

# STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK

A supplement to the  
NISD Elementary Student-Parent Handbook



Dr. Linda G. Mora Elementary  
1520 American Lotus  
San Antonio, Texas 78245  
210-398-2400

NORTHSIDE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dear Mora Families,

As we embark on another exciting school year, I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support in our shared mission to provide the best possible education and ensure the safety and security of our students.

The foundation of a thriving education environment is the partnership between schools and parents, and your commitment to this partnership is truly remarkable. Your involvement, dedication, and encouragement make a world of difference in our students' lives. Together, we create an atmosphere where our students can flourish academically, socially, and emotionally.

This campus handbook is a supplement to the NISD Elementary Student-Parent Handbook and contains information to help ensure the safety and the learning environment of all students. Please take a few minutes to read each item, and feel free to contact your child's teacher or the school office should you have any questions.

Please know that every member of the Mora staff is deeply committed to making this a happy and productive year for your child! Thank you for your gracious support as we move forward together. It's going to be an outstanding year!

Sincerely,

Erika L.M. Zagala  
Principal

Serena Torres  
Associate Principal

Mora Mission Statement:

We are a school built on our core values called Bearcat Beliefs. These are the values that guide our decisions and daily interactions. These beliefs are Student Centered Purpose, Respect & Relationships, Cross Cultural Appreciation, Kindness, Integrity, Teamwork and Humor.



## **SCHOOL HOURS**

**Our instructional day is 7:45 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

School office hours are 7:15 a.m.-3:45 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Children arriving after 7:45 a.m. are tardy. Because security doors will be locked at 7:45 a.m., a parent dropping off a child after 7:45 will need to accompany the child to the front security window to obtain a tardy slip to admit the child to class.



## **ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL**

- **Morning Arrival Procedures**

Please drop off students at the main entrance of the school, not at other entrances.

Students will only be allowed to enter at the main entrance as other doors are locked.

Pre- K, ECSE, ALE, and Kinder students will report to the cafeteria. Students in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades will report to their respective hallways. 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> students will report to the gym. If you choose to walk your child into the building, please park in the parking lot located in front of the school. The back drop off is for school buses and back walkers. For safety and security reasons, parents not are permitted to enter the building through any entrance other than the front doors. Please never park and exit your vehicle in the front loop as this area needs to be kept accessible to emergency vehicles. Teachers supervise students beginning at 7:15 a.m. Supervision is provided as early as 7:00a.m. for bus riders and students eating breakfast. To ensure safety for all students, adults/parents are not permitted beyond the cafeteria.

- **Afternoon Dismissal Procedures**

At the end of the school day (3:00 p.m.), teachers accompany their own students to their appropriate dismissal location. Students waiting to be picked up remain with their teacher in the building until dismissed. Any children remaining at 3:15 p.m. are brought to the office to contact their parents.

Parents who wish to pick up their child without exiting their car may pull single file into the right lane along the red curb. The left lane is for moving traffic only. Please do not pick up students or park in the left lane.

Adults will supervise the opening of car doors for safe dismissal. Please remember to turn off cell phones in school zones. Our kids deserve your undivided attention. The safety and well being of our children is our top priority. Thanks to our drivers who keep our children safe by:

- Refraining from cell phone use in our drive and parking lot
- Being patient as we develop a new routine
- Having doors unlocked so children can quickly enter the vehicle
- Using the designated crosswalk
- Staying in your vehicle in the drop-off/pick-up line
- By moving forward as far as possible.



## **EARLY NOTIFICATION OF DISMISSAL CHANGES**

Please notify your child's teacher of any changes to your child's dismissal plan in writing and well in advance. Our goal is to ensure every child gets home safely, and having a consistent dismissal plan and communicating any changes to that plan well in advance helps us ensure children are at the correct end-of-day location. No changes to dismissal plans will occur after 2:30 pm.

