

**ABC's of Pre-K  
Meridith Dunbar  
Early Childhood  
Academy**



**A Student Handbook**  
Written Especially For our  
Three and Four year old  
Friends and their Parents

# A

## **Attendance –**

When you enroll your child in Pre-K, you are making a commitment to your child and his/her learning. Your child should be in attendance everyday unless she/he is sick. It is important to understand that Pre-K is not childcare with flexible hours and attendance. Your student's day is structured to provide learning experiences based upon the expectations set forth by the Texas Education Agency. There are objectives that Pre-K students are expected to meet by the end of the school year. If your child is not in attendance, she/he misses out on these important learning opportunities.

Each week that your child achieves greater than 92% for the week he or she will get a prize from the treasure chest.

Every three weeks that your child achieves greater than 92% your child and a guest will have lunch together and enjoy a learning activity together.

Each six weeks that the child achieves greater than 92% the child will have a celebration in the classroom.

## **Absence notes –**

When your child is absent from school, please send a note in the daily take home folder stating your child's name, the date of the absence, and the reason for the absence. If your child went to the doctor, please provide a doctor's note to excuse the absence. These notes are important for the school's record keeping. If your child does not have an absence note on file, the absence is considered unexcused. You may use a maximum of 5 parent notes for each semester. Excessive absences can result in the revocation of transfer permits. Additional specific consequences are outlined in the TISD Parent & Student handbook.

If you will be taking extended or block leave; please let your child's teacher and the attendance secretary in the front office know in advance. Your child is allowed 10 excused absences for block leave, pre- & post-deployment leave or R & R but you must bring documentation to the school. Ordinary leave is not excused.

## **B**

### **Behavior –**

A large component of Pre-K is learning how to function in a classroom environment. The teachers spend a considerable amount of time teaching procedures, routines and expectations through stories and role-playing activities. In general, Pre-K children are expected to be safe, respectful of others with their words and actions, and responsible for their own actions. As each child is an individual and has individual abilities and needs, the teachers may elicit your help in teaching your child how to adjust to the school setting. Violent behaviors will not be tolerated and may result in a suspension from the classroom.

### **Birthdays –**

If you would like to celebrate your student's birthday at school with treats or cake, we ask that you bring only store bought items and enough for the entire class.

### **Background Check –**

If you would like to volunteer to work with the students at any time (field trips, special projects/events, etc.), you must have a background check on file with our school. Please see our Family Engagement Coordinator for assistance.

### **Backpacks –**

Please send your child's backpack everyday. This should prevent loss of important art work and important notes.

C



Conscious Discipline, a comprehensive social-emotional learning and classroom management program by Dr. Becky Bailey is based on current brain research.

It is the only program that utilizes everyday events as the curriculum, addresses the adult's emotional intelligence as well as the child's, and integrates classroom management with social-emotional learning. Conscious Discipline empowers adults to consciously respond to daily conflict, transforming it into an opportunity to teach critical life skills to children.

### **Contact Information –**

Please keep your child's information up-to-date in the office regarding address, phone numbers, e-mail, emergency contact numbers, and student release information. This is important should there be an emergency and we need to contact you. We cannot contact you if we do not have correct information. This information can be updated on Skyward also by the parent. Students will not be released to any person that is not listed as an alternative or emergency contact for student pick-up.

### **Car Signs –**

Every family receives two pick-up car signs at the beginning of the school year. Each sign states your child's name and your teacher's name. You are required to post this sign on your car dashboard if you use the car line. If you walk up, you must have your sign in hand. Anyone picking up your child without this sign will need to report to the front office prepared to prove identification with a picture ID.

## **Conferences –**

It is important to your child's education that you become involved and aware of his/her performance at school. Parent teacher conferences can be scheduled throughout the year as needed by setting an appointment with the teacher during their regular planning period.

## **D**

### **Dismissal –**

Please be prompt in picking your child up from school. If your child's transportation plans change, please send a note in your child's folder. Please make sure you have your parent pick-up tag every day. If you do not have it, you will be sent to the office for clearance. This is for your child's safety.

## **E**

### **E-mail –**

We need your email address to keep you up to date on campus events and news. If you have an email address, please make sure you print it clearly on your child's admission form. You can e-mail your teacher using: [firstname.lastname@tisd.org](mailto:firstname.lastname@tisd.org). This is a great way to communicate!

### **Early Release –**

The district schedules a few district-wide early release days throughout the year. Be sure to check the calendar and the daily take home folder for these days.

