



The University of Texas
University Charter School System

The University of Texas Elementary School
PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK



2021–2022



PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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WELCOME

Welcome to The University of Texas Elementary School for the 2021-2022 school year. This handbook provides a reference for pertinent details regarding our school. Our goal is to provide the best education possible in a warm, supportive and safe school environment for each student. We invite you to become actively engaged in your child's learning. We know that your involvement, combined with our excellent faculty and staff, will make this year a rewarding experience for your children.



“HOOK ‘EM LITTLE HORNS”

Sincerely,

Melissa Chavez, Ph.D.
Superintendent

Nicole Whetstone, Ph.D.
Deputy Superintendent

Lily Dominguez,
Associate Principal

Melissa Garcia,
Assistant Principal

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the University of Texas Elementary School is three-fold: to develop students into lifelong learners through rigorous research-based curricula delivered in a nurturing environment that includes parental and community involvement; provide opportunities for professional development and outreach for the University's academic units; and serve as a model of an exemplary program for diverse learners.

UT ELEMENTARY MASCOT

The mascot of the University of Texas Elementary School (UTES) is the Little Longhorn. The school colors are burnt orange and white.



Little Longhorns

DRESS CODE

UTES has a daily student uniform of burnt orange, white, or navy collared shirt and khaki or navy pants, shorts or skirts. Students without a collar (i.e. T-shirt) are not considered in uniform, and will be asked to change into a uniform brought from home. Students may wear a UT Spirit shirt on Fridays only. Students are expected to wear appropriate, closed-toed, shoes for PE and play. Flip-flops and cowboy boots are not appropriate for school. Encourage older female students to wear proper undergarments as needed so that they are comfortable and well supported during PE.

SCHOOL HOURS

The school doors on Hidalgo Street (by the gym) are opened at **7:10 a.m.** From **7:10 – 8:00 a.m.**, students will enter the school through the Healthy Horns Hall. After **8:00 a.m.** all students will enter through the front office. The school day **begins at 8:00 a.m.** Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. are considered tardy. The instructional day ends at 3:30 p.m. Students **MUST** be picked up no later than 3:45 p.m. unless they are transported home on the bus, go to childcare, or have a teacher-sponsored activity after school. Students not picked up by 3:45 p.m. must be signed out from the front office by an adult.

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH

Breakfast is served from 7:10 – 7:55 a.m. All students are provided breakfast and lunch at no cost. Families will still be asked to complete applications for the Child Nutrition Program. The information from these applications is connected to school funding and grants.

AFTER SCHOOL CARE

UT Elementary has an on-site after-school care program, provided by the YMCA. For enrollment and fee information, please contact YMCA personnel at (512) 236-9622. The following recreation centers pick up students from our school for off-site after-school care. You may contact them directly for enrollment information, fees, and availability: Pan American Rec Center at (512) 476-9193 and Metz Rec Center at (512) 478-8716.

CLASS / BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Each class has a limit of three class parties per year. Your child's teacher will communicate in advance information regarding class parties. Parties are typically held at Winter Holiday, Valentine's Day and at the end of the year. Parents are invited to participate in class parties. Birthday parties are not allowed in the classroom and invitations may not be passed out at school unless every student is invited. Parents are able to coordinate a special snack for the class to enjoy after lunch time. Please follow state guidelines about nutrition by providing healthy treats rather than cakes, cupcakes and cookies. Balloons or other floral decorations are not allowed in the classroom. Those delivered remain in the front office until the end of the day.

STUDY / FIELD TRIPS

Parents will be notified in advance when children leave campus on study trips. All study trips are planned for educational purposes only. When private transportation is used, students must have a permission and transportation form signed by the parent. Parents are requested to be chaperons on some of the study trips, depending on the venue and experience. Each grade level makes that decision in collaboration with the study trip provider, taking into account space availability, and overall experience. We kindly request that siblings not attend so adults can focus on the students' needs, safety and care.

It is important for all students to attend study trips as it is an enhancement and integral part to our curriculum. However, if your student has had excessive behavior issues, you may be asked to help chaperon him/her to the event.

CELEBRATE FREEDOM WEEK

UTES participates in Celebrate Freedom Week which is scheduled by law to occur during the last full week of classes during the week in which September 17th occurs. Instruction includes study of the intent, meaning, and importance of the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution, including the Bill of Rights, in their historical context. Students with conscientious objections, children of representatives of foreign governments, or children who have a written request from a parent or guardian may be exempted from the activity.

PLEDGE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

UT Elementary will recite the Pledge of Allegiance and the Texas State Pledge followed by a minute of silence each school day. SB83 requires students to recite the pledges to the United States and the Texas flag once each school day. Students may be excused from reciting a pledge on request of the student's parent or guardian.

The legislation also requires school boards to provide for a minute of silence following the pledges during which students may reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in another silent activity that is not distracting to other students. School employees are required to ensure that students remain silent and do not distract other students.

To request that your child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag, the request must be in writing. State law does not allow your child to be excused from participation in the required moment of silence or silent activity that follows.

PERSONAL ITEMS, CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Parent cooperation is greatly appreciated in limiting the amount of unnecessary items such as toys, playing cards, iPods, electronic games, sunglasses, cell phones, and fidget spinners. These items interfere with the learning process. According to the *Student Code of Conduct*, the district does not permit students to openly possess telecommunications devices, including mobile cell phones during school hours or at any school related function. A student who is in violation will have the device confiscated. A cell phone may be collected when the student arrives, kept in a secure location, and returned to the parent, who must arrange a time to pick up the phone. Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*. The district will not be responsible for damaged, lost, or stolen telecommunications devices.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Students are expected to have the necessary supplies for school each day. Please tell the school office if you are in need of school supplies.

