



**Parent and Student Handbook  
2025-2026**

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# General Information

McGown Elementary  
21211 Tuckerton Rd.  
Cypress, TX 77433

**School Hours: 8:15-3:35**

**Mascot: Owls**

**Colors: Aquamarine, Plum, Spring Green**

## Namesake

With over 40 years of experience in education, Sue McGown began her CFISD teaching career as a teacher at Holmsley Elementary in the 1980s, moving to secondary education before becoming an assistant principal at Bleyl Middle School. After serving in several other administrative positions, including opening Hamilton Middle School as the principal and becoming the inaugural principal of Cypress Woods High School, Ms. McGown resigned to finish her educational career in St. Louis, Missouri.

## WHOOO can help?

Our new phone system is a routing system with very few direct lines. The receptionist is trained to guide you to the right person and can route your call.

Reception: Cindy Paul- 832-349-7700 Fax: 832-349-7710 Attendance: Heidi Argueta- 832-349-7704 Clinic: Kathryn Palmer, RN- 832-349-7703 Cafeteria: Jessica Rivera- 832-349-7706 Club Rewind: 832-349-7713
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## Assistant Principals:

Amanda Garrett (Grades 1, 5, Life Skills)  
Cournette Hawkins (Grades K, 2, 4)  
Catherine Sauer (Grades PreK/3/ Res./Spec.)

## Counselors:

Jennifer Koester (Grades 1 and 4)  
Kara Singleton (Grades Pre-k, 2 and 5)  
TBA (Grades K, 3, and Life Skills)

## Instructional Leadership:

ELAR Instructional Specialist: Danielle Thomas  
Math/Sci. Instructional Specialist: Jerri vanWunnik  
Pre-K/K/1<sup>st</sup> Instructional Specialist: Meagan Drilling  
Testing Coordinator: Victoria Lee  
District Librarian for McGown/Pope: Jordan Hogan  
Diagnostician: Angela Rundle  
SPED Secretary: Lauren Ruiz

**Principal:** LauraAnn Novacinski

Secretary: Jennifer Morrow

# Morning Arrival and Attendance

## Arrival

The instructional day begins promptly at 8:15 a.m. Students may begin entering the building no earlier than 7:55 a.m. each day. There is no supervision provided by the school earlier than this time unless your child is attending Club Rewind. Announcements will begin at 8:10, followed by the tardy bell at 8:15.

## Late Arrival

Students arriving after 8:13 a.m. must be signed-in by a parent or guardian. The parent will need to park and enter the building to sign their student into class. They may not be dropped off. Our priority is to assist students to class as quickly as possible. The car rider line will be long the first few weeks of school until all newly registered students wishing to ride the bus are approved for transportation services. Please be patient as our staff and students learn procedures. No tardies will be issued during this learning phase at the beginning of the year. No tardies will be issued for bus transportation late arrivals.

## Attendance

Your child's attendance at school is very important for school success. However, if absences are necessary, please communicate with your child's homeroom teacher and the registrar. Students are required to provide a note from a parent or guardian for each absence within three days of the absence or consecutive absences. This note should include the student's name and grade, reason for absence, telephone number of parent or guardian, and signature of parent or guardian. This note may also be mailed, faxed, or delivered in person by the parent or guardian. We are unable to accept an emailed absence note or request for early dismissal. Keep in mind that a note does not erase an absence. It simply changes the status of the absence from "unexcused" to "excused". It is still an absence and can impact court warning notices, as well as attendance incentives or awards.

## Partial Day Absences/Picking up Students Early for Same Day Return

If a student is not present at the official ADA attendance time, the student will be marked absent for the entire day. A student shall be excused for temporary absences resulting from visits to health care professionals if the student leaves

class or returns to school on the same day of the appointment. If the student satisfactorily completes the schoolwork, the day of absence shall be counted as a day of compulsory attendance; however, the student must bring a note from the health care provider when returning to school that day.

Safety of our students is our number one priority, and any deviation from established practice will take time for office personnel to ensure the protection of your child. The following procedures must be followed for a child to be picked up early.

- The parent/guardian must send a note with their child on the morning of the early release, indicating that their child will be picked up early. If a parent realizes they need to pick up a child after the child has already arrived at school, an email note may be sent to [mcgown@cfisd.net](mailto:mcgown@cfisd.net) with a copy of picture ID. All requests must be in writing and should be sent by 2:00 p.m. Phone calls cannot be verified and will not be permitted for transportation changes. Please include in the note the date, time, and reason for early release. No student pick-up will be allowed after 3:00 p.m.
- Please communicate who will pick up your child. We do not have a pick-up list. Emergency contacts are for school use only in the event of the school's need to request a student be picked up from school. The parent still must name the person who will be picking up the child, and the adult must present a government issued ID when picking up early (pictures of IDs will not be accepted).
- If parents are separated or divorced, the school will release the student to either parent of record with the receipt of a note from the custodial parent. In the event that one parent has limited custodial or visitation privileges, the school must be provided a copy of the most current divorce decree stipulating the custody agreement. In the event a student has a guardian, the school should be given a certified copy of the guardianship order. The school will then release the student to his/her legal guardian. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to furnish a copy of the most current court order or divorce decree to the school. Legal documents are those that have been signed by a judge and contain a court's stamp.

- All persons, including parents, must show a government ID to school personnel when picking up children. We will only release children to an adult whose ID matches the name given by the parent/guardian in the written request for release.

### **Warning Notices/Excessive Absences (including excused absences)**

**Please see CFISD Board Policy for more detailed information**

[Link to Compulsory Attendance Policy](#)

Parents of elementary students will receive written notice following the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) absence from school, whether “excused” or “unexcused.”

A student between the ages of 6 and 18 must attend school and district-required tutorial sessions unless the student is otherwise exempted or excused. A student enrolled in a public pre-kindergarten or kindergarten program must also attend school. CFISD employs attendance officers to support students in maintaining good school attendance.

All students must adhere to the 90% attendance law. Once a student’s attendance falls below 90%, all subsequent absences will require a note from a doctor, a health clinic, or the student may be taken to school to be assessed by the school nurse in an effort to determine whether any symptoms of communicable illness exist that would prevent the student from attending class.

A student may not receive credit for the year and may be retained unless he/she has been in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days during the school term.

When a student’s attendance drops below 90 percent but remains at least at 75 percent of the days the class is offered, the student may earn credit for the class or a final grade by completing a plan approved by the principal. This plan must provide for the student to meet the instructional requirements of the class as determined by the principal.

