

Matheson Park Elementary School

Student Success Handbook

2025 – 2026



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Welcome to Matheson Park Elementary School!

The Matheson Park Elementary School Student Success Handbook is one way to communicate important information regarding our school. Our handbook incorporates APS policies, procedures, and school expectations. At Matheson Park ES, we strive to be responsible, respectful, caring, and safe and have aligned our Student Success Handbook around these guiding principles. If you have any questions please feel free to contact your child's teacher or Principal Lovato at 505-291-6837.

ABBREVIATED SCHEDULE FOR 2-HOUR DELAY DAYS

An abbreviated day is a day when school cannot be opened at the regularly scheduled time due to extreme weather conditions or some other emergency. This announcement will be made through the news media by 6:00 A.M and you will receive an automated message through SchoolMessenger. Starting and dismissal times for Matheson Park students on abbreviated days are as follows:

- Classes Begin: 10:40 A.M.
 - NO breakfast
 - Lunch will be served
- Classes Dismiss: 4:10 P.M.

ANIMALS IN SCHOOL

With prior approval from the Administration, animals may be brought to classrooms only if they serve a direct instructional purpose or are used as a certified service animal only.

ATTENDANCE

Student attendance is a critical educational process component. Students, families and APS personnel must work together to promote student success by encouraging daily student attendance. Attendance positively correlates to student success and should not be treated as a disciplinary issue, but rather lead to conversations with students and families to improve attendance.

Except as otherwise provided in the Public School Code, a school-age person shall attend public school, private school, home school or a state institution until the school-age person is at least eighteen (18) years of age unless that school-age person has graduated from high school, received a high school equivalency credential or withdrawn from school on a hardship waiver. A parent/guardian may give written, signed permission for the school-age person to leave school between the ages of sixteen (16) and eighteen (18) in case of hardship approved by the local superintendent or private school. A school-age person subject to the provisions of the Attendance for Success Act shall attend school for the length of time established in that school-age person's school district, charter school or private school. The school district or private school shall not excuse a school-age person from attending school except as provided in that act.

The parent/guardian of a school-age person, subject to the provisions of the Attendance for Success Act, is responsible for their attendance.

Attendance improvement plans, activities and interventions shall focus on:

- Keeping students in an educational setting
- Prohibiting out-of-school suspension or expulsion as the punishment for absences
- Assisting a student's family to remove barriers to the student's regular school attendance or attendance in another educational setting
- Identifying solutions to improve a student's attendance and discuss necessary interventions for the student or the student's family
- Providing additional educational opportunities to students who are struggling with attendance
- Reintegrating students with chronic absences back into an educational setting
- Limiting a student's ability to withdraw only after all intervention efforts have been exhausted.

Excused and Unexcused Absences:

- Schools shall comply with state statute and the Albuquerque Public Schools Handbook for Student Success when determining excused and unexcused absences.
- Unexcused and excused absences and out-of-school suspensions all count toward student absences that require student intervention plans when the number of absences reach the standards for chronic or excessive absenteeism.
- Differentiating between excused and unexcused absences is only helpful in informing success student attendance intervention plans.
- Students may obtain make-up work for any absence, excused or unexcused. Make-up work is not provided for long-term suspension and expulsion.

Excused Absences - Absences will be excused for the following reasons with proper notification:

- Illness (including chronic illness documented on a health plan, IEP or 504 plan)
- Limited family emergencies
- Family deaths
- Medical, health or legal appointments
- Religious commitments
- College visits
- Deployment of a military parent/guardian
- Limited extenuating circumstances as approved in advance by the school principal
- Tribal obligations



BEHAVIOR

Matheson Park Elementary School (MPES) follows ALL guidelines outlined in the APS Handbook for Student Success:

MPES Mustang Expectations:

1. I will keep my hands, feet, and hurtful comments to myself.
2. I will respect myself and others.
3. I will take care of school property and equipment.
4. I will keep all personal toys/make-up/trading cards and sports equipment at home.
5. I will behave in a way that allows everyone to learn.

