiss students.
- PK-2nd grade parents will pick up their students in the front of the building facing Burleson. Students will exit doors 1 & 2. 3rd-5th grade parents will pick up students in the car line at door 12.
- PK-2 grade students exit doors 1 and 2 when their car tag number is called. They are loaded into cars by staff members.
- 3rd-5th grade students exit door 12 when their car tag number is called. They are escorted by staff members

**Please view the campus arrival and dismissal video to watch our procedures in action.**

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KXspwhfvKuXN1H\\_ZzYftgh7-VODuvBMg/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KXspwhfvKuXN1H_ZzYftgh7-VODuvBMg/view?usp=sharing)

## Car Tags

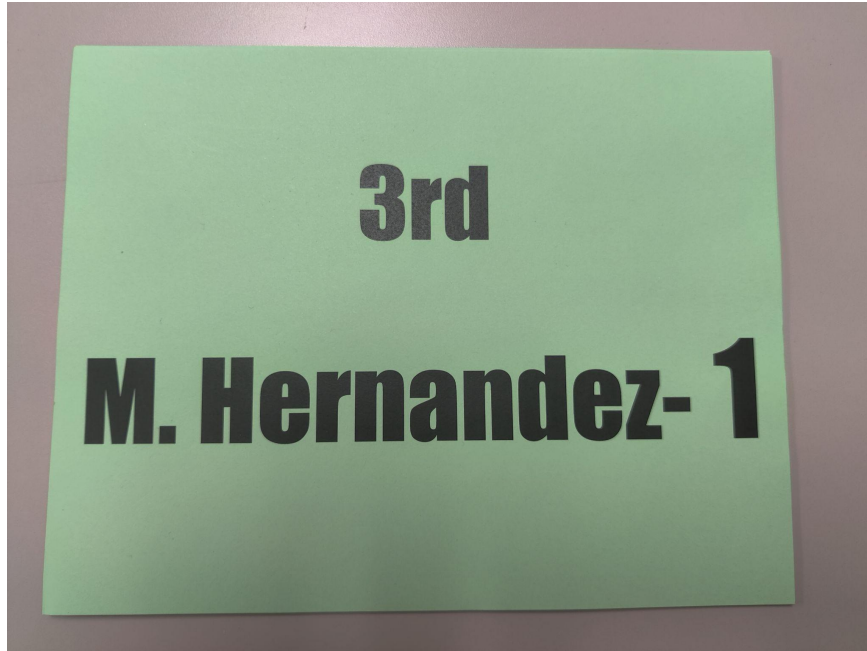
In an extra effort to keep our students safe, we will continue to use student name car tags for all car riders. All students will be assigned two colored car tags per family. If lost, request another from your child's teacher. Each grade level is assigned a color and will contain your child's grade, teacher, and a number that identifies **your child**. If you do not have a car tag for your child, you will be asked to park and go to the front office. Proper identification must be shown in the front office and you must be listed in Skyward in order to pick up your student. Students will not be dismissed without the school issued placard for any reason.

To pick up your child's car tag, please click the link below to access the Student Car Tag Pick Up. To fill out form, have your child's name, teacher name, select day & time for pick up: Wednesday, 8/10/22, 8:30-11:30 & 1:00-4:00, and Thursday 8/11/22, 8:30-11:30, 1:00-4:00, & 6:00-7:30 (during Sneak-A-Peek).

Link: [Student Car Tag Pick Up](#)

If you have a student in 3-5 and a student in K-2, you will get in the 3-5 car line (back of the building) and siblings in K-2 will be escorted to their older sibling in 3-5 for pick up.

Grade	Car Tag Color
Pre-K	Yellow
Kindergarten	Yellow
1st Grade	Orange
2nd Grade	Red
3rd Grade	Green
4th Grade	Pink
5th Grade	Blue



Example of a 3rd grade Car Tag

## Student ID Badges

All students are required to wear their ID badges while on campus during the regular school day and are required for bus transportation. The school issued plastic sleeve and lanyard must be used as holes cannot be punched in the IDs. If your child's ID badge is lost or misplaced, the cost of replacing the ID badge and lanyard is \$5.00 (cash only). The cost of replacing the ID badge only is \$3.00 (cash only). Subsequent replacements are \$4.00.

### **Specifics:**

- Required for all
- *First one free*

- *2<sup>nd</sup> replacement is \$3.00*
- *Subsequent replacements are \$4.00*
  - Students should not wear badges when engaged in physical activity – per Neal Sandlin – PE, recess, athletics
  - Elementary – If your child rides the bus they will bring their badge home. If your child is a car rider, their badges will be left on campus at the end of each day.

## Campus Visitation Policy

We are so happy that you have chosen Austin Environmental Science Academy to be your child's school. Our staff looks forward to your visit and welcomes your presence at Austin ESA. Please see the following requirements that must be followed in order to ensure a safe learning environment for all students and staff.

### Visitation Requirements:

- Use the buzzer located outside to call the front office and gain entry into the building.
- All visitors must bring their government issued ID card. Examples of ID cards include:
  - Drivers license, ID Card
  - Passport card
  - Military ID
  - Mexico Drivers License
  - Mexico Consulate Matricula
  - Alien Registration Receipt card
  - Canada Drivers License

- Your ID card will be scanned through our district Raptor system. This system is used to screen visitors to ensure student safety.
- After your ID is scanned and we receive an all clear, you will receive a sticker to place on your shirt.
- You will need to leave your ID and your car keys in the front office to proceed into the campus.
- You will receive your card and keys back when you leave the campus.

