

Parent/Student Handbook

2022-2023



A.J. Pitts, Principal

Hannah Hallmark, Assistant Principal

Elizabeth Vreeland, Counselor

Zilker Elementary

Zilker Elementary offers students a balance of educational experiences, extending beyond strong academics to arts enrichment on and off campus, environmental education and social and emotional learning. An active, involved PTA reflects the collaboration between home and school to support student success. Since opening in January of 1950, Zilker Elementary has been the neighborhood school where thousands of south Austin children have created lifelong memories.

Zilker Slogan

Zilker is a great place for kids!

Zilker Mission

THE MISSION
of
Zilker Elementary School
is to develop every student into a lifelong learner
as a result of a challenging curriculum,
individualized instruction, high expectations,
and a nurturing environment
with parental and community support.

Zilker Mascot

Panther

School Colors

Maroon and Gold

Zilker School Song

It's so full of life in this school there is no strife
Spirit in the air, teachers smiling everywhere
When we sing it altogether, we can form a winning team
Zilker is a GREAT PLACE FOR KIDS!

Zilker is the place where we learn to be the best
Zilker is the school teaching better than the rest
Here to make a difference teaching peace and harmony
Zilker is a GREAT PLACE FOR KIDS!

OUR STAFF

| | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Administration | A.J. Pitts, Principal Hannah Hallmark, Assistant Principal Elizabeth Vreeland, Counselor | Fourth Grade Team | Josephine Kim Amy Montoya Lydia Reiff-Martin Josephine Yi |
| Office Staff | Beth Ferry, Admin. Assistant Krystal Nates, Registrar/Attendance | Fifth Grade Team | Jodi Avant Dee Nic Ruairi Patricia Russell |
| Kindergarten Team | Amelia Aretz Elizabeth Cubillos Karen McCumber Renne Wolden | Special Areas Team | Tracy Sullivan, Art Isabelle Baez, P.E. Chandler Dean, PE Danielle Hughes, Music |
| First Grade Team | Katie Chagnon Jocelyn Garcia Stacy Shapiro Madison Riley | Specialized Staff | Deborah Kent, Dyslexia Specialist , Dyslexia Specialist Katy Larson, Librarian |
| Second Grade Team | Emma Carvallo Katy Dailey Gabriel McNitt Emily Peters | Special Education Team | Bailey Holmes Jennifer Marshall Jessica Montanez Kali Parsons Jody Wynn Add speech |
| Third Grade Team | Grace Fremuth Madison Phillips Rafeal Rodriguez-Lazaro | Cafeteria Team | |
| Teacher Assistants | | Custodial Team | |

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL TIMES & PROCEDURES

7:15 am Students may enter the building. All students report to the cafeteria

7:30 am First bell rings to dismiss students to class

7:40 am Class begins with welcoming Morning Meeting

The building is accessible to students beginning at 7:15 a.m. daily. Students must enter the building through the front doors or side by picnic tables from the car drop off. Students must go to the cafeteria prior to 7:30 and are not allowed in any other areas of the campus including outdoor areas.

For drop off we have the parking lot open off of Rundell for car drop off as needed. Please be cautious as you drive around the school for our pedestrian traffic. We also have a walk up drop off at the front doors. Students will go straight to the cafeteria or class on their own from drop off locations.

All students are dismissed at 3:10 p.m. Bus riders board the bus on Rundell St. For the 2022-2023, Zilker will be a walking only dismissal school. Meaning we will not have a car rider line.

The options for families are

- Pick your child up from the teacher's outside door (gates will open at 3:09 for this)
- Release your child as an independent walker and they leave campus alone to a designated spot you have decided with them.

We ask that if you drive near the school to meet your child - you drive with caution and respect. There is a lot of pedestrian and bike traffic. Please be cautious on the one way streets and for bike lanes. It takes all of us to create a safe commuting experience for our students and families.

*Please respect our neighbors and businesses by not parking in their driveway or parking lots.

ATTENDANCE

Daily school attendance is key to academic success and should be the goal of every parent/guardian and child. Daily attendance and on-time arrival permits students to engage consistently with the presentation of information and in activities that promote growth for all students.

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to monitor their child's school attendance and ensure they arrive at school on time each day. Students should be in class each school day with the exception of illness, religious celebration, or a family emergency. A written note of explanation must be sent to the school (zilker@austinisd.org) within 48 hours of an absence.