Students are expected to treat other students, adults, and school property with respect. MPES staff will teach school-wide expectations. Minor behavior incidents will be handled by teachers. Major incidents that pose a safety threat or cause harm will be referred to administration.

In accordance with the Family Education Right and Privacy Act (FERPA), the school will not disclose information about other students involved in an incident or the consequences given. Consequences will be given following the matrix in the APS Handbook for Student Success.

BICYCLE POLICY

If students ride bicycles to school, they should wear a properly fitted helmet. Students are not allowed to ride bicycles on school grounds. Bicycles are to be parked and locked in the bicycle rack upon arrival at school. The school is not responsible for loss or damages done to the bicycle. **SKATEBOARDS, ROLLER BLADES, ROLLER SKATES, AND SKATE SHOES ARE NOT ALLOWED AT SCHOOL.**

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

We love celebrating our students and the joy that birthdays bring! To ensure that these special moments are recognized while preserving valuable instructional time, birthday celebrations will be acknowledged **briefly at the end of the school day within each classroom.**

We also recognize and honor the rich diversity of religious and cultural beliefs within our school community. Our approach to birthday celebrations is designed to be inclusive and respectful of all families' values and traditions.

If you have specific preferences or would like to opt out of classroom birthday acknowledgments for your child, please feel free to reach out to your child's teacher. Thank you for your continued support in creating a welcoming and respectful environment for all our Mustangs!

Albuquerque Public Schools Religious Issues and Holiday Practices:

Because of the diversity of religious beliefs represented in the school community, the following instructional guidelines apply:

- The concepts of joy, giving, camaraderie, understanding, and sharing should not be negated for any child by holiday practice.
- Instructional materials used should neither advance nor inhibit a particular religious belief.
- Holiday activities are permissible, but should have a strong instructional/curriculum tie and should not be drawn out over excessive periods of time.
- Schools' staff should meet and formulate school guidelines about holiday practices consistent with this instructional procedural directive. As school staff formulate these guidelines, they work through their Instructional Council.
- Classrooms/schools should be "religion neutral" (neither promoting nor inhibiting religious beliefs).
- Religious symbols of any denomination should be used only when teaching about religious beliefs and only for brief periods of time during the course of instruction.
- When a symbol has both a cultural and religious significance, it should be considered a religious symbol and be dealt with according to this instructional procedural directive.
- Student initiated inquiry and/or activities related to religious issues and ceremonies should be accommodated, but only in the context of the above guidelines.

BULLYING

Bullying is a way of using power aggressively in which a person is subjected to intentional, unwanted, and unprovoked hurtful verbal and/or physical actions. An act of bullying results in the targeted student feeling oppressed, fearful, distressed, injured, or uncomfortable. The aggression is repeated on more than one occasion and can include physical, verbal, emotional, racial, sexual, written, electronic, damage to property, social exclusion, and intimidation. Hazing is included in this violation. Bullying may be motivated by actual or perceived characteristics such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, mental, physical, or academic disability.

Albuquerque Public Schools strictly prohibits bullying by all members of the school community. Albuquerque Public Schools strictly prohibits bullying by students whether on or off campus. Those who encourage bullying may be subject to corrective action. Bullying incidents shall not be tolerated by any Albuquerque Public School employee.

Albuquerque Public Schools prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying.

Aspect	Bullying	Conflict
Intent	Deliberate and hurtful	Often unintentional or based on disagreement
Power Dynamics	Involves a power imbalance	Between individuals of equal power
Behavior	Repeated, targeted, and aggressive	Can be a one-time disagreement or misunderstanding
Resolution	Difficult to resolve without intervention	Can be resolved through communication
Examples	Name-calling, exclusion, threats, physical harm	Argument over opinions, competition, miscommunication
Impact	Emotional, psychological, and sometimes physical harm	Temporary frustration or tension

CAFETERIA (FREE BREAKFAST & LUNCH)

- ALL students receive FREE breakfast and lunch. Matheson Park ES offers Breakfast in the Classroom, which is a school meal program where students eat breakfast in their classroom after the school day begins, rather than in the cafeteria before school starts. It's designed to ensure all students have access to a nutritious meal to start the day, especially those who may not have eaten at home. Breakfast is served during the first 15 minutes of the instructional day, during morning work and announcements.