TEXTBOOKS AND LIBRARY BOOKS

It is the responsibility of the school and the administrators to issue, collect, care and account for all state-adopted textbooks. All textbooks and library books that are lost, damaged, or destroyed by a student are paid for by that student at the state established price.

SECURITY

All gates are locked throughout the day with the exception of the doors and gates to the main entrance. If a family has special custody or security concerns, it is the family's responsibility to inform the school in writing and provide copies of court orders that give or deny permission to specific parties.

Any visitor who is not a student or staff member **MUST SIGN IN** at the front office and get a visitor identification sticker. UTES utilizes the Raptor system to screen visitors. Upon entering the school building, visitors will be asked to present an ID such as a driver's license, which can either be scanned or manually entered into the system. If a parent or guardian for any reason does not have a US government-issued ID, the school staff member can use any form of identification and manually enter the person's name into the Raptor system. The Raptor system checks the visitor's name and date of birth for comparison with a national database of registered sex offenders. No other data from the ID is gathered or recorded and the information is not shared with any outside agency. Once entry is approved, Raptor will issue a badge that identifies the visitor, the date, and the purpose of his/her visit. A visitor's badge will not be necessary for those who visit our schools simply to drop off an item in the office or pick up paperwork.

ACCIDENTS AND EMERGENCIES

While children are supervised carefully at all times at the UT Elementary School, sometimes an accident may occur. In the event of an emergency, the child's parents are contacted. When parents are unavailable, school administration notifies alternate emergency contacts from the child's files. If no one can be reached, the school calls the child's physician to determine what action should be taken. If the emergency requires immediate medical attention, the school calls EMS to transport the child to Dell Children's Hospital.

Under opinions issued by the Attorney General of Texas, state agencies cannot purchase insurance coverage unless the establish liability by common law or the Texas Tort Claim Act. In accordance with this ruling, The University of Texas Elementary School cannot purchase any insurance coverage for children attending the school. Parents need to provide insurance for their children.

TRAFFIC AND SAFETY RULES

For smooth and safe student drop-off and pick-up times, all parents/guardians are asked to comply with the following safety rules:

- Students are reminded to walk on all sidewalks and cross only at the crosswalks.
- Follow the directions of the crossing guards at all times. They are there to keep traffic moving and children safe.
- For safety, do not park or stop in the fire lanes or on the railroad tracks, even for a brief period of time.
- The disabled parking area is clearly marked in front of the circle drive. These spots are reserved for our children and parents with special needs.
- Park your car on the street in designated spaces. Do not park in spaces reserved for UTES faculty and staff.
- Do not stop your car in the crosswalk area. The crosswalk is utilized by all of our students and parents during drop-off and pick-up. Stop your car before the crosswalk when a crossing guard is bringing your child to your car.
- Abide by traffic and safety laws and do not drive through nearby business parking lots.



Attendance Policy

ATTENDANCE

Students learn best when they attend school every day. When students miss school, they miss important lesson and essential skills needed for academic success. **Regular attendance** establishes patterns of responsibility and commitment that will serve students throughout their lives. Attendance is also how school funding is established each year. Like all other public schools, UT Elementary School is funded through the average daily attendance of our students. The State of Texas has a mandatory attendance policy called the Compulsory Attendance Law Sec. 25.085 TEC. All students who attend a public school (Pre-K–12th grade) are required to come to school every day. Here are the general rules and procedures for attendance at our school.

WHAT IS AN 'EXCUSED ABSENCE'?

A child can be excused for a temporary absence resulting from any cause acceptable to the administrators. For an absence to be excused, you must write a note with the child's full name, date of the absence and reason for the absence. ***Notes need to be provided to the Front Office within one (1) week of absence for it to be considered.** If your child is ill and has been to the doctor, a doctor's note is best. If your child is out for 3 days or more due to illness, **a doctor's note is required.** Administrators have the right to excuse absences at their discretion. Full-day absences, whether excused or unexcused, will still be noted on the student's report card and count towards overall attendance scores.

Excused absences generally are for the following reasons:

- Illness
- Religious holiday (1 day)
- Bereavement (3 days)

WHAT IS A TARDY? WHEN ARE THEY EXCUSED?

A tardy is counted when a child comes to school after 8:00 a.m. or leaves before the end of the instructional day, which is 3:30 p.m. **A tardy is excused only when the child has a documented medical appointment.** Please provide the medical note so the tardy can be marked as excused. Only medical notes for the student who has the appointment are accepted as excuses for a tardy. Medical appointments include visits to a physician, dentist, and therapist or for the purpose of Medicaid screening.

WHY DID I GET AN ATTENDANCE NOTICE?

If your child has missed 4 or more days or parts of days (tardies) that are **unexcused** you will receive an attendance notice. If attendance becomes difficult for you and your family, we will need to meet and make a plan to get your child to school each day.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENT ATTENDANCE

All student at UTES are expected to:

- Arrive ON TIME to school
- Be present for the entire school day
- Provide written communication when absent
- Complete or make up work when absent

CONSEQUENCES

- **1st** Attendance Notice: after 4+ unexcused absences or tardies in 6 weeks. Notice **must** be signed and returned.
- **2nd** Attendance Notice and meeting with administrator: after additional 4+ unexcused absences or tardies in 6 weeks
- **3rd** Attendance Notice and meeting with administrator for mandatory Truancy Prevention Program.

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

A parent or guardian should accompany a student when withdrawing from school. A parent signature is required for withdrawal of a student under the age of eighteen. The procedure for withdrawal is as follows:

1. Obtain appropriate withdrawal forms from the campus registrar's office.
2. Have the appropriate forms filled out by teachers; return all school instructional materials and technological equipment, library books, school property, and make sure all fees/fines are paid.

When parents wish to withdraw a child from school, they should contact the school office at least one day before the date of withdrawal. Before a student can be cleared to withdraw, he/she must return all textbooks and library books, and pay for lost or damaged books. School records will be sent upon request from the new school.