### **Make-up Work when Absences Occur**

Students shall be expected to make up assignments and tests after absences. Students will be given the number of days equal to the number of days missed to complete make-up work. All work completed for a grade will be completed at school. Students shall not be given make-up work in advance of anticipated

absences; however, if a student is absent for longer than three days due to illness, parents may arrange with the assistant principal to pick up missed work at appropriate intervals so that the student does not fall behind.

# Behavior and Conduct

Students at McGown Elementary learn appropriate behavior choices in the same way they learn reading or math. Poor behavior choices are opportunities for learning, and it is important that students recognize the strong partnership between parents and school when natural consequences and restorative practices occur. It is sometimes hard for parents to see their children make mistakes, but it is normal and developmentally appropriate for children to struggle with behavior choices when navigating their way through social situations.

## **WISE matrix**

McGown Elementary has developed the WISE matrix as a part of Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) as a proactive approach to establishing the behavioral supports and social culture for all students. PBIS helps our students achieve social, emotional, and academic success through consistent implementation by all adults at McGown.

- **Willpower**
- **Integrity**
- **Safety**
- **Effort**

Students will be taught expectations for WISE behavior for various situations they face on campus (e.g., classroom, cafeteria, playground, etc.) and are expected to cooperate with adults and peers, while demonstrating respect for adults, peers, and property.

## **Student Code of Conduct**

Please refer to the CFISD Student Code of Conduct for information on discipline procedures and bus conduct - [Student Code of Conduct](#)

## **HOOT Loot**

WISE Owls will have many opportunities throughout the year to earn HOOT Loot from any staff member for exhibiting appropriate *Willpower, Integrity, Safety, and Effort.*, which can be spent on various incentives and reward activities.

# Communication

## Change of Address and Telephone Numbers

It is important to keep addresses and phone numbers current. This is our only source of notifying you in case of illness or emergency. You may notify us of changes by sending a note with your child, or by contacting [heidysargueta@cfisd.net](mailto:heidysargueta@cfisd.net). If your home address changes, you must show proof of residency to verify the address change.

## Emergency Information when Parents are Out of Town

If both parents are out of town and the child is staying with a friend or relative, we must have the names and telephone numbers of the adults taking care of your child in your absence. Names and telephone numbers must be in writing. It is imperative that we have this information to assist with transportation arrangements and in the event of a medical concern. It is also advisable to leave written permission with the caretakers to seek medical care in your absence.

## School and District Communication

It is important that you have provided the campus with correct cell numbers and email addresses. Information will be sent as a phone message, text and/or email. When you receive a call from the school, please listen to the message before picking up the phone to call back. This is critically important during inclement weather dismissal.

## Communicating Emergency School Closings (or late start/early release)

CFISD has communicated a standardized schedule for late start of either a 1-hour or 2-hour delayed start if weather is a concern.

	<b>1-hour Delayed Start</b>	<b>2-hour Delayed Start</b>
<b>McGown Elementary</b>	<b>9:15-3:35</b>	<b>10:15-3:35</b>
Sprague Middle School	8:45-3:05	9:45-3:05
Bridgeland High School	8:15-2:35	9:15-2:35

For a 1-hour delayed start, we will serve breakfast as usual. In the case of a two-hour delay, other than special circumstances, we will not be able to provide breakfast and have time to reset for lunch.

[School Messenger](#) - parents can opt-in to receive a text, phone call, or email through the link provided.

Due to the size of our school populations, parents are also encouraged to monitor television or radio stations, and the website [www.cfisd.net](http://www.cfisd.net) for school closings:

● Channel 2 (KPRC)	● News24 Houston
● Channel 11 (KHOU)	● Channel 45 (KXLN)
● Channel 13 (KTRH)	● Channel 48 (KTMD)
● Channel 26 (KRIV)	● CFISD Channel 16 (Cy-Fair TV)

Radio stations that are contacted are:

- FM Stations: 92.9, 95.7, 97.9, 99.1, 100.3, 102.1, 102.9, 106.5, 107.5
- AM Stations: 740, 950, and 1010

#### **Other outlets for communication:**

- Remind App. Notifications
- Facebook: @cfisdmcgown
- Instagram: @cfisdmcgown
- X: @cfisdmcgown
- Weekly newsletters from teachers
- Email
- Schoology pages
- Phone calls (District alerts are handled through School Messenger.)
- Conferences (In-person or through Zoom)
- The campus marquee
- Notes from the Nest (official McGown Newsletter)

#### **News from the Nest**

*News from the Nest* is the official McGown newsletter that will be made available and sent home monthly through School Messenger and/or Remind.

#### **Parent/Teacher Communication**

- Teachers will be communicating through email, Schoology, by phone, and the Remind App. Remind communication is a one-way communication feature from the teacher to the parent.

- Teachers will not initiate communication regarding academic or behavior concerns through email, per CFISD Board Policy.
- Please allow 24 hours for a staff member to return your email or call.
- Be aware that paras will not be engaging in individual communication with parents. Please allow the teacher to address student achievement and/or concerns.
- Teachers are only available to return emails or phone calls before or after school and during their planning/conference period. Thank you for understanding that the teacher’s planning/conference time is also used for meetings and grade level planning. Teachers may not always be available during this time due to previously scheduled meetings.
- Planning/Conference times are as follows for the 2025-2026 school year:

Pre-K	12:40		3 <sup>rd</sup>	8:25
Kindergarten	1:30		4 <sup>th</sup>	9:20
1 <sup>st</sup>	2:25		5 <sup>th</sup>	10:15
2 <sup>nd</sup>	12:35		Specials	11:35

- Parents may request a conference with the teacher, as needed, throughout the year. Scheduling may be arranged with the teacher by sending a note, emailing the teacher, or calling the front office. The teacher will be notified that you called. The teacher will then return your call within 24 hours to arrange a conference. Teachers are unable to use class time for conferences, phone calls or emails.

### **Grade Level Folder**

Establishing clear, open communication between school and home is a school goal. This requires the child to serve as the necessary link between school and home. Therefore, each child will have a grade level folder that will be used for any notes sent to school or graded papers/resources being sent home. Your child will also have other grade level tools within the folder, such as the science study guide, a book log, HFW cards, or cheat sheet for technology assistance. Contents vary by grade level.

## **Student Phone Calls**

The telephones in classrooms and around the building are business phones and do not receive in-coming calls. They are only to be used by students in an emergency situation. Students will not be permitted to call home for forgotten items. Plans for after school should be made in the morning before your child leaves home. In an emergency situation, messages will be relayed through the assistant principal to your child.

## **[Personal Device Policy Update](#)**

- Cell phones may be used before entering the building.
- Cell phones must be silenced and placed in backpacks during the school day.
- No cell phones will be allowed during the school day in classrooms, hallways, or at recess/lunch, per HB1481
- Cell phones may be turned back on and used upon exiting the building for dismissal.