**If the teacher has not received notification from a parent/guardian regarding a dismissal change, the child will be sent home according to the plan on file with the classroom teacher.**

Same-day changes are best communicated by calling the office at 210-398-2400 no later than noon. If there is an emergency that requires a last minute change of your child's dismissal plan, please speak with a member of the office staff by calling 210-398-2400. We will be vigilant in getting the message to your child and his/her teacher as quickly as possible. We do ask that you please reserve last minute phone calls for emergencies only.

Thank you for your help in making sure our students arrive and depart safely each day.



## **TARDIES & EARLY OUTS**

Arriving at school on time every day is extremely important. The first bell rings at 7:40 a.m. Children are tardy at 7:45 a.m. and announcements and morning meetings take place shortly after that. Valuable information and instructions are given at the beginning of the day which can affect the rest of the school day. If a child comes in late, he/she often misses out on this information and instruction as well.

Students arriving after 7:45 a.m. will be marked tardy by their teacher in the classroom. Students arriving after 8:00AM must come to the office, accompanied by their parent, to sign in.

Students arriving after 9:00 AM without a doctor's note will be marked absent.

When students are picked up before the 3:00 pm dismissal bell, it is considered an early out. For student safety, the front office will not dismiss students between 2:30 and 3:00 pm to parents. At that time, teachers are getting kids ready and there is much movement in the hallways. If you must take your child out early, it should be done before 2:30 pm.

Tardies and Early Outs are considered partial day absences and count towards the student's attendance record.



## **ATTENDANCE**

Parents are required by Texas Compulsory Attendance Law to ensure their child(ren) are in school the full day of instruction (7:45 a.m.-3:00 p.m.) every day of the school year. This means students should be present for 90% of the school year to receive credit. If a child does not attend school for 90% of the year, regardless of excused or unexcused absences, he/she may be considered for retention.

Children who are absent miss valuable instruction. Absences affect the quality of a student's work and interfere with normal instructional procedures in the classroom. It negatively impacts the child who is absent as well as other students in the class.

When a child is absent or tardy from school, the parent or guardian should send a note to the school explaining the reason for the absence upon the child's return to school. All notes must include:

- The date of the note
- The name of the child
- The date of the absence or tardy
- The specific reason for the absence or tardy
- The parent's signature

An absence may be excused when there is an acceptable cause such as personal illness, death in the family, or family emergency. Vacations are not an acceptable cause for an excused absence from school. When a student's absence for personal illness exceeds three consecutive days, a statement from a physician or health clinic verifying the illness or other condition should be provided. Failure to provide any note within 5 days will result in an unexcused absence. Any absences in excess of 10 days for the school year will require a doctor's note to be excused.

It is our desire to work with families to address any attendance concerns at the campus level. Ongoing attendance issues will be referred by the committee to an attendance officer who will determine if judicial action is appropriate. Judicial action for a Class C misdemeanor offense is considered appropriate if there has been violation of the Compulsory Attendance Law.

Absences <b><u>Excused</u></b> With a Note	Absences <b><u>Unexcused</u></b> Even with a Note
Illness Medical Appointments Religious Holidays Family Funerals Court Appointments **These absences require a note in order to be excused.**	Missed bus Overslept Vacation Errands for parents Family Business (including trips)



## **EMERGENCY CONTACT AND RELEASE OF STUDENTS**

It is very important for the school office to have a current MEDICAL RELEASE AND EMERGENCY CONTACT information available with correct telephone numbers in case of your child's illness or an accident occurring during school hours.

In addition, your child(ren) will only be released to person(s) indicated as an EMERGENCY CONTACT to have authorization to pick up your child in the event that you are unable to do so. This information was provided when you registered for the 2023-2024 school year. Please make sure all phone numbers and contact names are updated at all times.

If at any time during the school year, you should change your home, cell, or work telephone number or person(s) authorized to pick up your child, please notify the office immediately and/or stop by the office to make the changes.

Finally, for your child's safety, anyone new picking up a child from the office MUST bring a photo identification with them to confirm that they are the person authorized to pick up the child. We will not release any child without proper identification confirmation.