### **Early Supper –**

All children 18 and under are welcome to eat early supper for free in our cafeteria from 3:30 – 4:00 pm Monday to Friday when school is in session.

## **Extra Clothes –**

Please keep an extra set of season-appropriate clothes labeled with your student's name in your child's backpack for those little accidents that many pre-k children have. These accidents involve not only bathroom accidents, but spilled milk and food, paint, etc.. Please replace these accident clothes as the weather changes or as you notice that they've been used.

## **Expectations –**

Meridith Dunbar Early Childhood Academy holds high academic and behavior expectations for all students, parents, and employees. We are expected to always do our best, in all things, on all days, treating each other with respect and kindness.

# **F**

## **Family Access –**

Family Access is a secure web service that allows the user to view attendance, grades, assignments, vaccinations, schedules, teacher contact information, and more. Students and parents can log onto Family Access with their TISD login and password. Family Access is provided by TISD as a free service and will be available to all parents with children enrolled in the district.

## **Field Trips –**

We may choose to go on a field trip some time during the school year. You will receive advance notice of a field trip in the take home folder including money amounts and due dates. If you would like to chaperone a field trip, you must have completed the volunteer background .Your role as chaperone is to monitor and guide children on our trip. You will be responsible for a small group of children, not just your child. For this reason, you are asked to make other arrangements for siblings while you are on a field trip with us.

## **Folder –**

Your child will bring home a folder everyday. In this folder you will find your child's art work and communications from the teacher. Please praise your child for the efforts she/he made to complete the art work and ask your child to explain how she/he did it. The daily folder is also a great place to send notes or money to school because the teacher will check the folder every morning. Check this folder daily, and empty the appropriate notes. Make sure your child has her/his folder EVERY DAY since it is a valuable communication tool.

## **G**

### **Good-byes –**

Quick good-byes make for drier eyes! When you bring your child to school, please say a quick good-bye and send your child on his/her way. There are specific school employees stationed at the door every day to accompany the prek children to their appropriate classroom. Good-byes are often more difficult for parents than they are for our children.

## **H**

### **Hand washing –**

We encourage you to help your child practice proper hand washing at home, including the use of soap, and we will do the same at school. We also use hand sanitizer frequently, especially during flu season. Proper hand washing is the best prevention of the spread of illness.

### **Hitting –**

Children at Meridith–Dunbar are expected to use their hands for helping others. We encourage children to solve problems with words, rather than their hands. We know that some parents have instructed their children to hit back

if hit by another person. This is not acceptable at school. Please help your child understand that if another person hurts him/her at school, he/she needs to seek help from an adult. Students will be re-taught proper social skills to use instead of hitting.

### **Hours –**

Our campus is open and ready to receive students at 7:15 am. Students not dropped off in the car line by 7:30 will need to park and come inside to sign in. Students, who are not in the classroom at 7:45 for am session / 12:15 pm session, are considered tardy. Afternoon students may be dropped off starting at 11:30 and afternoon dismissal is 3:15 pm. Early supper will begin at 3:30 and end at 4:00. Our campus office is open from 7:15-4:00 pm during the weekdays.

### **Hygiene Assistance –**

In an effort to provide the best learning environment for all students, it is our expectation that students be potty-trained. However, we understand that with early learners, accidents may happen. On those occasions, we request that parents partner with the school in the following ways:

#### **Students who are potty-trained:**

- The parent is to send wipes and a change of clothes labeled with the child's name.
- Most students should be able to change wet clothing by themselves. However, if the child needs assistance with zippers, buttons, or clasps, a staff person can assist with a minimal task, and then allow the child to remove the clothing by himself/herself.
- If the child has wet his/her clothes, he or she will use a wipe and change clothes before returning to the learning environment.



### **Students who are in transition:**

- The student is to wear pull-ups instead of diapers.
- The parent is to send extra pull-ups, wipes, and change of clothes labeled with the child's name.
- Most students should be able to change wet clothing by themselves. However, if the child needs assistance with zippers, buttons, or clasps, a staff person can assist with a minimal task, and then allow the child to remove the clothing by himself/herself.
- If the child has wet pull-ups, he or she will use a wipe, put on a fresh pull-up, and change clothes (if necessary) before returning to the learning environment.

We appreciate you working with us to help your child become independent as soon as possible. Please be assured that your child's hygiene needs will be handled in a non-punitive, child friendly, and non-intrusive manner.