## **Home Access Center (HAC)**

Our district offers every parent the opportunity to monitor grades through the Home Access Center. We encourage parents to stay informed and up-to-date regarding their child's progress. Parents will be sent an email with information about login and password authentication for access. You can contact the Customer Care Center at 281-897-4357 if you get locked out or forget your password.

# Instructional Program Highlights

## Library Books and Take-Home Readers

Students have full responsibility for textbooks and library books checked out to them. If a student loses a library book or home reader, then a notice will be sent home with the replacement cost of the book. All fines will be paid on schoolcashonline.com. Fines must be paid before the student may check out new books. Refunds will be made if books are found and returned after paying for the book.

## Classroom Supplies

Students are asked to purchase school supplies requested for each grade level. Online ordering and delivery are provided for parent convenience. Parents are asked to replenish consumable supplies as needed. Parents may be asked to provide specialized materials (e.g., poster board, a shoebox, items for decorating a journal or diorama, magazine pictures, etc.) for special projects throughout the year to enhance a learning experience.

## Backpacks

Students are expected to arrive prepared for class daily with their grade level folder and, for students in grades 2-5, their charged Chromebook. Backpacks should not be so heavy as to cause student distress. If at any time a parent questions the weight of what is being required for school, the classroom teacher should be alerted to the concern. Due to carpeting and stairs, we will not be able to accommodate rolling backpacks at McGown.

## Chromebooks

The district has issued Chromebooks to all students in grades 2-5. It is the expectation that each student will bring their Chromebook to and from school daily, charged. If a student is prepared for school with a charged Chromebook, then the student is encouraged to leave the charger at home. If a student loses the device or the device is damaged, the student needs to submit a service request through LTE. If a student loses the charger to his/her device, he/she needs to submit a request for an additional charger through LTE. Students should not place any stickers on the charger, Chromebook, or computer case as it could be a fire hazard.

## **Internet Accessibility**

All students must have documented parental permission to access the internet at school. Teachers may include internet presentations during class instruction without parent permission. Any unauthorized use of the internet will be subject to disciplinary action and parents will be notified.

## **Homework**

With the exception of reading, current research does not demonstrate a correlation between homework and increased academic achievement at the elementary level. We believe that your child can reach their full potential with the instruction provided in the 7 hours and 20 minutes they are with us daily. Homework will not be formally assigned by the teacher or the campus. Instead, we are providing time to read with your child, practice math facts, study for upcoming tests, practice handwriting and talk with your child about their day. Your child's teacher will regularly communicate learning progress, keeping you informed of what your child is learning. If you have specific concerns about your child's progress, an individual plan can be created with the teacher to support your child's continued growth. Additional resources are available on the school district webpage under Curriculum, as well as your teachers' Schoology pages.

## **Study Habits**

Our goal is to teach our students the skill of preparing and studying for announced assessments/tests. We know that this is a skill they will require throughout their academic career. We need to work together to encourage students to be proactive in scheduling the appropriate amount of after-school time to study and develop their optimum method of preparing for assessments.

## **Redoing Work**

Students have three opportunities each nine weeks to redo assignments for a grade of 69 or below. The three opportunities will include one major grade and two daily grades. The highest grade a student can earn on the "redo/retest" will be a 70.1. The (.1) will be an indicator that the grade listed is a replaced grade. Parents must request the redo opportunity within one week of the grade being posted on HAC. A reteach opportunity will be provided by the teacher in the form of a small group lesson or assignment. District Progress Monitoring Assessments (DPMs) and district benchmarks are not included in the redo/retest opportunities.

## **Accelerated Instruction**

Students who did not pass the STAAR in language arts or math for two consecutive years are required to participate in 15 hours of accelerated instruction for each content area. This instruction can occur through summer school hours, before school tutoring, and small group instruction during the closing the gap time each day. Small group tutoring should be composed of no more than 4 students, unless parents agree to waive class size so that support may be provided during the school day.

## **Tutorials: Owl University**

Each grade level may develop a tutorial plan. Teachers may provide morning or afternoon tutorials for invited students as needed during the spring semester.

## **Horizons**

The Horizons program is for students who are identified as gifted/talented through the standardized testing criteria defined by the district. GT testing will occur in the spring semester. While all kindergarten students are screened, parents requesting testing for students in grades 1-5 need to complete the request in the Home Access Center (HAC). Most teachers at McGown have received specialized training for certification needed to educate children served in the Horizons program. Please contact Victoria Lee, Testing Coordinator, if you have questions regarding the testing process or would like to request testing.

## **Credit-by-Exam**

In elementary school, Credit-by-Exam is a test students can take to advance an entire grade level. Testing to advance a grade level is a decision that needs to be thought through carefully. Passing the credit-by-exam tests means the student will move to the next grade level with peers who are one year older than the student. It is important to consider the maturity level of the student and how skipping a grade level may impact them socially, emotionally, and academically in middle school, high school, and beyond.

Students in grades K-5 will have four opportunities during the school year to use “credit-by-exam” to accelerate to another grade level. Students will only have one opportunity to test for each grade level considered. The table below indicates the

testing dates and when the student would advance to the next grade level upon scoring 80% or better in each test given.

Testing Month	Testing Subject	Grade Advancement Upon Passing
August (new students only)	Grade Level	August of Same School Year
November	Grade Level	Following School Year
February	Grade Level	Following School Year
June or July	Grade Level or Math Only	August

To apply to take the test to skip kindergarten, a student must be 5 by September 1, and registered in a CFISD school. To apply to take the test to skip grade 1, a student must be 6 by September 1, and enrolled in a CFISD school. Students in grades 2-5 may also test to skip a grade level or math only, but there are no age restrictions.

Students who earn scores of 80% or better on each component of the credit-by-exam will qualify to advance one grade. Only one grade level may be “skipped” each year. No retests will be given.

If you are interested in receiving more information about credit-by-exam, please contact your school counselor at 832-349-7708.

- Jen Koester
- Kara Singleton
- TBA

# Grading/Reporting Practices

In an effort to communicate progress to parents, work samples are collected and graded to show a student's mastery of a specific skill. However, all assignments that come home are not necessarily graded. In addition, some assignments that come home with grades may not be recorded in the teacher's gradebook.

## Kinds of Grades

Teachers use a variety of activities during a nine-week period to assess student learning. Grades are collected in the following ways:

- Independent learning skills
- Projects and products
- Narrative/response writing
- Group presentation participation
- Portfolios
- Oral presentations
- Objective tests
- Journals and logs
- District DPMs, checkpoints, and unit tests

A student may occasionally receive a holistic score on a rubric scale of 0-4 for projects or writing assignments. Specific criteria regarding grades will be shared by the teacher. Not all grades are averaged equally. Tests and quizzes may count toward a higher percentage of the student's final average than daily grades.