## **PARENT VISITS IN THE CLASSROOM**

Parents and guardians are welcome to visit the classroom; however, as a courtesy, we ask that any parent who wishes to visit their child's classroom make arrangements 24 hours prior to the classroom visit. If 24-hour notice is not possible, campus administration will be notified to ensure that a visitor in the classroom at that time is appropriate. To ensure that the learning environment in the classroom is preserved, parent classroom observations should not exceed 30 minutes unless approved by campus administration.



## **SCHOOL NURSE & MEDICATION POLICY**

**\*\*All medications must be taken to the school office. Students are not permitted to carry any type of medication, prescription or non-prescription.\*\***

Long-term prescription medication may be administered only if the physician completes the required SPECIAL HEALTH FORM and the medication is received in a properly labeled prescription bottle. (The required form can be obtained from the nurse or office personnel.) Short term (up to 2 weeks) prescription medication may be administered upon written request by the parent. This must also be received in a properly labeled prescription bottle. Non-prescription medications (including aspirin/Tylenol/Ibuprofen) are NOT to be administered at school. Leftover medication cannot be sent home with the students. It must be picked up by the parent/guardian.

<b>PLEASE KEEP YOUR EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS UPDATED!</b>
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## **BIRTHDAYS**

Birthdays will be recognized in the classroom, and parents are welcome to send or deliver individually wrapped treats such as individually packaged cupcakes or cookies to be shared in the classroom the last 10 minutes of the instructional day. The delivery of balloons and/or flowers to students is not permitted. Please let your child's teacher know if you do not want your child to participate in birthday recognitions.



## **CLASS PARTIES**

For the 2023-2024 school year, the two school parties will be the Winter party on December 15th and the Fiesta Party on April 25<sup>th</sup>.



## **PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY**

All mobile devices (cell phones, personal tablets, etc) are to be turned off and kept in students' backpacks while at school. Smartwatches may be worn; however, students should not use them during the school day as a communication device (ie. texting, taking pictures, or phone calls). Students not complying with this policy may have the device confiscated and secured until a parent picks it up. Please note, on testing days, students are not permitted to have devices (including smartwatches) on their person at any time.

During school hours, if a parent/guardian needs to get a message to their student, they are welcome to call the office at 210-398-2400 and the message will be delivered to the student as soon as possible and in a manner that will not disrupt learning.



## **COMMUNICATION FROM SCHOOL**

Campus newsletters will be sent out electronically every Friday by administration. Teachers may use apps such as Remind, Class Dojo, or SeeSaw as a form of communication.

Please feel free to contact your child's teacher or the office staff with any questions or concerns. During the day, parents may leave a voicemail for their child's teacher or email them. **MOST** emails are [firstname.lastname@nisd.net](mailto:firstname.lastname@nisd.net). There are a few exceptions to this rule. Please note that teachers are instructing during the day and not able to respond immediately to texts or emails. Please allow up to 24 hours for teachers to respond.



## **CONTROLLED ACCESS & RAPTOR SIGN IN**

Parents and guests are welcome at Mora Elementary School. For the safety of our children, all parents, visitors and volunteers during the instructional day must register at the front security window located just inside the main doors using the Raptor Visitor Tracking System. **A State/District issued photo ID** is required to be presented at the front security window located just inside the main doors. It will be scanned by our office staff and, upon clearance, a photo badge will be generated that must be worn while on campus and turned in upon exiting the campus. Staff has been trained to ask visitors who do not have a visible badge to return to the office.

- All guests to campus will be required to show photo ID and obtain a visitor's photo badge before visiting locations beyond the main office.
- Entrance and exit is through the front doors adjacent to the main office. All other doors are locked during the school day and are not to be used. Students are not permitted to open other doors to allow visitors in the building.
- Doors will continue to remain locked after school hours. Office staff will be available until 3:45p.m. After 3:45, entrance may only be granted when prearranged with a staff member.

## **PAW PASS**

A Paw Pass may be requested for parents who regularly visit or volunteer on the campus. A NISD background check is required as well as a scanned state issued photo ID to create the pass. TO ensure the safety of all our students, IDs will need to be scanned quarterly in order to renew your Paw Pass. Paw Passes must be worn at all times while in the building. Please keep these badges visible. Passes must be turned in before you exit the building.