- Thirty-minute lunch times vary by grade level, which includes a short 10-minute recess. There is also a snack zone outside on the way to the playground for students to finish their lunch or eat a snack during recess.
- Matheson Park ES promotes proper nutrition and an active lifestyle. To help meet this challenge, **students are asked not to supplement their school lunch with chips, candy, and/or sodas or sweetened beverages.** For students who bring lunch, think about portions and healthy food choices. Remember, eating healthy provides fuel for our bodies so students can work and think ALL day!

CYBERBULLYING

“Cyberbullying” means any bullying that takes place through electronic communication.

“Electronic communication” means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including a telephone, cellular phone, computer, electronic tablet, pager or video or audio recording. This also pertains to cyberbullying on personal devices during school or communication that happens on campus or affects the school campus even if outside of the school day (This includes communication or actions on social media platforms.).

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DRESS CODE

Matheson Park Elementary School strongly believes that all students should be able to dress comfortably and the primary responsibility for a student’s dress lies with the student and the family. The school will not impose punishment related to student dress and dress code enforcement will not result in barriers to student attendance or participation, unless related to safety.

- **Prohibited clothing and accessories include, but is not limited to:**
 - obscene or violent language or images
 - depictions of alcohol or drugs or other illegal item or activity
 - racist content, hate speech, profanity or pornography
 - accessories that could be considered dangerous or used as a weapon. For example, Students may not wear spiked jewelry, chains or belts with more than 2 inches excess.
- Hair color, length, style, including hair coverings or styles related to an individual’s personal, cultural or religious beliefs cannot be considered for disciplinary action.
- **Clothing:**
 - Students must wear appropriately fitting clothing:

- Pants should fit at waist, crotch, and legs.
- Tank tops/dresses with 2" wide straps may be worn and no midriffs.
- When wearing shorts or skirts, the length must be at least the length of their fingertips when hands are rested at their side.
- Students may not wear clothing that advertises displays or promotes drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sexual activity, violence, disrespect or bigotry.
- **Hats/Caps**
 - May not be worn in the building except when there are instructional, safety, religious or medical reasons. Students may wear hats outside for sun protection.
- **Shoes**
 - Close-toed shoes are best for school and are required for PE days. Flip flops, sandals and high heels are discouraged. For safety reasons, Heelys and/or rollerblades or any other shoes with wheels are not allowed.

In the event of a dress code violation, students will be provided a change of clothing and/or call home for a change of clothes. If families need assistance with clothing, then notify the counselor, community school impact coordinator, teacher, or administration.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Immunizations protect children from serious illness. Studies show they are safe and effective in helping children stay healthy. The protection of vaccines far outweighs the small risk of serious complications. Most childhood vaccines are 90-99% effective in preventing disease.

Where can my child be vaccinated? Vaccines can be obtained through:

- Your child's healthcare provider, or
- A New Mexico Department of Health Public Health office

Requirements for Attendance

- Each year the New Mexico Immunization Coalition determines immunization requirements for students attending school. These requirements may change from year to year based on recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.
- Per APS policy - Student Enrollment Requirements, the student and/or parent/legal guardian shall provide the district with evidence that the student is in compliance with immunization requirements under New Mexico state statute.

Requesting Exemptions

- New Mexico law allows for two types of exemptions for children seeking exemption from required immunizations to enter school. These two exemptions are medical or religious reasons.
- Parents must submit an approved Certificate of Exemption Form in order to register their child without proof of current vaccinations.

ONLINE REGISTRATION & CONTACT INFORMATION

In order to protect the health and safety of our students, it is important that all pertinent information collected during online enrollment be accurate at all times. Please remember that your child will ONLY be released to individuals who are named on your child's information page and who are able to provide photo identification. It is helpful to have a minimum of 3 emergency contacts listed for your child.