Parent Communication & Involvement

COMMUNICATION

The University of Texas Elementary School (UTES) provides a variety of methods for communicating with our students and families.

PAPER

Your child's teacher will send a parent communication folder (**Thursday Folder**) home each Thursday to inform you of your child's progress and important events and information. As much as possible, information will be communicated electronically and posted on our website. However, there will still be occasions to send home paper notices in these folders.

ELECTRONIC

The email you provide with registration will be added to our group email account. You may receive weekly emails with information from the Thursday Folder as well as any pertinent information on school and community events. A newsletter from the principal will be emailed out each month. Please take the time to read these. They will contain important information to keep you current on school meetings, issues, policies and services. Grade level newsletters are emailed monthly. These newsletters will keep you informed of class activities and instruction. Please discuss newsletters, notes, and reports with your child.

CLASSDOJO

ClassDojo is a communication application for the classroom. It connects teachers, parents, and students who use it to share photos, videos, and messages through the school day. You can see all of your child's feedback from teachers, hear important announcements and updates, and see photos and videos from class. Parents are invited to join using a code from your child's teacher. All of your child's information is kept safe on ClassDojo, only their teachers, and you as their parents can see their information.

WEB

Cafeteria menus, the annual calendar, and monthly newsletters are posted on the UTES website.

FACE-TO-FACE

Community Coffees are held each quarter with tours given afterward. School administrators encourage you to come and meet with them to discuss any concerns, share in successes and learn more about our programming.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER

The campus registrar's office should be notified immediately of a change of home or business phone number or of a change of address. Up-to-date information is essential for the school to successfully handle emergencies and to maintain communication with parents.

PARENT VISITATION

Parents are encouraged to visit the school throughout the year. Making an appointment with the teacher at least a day in advance is not only a courtesy, but also enables you to schedule the visit for maximum benefit (the class may be taking a test or going on a study trip). Teachers cannot stop instruction to visit with parents who “pop-in.” However, parents are welcome to email or call their child’s teacher to set up a time to meet before or after school or during the teacher’s planning period.

To maintain the safety of our campus and students, ALL visitors, including parents, must sign in at the office and get a visitor sticker before going to any classroom teaching area. Please limit your visit to 30 minutes. Teachers will be happy to discuss your observation with you at a mutually convenient time. You are always welcome to visit and eat lunch with your child or volunteer in the classroom. Please arrange your volunteer time with your child’s teacher. Taking photos and/or videotaping other students while visiting is not allowed.

VIDEO RECORDING

At no time will any UTES volunteer or parent video record any students or staff members without the expressed written consent of the campus principal or the superintendent.

CONFERENCES

Teachers and/or parents may request a conference when desired; however, the teacher must attempt to schedule a conference when the student’s grades are failing or the student is doing borderline work in any subject. The request for a conference is marked on the report card, along with the scheduled time and date. UTES will hold parent conferences October 14th and February 17th. Parents are expected to attend all parent conferences.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The University of Texas Elementary School has multiple opportunities for parents to be involved in our program and school events.

LITTLE LONGHORN LEAGUE (L3)

The Little Longhorn League (L3) is a parent-led organization that promotes parent and community involvement and acts as a support network for both UTES parents and teachers. L3 provides an important and necessary foundation on which the academic program can successfully build. We encourage all parents to become involved in their child’s education by joining the UTES Little Longhorn League. Participation in L3 is a great way for parents to connect with UTES staff and with other parents. L3 meetings occur at 5:30 p.m. once a month and are an opportunity for parents to learn more about school programming, campus updates and opportunities to be involved in campus activities. L3 additionally works with administration to organize fundraisers.

EDUCATION COUNCIL

The Education Council (Ed Council) is led by campus administrators and is made up of teachers, parents and board members. The Ed Council reviews yearly campus goals and objectives and monitors progress towards these goals. Ed Council reviews campus data and develops goals and objectives for the following school year. Ed Council meets one afternoon every quarter.

SHAC

The Student Health Advisory Committee (SHAC) is a parent-led organization made up of staff, parents and community partners. The SHAC reviews campus programming and initiatives connected to the Eight Components of Coordinated School Health. SHAC meets one afternoon every quarter.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

All parents are encouraged to volunteer in some manner during the school year. The volunteer program is designed to enable parents to participate in the educational process of our school. Parents have the opportunity to volunteer in several areas such as: in-classroom, clerical, and for special school-wide events

TELEPHONE USE

The school phone is a business phone and is not used to make personal calls. Students may get permission from their teacher to use the phone in case of an emergency.

HOMEWORK

At UT Elementary School, students are expected to follow through with homework assigned by the classroom teacher. Each student is expected to practice their reading at home daily and record their efforts in a nightly reading log, as well as complete assignments in core content areas. In grades 2nd–5th homework will count as 10% of the 9 weeks grade. Incomplete homework or missing homework will be addressed through the following steps:

- Call to parent/guardian each week homework is incomplete or missing
- Discussion with student
- Request to complete homework during station or center time
- Parent conference

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

Check social media, radio and television stations for information. In the event weather conditions or emergencies make it necessary to close school, UTES follows Austin ISD inclement weather decisions.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are sent home every nine weeks. Each reporting period the parent will receive written comments. Please read the comments and review grades with your child and sign and return the report card envelope each nine weeks. Any student failing or borderline at the mid-nine weeks will receive a written progress report.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts and open enrollment charter schools must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (RTI). The implementation of RTI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts and charter schools to meet the needs of all struggling students. Students that are at risk of not passing their course work during the middle of a grading term will receive a progress report along with an RTI notification stating the interventions that are utilized to assist with the poor performance. If the low performance continues, a Local Support Team (LST) will

be adjourned to discuss further recommendations.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact school administration to learn about the school's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including making a referral for a special education evaluation or for a Section 504 evaluation to determine if the student needs specific aids, accommodations, or services. A parent may request an evaluation for special education or Section 504 services at any time.