## Lunch Period Visitation

Parents, grandparents, and guardians are allowed to visit during your child's designated lunch period. All other visitors will require prior approval by campus administration. Parents, grandparents, or other guardians who are visiting students during lunch will follow the campus visitation requirements to gain access inside of the building. Once inside the building, guests will walk to the cafeteria and sit in the designated parent lunch area.

Please be mindful of the following requirements while visiting:

- Food that has been brought in cannot be shared with other students.
- Please only visit your child during lunch no more than once per week.
- Seating is limited, so please limit visitors to no more than two to three guests- including yourself.
- Students will not be allowed to take food with them to their classroom. The meal must be consumed in the cafeteria during their lunch time.

- Please do not use this opportunity to visit with the classroom teachers as they are on duty monitoring the students.
- Please dress appropriately when coming to school to eat with your child -- no pjs, slippers, or revealing clothing.
- Restrict your conversation to only your child.
- If your child needs to use the restroom, you must let an adult know.
- The visitation ends once the child leaves the cafeteria.
- Once lunch is over, visitors will return to the main office and the students will continue with their instructional day and return to class.

Campus administrators have discretion to deny access to any visitor who poses a substantial risk to the safety of students or staff, or if the individual fails to follow the policy identified above.

## Communication and Concerns

In our efforts to strengthen communication between the campus and our parents, teachers are strongly encouraged to communicate with you on a consistent basis. You should hear from your child's teacher regularly in order to discuss positive outcomes, academic successes, and areas that need improvement. We also want to hear from you. Feel free to share the positives along with your concerns.

Please see the following process for addressing concerns that may occur:

- Contact your child's teacher to discuss the issue. Parent contact is very important to the teachers and staff, most times than not, calls will be responded to and resolved the same day.

Please allow staff members 24 hours to return your call or email to address your concern.

- Concerns about safety and bullying need to be brought to administration as soon as possible. Please feel free to call our front office at 972-343-4600 to speak with a member of our campus administrative team.

## **Birthdays and other Parties**

Birthday parties shall not be held at school, nor shall individual student party invitations be distributed at school. Flowers, corsages, or balloon bouquets shall not be delivered to students at school by parents, fellow students, or vendors- nor are those items allowed on buses.

Food products (cupcakes, cookies etc.) will be distributed at 3PM and students can consume the treat after school.

## **Parent and Teacher Association (PTA)**

The PTA will hold monthly meetings. All upcoming activities and overall district wide information is discussed. Parental involvement is one of the most important pieces to a child's academic success so please contact the front office or the PTA President for information regarding membership, fees and meeting dates.

In the meantime, here are some tips that you can use to help your child be successful.

- Set high expectations for your child
- Ask about their school day
- Help them with their homework – but do not do the work for them!
- Check their take home folder daily
- Attend school events
- Know their friends
- E-mail their teachers
- Check grades in Skyward
- Censor what is watched and video games played
- Censor social media and conversations via text
- Talk to them about life- responsibility, choices, consequences
- **Join the PTA**

### Use of Cell Phones and Other Devices

Students are not permitted to use personal electronic devices such as MP3 players, video or audio recorders, DVD players, cameras, games, e-readers, or other electronic devices at school, unless prior permission has been obtained.

For safety purposes, students are permitted to possess personal cell phones; however, these devices must remain turned off during the instructional day, including during all testing, unless they are being used for approved instructional purposes. A student must have approval to possess other telecommunications devices such as netbooks, laptops, tablets, or other portable computers.

Use of any other electronic device, including cell phones, used during the instructional day or motivational activity must have approval from campus administration.



The first time a device is confiscated, it will be turned in to the office and can be collected at the end of the school day by the student. The second time a device is confiscated, it will be turned over to office staff and a parent or guardian must come to retrieve it from an administrator.

**The district will not be responsible for any damaged, lost, or stolen electronic or telecommunications (cell phones) device.**

## [Volunteers/Chaperones](#)

Please contact your child's teacher to determine if volunteers or chaperones will be required for special events. If needed, all volunteers and chaperones in GPISD must agree to complete an annual background check by completing the Grand Prairie ISD Online Volunteer Application (click the link below or go to Gpisd website → Parents and Students → Family and Community Engagement → Volunteers). A complete criminal background check will be done, and if approved, you will be considered a volunteer for the 2022-2023 school year. Once you have completed the background check online, you may call the school campus secretary or visit the front office after 72 hours to confirm your approval.

Link: [Grand Prairie ISD Volunteer/Chaperone Online Application](#)

## Student Medical Needs

Our campus nurse is Ms. Brigitte Finnell, RN. She is happy to serve our students this year. Please see her list of helpful information below:

- As it pertains to medications: Parents must obtain a medication administration form from the nurse that needs to be filled out by the student's doctor before the nurse can administer medications at school (or provide orders from the doctor's office).
- For students with allergies: Parents should have completed the health history of the student on skyward. If the parent indicated no allergies in this health history and the student has allergies/asthma, a doctor's note must be received as validation for the nurse to update in Skyward or the parent should notify the nurse.
- Please notify the nurse directly if the student has pink eye, flu, strep throat, or COVID for further instructions before the student can return to school.
- Pre-K to 2nd grade: Parents should provide 2 changes of clothes in the student's backpack daily in case of toileting accidents. Teachers are encouraged to remind parents of this as well.

## Counseling

Our new counselor is Felicia Richards. She is willing to help you with any needs that you may have regarding the following:

- Student counseling
- Family counseling
- Family resources
- Additional needs that may not be listed

Please contact the campus at 972-343-4600 to speak with Mrs. Richards. She can also be contacted at [felicia.richards@gpisd.org](mailto:felicia.richards@gpisd.org)