It is important that we continuously have accurate contact information for parents/guardians and emergency contacts as well. If there is a change in emergency contacts or other student information, please contact the office to make changes as soon as possible. The type of information that needs to be kept current includes: telephone numbers, home address, custody and other pertinent legal information, and medications or health concerns.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Your child's teacher will schedule a conference with you after the 1st and 3rd reporting periods. This is a time to discuss the academic performance, social skills, work habits, and behavior of your child. It is also a time for you to ask questions about curriculum and instruction. Teachers are happy and willing to meet with parents at other times if necessary.

PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students are allowed to bring a cell phone or smart watch, however; it must be powered off during the school day (bell to bell). Other personal devices (gaming devices, tablets, etc...) are NOT allowed in school. It may be confiscated if it is being used during the instructional day. There is also a risk of loss, breakage, and theft when expensive items are in the possession of students. The school will not assume responsibility for items brought to school.

Cell Phone Policy:

1st Offense: Warning and reminder of school policy.

2nd Offense: Phone will be confiscated and administration will contact the family. Phone will be returned to student at the end of the school day.

3rd Offense: Phone will be confiscated and administration will contact the family. Family will have to retrieve the confiscated phone from administration.

Senate Bill 11, which requires districts to develop policies regarding cell phones, smartwatches, tablets, laptops, and gaming devices, specifically includes "smartwatches" as a device that must be addressed in school policies. The goal is to minimize distractions during instructional time and improve student focus and well-being.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

To participate in PE class, it is very important that the students wear athletic shoes (basketball shoes, cross-trainers, running shoes, etc.) or shoes that provide proper grip and traction, reducing the risk of slips and falls. Students will participate in PE ONCE per week, so please be aware of your child's schedule so that your child will dress appropriately. Thank you for helping us keep our students free from injury.

PROHIBITED PROPERTY AND LOST AND FOUND

We highly recommend that your child's name be printed on all jackets, lunch boxes, and water bottles. The school Lost and Found Bin is located in the cafeteria. Unclaimed clothing will be given to APS Clothing Bank on a regular basis. Please do not allow your child to bring cell phones, music players, skateboards, roller blades, toys, collectors' items, etc. to school. Prohibited items brought to school will be confiscated. These items can be easily lost, stolen, or traded and can cause disruption. If these items are confiscated, you will be contacted to pick up the items from the school. Matheson Park ES is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

STUDENT CONCERNS

Parents/Guardians who have concerns about their child's progress or well-being in school should first contact the child's teacher and make arrangements to discuss these concerns. Most concerns are alleviated during this step. However, should there be continuing concerns thereafter, please do not hesitate to contact the principal.

STUDENT DROP-OFF/PICK-UP

- Student drop-off is from 8:25 A.M. – 8:40 A.M.
- Student pick up if at 4:10 P.M.
- Drop Off and Pick Up: Cars must stay in line around the perimeter of the parking lot, located north of the campus.
- Drop Off: Students will be dropped off and picked up in the back-parking lot. Families that walk their children to school will need to escort them to the back-parking lot, located north of the campus. School staff will direct students where to go, which is a dedicated area between the blue building and first row of portables. We have created a place for students to stand by assigned classrooms.
- Drop Off and Pick Up: If you choose to park in the parking spaces and drop off or pick up your child, YOU MUST ESCORT YOUR CHILD ACROSS THE PARKING LOT. This is our only way to ensure the safety of our students.

STUDENT PLACEMENT

At the end of the year, classroom teachers work with the principal to create balanced classes for the following year. Families may not request a specific teacher, but they can provide information about learning styles and teaching models. Class lists are not final until after the 20th day of the current school year. Changes may be made due to staffing and/or enrollment increases or decreases.

In the event we need to create a new classroom at the beginning of the year due to an overage in class size averages, we will follow this following procedure:

- First, families and students will be given the opportunity to volunteer to move to the new classroom.