## Make-up Work

Students shall be expected to make up assignments and tests after absences. Students will be given the number of days equal to the number of days missed to complete make-up work. All work completed for a grade will be completed at school. Students shall not be given make-up work in advance of anticipated absences; however, if a student is absent for longer than three days due to illness, parents may arrange with the assistant principal to pick up missed work at appropriate intervals so that the student does not fall behind.

## Redoing Work

Students have three opportunities each nine weeks to redo assignments for a grade of 69 or below. The three opportunities will include one major grade and two daily grades. The highest grade a student can earn on the "redo/retest" will be a 70.1. The (.1) will be an indicator that the grade listed is a replaced grade. Parents must request the redo opportunity within one week of the grade being

posted on HAC. A reteach opportunity will be provided by the teacher in the form of a small group lesson or assignment. District Progress Monitoring Assessments (DPMs) and district benchmarks are not included in the redo/retest opportunities.

### **Home Access Center (HAC)**

Our district offers every parent the opportunity to monitor grades through the Home Access Center. We encourage parents to stay informed and up to date regarding their child's progress. Parents will be sent an email with information about login and password authentication for access. You can contact the Customer Care Center at 281-897-4357 if you get locked out or forget your password.

### **Posting of Grades in HAC**

Teachers will do their best to post student grades within 2-5 days following the completion of an individual student's assignment. An exception to this practice might be writing compositions which require additional time for individual student feedback.

### **Report Cards**

Progress reports are released on Home Access Center after the 4<sup>th</sup> week of the grading period, and report cards are released on Home Access Center at the end of the nine-weeks. Report cards can also be viewed using the icon located in the dashboard located on my.cfid.net.

### **Report Card Averages**

In grades Pre-K- 1<sup>st</sup> grade, teachers assess student work samples and record their achievements. At the end of the nine-week grading period, each student's performance is applied to a rubric which determines a quarterly grade.

In grades 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>, graded work is recorded by the teacher and averaged each nine weeks to determine the quarterly average.

### **Grading Scale**

The following numerical scale is used to report achievement in reading, language arts, social studies, math, and science for grades 2<sup>nd</sup>- 5<sup>th</sup>.

90-100 = A      80-89 = B      75-79 = C      70-74 = C-      0-69 = F

## Promotion Standards

**To be promoted at the end of kindergarten and first grade**, a student must have been present 90% of the days for the term, be working on level, and earn an end-of-year grade of satisfactory in reading, language arts, and mathematics. Students meeting these criteria will be promoted to the next grade level at the end of the year.

**To be promoted at the end of grades 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>**, a student must have been present 90% of the days for the term, be working on level, and earn an end-of-year grade average of at least 70 in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students meeting these criteria will be promoted to the next grade level at the end of the year.

## Honor Roll

McGown Elementary follows the CFISD reporting of **Distinguished Honor Roll** and **Honor Roll** for students in grades 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Distinguished Honor Roll:** Students must earn straight A's in Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies with an S for satisfactory performance in P.E., Art, Music, Spanish ABL, and in conduct.

**Honor Roll:** Students must earn a combination of more A's than Bs (3 A's and 1 B) in academic subjects, with an S for satisfactory performance in Art, Music, PE/Spanish ABL, and in conduct.

# Parent Visitors/Volunteers

## Parking

Parking is available to visitors in non-reserved parking spaces. Please do not park alongside the red curbs, as these are fire lanes and bus loading zones. We also need to keep the roadway clear so that traffic can flow smoothly at all times. Signs are posted that designate “no parking” zones. Designated handicap parking areas should only be utilized by those persons displaying a handicap parking permit or license plate. Unauthorized vehicles may be ticketed if parked in these spaces without a permit.

## Visitor Check-in

We have a visitor check-in system which requires all visitors, volunteers, and even school district employees to ring the doorbell for entrance into the secured vestibule and to show a government issued ID (driver’s license, state identification, or CFISD badge/contractor badge for CFISD staff members) upon entering the school. Visitors must bring and show ID each time they visit. A photo of your ID will NOT suffice. All parents and visitors must sign in when they arrive on campus and sign out when they leave.

## Visitor Badges

Like with staff members and student ID badges, visitors are expected to wear the printed name tag that is provided and stay in the area designated on the badge.

## Classroom Visitation/Observation

Parents are welcome to observe in their child’s classroom at appropriate times. It is important that we do everything possible to maintain maximum learning time with few interruptions and distractions. For this reason, you should:

- Contact the teacher and call the AP at least one day in advance to schedule your visit.
- Sit at the back of the classroom or where the teacher directs you.
- Get in touch with the teacher at a later time if you have questions or comments. The teacher’s full attention must be with the children during class time.
- Make other arrangements for your pre-school children.
- You will be escorted by administration for any classroom observation for up to twenty minutes in the classroom. Parents will not be permitted on testing days.

## **Lunch Visitors**

Lunch visitors are welcome at McGown on Tuesdays through Thursdays; however, any relative visiting for lunch (without a child's parent being present) must have prior written permission from the parent/guardian. Lunch time is for the designated grade level students only, so we will not include siblings from other grade levels (or schools) to attend the lunch visit at McGown.

Due to space constraints, there are only so many seats available at the visitors' table. For this reason, students are limited to one visitor one time per month. Please understand our need to limit the number of visitors each day so that we have space for McGown students. Please sit with your child at the designated visitors' table. You are welcome to bring lunch for your child if you are eating with him/her that day.

Due to food allergies and safety concerns, students will only be allowed to have lunch with their own parent/guardian. Students may not have lunch with a friend's parents. Parents may only provide lunch for their child and may not bring lunch for another child.

Five minutes before lunch is over, teachers will signal to students to return to their assigned table. Parents are asked to exit the cafeteria at this time. Adults needing to use the restroom may use the adult restrooms outside the cafeteria hallway. Adults or staff members may not use students' restrooms in the cafeteria or instructional areas at any time.

It is very important for teachers to have time to establish cafeteria procedures and routines. Because of this, we respectfully request no lunch visitors during the first month of school. This allows school staff time to establish cafeteria procedures and for your child to feel comfortable and secure in the routines. Throughout the year, there will be days that we will not be able to accommodate lunch visitors due to testing or other schedule changes.

Lunch visitor sign-ups will be dropped via school messenger and Remind the first Monday of each month at 10:00 a.m. beginning in October for grades k-5. We will begin pre-k lunch visitors in January.