SECTION 504

Pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the district has a duty to identify and provide educational accommodations and related services to those students who have disabilities, but who are not in need of special education for that disability in accordance with the Individuals Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). For additional information, please contact the district's Section 504 Coordinator, Nicole Whetstone, Ph.D., nwhetstone@austin.utexas.edu.

SEMESTER AWARDS

At UTES we strive to provide students with the high quality, research-based learning opportunities needed to develop ***the academic knowledge, intellectual habits and social and emotional skills*** needed to be college and career ready. Student awards are directly connected to this purpose as they serve to not only recognize students for their hard work, but to teach students that ***recognition and rewards are not given, but earned.***

Our awards system is research-based and designed to reflect the many areas in which students may demonstrate excellence including academics, citizenship and conduct. Beyond recognition, our awards system teaches students how to set and reach goals, overcome obstacles, develop resilience and realize ***that reaching their full potential is within their control and directly related to their choices.*** We set high expectations for our students and believe that each one of our students is capable of excellence.

The chart on the following page shows a listing of awards, a description, and opportunities to earn.

Award	Description	Opportunities to Earn
Distinguished Achievement	All A's in 1 st semester averages All A's in 2 nd semester averages All A's in end of year averages	All A's for 1 st semester certificate All A's for 2 nd semester certificate All A's for all year medal
Honorable Achievement	All A's and B's in 1 st semester averages All A's and B's in 2 nd semester averages All A's and B's in end of year averages	All A's and B's for 1 st semester certificate All A's and B's for 2 nd semester certificate All A's and B's for year medal
Attendance	Multiple years for perfect attendance	5th Grade only – Perfect attendance for multiple years
Longhorn Leader	Students that demonstrate excellence as UT Peacekeepers, who strive to serve others and who demonstrate outstanding leadership. (Only one per class)	End of Year – two per class
Specials Areas: <i>Excellence in PE</i> <i>Excellence in Music</i> <i>Excellence in STEAM</i> <i>Excellence in Spanish</i>	Students that demonstrate excellence by doing their best, showing tenacity and acting as Peacekeepers in their class. (Only one per class)	End of Year – one per class
Completion	All students in PreK – 1 st will be recognized	End of Year Awards Certificate

PARENTAL RIGHTS

Parents have a right under the Federal Education Privacy Act (FERPA) to:

1. Request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teachers.
2. Request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide services to their child.
3. Review teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids and instructional materials used in the curriculum, and to examine tests that have been administered to their child.
4. Inspect a survey created by a third-party before the survey is administered or distributed to their child.
5. To review their child's student records when needed. These records include: attendance records, test scores, grades, disciplinary records, counseling records, psychological records, applications for admission, health and immunization information, other medical records, teacher and counselor evaluations, reports of behavioral patterns, and state assessment instruments that have been administered to their child.
6. Remove their child temporarily from the classroom, if an instructional activity in which their child is scheduled to participate conflicts with their religious or moral beliefs. The removal cannot be for the purpose of avoiding a test and may not extend for an entire semester. Further, their child must satisfy grade-level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by the Texas Education Agency.
7. Grant or deny any written request from the district to make a videotape or voice recording of their child.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY (FERPA) STATEMENT

Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting information unless the parent or guardian objects to the release of the directory information about the student. If a parent does not want the UT Elementary to disclose directory information from their child's education records without their prior written consent, you must notify the district upon enrollment of the student into our school district.

UT Elementary has designated the following information as directory information: student's name, honors and awards received.

SEXUAL HARRASSMENT

The district believes that every student has the right to be free from all forms of discrimination and harassment while attending district schools and school-related activities. The district regards sexual harassment of students as a serious incident and will consider the full range of disciplinary options, up to and including expulsion, according to the nature of the offense.

All students are expected to treat one another courteously, with respect for the other person's feelings; to avoid any behaviors known to be offensive; and to stop these behaviors when asked or told to stop. All students are prohibited from engaging in offensive verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature directed toward another student or adult. This prohibition applies whether the conduct is by word, gesture, or any other intimidating sexual conduct, including requests for sexual favors that the other student regards as offensive or provocative. Students and/or parents are encouraged to discuss their questions or concerns about the expectations in this area with the teacher, campus administration, or the district's Title IX compliance officer.

STUDENT CONDUCT COMPLAINT AND REPORTING

Upon knowledge of a suspected incident, the campus administrator files a report, conducts a thorough investigation, and completes a follow up determination report. All parents involved are promptly notified of the complaint and the pending investigation. All interviews concerning any student involvement should include the student, the parent and an additional staff member. The investigation must include the following:

- Conducting interviews of all students involved
- Conducting interviews of witnesses
- Investigating the circumstances of the incident, including events or incidents that preceded the incident in question
- Documentation of all interviews on the complaint form

Regardless of the outcome of the initial investigation, the campus administrator continues to monitor the situation, paying special attention to the student or students involved as well as the interaction with any incidents that may involve a staff member. The summary of the events and the findings are sent to the Title IX coordinator. The Title IX coordinator keeps a record of any reported incidents. The coordinator may assist in the investigation if needed and may be requested to offer a third-party opinion for the determination of actual harassment. If the determination results show that some form of harassment occurred, the campus

administrator is responsible for taking immediate and swift action to end the harassment, eliminate any hostile environment and its effects and prevent harassment from recurring. Any steps taken will not penalize the student who was harassed, intimidated and/or bullied. The actions involved may include but are not limited to the following:

- Removing the student being harassed from the situation where the events occurred
- Removing the student accused from the situation where the events occurred
- Available counseling options for a student who is a victim of harassment intimidation and/or bullying
- Available counseling options for a student who engaged in conduct that was harassing, intimidating and/or bullying
- Consequences in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*

In the event that any person involved does not agree with the determination or follow-up actions, they may appeal in writing to the superintendent. Only written appeals will be reviewed and investigated by the superintendent's office. Upon receipt of a written appeal concerning the determination and/or action steps taken to rectify a complaint, the superintendent's office will complete the appropriate documentation, and will conduct its own investigation and interviews of all of the parties involved.

