

**Bear Creek Elementary
Student and Parent
Handbook**

2022-2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome

Bear Creek Philosophy

 Purpose Statement

 Core Values

 Guiding Principles

 Our Commitment

 Communication Plan

Bear Creek Safety and Environment

 Introduction

 Drills

 Legal Documentation

Bear Creek Attendance and Office Procedures

 Absences

 Checkouts

 Emergency Contact Information

 Late Arrival

 Religious Holidays

 Trips and Vacations

Student Behavioral Expectations

 Common Area Thoughts and Guidelines

Health and Wellness at Bear Creek

 Birthdays

 Wellness

 Medication

 Medical Alerts or Allergies

 Physical Activity

Additional Bear Creek Information

 After School Care

 Class Parties

 Community Trips

 Dress Code

Student Electronic Devices

Lost and Found

Personal Property

Report Cards

Social Media Use and FERPA

Textbooks and Library Books

Organizational Chart

WELCOME AND A WORD OF THANKS

Thank you so much for sharing your children with us. We have been very lucky to have had your true and tangible support during our initial two year run as a public school. For many reasons we are more excited this school year than perhaps any other because we are beginning the year with a sense of relative normalcy.

Specific School Operation Policies

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TigqqgjQXYvTKa4vjfuAK4GIKg0Kqorj/view?usp=sharing>

BEAR CREEK PHILOSOPHY

OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT

Bear Creek Elementary is an inclusive community who intentionally advocates for a culture of connection through integrity, resiliency, courage, and empathy. We are evolving, curious, and diverse solution seekers, who are deliberately making positive contributions and changes to the local and global community.

We believe that each member is an essential piece of our school mosaic. At Bear Creek Elementary, every parent, staff member, and student is the beating heart of the community. We are ALL what's right in the world, we are all valuable, and we are stronger -- together. To be successful in and out of school students need to learn and interact with a set of social and emotional competencies – connection, courage, empathy, integrity, and resilience. All members of our Bear Creek Elementary community must first feel a sense of belonging, significance, and competence.



This concept of “Maslow before Bloom” is essential to understand as one of our foundational elements here at Bear Creek Elementary.

If you would like to dig deeper please visit this [tutorial](#).

OUR VALUES

The five BCE values were created through community and staff engagement extending across nine months. Each school-wide value is intentionally taught, modeled, and celebrated. Connection is our overarching value. It is the humble understanding that we cannot live without one another, and that together, we are better. All we do has a ripple effect on everyone. We each have value as an integral part of the interwoven tapestry of our Earth and its inhabitants. We recognize **Connection** with the Zulu translation which is Ubuntu meaning we are all connected. Within that “connected space” we must recognize our responsibility to act with **Courage, Empathy, Integrity, and Resilience**.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Teaching social and emotional skills is as important as teaching academic content.
2. How we teach is as important as what we teach.
3. Great cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
4. How we work together as adults to create a safe, joyful, and inclusive school environment is as important as our individual contribution or competence.
5. What we know and believe about our students – individually, culturally, developmentally – informs our expectations, reactions, and attitudes about those students.
6. Partnering with families – knowing them and valuing their contributions is as important as knowing the children we teach.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN

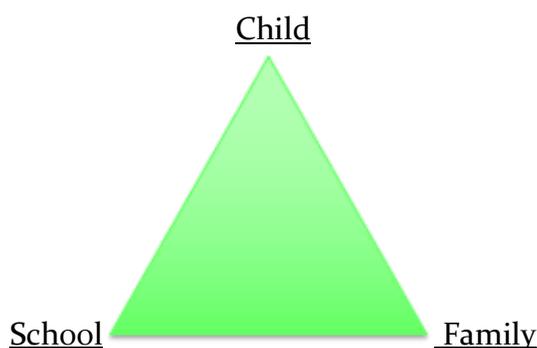
The Bear Creek Elementary School Staff will:

1. Value and uplift the uniqueness of each person
2. Teach in ways that promote creativity, curiosity, and problem solving
3. Provide a safe place to be an imperfect, but growing human being

4. Embrace the larger community and become actively involved
5. Promote and ensure equity for all members
6. Be courageous in our conversations and interactions to promote vibrant relationships
7. Set high expectations for all
8. Create opportunities to explore, find passions, and build learning identities
9. Teach social and emotional skills foundationally, integrated into all we do
10. Focus on how we teach, as it is as important as what we teach
11. Work together as adults to create a safe, joyful, and inclusive school environment
12. Know our students – individually, culturally, developmentally – as that informs our expectations, reactions, and attitudes about those students

OUR SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

At Bear Creek Elementary we understand the true partnership that is required to provide our students with the best possible outcomes. This partnership is rooted in shared responsibility which distributes accountability between the school, the parent, and most importantly, the child. Sustainability is paramount as we continue to develop our school culture and any model that lands sole responsibility and accountability with the school personnel is not sustainable. If any side of our Bear Creek Elementary shared responsibility is not an active participant, then the triangle fails.