- After the volunteers are placed, additional classroom spots will be filled using our usual placement method. The rest of the class will be formed to ensure balanced classrooms of all abilities and gender.

If at the 20th day we are required to reduce our teacher allocations, then students will be equally/equitably distributed among the other teachers at that grade level. The principal will place the students using teacher input and maintaining a balance of gender and ability ratios. Parents may not request a particular teacher.

We appreciate the support you will offer your child and his or her new teacher during this time of transition. It is important to remember that the students will be observing how the adults in their lives handle the change during this transition.

SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION

If students live in the school district, they are eligible to ride a bus if they live one mile or more from school. However, certain standards of behavior are expected.

- The bus driver is in charge of the children while they are on the bus.
- Children must obey the driver.
- Children are expected to sit in their seats and keep the noise level down.

BUS TRANSPORTATION IS A PRIVILEGE! If the students' behavior is unacceptable, they may jeopardize this privilege. Parents should take time to talk to their children about safe conduct at the bus stop and on the bus. Violation of bus rules could result in a student not being allowed to ride the bus.

SCHOOL DAY (8:40 A.M. – 4:10 P.M.)

- The instructional day is 8:40 A.M. – 4:10 P.M. Supervision is provided before school beginning at 8:25 A.M. The first bell rings at 8:40 A.M. and the tardy bell rings at 8:45 A.M.
- We respectfully ask that students arrive on time every day and are not checked-out early towards the end of the day (especially between 4:00 P.M. – 4:10 P.M.). EVERY INSTRUCTIONAL MINUTE COUNTS! When students are tardy or picked-up early it interrupts the learning process.
- If students are tardy and arrive after the tardy bell or the duty staff have left their designated post, then students must be dropped off at the front office and an adult must sign them in.
- If a student is picked up during the instructional day, then a parent/guardian OR authorized adult will need to sign them out in the main office. We will not release your child to anyone other than parents/guardians or adults listed on your ParentVue account. A picture ID is required for your child's safety.

TECHNOLOGY/INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

- The Albuquerque Public School District provides technology resources to its students for educational purposes. The goal of providing these resources is to promote educational excellence.
- Proper behavior, as it relates to the use of computers, is no different from the proper behavior in all other aspects of APS activities.
- All users are expected to use computers and computer networks in a responsible, ethical, and polite manner. Violation of this policy is grounds for school disciplinary action.

VOLUNTEERING & BACKGROUND CLEARANCE

Volunteers are welcome at Matheson Park ES. Background checks for potential volunteers are based on database searches of criminal records, Departments of Correction records, sex offender registries, and driving records. Volunteers are authorized based on satisfactory background check results. State law requires a background check from volunteers before participating in any volunteer activity at any APS school. You can apply to volunteer on the APS website: www.aps.edu/volunteer-with-aps

There are two categories of volunteers who receive differing levels of background check clearances and badging.

- Category #1: **Unsupervised Volunteers** with unsupervised access to student - Cost for the background check is \$59 and is valid for 2 years.
- Category #2: **Supervised Volunteers** have unsupervised access to students - Cost for the background check is \$12 and is valid for 2 years.

Guests, visitors, and volunteers must sign in at the office and wear a visitor pass. Guests are those individuals, with principal approval, who assist, on campus, on a non-regular or one-time basis. Visitors are those who attend a district sponsored event or activity for a short period of time. A volunteer is an individual who helps in the school on a regular basis. **ALL volunteers must undergo an APS background check to authorize them to perform volunteer services like helping in the classroom or accompanying a class on a fieldtrip.** Volunteers must apply online at www.aps.edu/volunteer-with-aps. We request that all VISITORS and VOLUNTEERS HONOR AND ABIDE BY THE DRESS CODE AND BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS THAT APPLY TO STAFF AND STUDENTS.

MATHESON PARK
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



MUSTANGS

ON THE MOVE
RACING TOWARD SUCCESS

2025-2026