After the secondary investigation by the Office of the Superintendent and the determination that follows, the complaint is considered closed. All parties are notified in writing of the results of the investigation and the actions taken to address the situation. Further appeals or action requested by the parent or guardian shall be considered only in the event that further evidence can be shown to conclude that harassment may again have occurred.

SPECIAL EDUCATION REFERRALS

If a parent makes a written request for an initial evaluation for special education services the school must respond no later than 15 school days after receiving the request. At that time UTES will give the parent a prior written notice of whether it agrees to or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards*. If the school agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

Please note that a request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally and does not need to be in writing. UTES will comply with all federal prior written notice and procedural safeguard requirements and the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the school to respond within the 15-school-day timeline. If the school decides to evaluate the student, it must complete the student's initial evaluation and evaluation report no later than 45 school days from the day it receives a parent's written consent to evaluate the student. However, if the student is absent from school during the evaluation period for three or more school days, the evaluation period will be extended by the number of school days equal to the number of school days that the student is absent.

There is an exception to the 45-school-day timeline. If UTES receives a parent's consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is

absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30th due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.

Upon completing the evaluation, UTES must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost. Additional information regarding special education is available from the school in a companion document titled *Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process*. The following websites provide information to those who are seeking information and resources specific to students with disabilities and their families:

- Texas Project First
- Partners Resource Network

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education services is Special Education Director Janina Roberts, jroberts@austin.utexas.edu



Discipline & Anti-Bullying Policies

DISCIPLINE POLICY

All students have a right to learn; therefore, no child is permitted to disrupt learning. As all public schools, we follow both state and federal laws regarding privacy, discipline, suspensions and expulsions.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENT BEHAVIOR

All students at UTES are expected to:

- Listen to others
- Follow directions on first request
- Respect self, others and property
- Make safe choices
- Always do your best

CONSEQUENCES

- First Offense: quick reminder/corrective feedback is provided by teacher
- Second Offense: teacher will speak to student one-on-one with corrective feedback
- Third Offense: student will be provided a cooling-down time/brain and body break
- Fourth Offense: student will have brain/body break and parents will be called
- Fifth Offense: student will earn a referral to the office
- Exceptions. We have a zero-tolerance policy for any violence committed against other students or staff:
 - Possession of weapons,
 - Possession of drugs,
 - Extreme verbal assault against students or staff, and
 - Extreme disruptions that have a large impact on other students or put students in danger. In these situations, an office referral will be issued and parents will be contacted.
- Students that have consistent discipline issues may have their privilege to attend field trips revoked if administration deems their behavior unsafe.

REFERRALS

Our staff is trained in responsive learning and classroom management. We make every attempt to correct behavior and support students to avoid issuing office referrals. Spending time in the office means children are not learning. When referrals are issued, the administrator addressing the referral will determine, based on the offense and her/his knowledge of the student, the actions that will be taken. Visits to the office may result in the following actions:

- Conference with administrator
- Cool down/body and brain break in office
- Problem solving with administrator
- In-school suspension
- Suspension from school
- Expulsion

EXCESSIVE DISCIPLINE ISSUES

As all schools do, there are times when individual students consistently struggle with emotions, behavior and the ability to meet expectations. As our campus is committed to serving not only the academic, but social and emotional needs of ALL students, we work as a team to address the needs of struggling students. Providing support to struggling students, their parents and their teachers is a key role of the administrative team. We employ a number of strategies, all research based to address consistent behavioral, social or emotional issues including: frequent observations, developing behavior plans, developing incentive programs, consulting and counseling with parents, teaching self-care strategies, providing counseling, requesting support from outside resources and referring to outside medical or psychological services.

When we have students that continue to be unsafe and disruptive and have been suspended for a total of ten days, UTES has the right to expel the student and send them back to their home school. When a child has earned ***ten suspensions***, an expulsion hearing will take place. At this time, the staff will review the child's discipline referrals, data from teachers and data from parents to determine if expulsion is appropriate. As a public school, we are required to follow all state and federal laws regarding suspensions and expulsions. We understand that there are times parents have concerns about other children in their child's classroom. We know that this concern comes out of wanting your own child to be safe and have the best possible learning experience. However, we are restricted from discussing specific information about a child with parents or guardians other than their own. Teachers are also restricted from discussing other children's behavior with parents. If you have questions or concerns, it is best to address them with the principal or assistant principal.

The UT Elementary Anti-Bullying Contract appears in the appendix.



HEALTH

GUIDELINES FOR KEEPING ILL CHILDREN HOME FROM SCHOOL

While attending school on a daily basis is vital to your child's learning, we realize that illness does occur. In order to keep our student body healthy, it is important to keep kids home when they have a contagious illness or they are too ill to participate in learning that day. For all the guidelines below, we recommend you see your child's healthcare provider for any unexplained symptoms listed below.

BEING SENT HOME

Sometimes children will develop illness while at school, or symptoms will worsen once at school. In order to prevent contagious illnesses from spreading, we will contact parents to pick up their child for symptoms that indicate illness. Students need to be picked up within 30 minutes of notification. The nurse or office staff tending to the student will determine whether the student should be sent home. The following are only guidelines. If the school staff is concerned about a very contagious illness being passed around, parents may be contacted to pick up their child outside of these guidelines, in the case that their child shows other signs of developing illness.

WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

If your child has the following symptoms, he or she should be seen by a doctor or be symptom-free before returning to school:

- A rash all over their body
- A sore throat with fever or swollen glands
- Persistent redness, green or yellow mucus and/or crusting in the eyes

The chart on the following page outlines guidelines for illness at school.

GUIDELINES FOR ILLNESS AT SCHOOL

ILLNESS/INFECTION/SYMPTOM	SHOULD YOU STAY HOME?	WHEN CAN YOU COME BACK?
Chicken Pox	YES	When all the pox have scabbed over
Cold	NO, without fever YES, with fever	See Fever Guidelines
Coxsackie (hand foot & mouth disease)	NO, unless fever	See Fever Guidelines
Diarrhea	YES	18 hours after last diarrhea symptoms
Ear Infection	NO, with doctor diagnosis	SMILE: You're in school
Fever of 100° F or greater (Undiagnosed illness)	YES	18 hours after fever-free, without fever reducing medications
Fifth Disease	NO, without fever YES, with fever	See Fever Guidelines
Giardia	YES	When diarrhea subsides, or your doctor approves readmission
Impetigo	YES	Once treatment has begun
Lice	NO	Begin treatment as soon as possible
Pink Eye	YES	24 hours after treatment has begun
Unidentified Rash	YES	When rash is gone, unless your doctor approves readmission
Ring Worm (on the body)	NO (But you must keep area covered)	Doctor can recommend treatment
Ring Worm (on the scalp)	YES	After treatment has begun
Roseola	YES, with fever	See Fever Guidelines
Scabies	YES	After treatment has begun
Strep Throat	YES	24 hours after beginning treatment and when child is fever free
Vomiting	YES	18 hours after last vomit
<p>Lice: If a student is identified as having lice present, a parent letter will be sent to each member of the class notifying them of the discovery. Names cannot be revealed, only that the presence of lice has been detected.</p> <p>Proper Rest: A solid night's sleep is vitally important to the health and learning of children. Children need a minimum of eight hours of sleep each night. Sleepy children struggle to remain focused during the day, have a harder time regulating their emotions, and can be more prone to injury or illness. Please make sure your child/ children arrive to school well rested each day</p>		

MEDICATION

Any medication, which cannot be taken at home and must be administered during school time, must be sent to the office in a labeled bottle. A medical consent form signed by Parent or Guardian allowing us to administer the medication must be completed before we give the medicine. Proper utensils for measuring and dispensing the medication (syringe or medicine cup) must also be sent. All prescription medicine must be in the original labeled container. The container and your notes must include: student's name, name of medicine, purpose of medication, dose, time of day when it is needed, and how the medicine is taken. The first dose of medicine must be given at home (excluding EpiPens and rescue inhalers).

EMERGENCY CARE INFORMATION

It is very important that we have a complete registration form on file for each child. All telephone numbers email addresses, and street addresses should be recorded and kept up to date so that a contact can be made as soon as possible in the event of an emergency. The school office will not release students to individuals not listed on the registration form. Special permission for someone else to pick up your child must be sent in advance and must be in writing. Parents may stop by the school office to add or delete names as appropriate. All parents should have a telephone number where they can be reached during the school day. Persons who are picking up students must provide identification as requested.

WELLNESS GUIDELINES

As a University of Texas demonstration school, we are leading the way in promoting healthy and active lifestyles. Therefore, we go above and beyond the requirements of the National Free and Reduced Lunch Program. Below you will find federal, state, and UTES standards for food and physical activity.

PHYSICAL FITNESS ASSESSMENT (FITNESS GRAM)

Annually, the district will conduct a physical fitness assessment of students in grades 3 through 12 as required by Education Code 38.101. At the end of the school year, a parent may submit a written request to the UT-UCS District Assessment Coordinator to obtain the results of their child's physical fitness assessment conducted during the school year.

FEDERAL AND STATE STANDARDS

- Foods with Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV) are restricted during 7:10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. This includes candy, soda, popsicles, chips, and caffeinated beverages, including energy drinks.
- Competitive Foods, including all food and beverages that are not provided by school foodservice, may not be served.
- Three school events throughout the school year may be designated as a special time for consuming FMNV determined by the school administrator.
- Campus approved field trips are not exempt from the nutrition policy.
- Parents providing their child's lunch may not provide food to any other child other than their own.
- Students receive at least 135 minutes of moderate or vigorous structured physical activity per week.
- Food or physical activity may never be used as a reward or punishment.

UTES FOOD STANDARDS

Snacks will be organized by each teacher. Please refer to the recommended snack list in the appendix of this guide for ideas and campus guidelines. Please avoid snacks that are fried, high in sodium (choose foods less than 350 mg per serving), or that contain added sugar, high fructose corn syrup or food dyes. Any snack requiring refrigeration may be given to the chef for keeping for the week the snack will be served. Any snacks left over at the end of the week will be discarded.

If you plan to bring your child lunch from a restaurant/food trailer, please eat this with them outside at the picnic tables, rather than in the cafe.

- If your child has a severe food allergy, please see the nurse for appropriate paperwork to be filled out by the doctor. With a doctor's note and a completed IEP, 504, or School Health Care Plan, food modifications may be made by our chef.
- For dietary restrictions not associated with severe food allergies, the breakfast and lunch menus are available online and are sent home at the beginning of each month. Our chefs work hard to prepare healthy food options, with alternatives frequently available for commonly avoided foods. When foods such as dairy, gluten, eggs, and meat are served, they will be marked on the menu so that you can send alternative meals with your student when they need to avoid certain foods being served that day.
- Please make sure that students bring a water bottle each day and that the water bottle is brought home regularly to be cleaned.