COMMUNICATION PLAN

Our main form of communication is our weekly newsletter [The Cub Hub](#). Barring unforeseen events, it will be published each Monday and will provide important campus and district level information. Each grade level/department will also have their newsletters linked within, making this an inclusive one stop source for all your Bear Creek news.

Our social media accounts will not be used as a go-to source for information. However, we do hope to use them as a source of inspiration as we highlight the positive happenings on and around campus. Parent Facebook groups (e.g. grade level or teacher pages are not official)

The newsletter will be sent out via school messenger and then posted on our website.

If the school needs to get something out in quick fashion we will use school messenger to send an email, text, and voicemail.

Beyond the required weekly newsletter, each teacher is expected to provide you with timely class updates using email.

We hope this very simple communication plan will be clear and efficient while providing you with the information you need in a timely manner.

BEAR CREEK SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

Bear Creek Elementary provides a state-of-the-art school security system. All students and visitors must enter through our single point of entry which is the front entrance and go through a series of three security checks to clear them to enter any area with children. Beyond the dozens of security cameras that are routinely reviewed in real time the campus also has a eight-foot fence which surrounds the entire perimeter of the campus. All classroom doors are locked throughout the day. If we do nothing else, we must keep your children safe. The focus on security that is placed by the Bear Creek Elementary team is another essential foundation of our culture.

DRILLS

The school conducts monthly safety drills as a safety precaution, and each drill is treated as if it were an actual emergency. Although speed is important in any such procedure, of greater importance is the ability of students to follow teachers' directions and proceed in an orderly manner. Instructions on how to respond in the event of an emergency, such as a fire or a tornado, are posted inside each classroom. Teachers will provide directions to students in the

event of any emergency. The Austin Independent School District and all sites follow a standard response protocol.

LEGAL DOCUMENTATION

If there are any court orders or other legal documents which might determine who is and is not eligible to see your child, receive information about him/her, etc., and please be sure our office has an official copy. We cannot enforce restrictions or request assistance from the police or other law-enforcing agencies without such supporting documentation. It is the responsibility of the caregiver to provide the school with the most up to date legal paperwork in the event of an official change.

All visitors are required to bring a driver's license and sign-in at the office each time they arrive on campus after 7:50 a.m. and obtain a visitor sticker. Staff members have been trained to ask you to sign in if they do not see that you have a sticker.

BEAR CREEK ATTENDANCE AND OFFICE PROCEDURES

ABSENCES

Students, if you come to school EVERY DAY you will not miss any learning time or fun at school. However, if you are running a fever or are ill, it is important you stay home to rest until you are fully recovered. Parents, a fever is "a temperature of 100 or higher." If children have a fever, they only return to school once they have been fever free for 24 hours after stopping medication. Please check your child's temperature the night before and the morning of the day he or she returns to school to be sure there is no fever. Please help your child's recovery and keep other students healthy by keeping your sick children at home.

Parents, if one of your children must be out for any reason, please send a note to the office stating the reason for the absence the day your child returns or the absence will be considered unexcused. Notes are only accepted up to 48 hours after an absence. In case of illness, work missed will be provided to the student upon returning to school. Teachers need at least 24 hours' notice to prepare assignments for these students.

CHECKOUTS

When it is necessary to check your child out of school prior to 3:00 p.m., please sign the student out in the office. Office personnel will call the classroom and have the student sent to meet you in the office. Please be prepared to show your identification in the office each time you pick up your child. Students must remain in the classroom until they are checked out in the office. Please remember, it is very difficult to check a student out after 2:30 p.m. because dismissal is such a busy time on campus.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

It is essential that the school office has current home, work, and emergency contact numbers for each child. These numbers must be kept current. Please notify your child's teacher, as well as the school office, of any telephone or address changes as soon as possible.

LATE ARRIVAL

Attendance is taken daily at 10:30 a.m. If your child arrives after 7:50 a.m., he/she will be marked tardy.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

The Texas State Board of Education has specified that students shall receive an excused absence for the purpose of observing religious holy days, when it is a tenet of their faith that they must be absent from school during such time, provided a written request is sent in advance by the parent or guardian.

TRIPS AND VACATIONS

Please try and plan trips around the school and AISD calendar if possible. The benefits of traveling are very real and while we do not want to impede these opportunities just know that these absences are unexcused. We will be able to provide general information including missed assignments to traveling students however there should not be an expectation of virtual instruction.