## **I**

### **Illness –**

While good attendance is important to your child's learning, staying home when ill is important to your child's health and the health of his/her classmates and teachers. While medication may be used to control symptoms, your child may still be contagious, so it is always best to keep children at home to get the rest he/she needs. If your child becomes sick at school, you will receive a call to come and pick him/her up. Please keep your phone numbers up to date on our registration so that we can locate you.

## **Independence –**

Please help foster a sense of independence in your child by providing him/her with clothes that he/she can operate independently (as much as possible). You can also help foster independence by teaching your child to zip his/her own jacket, button buttons, and adjust belts.

## **J**

### **Jackets/Sweaters –**

Unless it is raining or terribly cold, we will go outside daily. Please send jackets when the weather is cool. You might also want to send a sweater for your child to wear in the classroom, should it be cooler than comfortable for your child.

## **K**

### **Kindness and Respect –**

Members of our learning community are encouraged and expected to treat all others with kindness and respect. Hitting, fighting, name calling, and making fun of others will not be permitted. Please reinforce the concept of respect for others in your conversations at home.

## **L**

### **Lunch –**

Children may either purchase their lunch or bring it from home. If they bring a lunch box, make sure it is labeled with the student's name. Three and four year old children have a special lunch menu, and a monthly lunch calendar will be sent home at the beginning of each month. It saves a great deal of time and confusion if you pay for lunch by the week or month, rather than daily. You can also keep track of your child's lunch account at [MyPaymentsPlus.com](http://MyPaymentsPlus.com). Parent's may join us for lunch, students must sit with their class during your lunch visit.

## **Learning –**

Your 3 or 4-year-old child learns by doing and watching. Most of your child's learning experiences in Pre-K will be through hands-on, active learning. Young children learn from watching older siblings and parents. Please remember you are your child's first teacher.

## **Library –**

We encourage you to visit our library during the school day to check out books to read at home or to read to your younger children.

# **M**

## **Monthly Family Night /PTO Meeting**

On the first Tuesday of each month, we offer a Family Night where different classrooms will perform. Before the performance begins, there will be a brief PTO business meeting. After the performance our Principal will close with any campus news or updates.

## **Meals –**

Please be sure your child has money in her/his account at all times. Free or reduced meal applications are available through our nutrition services.

## **Money –**

All money that is sent to school should be sent in an envelope or baggie labeled with your child's name, the teacher's name, the amount of money and the purpose. Please send this money in your child's folder, as teachers do not check backpacks on a daily basis, and the children do not always remember that you've sent money to school. The reasons you might send money to school are for lunch, field trips, pictures, popcorn, etc. REMEMBER TO LABEL THE PURPOSE FOR ALL MONEY.

**Motor Development**– Our Pre-K students have PE classes weekly. Each class spends time working on play that includes balancing, throwing balls, and riding on tricycles. Please send your student to school with closed shoes.

## N

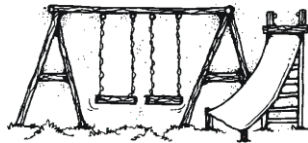
### **News –**

Our school year is full of special activities you will want to be aware of. Be sure to bookmark our school website and check the websites for updates. Your child's teacher will be the most direct source of information via the daily take home folder with letters and memos.

## O

### **Outside Play –**

The children will play outside daily, unless it is raining or extremely cool. Please dress your child according to the weather, including jackets/coats, hats, mittens, and playground-safe athletic shoes.



## P

### **Parent Connect-**

Parents are encouraged to call the 'Parent Connect' information line at (254) 215-6782 for questions or concerns about Temple ISD. It will also be used to relay important information, such as: specially scheduled board meetings and any severe weather closings. Callers to the hotline may remain anonymous and will be called back at the earliest convenience.

# Q

## **Questions –**

When you have questions, please don't hesitate to ask for an answer. You can send a note in your child's folder, e-mail the teacher, or call the office. A good way to find out about your child's day is to ask specific questions like: What center did you play in today? What story did you read? Can you tell me about the story? Did you sing songs today? Who did you play with today? What was your favorite part of school today? What made you laugh?

# R

## **Rainy Day Dismissal-**

In case of torrential rain, all children will be dismissed under the awnings on the side of the building on South 30<sup>th</sup> Street.

## **Rest Time –**

We do recommend making sure your child gets plenty of quality sleep at home every night. If your child's sleep patterns get interrupted, it is noticeable at school in their behavior.

## **Restroom Use –**

We do not have a restroom in each classroom but we do have restrooms located close for the children to use as needed . (See Hygiene for specific information.)