Policy

The Texas Compulsory Attendance Law states that AISD can file a complaint against the parent/guardian of a student who has three or more unexcused days or parts of days within a four-week period. AISD must file a complaint if the student has 10 or more

days or parts of days within a six-month period. For elementary campuses, "unexcused days or parts of days" are coded UNX (unexcused absence) or UT (unexcused tardy).

Excused vs. Unexcused

Students who are not at school at 10:00 A.M. are counted absent. Students who arrive late (before 10:00) are counted tardy.

The following reasons will be accepted as excused:

- Healthcare appointments (doctor, dentist, etc.) - be sure to bring a physician's note to the front office
- Illness - if your child runs a fever, please keep him/her home until fever-free for 24 hours. Please bring a note from student's parent/guardian indicating that the student was ill
- Holy days
- Extenuating circumstances - ie. funeral or family emergency as approved by the principal

The following are common reasons for unexcused absences and tardies:

- Failure to provide documentation when the student is out ill, or failure to list correct dates on the note
- Being signed in or out during the day for a medical appointment without providing a note from the physician
- Travel
- Family events (weddings, reunions, etc...)
- Oversleeping
- Car trouble or traffic

CAMPUS ADVISORY COUNCIL (CAC)

One venue for parent participation is through our CAC. This is an advisory group that meets once a month to discuss items of interest to the campus and district. There are times when the CAC is asked to provide input to the district regarding various decisions or initiatives. Typical areas of advisory are related to curriculum, instruction, budget, and staffing. For more information, you may access the CAC guidelines at <http://austinisd.org>.

All CAC meetings are open to the public, and everyone is invited to attend.

CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

The school goals for student placement consist of the following:

1. Accommodate any academic needs of the student.
2. Provide the best student/teacher assignment to suit the student's individual learning needs.
3. Provide experiences resulting from a diverse group of students in each classroom.
4. Balance class populations by such factors as ability levels, new and returning students, and numbers of boys and girls.
5. Maximize instructional time by eliminating inappropriate combinations of students within the classroom.

Our overall goal is to provide the best possible educational experience for your child. After spending the entire school year with each child, the professional opinion of the teachers is very valuable in determining the optimum placement of each student. Input from the staff, faculty, counselor and parents will be considered in the class placement process. In the spring of each academic year, parent feedback is requested from parents to help with the placement process. Requests for specific teachers cannot be honored.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Classroom management begins with highly engaging instructional practices. Zilker teachers will establish high expectations for learning and for behavior in each classroom.

As part of [Capturing Kids' Hearts](#), the classroom teacher develops a Social Contract with his/her class. The Social Contract serves as a guide for how students will behave and how they will treat each other. Teachers utilize the CKH four questions to address individual behavior as needed. Zilker teachers establish clear expectations and consistent classroom routines in order to provide the best learning environment for each student.

CAPTURING KIDS' HEARTS

Capturing Kids' Hearts is a process we live by to build and strengthen relationships with students. This process gives us a consistent framework throughout the school where all teachers and students feel a connection with one another to become a part of the Scotch family.

Our day begins with greeting each student at the door with a handshake and a positive message.

This gives a moment where teachers engage with each student as he/she enters the classroom. In addition, an essential part to Capturing Kids' Hearts is Good Things. Every classroom designates a time in their day to celebrate the good things in our lives.

We have the opportunity to explore our students needs, convey empathy, and ask questions. Students may simply share a good thing or do an activity to make connections to help build our classroom communities. Communication plays a key role in everything we do throughout our day. It shows that we care for one another and we work towards addressing the needs of our students both academically and emotionally.

We empower our students and build trust by giving them the responsibility to make decisions and become good problem solvers. Every classroom has created a social contract which is an agreement of behavior. The social contract is written by the students and then signed to show their commitment. In addition, teachers and students use nonverbal signals to work together to hold one another accountable for how we treat each other.

Teachers end and send their students off with a launch. After a lesson or at the end of the day, teachers are giving their students ideas to think about from that day's lesson or leaving them with an inspiring message.

Capturing Kids' Hearts will make a huge impact in our school community. The students know the expectations throughout the school and there is a consistent message being conveyed

by all adults and children. We have gained the necessary tools to build and maintain relationships.

Good classroom management is truly about having positive relationships with all students

COMMUNICATION

There are multiple means of communication at Zilker Elementary. All primary communication from the principal will be through our weekly Community Connection that is sent directly to your email. We have a email address that's easy to remember and use Zilker@austinisd.org

Teachers are best contacted through email - and then you can request a phone call back from them. Since they are working with kids during the day, often times phone calls will have to be made after students are released. But all staff have a 24-36 hour window to return after receiving.

COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

Zilker staff members and administration stand ready and willing to work with you to address your concern.

Most student or parent complaints/concerns can be addressed by discussing the issue with the individuals involved. Start with the classroom teacher. If the issue cannot be resolved, you may call the principal for assistance. The administration's goal is to assist you in working through any challenge that may arise in an efficient and fair manner.

DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Zilker school discipline plan is based on the Positive Behavior Support program and the Capturing Kids' Hearts philosophy. We believe that each child is responsible for his or her own actions. Zilker teachers work to establish a strong sense of community in each classroom. A class Social Contract is developed by the students to guide the class throughout the year. Positive rewards are offered to recognize appropriate behavior. If a child is sent to the office for a behavioral concern, parents will be called by the school.

DOGS ON CAMPUS

Do not bring dogs on the campus. This includes arrival and dismissal times!

DRESS CODE

Students are dressed appropriately for school when their attire and hair do not distract others from learning, and they are able to actively participate in all activities during the school day. All private body parts must be covered including the midriff for length of shirt. All students have a formal physical education class daily and need to wear appropriate clothing and shoes. Please see [AISD Student Dress Code Policy](#) for specifics. If the principal or designee determines that dress is inappropriate, the student shall be given the opportunity to correct the problem at school before calling home for help.

DUAL LANGUAGE

Zilker is a proud Dual Language campus from Prek-5th Grade. For more information on our Dual Language program, please see our [Dual Language Handbook](#)

EMERGENCY CONTACT

Parents must provide telephone numbers where a responsible adult may be reached in the event of illness or injury. If your child needs emergency care and we cannot reach you or others you have named, we will call EMS. Parents are responsible for paying any medical bills from EMS and the hospital they use.

GRADING & REPORTING

All teachers will follow the policies and procedures of the Austin Independent School District as they devise grading and reporting procedures for their students. You may receive more specific information regarding these procedures by conferring directly with your child's teacher(s). General information for each grade level follows.

Kindergarten, 1st Grade, & 2nd Grade

At these primary grade levels, a numerical grading system is used on the report cards. The numbers and corresponding performance are as follows:

Advanced: 4
Skilled: 3
Basic Understanding: 2
Needs Improvement: 1

In 3rd through 5th grades, the letter grades A, B, C, D and F, as set forth on the scale below, will be used to reflect academic achievement in each subject area. Plus (+) and minus (-) may also be used with the grades of A, B, and C.

GRADE NUMERICAL RANGE

A--Excellent (90-100)

98-100 A+

94-97 A

90-93 A

B--Good (80-89)

88-89 B+

84-87 B

80-83 B

C--Fair (70-79)

78-79 C+

74-77 C

70-73 C

D--Failing (59-69)

F--Failing (58 & below)

Specific traits that will be assessed under "Personal Development" are included on the actual report card. The following scale will be used to indicate a student's performance in these areas:

• 4 - Consistently • 3 - Frequently • 2 - Occasionally • 1 - Rarely

Report cards will be sent home every nine weeks. Any student with a failing average (below 70) will receive a Progress Report approximately halfway through the nine weeks grading period or at any other time when a grade has dropped significantly. The report cards will be electronically formatted.

IMMUNIZATIONS AND TB TEST

Our school enforces the state laws for requiring records of mandated immunizations or proper exemptions.

LEAVING SCHOOL DURING THE DAY

Any student leaving the school during school hours must be signed out in the office by a parent or guardian who is listed on the emergency card. Do not go directly to the classroom to pick up your child. For security, your child will be called to meet you in the office. You must notify the office if someone other than a person listed in registration will be picking up your child for appointments, etc. Proper identification must be provided. Any time away from school is counted as tardy.

LOST AND FOUND

Please label your child's sweaters, coats and lunch boxes. Items with a child's full name are promptly returned. Found items are taken to the lost and found area on the front porch of the school. Each month all unclaimed items will be donated to a charitable organization.

MEDICATION

For the safety of all students, prescription and non-prescription medication can only be administered from the school office. School regulations require the office to maintain written requests from parents explaining time and dosage, etc. Forms are available in the office. All medications must be in original containers and correctly labeled. Teachers and the office staff are willing to assist with medications, but it is the responsibility of the child to report to the office for the medication.

PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

Zilker PTA is a very active body and is involved in many aspects of our school life. Your membership and participation are encouraged and appreciated. Zilker has a goal of 100% parent and teacher membership.

The PTA Executive Board meets monthly, with General Sessions held throughout the year. We welcome your participation at meetings and the many events sponsored/coordinated by our PTA.

PTA helps organize volunteers in and around the school. Would you like to drop by every week and help in the lunchroom? Shelve books in the library? Spend one hour a month in the workroom? Or a day at the Science Fair? We can find a way to work within any schedule limitations. Checkout the PTA website for Volunteer Information and find the right spot for you.

PARENT Portal

In Austin ISD, parents are able to access all their student's educational information in one place: the Parent Portal!

How Do I Access the Parent Portal

Go to <https://portal.austinisd.org/> to access the Parent Portal. If you do not have a Parent Portal Account, you can register for one online. The Parent Portal serves as the primary resource for all of the services provided online to our parents. This site gives parents direct access into their child's classroom information, registration to your child's campus, district-wide information and links to other often used services.

Student Registration

Beginning January 9, 2023, parents can register a new student for the 2023-2024 school year through Parent Self-Serve or go straight to the AISD Student Registration system once they are logged into the Portal. Go to Student Registration information >

My Messages

SchoolMessenger is the district's communication tool. Parents can set their preferred modes of district communication in the Portal. Read more about SchoolMessenger >

BLEND

BLEND allows parents to support student learning by providing a view of assignments, due dates, communication with instructors and more. BLEND is built upon the Canvas Learning Management System and offers a secure point of access for blended learning. To learn more, visit the BLEND Parent Tour.

RELIGIOUS MATTERS POLICY AND GUIDELINES

Zilker students and families share a wide range of religious beliefs and expectations. Since public schools are non-religious entities, Zilker will remain neutral in regard to religious expression.

All students and staff members are expected to be tolerant of each other's religious views. Therefore, no particular religious beliefs or non-beliefs will be promoted or endorsed by the school or its employees, and none should be disparaged. Students and staff may request to be excused from participating in practices that are contrary to their religious beliefs in accordance with the AISD policy.

Guidelines:

1. Teaching about religion and religious observances within the context of the curriculum is appropriate. It is further recommended that the focus be on themes such as sharing and giving, the diversity of family celebrations, community action, principles of religious freedom, and religion and its relationship to the law, rather than holidays or beliefs being a course of study in and of themselves.
2. Symbols that represent a religious holiday may only be utilized as curriculum aids provided their use is relevant to the learning experience. Religious symbols may not be used as decoration.
3. The campus calendar should be prepared so as to minimize conflicts with major religious holidays and observances for all faiths.

4. The class parties in December are referred to as winter parties and will not contain symbols related to the Christmas holiday.

STUDENT BIRTHDAYS

Students will be honored for their birthday through morning announcements. Treats, either edible or not (flowers, balloons, etc) are not allowed for birthdays. We want to ensure everyone feels special on their birthday and starting traditions that can't be done for all students is hard for students to understand.

TARDIES

It is very important that children arrive on time to school each day. Class begins promptly at 7:40 A.M. Any time missed during the school day is considered a tardy. A conference with the parents and principal, assistant principal or counselor will be requested if tardies are excessive. Tardies will be recorded and will be reported on report cards.

STUDY FIELD TRIPS

Each grade level takes a variety of field trips each year. Teachers will send information home explaining the purpose of the trip and will ask for parent/guardian permission. The permission slip must be signed and returned for your child to be able to participate.

TECHNOLOGY AT SCHOOL - Blended Learning

Blended learning is the thoughtful integration of high-quality face to face and online experiences. The goal is to create personalized and equitable learning experiences that promote student agency and opportunities for the teacher to differentiate and support students in small group and/or individual instructional settings.

In our classrooms, technology will be used to enhance student learning and productivity in a way that can not be done without technology. We stress to everyone that devices are a learning tool not a toy.