Keeping Children Safe

DRILLS – EMERGENCY INFORMATION

UT Elementary conducts emergency drills designed to assure the orderly movement of students and personnel to the safest area available. Emergency procedures must be done quickly and quietly. Teachers will take their classes to the designated safe areas.

UT Elementary conducts fire, severe weather, evacuation, lock-down, and other emergency drills designed to assure the orderly movement of students and personnel to the safest areas available. Even though these drills are almost always for practice, it is very important for students and teachers to treat them seriously. Maps and instructions are posted in each classroom. Each teacher will explain these in class and regular practice drills will occur. Staying quiet and paying close attention to instructions during drills is mandatory. When the alarm is sounded, students must follow the directions of teachers or administrators quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner. In the event of a campus emergency, students will either be instructed to remain in their room (lock down), proceed with severe weather procedure, or evacuate the building for fire or emergency.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE/FIRE DRILL

Emergency evacuation procedure will be used any time that remaining in the building might pose a danger to students. Examples are: *fire, bomb threats, environmental and toxic disasters.*

The purpose of an *emergency evacuation* is to remove students from the building and to safety as quickly as possible. In the event that an evacuation is necessary, instructions will be given to evacuate the building.

1. Students should line up and proceed in an orderly manner to the designated area.
2. The teacher should ensure that all students are accounted for and bring an attendance strip with them, if possible.
3. Students should remain quiet at these locations and quiet until further instructions are given.
4. Once at the designated location, *students should remain lined up by teacher in class order for a quick accounting of all students.*

LOCK-DOWN PROCEDURE

Emergency lock-down will occur for the following: unauthorized/hostile person(s) on campus, catastrophic injury or accident, or any other situation requiring students to remain in the safety of the classroom. In the event of a lock-down drill, the teacher should:

1. Immediately lock the door and have the students remain seated and away from the windows.
2. The teacher will take roll immediately and account for any missing students.
3. Students in library or computer labs should remain with the instructor.
4. Students in a hallway or restroom should proceed to the nearest available classroom until the “all-clear” announcement is given.

SEVERE WEATHER DRILL

In the event of a severe weather emergency:

1. Students will be given instructions by the teacher when notified of a severe weather emergency.
2. When necessary, students will take a defense position “duck and cover” (students on knees in a fetal position with hands over their exposed head and neck).
3. An “all clear” announcement will be made when it is safe to resume normal activity.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

State law requires that employees who suspect or have information regarding child abuse contact the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

1. A professional as defined in the law is required to report not later than after the 48th hour after the professional has cause to believe the child has been or may be abused as defined in §261.001(1) or 261.401, Family Code, or is the victim of the offense of indecency with a child and the professional has cause to believe the child has been abused as defined in §261.001(1), Family Code.
2. A non-professional shall make a report immediately after the non-professional has cause to believe that the child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse.
3. A report shall be made regardless of whether the contractor/provider staff suspects or knows that a report may have previously been made.

Information and resources regarding child abuse and neglect can be accessed at http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact_Us/hotlines.asp. Included on this website is a directory listing of toll-free numbers maintained by various crisis organizations.

RECOGNIZING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

What is child abuse? It is any mistreatment of a child that results in harm or injury. There are four basic types of child abuse, though children often experience more than one kind of abuse.

Physical Abuse includes actions such as beating, burning or punching a child.

Emotional Abuse involves criticizing, insulting, rejecting or withholding love from a child.

Sexual Abuse includes rape, touching or fondling or involving a child in pornography.

Neglect includes failure to provide for a child's basic physical, medical or emotional needs. Leaving a young child home alone or failing to provide needed medical attention may also be considered neglect.

SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE

- Changes in behavior including: anxiety, depression, insomnia, night terrors, rebellion, withdrawal and changes to eating habits
- Regression to previously outgrown behaviors such as bedwetting or thumb sucking
- Unusual fears of people or places or aggression towards individuals
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities, sports or friends
- Changes in attitude towards school or academic performance
- Unusual and unexplained health problems such as frequent headaches and stomach aches
- Abnormal sexual behaviors or knowledge of advanced sexual language or behaviors
- Physical signs of sexual abuse are rare but include pain, bleeding or tearing of genitals, anus or mouth

and/or presence of sexually transmitted diseases

PROTECTING CHILDREN ONLINE: CYBER SAFETY

At UTES students are taught cyber safety through their STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) class as well as in the regular classroom. Students are instructed how to avoid inappropriate sites during searches, to avoid chat rooms or other communication with strangers and how to communicate appropriately and safely online. In our upper grades, students are taught to recognize and report cyberbullying. At home, parents can protect children by carefully monitoring computer, iPad, tablet or phone internet use. The two websites listed below provide additional information on actions parents can take to keep children safe online.

Safekids.com <http://www.safekids.com/safety-advice-tools/>

Stopbullying.gov <http://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/>

The UT Elementary School Parent Handbook Agreement appears in the appendix.



Appendix

Community Commitment Compact

UT Elementary Anti-Bullying Contract

Parent Handbook Agreement

UTES Recommended Snack List



My Community Commitment from Pre-K to Ph D

UTES	AS A STUDENT, I WILL...	AS A PARENT, I WILL...	AS A TEACHER, I WILL...	AS AN ADMINISTRATOR, I WILL...
UNITY Collaboration and communication	Speak up for my needs and the needs of my community	Support the needs of my student and the school community	Foster a collaborative community within the classroom	Collaborate with the community to meet its needs
TENACITY Resilience and optimism	Approach challenges and mistakes with optimism	Encourage students to embrace challenges and mistakes	Challenge students and recognize effort during the learning process	Ensure that the school climate encourages growth and resilience
EXCELLENCE Achievement and growth	Strive to be the best version of myself	Provide opportunities for students to practice skills	Implement data-driven instruction that is challenging and engaging	Uphold high standards for curriculum and instruction and provide development as needed
SAFETY Health and climate	Follow the Code of Conduct and make healthy choices	Help my student familiarize themselves with the Code of Conduct and make healthy choices	Foster a safe and inclusive classroom that empowers students	Maintain a safe and inclusive school environment that promotes mental and physical well-being



UT Elementary Anti-Bullying Policy:

Bullying is hurtful behavior (words or actions) that is intended to make others feel unsafe, fearful, degraded or embarrassed on a consistent basis. We work to clarify with our students the difference between having a disagreement with another student and bullying. On our campus all students and adults work to prevent and stop bullying by committing to:

- Use words and actions that make others feel safe.
- Use words and actions that make others feel welcome.
- Build positive relationships by including others and not gossiping or spreading rumors.
- Stand up for ourselves and each other.