BEAR CREEK STUDENT BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Our responsibility is to develop a school-wide management plan that creates a cohesive and positive learning community and supports engaging instruction. These elements are the essential building blocks of a rigorous, relevant, and relationship-based classroom. This management plan helps us to establish a learning environment that is calm, orderly, and safe. It provides children with the opportunity to learn and practice being responsible, contributing members of our community.

While we assume positive intent, have a growth mindset, and take responsibility for creating a supportive environment there are times when our children make poor choices. In the event of a behavioral incident please note your child's team will provide the necessary support to help them move forward and learn from their mistakes. Also note that Bear Creek follows the Austin Independent School District's Code of Student Conduct which can be referenced [HERE](#).

Harassment, bullying, or hurting another student with your body or an object is strictly prohibited at Bear Creek Elementary. Please contact your child's teacher and the administrative staff if you have concerns or an incident to report.

Beyond the supports of our environment, we also have a responsibility to create specific expectations for specific areas in and around Bear Creek Elementary. These areas include the playground, outdoor classrooms, the hallways, the Den (cafeteria), and collaborative areas. We have had the benefit of work with children here for two full school years, so these guidelines have been met with a long vetting process.

Transition/Common Space Thoughts and Guidelines

- Adults Will Always Maintain Direct Line Of Sight
- Hang Backpacks & Jackets Neatly
- Quiet Transitions Through Collaborative Areas
- Furniture Should Not Be Used As Toys/Carts
- Please Walk
- Quiet Time After Every Out Of Room Transition

Cafeteria Thoughts and Guidelines

Lunchtime is a time for students to decompress, relax, and interact with their peers. This should also be a time when good manners and courtesy are practiced. Expectations and procedures should be consistently reviewed to encourage an excellent environment for lunch.

Teachers should accompany their students to and from the cafeteria each day at his or her designated time. This means walking your students to their entry points (i.e. table or line.) Staff and students are assigned a personal identification number (or PIN), which should be entered if getting a breakfast or lunch.

Teachers are asked to assist with the following guidelines:

- Arrive and leave the cafeteria on time. Please use the cafeteria clock as your guide.
- Allow students to get water and use the restroom before lunch, to avoid them leaving the group in the cafeteria.
- Encourage good cafeteria behavior with positive reinforcement and rewards for a job well done.
- Review cafeteria procedures and expectations with your class frequently.
- Walk your students to the serving line and table area

Students are asked to

- Enjoy your time
- Be sure to let one of the adults in the cafeteria know if you need anything by raising your hand and waiting for them to come to you
- Be sure to let one of the adults in the cafeteria know if you need to use the restroom by raising your hand and waiting for them to come to you
- Remember our two simple guidelines allow us to have a safe and fun experience in The Den :-)

HEALTH AND WELLNESS AT BEAR CREEK

BIRTHDAYS

In accordance with the Austin Independent School District's Wellness Policy as well as input from the Bear Creek Elementary Campus Advisory Council, birthday treats (edible and non-

edible) are not allowed. We have children with health concerns, severe food allergies, reactions to artificial colors and ingredients, and severe reactions to preservatives and other ingredients. By eliminating birthday treats, we will discontinue a practice that contributes to the complication of these allergies and conditions.

See the [AISD Wellness Policy](#) for additional information about physical education and nutrition.

CAFETERIA

Beginning on the first day of school, students will dine using their current meal status - free, reduced-price, or paid. There is no 30-day grace period like in the past. We encourage families to complete a meal benefit application prior to the start of school to avoid accruing any negative balances.

Students may add funds to their account by bringing cash to the cafeteria or caregivers may make online payments through their Schoolcafé account. online payments are subject to a processing fee.

If students exhaust their meal accounts, they may charge up to three meals. Once a student reaches their charge limit, if the account is not replenished, the student shall receive a courtesy meal, their choice of the available menu items for that day. We do not pull trays or provide an alternative meal. There is no limit to the number of courtesy meals a student may receive.

The school cafeteria will notify caregivers of any negative meal account balances.

All campuses will offer healthy à la carte [smart snacks](#) available for purchase. students may purchase using cash or funds on their Schoolcafé account. parents may set à la carte restrictions on a student's account by contacting their café manager.

LICE

Head lice are common for children ages 3-12. Head lice are not a health hazard and are not responsible for the spread of any disease. Screening will be done on an individual basis for students reporting or demonstrating symptoms. All students identified with live lice will be sent home at the end of the school day after contacting parent/guardian by phone.