## **Lunch Schedule**

Lunch times are as follows for the 2023-2024 school year:

- Pre-K                    12:00
- Kindergarten    10:30
- 1<sup>st</sup>                        11:00
- 2<sup>nd</sup>                        11:30
- 3<sup>rd</sup>    12:30
- 4<sup>th</sup>    1:00
- 5<sup>th</sup>    1:30

## **Forgotten Item Drop Off**

Teachers do not have access to email during instructional time to see that you are wanting to drop off lunch or other items. Please work with your child to establish routines at home that assist with learning the responsibility of bringing lunch, snack, glasses, water bottle, etc. We do not have staff to deliver special lunches to the instructional areas. If you are wanting your child to have a special lunch, we ask that you limit this practice to days you will be joining your child in the cafeteria.

In the event an important item (glasses, Chromebook, etc.) is forgotten at home, you may leave that item in the office and our staff will notify your child. While we have hundreds of water bottles in our lost and found, and students are always encouraged to use our filtered water fountains, we understand the need to have water to walk home from school. Should your child forget their water bottle, we will have a cart in the vestibule for water bottle drop-off (labeled with name and teacher). We will make sure your child has their forgotten water bottle before dismissal, but during the day, they will need to rely on the water fountains. We are careful to limit the number of classroom interruptions during the school day.

## **Student-Only Recess**

For safety, parents/visitors are not allowed on the playground during recess. Please remember that safety is our number one priority, and the school must adhere to a higher standard of security when monitoring a large group of students vs. when a child has small group supervision. For these reasons, we ask that parents do not accompany their children to the playground during the school day. Additionally, please do not park your car in order to watch your child or to take pictures of him/her at play. While this might seem like a good moment to observe

your child interacting with others, it causes undue alarm for school personnel. Thank you for understanding our need for vigilance with playground supervision.

### **Birthday Recognition**

Due to State guidelines (FMNV laws and competitive food laws) and student safety, parents are not permitted to bring cookies or cupcakes (or any other food or drink) to the school to share with classmates. A parent is welcome to sign up as a lunch visitor on any available lunch days on the sign-up genius, but balloons, drinks, flowers, etc. will not be allowed. All other celebrations should take place outside of school. Individual party invitations to private, non-school sponsored parties may not be delivered at school. If you signed up to be a part of a shared class list, you will receive your child's homeroom class contact information to assist with birthday party invitations.

We do have additional options for recognizing student birthdays:

- Free announcement during morning announcements
- Purchased birthday announcements on the school marquee

### **Student Celebrations**

There are two seasonal celebrations allowed each year in elementary school. McGown will host winter parties in December and end-of-year celebrations in May. The schedule will be published in the *News from the Nest*.

Our VIPS volunteers will organize and plan these celebrations for students. Party favors, activities, and treats are standardized at each grade level. Therefore, individual parents may not provide favors or gifts for students.

### **Party Visitors**

Due to parking constraints, holiday parties will be student-only days. However, end-of-year celebration events vary from year to year and may occur at different times throughout the day. Depending on the grade level event, we may be able to accommodate parents; however, school-age children in grades Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> will not be permitted to attend a friend, relative, or sibling's event. In addition, home-schooled or private school children will not be permitted to attend McGown events during the instructional day. Communication will come from that grade level.

## **School Events**

For safety reasons, school-age children will not be allowed to be checked out and attend sibling events held on campus (e.g., Field Day, music performances, lunch, grade level activities, etc.). This includes students checked out from other campuses (e.g., middle school, high school, home school, private school, or visiting children from out of town).

Any relative visiting for a school event (without a child's parent being present) must have prior written permission from the parent/guardian.

Some school events are designated as Student-Only events, and only parents who are volunteering for the event will be permitted to attend.

## **Parent Photography/Social Media Permission**

When updating your student profile, please be aware of the permissions you are granting regarding photography or videos of your child. There are two selections:

1. I grant permission for my child to be photographed, videotaped, and/or interviewed for use in district provided, school, and teacher: websites, social media pages, publications, displays, newspapers, memory books, the McGown yearbook, or television broadcasts. This would also include any images or responses that may be used in CFISD publications. If you do NOT GRANT PERMISSION, your child will not be included in the class group photo, or any other photos that will be included in the yearbook, Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter campus highlights.
2. I grant permission for my child to be photographed, videotaped, and/or interviewed for use in non-district (Out of District) publications, displays, newspapers, or television broadcasts. This refers to third parties and is usually associated with contests, publicity, or broadcasts that involve McGown. It could also apply to our architects or local developers looking for pictures of CFISD students to use in one of their publications.

During a prior year, if you have indicated for #1 that you do not give permission, and now you want to change that, make sure you complete the student update that is sent in August from CFISD to all parents and change your permissions.

## **Forgotten Items After School**

Although we recognize that children forget items at school from time to time, we do not have personnel available after school hours to escort students or parents to and from the instructional area to retrieve these items. Club Rewind personnel will not allow parents or children access to the instructional area after school hours. We appreciate your help in keeping our school a safe place for your children.

## **Lost and Found**

Every year many lunch kits, coats, jackets, etc. are turned into the Lost and Found. In order to help us return lost items to the rightful owner, we recommend that parents label all outer articles of clothing, as well as lunch kits and backpacks. Unclaimed items will be donated to Cy-Hope at the end of each semester.

# Lunch/Snack

## **Cafeteria Services**

Hot meal choices and cold boxed lunches are served daily in the school cafeteria. Each student will scan his/her issued ID badge for purchasing breakfast or lunch. Money can be added to your child's school account through [School Café \(link\)](#).

## **Parental Controls**

Parents are able to limit and/or block their child from purchasing ice cream/dessert items by contacting the cafeteria manager at 832-349-7706.

## **Breakfast**

Students may proceed through the "Grab and Go" breakfast lines beginning at 7:55 a.m. and go to class to eat breakfast. Breakfast is not served after 8:15 a.m. (with the exception of late bus arrival), and students are not allowed to eat in class after 8:25 a.m. Students should not be bringing in outside food for breakfast.

## **Snack**

When snacks are shared or given to all students in class by a teacher, only the foods listed on the Food Service department's approved list can be provided. Parents are permitted to provide the food of their choice for their child, with thoughtful consideration for ease of eating and cleaning (finger foods that are not greasy, drippy, turn fingers orange, or contain nuts).

## **FMNV**

USDA SMART snack guidelines were developed from the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 and require nutrition standards for competitive foods consumed in schools. These standards are meant to promote a healthy school environment and apply to all foods and beverages provided outside of the reimbursable school food service program. Examples would include fundraiser items, vending machine sales, or classroom incentives/treats.