What should you do if you or someone you know is being bullied?

- If it feels safe, (i.e. the student who is bullying is your friend) tell them to stop.
- If it feels safe, support the targeted student by saying something kind (“Are you ok? That was mean.”)
- If it doesn’t feel safe (you’re afraid of the student who is bullying,) tell an adult (teacher or parent).
- Write a note to an adult.
- Ask a friend to tell an adult.
- Talk with your friends, family and teachers about ways to stop bullying and to create a more welcoming school climate for everyone.

What does the school do when a child is bullying another child?

- Separate the student who is bullying from the targeted student to investigate.
- Interview potential witnesses as needed to understand the situation.
- Contact parents.
- Have a parent conference.
- Student and parent signs anti-bullying contract.
- Follow discipline policy.
- Increase supervision.

What does the school do to support the child being bullied?

- Parents contacted.
- Mediation with administration.
- Administration will work to identify best plan for each individual child.

I understand that UT Elementary School has zero tolerance for bullying. I understand that consistent name calling, making fun others, starting rumors or gossip and consistently physically hurting others is bullying. I understand that I am accountable for my actions and words. I understand that continued bullying will result in disciplinary actions including suspension and ultimately expulsion.

By signing this contract, I am acknowledging that I understand the campus bullying policy and agree to follow campus expectations.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Administrator Signature _____ Date _____



Parent Handbook Agreement

The Parent Handbook can be found on our website at www.utelementary.org under the Parents section. It will also be emailed to our Parents' Listserv. It is imperative that all families read and discuss this handbook with their UT Elementary students each year. Please complete the agreement below stating that you have read and understand the following sections:

I GENERAL INFORMATION

I have read and understand the general information for UTES. I understand I am responsible for knowing and following the schedules and policies. _____Initial

II ATTENDANCE POLICY

I have read the attendance policy and understand that daily attendance is connected to school funding and student success. I understand that my student must abide by the expectations or be subject to the consequences, including being sent to the Municipal Court. _____Initial

III PARENT COMMUNICATION & INVOLVEMENT

I understand there are many ways to be involved at UTES and various means of communication. It is my responsibility to maintain an updated email address for receiving weekly notices as well as checking the website for news and calendar events. _____Initial

IV DISCIPLINE & ANTI-BULLYING POLICIES

I have read the policies on discipline and bullying at UTES. I understand the rights of my child and the steps taken to ensure safe and positive experiences at school. _____Initial

V HEALTH & WELLNESS

I understand the need for maintaining healthy, active students at school. I will contact the school nurse with any concerns for my child's health. _____Initial

I understand and acknowledge that I have read, with my child, the UT Elementary Handbook.

Parent/Guardian (1) Printed Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian (2) Printed Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Administrator Signature

Date

Recommended Snack List

Below is a list of healthy snack ideas that UTES families can refer to when choosing snacks to bring for their class to enjoy. You are not restricted to the foods below, but if you choose something not listed below, please avoid fried foods, foods high in sodium (not > 350mg), peanuts, high fructose corn syrup, food dyes, or added sugar. These are guidelines. Please refer to classroom teacher preferences for more specific requests and snack guidelines.

If you have snacks that need to be refrigerated, you can bring them to the chef for storage for the week. All perishable leftover snacks will be discarded at the end of the week.

- Hummus with pita or vegetables
- Dried fruits without added sugars
- Baked sweet potato chips, multi-grain chips or veggie chips
- Whole grain muffins
- Whole grain crackers like: Triscuits, matzos, or kalvi rye crackers
- 100-calorie pack snack crackers
- Oatmeal or Whole Grain Bars
- 100% Fruit smoothies
- Mini rice cakes, flavored
- Dry cereal, individual serving (free of peanuts, high fructose corn syrup, artificial flavors, and artificial dyes)
- Whole wheat pita, tortillas, or English muffins
- Healthy dips such as salsa, guacamole, bean dip, yogurt dips, nut butters (not peanut due to allergies on campus)
- Unsweetened applesauce
- Individually wrapped cheese
- Pirate Booty (Tings and Smart Puffs also recommended)
- Goldfish
- Yogurt (Free of artificial ingredients. Greek yogurt is the best option)
- Fresh Fruits such as: grapes, apples, bananas, kiwis, berries, cherries, mandarin oranges
- Hard pretzels
- Whole grain/brown rice cakes
- Popcorn (Air-popped or pre-packaged light popcorn. Microwave popcorn not recommended)
- Cheese and fruit kabobs
- Veggies such as: carrots, celery sticks, snap peas, bell pepper strips, cucumber slices, broccoli, grape tomatoes

Below are some nutritious suggestions for class wide birthday treats:

- Rice cakes that the kids can decorate with icing, raisins, grapes, etc.
- Muffins
- Fruit salads
- Yogurt parfait (fruit, granola, yogurt)
- Oatmeal fruit bars
- Mini carrot or pumpkin cupcakes with cream cheese frosting
- If you choose to bring cupcakes, consider bringing mini-sized