For instance:

- A primary student using Seesaw to orally retell the events from a story with detail. Primary students can use their voice to explain their thinking which might not be possible with solely a paper task. The use of audio/ video recording allows the teacher to assess the highest level of reading comprehension. This example enhances students' productivity!!
- A class is about to complete a research project about animals, the teacher curates a list of links for the students to explore in order to get facts about their self chosen animals. Using these teacher selected links allows students to choose any animal and not simply from a list of books the teacher pulled from the library. The ability to self-select creates a higher level of engagement for the student, thus increasing learning and quality of product creation.
- Intermediate students have access to BLEND which houses many of their assignments. This allows students to look back on past assignments or information to continue learning. Families can also access the material from BLEND at home.
- A student is using an online application such as Imagine Language and Literacy. All at the same time in a classroom students are working on content exactly on their level. From well above grade level to scaffolding below grade level skills. Each time the

student logs in it continues their progress from the day before. The teacher is also able to login and see where students are struggling to work in small groups or one-on-one to fill these gaps.

- Testing on the computer allows students who need certain accommodations/support access to these with greater ease and efficiency. Also it prepares them for their future of testing on a device as they continue on their educational journey into adulthood.
 - Online tests taken at Zilker include, but are not limited to:
 - MAP Growth and MAP Fluency
 - Short Cycle Assessments (Grades 3-5)
 - Teacher Created School City Assessments
 - STAAR (Grades 3-5)

At Zilker, teachers are allowed and supported to create learning experiences that match their students/teacher needs and levels of mastery. Teachers may use technology to introduce a topic, reteach a topic, or extend knowledge of a topic, and for collaboration on projects. With this in mind, at times technology usage can look different across classrooms, so for more specific information on how your child uses technology, please ask your child's teacher for examples of technology usage in the classroom. Also, a parent can request access to their child's device at any time and we can send it home with the child or hold it for you to pick up.

Students in PreK - 2nd grade have iPads.
Students in Grades 3-5 have Chromebooks.

Students have access to a wide variety of applications through our AISD portal or teacher accounts:

- HMH: Into Reading
- Eureka Math
- PhD Science
- Seesaw (Prek-2)
- BLEND - AISD's version of the LMS (Learning Management System) Canvas
- Imagine Language and Literacy
- IXL
- Dreambox
- ST Math
- Epic Books
- PebbleGo
- **This list is not exhaustive, rather a list of most used applications**

[Student Technology Expectations and Digital Citizenship](#)

Technology will not be used to keep students occupied in non-instructional goals.

- Students will not have free choice time with technology
- It will not be used during recess either outdoors or indoors
- It will only be used for rewards with admin approval

Access to Internet Searches:

iPads and Chromebooks must have access to the internet in order to run the applications used for learning. All internet searches are run through the district's filter to ensure appropriate content for students. No system is perfect, and at times content may come through that your child or family is not comfortable with. In our classes, we teach students how to handle these situations in a supportive, responsible manner.

With most things in life, anything that has benefits also has negatives. However, we do feel confident in our use of technology at Zilker. When we can teach students how to use the internet appropriately at school, how to handle uncomfortable situations/content at school - this will better prepare them for when they are with a friend outside of school and something comes up. Please keep in mind that through the year, we have less than a handful of situations that occur from the use of technology in our classrooms. If something occurs that is not in line with our technology standards, we communicate it directly to the individuals involved.

If you'd like to explore additional resources, check out the [Austin ISD Family Technology Resources website](#) for tips about our AISD systems, devices, and more.

TELEPHONE USE

The school phone is a business phone and we receive and make many calls during the day. Therefore, we must limit students' calls to emergencies only from the office. This means that after school visits to friends must be arranged outside of school. Student phones/communication devices must remain off during the day and placed in a backpack.

TEXTBOOKS

State-approved textbooks are provided free of charge for each subject or class. Students and parents are responsible for the cost of damage to or loss of a textbook.

TRAFFIC

Traffic around Zilker Elementary has increased over the last few years. A lot of it is our own community of parents. While driving near the school you should be extra aware, careful, and slow. Also cell phones should absolutely not be used near the school.

VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS

All visitors and volunteers must sign in at the office and wear a visitor or volunteer badge/sticker before going to the volunteer location or the cafeteria. These procedures are essential for the security of the campus.

WHAT CAN BE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL

Children are not allowed to bring any items to school that are dangerous, valuable (too dear that it cannot be lost), or that distract other children. In general, children should only bring items for "show and tell" as requested/approved by the teacher. Do not allow stuffed toys, toy cars, toy guns, knives, nail clippers, expensive games, or jewelry to be brought to school. Ask the homeroom teacher for guidelines on technology in the classroom.

Zilker Elementary

Our school, our source of pride in the community. Thank you for making it the school it is every day. How we care about our school is shown by our actions and words. Through the community talk of our school and staff should be with pride and to uplift.