CFISD approved SMART snacks include:

- pretzels
- baked tortilla chips
- nut-free granola bars, trail mix, or cereal
- raisins, grapes, apples, bananas
- crackers, such as whole grain goldfish, Wheat thins, Triscuits
- 100% fruit juice, no sugar added, fruit cups
- apple sauce with no sugar added
- frozen fruit bars, Blue Bell frozen yogurt cups, Go-gurt
- carrots, sugar snap peas, with low-fat dip, humus, or sunflower seed spread
- low-fat string cheese
- plain, fat-free popcorn

### **Water Bottles**

Students are permitted to bring water bottles (filled only with water, not flavored additives) to school, provided that they use them responsibly. Water bottles must come to school filled. Students are allowed to refill their water bottles at any water fountain/water bottle filling station on campus. Please make sure your student's water bottle is labeled with his/her name.

Keep in mind, as previously stated in the **Forgotten Item Drop Off section:**

We have filtered water fountains at school, and water is safe to drink. Should your child forget their water bottle, we will have a cart in the vestibule for water bottle drop-off. We will make sure your child has their forgotten water bottle before dismissal for walking home, but during the day, they will need to rely on the water fountains. We are careful to limit the number of classroom interruptions during the school day.

# Clinic Procedures/Medication Policy

## Food Allergy and Medical Conditions

Parents are asked to speak with the school nurse regarding any severe food allergy, other severe allergy, or other serious medical condition that you believe should be disclosed to the school/district. This is to enable us to take necessary precautions for your child's safety.

## Medical Plans

The nurse will work with the parent, student, and staff to ensure any medical plans are followed, such as for Diabetes, Seizure disorders, or severe asthma. Staff interacting with your child will receive the appropriate training needed, such as for epi-pen usage.

## Medication Policy

Any questions regarding medication should be directed to the school nurse at 832-349-7703.

Cypress-Fairbanks I.S.D. policy provides that school nurses and other school employees designated by the superintendent are allowed to administer medication in compliance with physician's orders to students during school hours under the following conditions:

1. Prescription medication must be in the original container properly labeled with the child's name, name of medication, and directions for time and dosage. Medication must be prescribed by a medical professional licensed to practice in the United States.  
Or
2. Non-prescription medication shall be in the original, unopened container labeled as to content. Student's name and directions for time/dosage shall be provided by the parent/guardian at the time the request is made. Medication will be given per the manufacturer's label unless a written doctor's order is given.
3. Substances such as vitamins and herbal preparations will not be given at school.

4. Students are not allowed to have any medication, including cough drops, in their possession during the school day or at school-related activities.
5. For the safety and protection of all students, medication cannot be transported by students. All medication must be brought to the clinic by the parent, guardian, or other responsible adult and shall be secure at all times. When the period for administering the medication expires, the parent, guardian, or other adult shall pick up the medication at the clinic.
6. A doctor's note is required to be on file in the school clinic for any emergency medication a student may need to carry, such as insulin or inhalers. A plan will be developed with the nurse, school administrator, parent and student if student's maturity and severity of need warrants the student to carry the medication.
7. Students are not allowed to share any medication with another student.
8. In the event a school nurse, in the exercise of professional judgement, questions the administering of any particular medication as excessive or otherwise potentially harmful to the student, the nurse will cease to administer the medication and notify the parent and the physician. The nurse will consult with the school principal and others as appropriate.

### **Elevator Use**

The use of the elevator by a student requires a doctor's note and must be approved by the school nurse.

# Transportation

Transportation is a TEAM effort by students, parents, the McGown staff, and the transportation department. Consistency is important in ensuring that errors are not made. Please avoid transportation changes to the extent possible. CFISD bus drivers are highly trained with identifying the needs of their students. If they have a student they do not recognize or a student who is unfamiliar with the stop, the driver will return the student to campus. The driver will return a student to campus any time the driver is uncomfortable with a drop-off situation (e.g., unfamiliar adult greeting the student, unsafe activity in the neighborhood, or an upset child).

## Transportation Changes

Parents must notify the school regarding any transportation changes. A parent's photo ID is required for any transportation changes. All requests must be made by 2:00. The last time for early pickup is 3:00 to allow our staff to begin supervising dismissal. Emails to the student's teacher are not permitted. Only a parent/guardian may request a change in transportation.

## Bus Riders

Bus transportation is provided by the district for students attending their home campus. We encourage parents to take advantage of this service. Students are only allowed to ride the assigned bus to and from their assigned bus stop. Requests related to after-school activities, such as sports, scouts, and sleepovers will not be approved. Students attending McGown on a transfer are not eligible for bus service in CFISD.

### **Traversa Ride ID Badges (app: Traversa Ride 360)**

Badges are replaced each year with a new RFID number. Students must have their ID badge when riding the bus. Parents are responsible for replacing a student ID badge when lost or broken for a fee of \$3.00. Parents are able to know instantly when their child entered and exited the bus by visiting the parent portal and creating an account to receive messages each time the ID Pass is scanned.

## **Bus Number Assistance?**

Call 713-mycfbus

## **Bus Behavior**

We appreciate your support in working with your child concerning appropriate bus conduct. Students must exhibit respect to the bus driver and courtesy to fellow passengers during the bus ride so that the driver can focus on safely driving the bus. Failure to observe the bus rules will result in parent notification through a bus report. Excessive bus reports may result in the denial of this transportation privilege. Information concerning student conduct on buses is detailed in the Cypress-Fairbanks I.S.D. [Student Handbook and Code of Conduct/Bus Transportation](#).