Parents/Guardians will be advised to treat their child for head lice. The name of the treatment product must be provided by the parent/guardian on the treatment letter. After treatment has

been completed, the student can return to school. Students identified with nits only will have their parent/guardian contacted to see if treatment has taken place within the last seven days. The name of the treatment product must be provided by the parent/guardian on the treatment letter. If treatment has occurred within the last week, the student may stay in school. If treatment has not occurred in the last seven days, the same protocol for live lice will be followed. Alert letters will only be sent home in the event of a high percentage of students infested in a classroom.

See the [Austin Independent School District Lice Policy](#) for more information.

MEDICATION

In order for Austin Independent School District staff members to administer medication to a student, a parent must sign an [AISD Request For Administration Of Medication By School Personnel](#) form. These forms are available in the school office. All medication MUST be in the ORIGINAL container and clearly show the student's name and dosage to be given. Students should come to the office to take medication when needed. If your child needs to be reminded, please write a note to the teacher. Teachers may not administer medications except in the case of field trips.

MEDICAL ALERTS OR ALLERGIES

There are children on our campus who have a severe food allergy to peanuts and/or tree nuts. Please instruct your child not to share food with other classmates unless a teacher gives approval to do so. Food allergies can be very serious and potentially fatal. The only way to avoid a reaction is to avoid the offering of food. To provide a safe environment for all children, some classrooms may be designated as a *Nut Aware Classroom*. In *Nut Aware Classrooms*, we request that you voluntarily consider finding alternatives when providing lunches and snacks for your child. For more information, please contact the school nurse.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Each Bear Creek Elementary Kindergarten - Fifth Grade student is provided with 45 minutes of daily physical activity in a physical education class. Pre-K students participate in a similar amount of physical activity time each day.

Beyond the physical education time, classroom teachers implement a 30-minute recess time each day to allow students time for exercise and to play together. In addition, teachers have been trained and provide quality and authentic movement opportunities during their instructional day.

ADDITIONAL BEAR CREEK INFORMATION

AFTER SCHOOL CARE PROGRAM

We partner with the Circle C Child Development Center for after school care. It begins immediately after school and ends promptly at 6:30pm. For more information please visit [here](#).

CLASS PARTIES

Class parties are typically held three to four times a year depending on a variety of factors including the grade level of the class.

The dates of these parties are designated by the grade levels and room parents and approved by campus administration. Please check with your child's teacher.

COMMUNITY TRIPS

Parents will be notified in advance whenever children leave campus on community trips. Permission for trips using AISD arranged transportation is given on the AISD Student Registration Form. All community trips are planned for educational purposes only.

DRESS CODE

Bear Creek Elementary follows the Austin Independent School District's dress code. In order to ensure sensitivity to all students, please note students will be addressed individually if there are dress code concerns. All staff members will keep in mind the student's age and maturity when having sensitive discussions with students.

The dress code can be viewed [here](#).

STUDENT ELECTRONIC DEVICES

If electronic devices (e.g. cell phones and smart watches) must be brought to school, they should be in silent mode and put away at all times. If you need to reach your child, please call the front office.

LOST AND FOUND

When items are found at school, they will be placed in the “Lost and Found”. Children and parents are asked to check this area for items that are lost. After a few weeks, unclaimed items are donated to a local charitable organization.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

Parent cooperation in preventing your child from bringing unnecessary items to school is appreciated. Children are not allowed to bring any item to school that is dangerous, too dear to be lost, or which distracts other children. Inappropriate items will be collected by the teacher and returned at the end of the school day. Dangerous items or electronic devices used without permission will be sent to the school office for pick-up by the parent. Confiscated items will be kept in the school office and may be retrieved by a parent.

As we work to embrace our modernized environment it is important to note that there are not traditional storage options in new schools. We ask you to make sure that what is coming to school is absolutely necessary for them to engage in their school day.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are electronically issued each nine weeks to notify parents of the on-going progress of their children. Grades on report cards are based on a variety of assessments throughout the nine weeks, including but not limited to: teacher observations, anecdotal records, student products, formal assessments, journals, etc. Grades are also given for personal development, work and study habits, and conduct. PK-2nd grades use a developmental scale: 4 (mastery), 3 (proficient), 2 (emerging understanding), 1 (needs improvement). Grades 3-6 use a letter scale (A,B,C,F) for academics and a number scale for personal development areas (4,3,2,1).

SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND FERPA

Please do not include photos or videos of children other than your own on social media.

TEXTBOOKS AND LIBRARY BOOKS

It is the responsibility of the school to issue, collect, care and account for all state adopted textbooks. Text and library books that are damaged, destroyed, or lost by a student must be paid for at the cost established by the Texas State Board of Education. Please refer to the library [website](#) for more information.