We will emphasize bathroom etiquette including washing hands after going to the bathroom.

# S

## **Shorts under Dresses for Girls –**

Girls are expected to wear shorts under their dress for modesty and hygienic reasons.

## **Signing In/Out –**

For the safety of our Meridith children, all parents are required to sign in and out at the office using our system when visiting the school for any reason. Sign your child in at the office anytime he/she is tardy (after 7:45) or returning from an appointment. If you need to pick your child up early from school, you will need to sign him/her out at the office before 3:00 to avoid disrupting the normal dismissal procedure.

## **Special Dress Days –**

Your student may have the opportunity to wear dress up clothes on special days throughout the year (crazy hair day, crazy socks day, etc.) Each Friday we encourage your child to wear their Meridith or Temple Wildcat T-Shirt to school. The last Friday of each month students who wear their Meridith or Temple Wildcat T-Shirt will receive a free popcorn from our P.T.O.

# **T**

## **Tennis Shoes –**

Tennis shoes/athletic shoes are standard dress at Meridith. Sandals, boots, and dress shoes are **not** appropriate for playing on the playground or participating in our PE activities for safety reasons.

## **Tardies –**

Tardies are disruptive to our classroom and your child's routine. Please have your child at school on time everyday in order to provide a positive role model of responsibility.

## **Transportation –**

At the beginning of the school year, you will be asked how your child is going home; either as a parent pick-up, bus rider, or after school child care. If for any reason, you elect to change this system, you must either email the teacher as soon as possible or send a signed note to the teacher in the take home folder. If a child tells the teacher about the change, it will not happen without the email or signed note from the parent or legal guardian. This policy is to protect the student.

## **Toys –**

Our classroom is brimming with fun toys and manipulatives for the students to use in their play and learning. Please check to make sure your child is not bringing toys to school and not taking our toys and manipulatives home.

# **U**

## **Understanding –**

Your child is important to the teacher. We will always treat your child with love, respect, and understanding. We are interested in your child. We need to know if she/he is happy, sad, sick, or frightened about anything. Changes in family life such as a parent leaving to or returning from deployment, loss of a pet, death in the family, a new baby, or exciting upcoming events can affect a child's behavior at school. Your teacher would appreciate a note, an e-mail, or a phone call if there is anything that might affect your child. We do not intend to pry into details; only to understand when your child might need some extra attention or understanding because of changing circumstances.

# V

## **Volunteers –**

Meridith welcomes parents and family members to spend time at our school. Our volunteers are used in the classrooms during lunch time to assist with the meals, in the office, completing projects for teachers, field day, field trips, tutoring and numerous other special events. If you're interested in volunteering, you will need to speak with our Parent Engagement Coordinator. You will complete paperwork to undergo the district's required background check which entails a complete criminal check. This takes approximately 2 weeks and must be completed before you are allowed to volunteer.

# W

## **Website –**

Go to the TISD website- Click on *schools*, click on *Meridith–Dunbar Early Childhood Academy*. Be sure to bookmark this site for easy access all year long.

## **Who to Contact -**

**Special Dietary Needs–** School Nurse and Cafeteria Manager

**Family Engagement Coordinator- Dennette Gardner**

**Medication Administration/Special Health Concerns –** School Nurse

**Transportation Issues –**Transportation Department or Principal

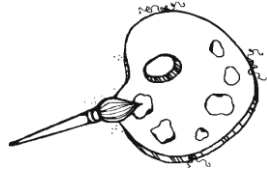
**Speech/Language/Developmental Concerns –** Principal

**Any questions or concerns –** Lynne Brock, Meridith Principal



## **Work –**

A pre-k child's work is play. Please be sure to give your child time to play at home, preferably away from the TV and video games. If you were to visit a pre-k classroom, it would look like all they are doing is playing. Our teachers take pride in designing educational play to provide opportunities for cognitive, social, and emotional growth in the students they serve.



## **X**

### **Experiences –**

Your child will have many great experiences at school this year. We hope you will take the time each day to allow your child to share his/her experiences with you. Daily communication enriches receptive and expressive language which is an important part of their development.

## **Y**

### **You –**

You are your child's most important teacher. Please be sure you read with your child and talk WITH your child daily.

### **Z Zzzz (rest)**

Your child's day at school is a very busy day. Please see that your child gets adequate rest each night. A good rule of thumb is 8 – 10 hours of sleep each night for a 3 or 4 year old child.

Now you know your ABCs, welcome to our school family!