## **Bus Stops**

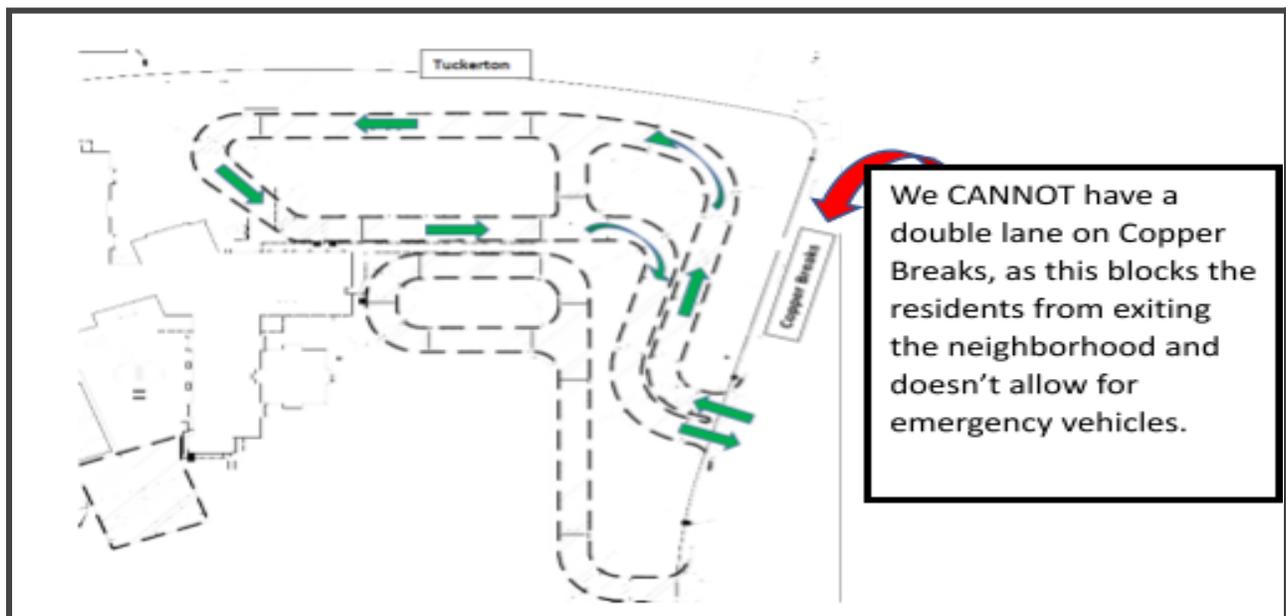
If possible, be at the bus stop five minutes before the bus is scheduled to drop off your child(ren). In the event you are unable to be home when your child arrives, arrange an alternate plan with your child: where to go, a hidden key, talk to a neighbor, etc. Careful planning for the unexpected can greatly reduce your child's anxieties. Pre-K and kindergarten students with red ID badge holders will not be dropped at bus stops without a familiar adult to meet them. These students will be returned to campus and parents called to come pick up their child. Excessive bus returns will result in the development of an alternate dismissal plan for your child.

## Car Riders

**Arrival: Car rider unloading will begin at 7:55 a.m. and end at 8:13 a.m.**

Students arriving after 8:13 a.m. will not have time to get to class before the 8:15 a.m. tardy bell. Therefore, the car rider line will end at 8:13 a.m. to ensure students have enough time to get to class. If you are dropping off after 8:13 a.m., please park and check your child in at the front door.

- Enter the car rider line from a single line on Copper Breaks Crossing and follow the path.



For your child's safety and the safety of others, please obey all traffic laws, directions from staff and safety signage upon your arrival and departure from campus. Please drive cautiously as you enter the school grounds by driving the speed limit and refraining from using your cell phone, per Texas law.

- We will be unloading/loading 2 lanes of cars at one time. All cars will move forward and stop at the same time at the signal of the staff member.
- Please make sure your car is in park when in the loading/unloading zone.
- Do not park and walk up to drop off your child. This increases the chance for accidents and keeps our staff from focusing on expediting the line.

- **IMPORTANT:** As safety is always our first priority, it is important for students to be able to unbuckle and get out of a car on their own. Just like learning their phone number and address, a young child needs to be able to problem solve and escape a vehicle in case of an emergency. With your support, your child will learn this skill before you know it. However, if your child needs extra time or support to learn to get out of the car on their own, please communicate with us so that we can work together to develop a plan for your child until they are ready to unload in our regular car rider line.

**Dismissal: Car rider loading will begin at 3:35 p.m.**

- Every McGown student will receive a car rider number and tag, even if they do not intend on being regular car riders. This will assist you on days you do decide to make a change in transportation. Car tags will be available at Meet the Teacher.
- Please have your car rider number displayed from your rearview mirror. This allows our staff to quickly collect car rider numbers and thus speed up the dismissal process.
- If you do not have a school-issued car rider number displayed, you will be asked to park and come inside to sign out your child. Please work with young children to learn and recognize your family's car rider number.
- Once in line, it is important to stay in your lane. Students are dismissed to cars according to how they are lined up in order. Do not change lanes during dismissal, as this creates a very unsafe situation.
- When leaving the parking lot, if you are in the left lane, you will turn left onto Copper Breaks. If you are in the right lane, you will turn right onto Copper Breaks. You cannot merge left from the right lane, as this backs up the car rider line and causes hazardous conditions for drivers exiting the parking lot.
- If your child does not immediately respond when his/her car rider number is called in the classroom (or if Wi-Fi is down and we are operating manually), do not be alarmed. Should this happen, you will be asked to reroute to the daycare loop, allowing us to continue the movement of the

car rider line while we retrieve your child from the classroom and escort them out to your car.

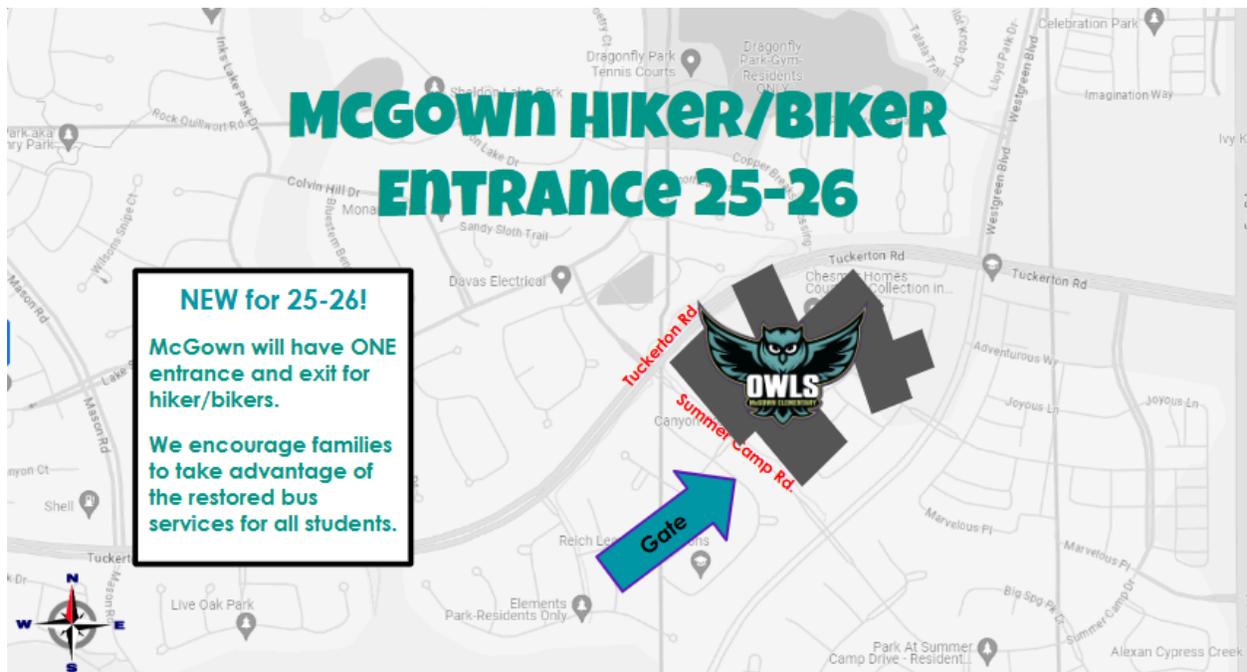
- If we have been placed on a CFISD weather shelter-in-place, dismissal will be delayed, and we will communicate via Remind. During this time, please do not exit your vehicle and come to the door to retrieve your child. We are unable to leave our security posts to come answer the door, nor are we able to release staff or students outside.

## Day Care Riders

If your child is transported by a daycare bus, the daycare is required to observe the same daily schedule as other modes of transportation. Please make sure you inform the daycare if your child is absent or will be going home a different way. This prevents a delay in releasing the daycare buses since the daycare is careful to check that they have all of their students before departing campus.

## Hiker/Bikers - **NEW for 25/26 school year**

McGown is changing the hiker/biker plan for the 25-26 school year to one gate for arrival and dismissal as shown in this graphic:



## **Hiker/Biker Tardies**

If your child is late to school, it is best that you drive your child to school or accompany him on his journey. We do not have crossing guards or staff on duty after the school day begins. If your child arrives after the tardy bell, they will need to be checked in at the front office before going to class.

## **Hiker/Biker Dismissal for Pre-K/K**

Students in pre-K/K have a red identification sleeve for their ID badge. Just like for bus transportation, we will not release pre-K or Kindergarten students without an adult or parent-designated sibling. To expedite this process, please bring your car rider tag. Staff will be able to verify and match students and parents more quickly with the car rider tag.

## **Hiker/Biker Inclement Weather**

In the event of **unsafe** weather conditions, such as –

- Lightning
- High winds
- Severe thunderstorm warning
- Tornado warning

We will communicate an "inclement weather dismissal." Hikers and bikers will follow their alternative dismissal plan, designated by parents through the McGown transportation registration process.

## **Club Rewind**

The parking lot and transportation lanes are busy during dismissal. Club Rewind will communicate pickup procedures.

## **Playground**

The playground, hard top areas, and track are closed for after school play until all buses have departed from the campus. Playground gates will be open from 6:00-9:00 p.m.

# Safety and Security Protocols

## Student ID Badges

All students have been issued a student ID card. All CFISD students are required to wear their ID card daily for security and safety purposes. Cards will be scanned for cafeteria meals and library books.

A second ID badge will be attached to the backpack for bus access. The Traversa Ride ID (app: Traversa Ride 360) system tracks students riding the bus and allows parents to track when students get on and off the bus.

Cards that are no longer readable, lost, or damaged will be replaced. The student can obtain a replacement badge request form from the front office. CFISD replacement costs are as follows:

- Student ID card: \$3.00
- Lanyard: \$1.00
- Clear plastic sleeve: \$1.00

## Front Office Safety Vestibule and Screening

Everyone visiting McGown will go through a short screening process by front office personnel before gaining access to the instructional areas of the campus. After gaining entrance through the secured vestibule, all visitors and CFISD employees/contractors will be asked to scan a valid ID or show school district ID. Please make prior arrangements for conferences or class visits.

## Exterior Doors

All exterior, hallway, and classroom doors are locked at all times. Doors are only propped open during morning arrival. Students and staff are always able to exit the building in an emergency, but all doors are locked for re-entry. The front door is the only entrance for visitors, and all visitor protocols will be followed.

## Emergency Drills

All CFISD campuses require emergency drills. Students are taught during the first week of school what the fire alarm sounds like and what the intruder alarm sounds like, as well as the expectations for evacuating a fire and for executing an

Avoid/Deny/Defend intruder response. Fire drills are conducted once per month. Shelter-in-place, Secure-the-building, and Evacuate are once a year, and Lockdown drills are conducted once each semester. We will always let students know ahead of time that we are conducting a drill and what to expect. A School Messenger communication alert will be sent to you to let you know that a drill was conducted on campus.

## False Alarms

At times, a fire alarm will falsely sound, and even the intruder alarm can be inadvertently triggered. We always treat these as real situations and respond accordingly. In these instances, students are able to respond appropriately because they have had ample opportunities to practice. These situations can cause alarm for everyone involved, and so please know that we spend time afterwards debriefing in homerooms and talking about responses, while providing time for students to be reassured by teachers and staff. Parents will always receive School Communicator alerts for false alarms; however, our first priority is investigating and responding and not in drafting communication in the moment.

### Safety Terms and Procedures

In the event of an emergency at your child's school, it is important to know these terms:

#### LOCKDOWN

A lockdown takes place if an internal threat is identified at the school. All school doors are locked, and students are confined to classrooms. No entry into or exit from the school will be allowed until an *all-clear* announcement is made. For their safety, students will NOT be released during a lockdown.

#### SECURE THE BUILDING

This occurs when there is criminal activity in the community or an unsafe situation outside of the school. Staff will secure the exterior doors and monitor the situation, preventing any unauthorized visitors into the school. Students will continue with school activities and will not be permitted outside until the *all-clear* announcement is made.

#### SHELTER-IN-PLACE

Students take shelter in designated areas to protect themselves from hazardous materials or severe weather. No entry into or exit from the school will be allowed until an *all-clear* announcement is made. Students will NOT be released during shelter-in-place.

#### EVACUATION/REUNIFICATION

In the event of certain building emergencies, students will be relocated to an evacuation assembly area. The district will follow established procedures when releasing students to any parent/guardian. Students will only be released to a parent/guardian who presents a valid government issued photo identification.

### How will I be reunited with my child?

Parents and/or guardians will be directed by school or public officials to their child's specific location via the district website or *eNews alerts*. Students will be released **ONLY** to parents and/or guardians who are documented as emergency contacts and who present a picture ID such as a driver's license, military ID or passport. The reunification process can be time-consuming so parents are urged to be patient.



### How can you help?

- Ensure that your child's emergency contact information is accurate and current.
- The district uses the district website, *eNews alerts* and/or mass phone calls to notify parents of inclement weather and other emergencies.
- Become familiar with your school's emergency communication procedures. Each school is committed to providing accurate and timely information in the event of an emergency.

### In Case of a School Emergency

Although your first reaction might be to call or rush to your child's school, please follow the tips listed below:

**DO** monitor the district website and watch for *eNews alerts*.

**DO** rely only on official communication from school or public safety officials.

**DO** listen for official information regarding reunification with your child.



**DO NOT** call or rush to your child's school. Your presence could interfere with emergency responders.

**DO NOT** phone your child or school. Staff and students are discouraged from using cell phone communication for safety reasons.