## **CONTROLLED ACCESS & LEARNING TREE**

Parents picking up children enrolled in Learning Tree are asked to park and contact Learning Tree at the front door. A designated Learning Tree staff member will bring the student to the front door. Pickup from Learning Tree should not occur during regular school dismissal unless previously communicated to the classroom teacher by 2:30 pm. If parents do need to pick up during regular dismissal time, they will be asked to park and contact Learning Tree.

## **STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

Students are expected to display proper respect for school staff and fellow students and to always act in a responsible manner in all areas of the school building, including outside areas. We believe it is a fundamental right of all students to have the opportunity to learn without the unnecessary distractions from other students. Teachers should be able to provide learning opportunities for all students without disruption. Mora teachers promote positive discipline in the classroom. Positive discipline includes class meetings and teaching students to problem solve. Each teacher will share with you the specifics of his/her behavior management plan. District policies are detailed in Section C (Code of Student Conduct) of the Northside Student-Parent Handbook.  
(NISD Safeline telephone #: 210-397-SAFE)

In June 2022, Governor Greg Abbott signed House Bill 114 into law, marking a significant response to the growing concern surrounding e-cigarettes and vaping among our youth. This law specifies that any student found in possession of vaping-related items will be in violation of our Student Code of Conduct, resulting in a mandatory placement in an Alternative Education Placement (AEP).





## **DRESS CODE**

Mora Elementary will follow the district dress and grooming policy. Please see below.

Final determination of acceptable dress and grooming rests with the principal or his/her designee

- Shorts of mid-thigh length may be worn at all school levels. Suggestive and/or indecent shorts will be prohibited.
- Mid-thigh length skirts, skorts, and dresses may be worn at all levels. There should not be a cut or slit in the clothing that extends above the mid-thigh. Suggestive and/or indecent styles will be prohibited. These requirements also apply to school uniforms.
- Appropriate footwear must be worn; footwear which has toes reinforced with steel, hard plastics or similar materials are specifically prohibited.
- Hair must be neat and clean. Unconventional hair styles that distract from teaching and learning will be prohibited.
- Any clothes that are suggestive or indecent or which cause a distraction will be prohibited. Specifically, oversized clothing, tank tops, muscle shirts, halter/crop tops, spaghetti straps, exposed backs or midriffs, and see-through garments are prohibited.
- Indecent/inappropriate patches, writings, or drawings on clothing are prohibited. Undergarments must not be visible.
- All pants are to be worn at the waist (no “sagging”) Tight fitting pants (e.g. tights, spandex, bicycle pants, etc.) are also prohibited. Frays or holes above the knees are prohibited.
- Body piercing jewelry is prohibited except for rings, studs or other traditional jewelry. Any piercing that distracts the teaching and learning environment will be prohibited.

Because fads in dress and grooming are subject to sudden, and sometimes radical change, a basic rule to remember is that student dress and grooming should not be suggestive or indecent, or so bizarre and unusual as to detract from the classroom environment.

For student safety, we ask parents to ensure that students are wearing appropriate shoes for PE days. No sandals, flip flops, or Crocs should be worn on those days.



## **TOYS**

Unless a toy relates directly to a classroom activity or is for “Show and Tell”, please do not allow your child to bring a toy to school. Children become upset when special toys are lost or broken. Also, toys distract students during instructional time.



## **STUDENT LUNCHTIMES**

Parents and guardians are always welcome to eat lunch with their child. To ensure the safety of all students, the office staff will check the emergency contacts designated for a child who has a visitor during lunch. If the adult is not listed as an emergency contact, the visitor will not be permitted to eat lunch with the child without written permission from the child's parent or guardian. Due to federal guidelines, parents are not permitted to eat off of a student's tray. However, parents and visitors may purchase a tray from the cafeteria and sit at the parent table.

You may eat lunch with your child any time except for certain days designated by the campus (state testing, picture day, etc). Tables on the stage are reserved and are to be used when parents eat with their child. All other students must remain with their designated class. Again, to ensure student safety, visitors are not permitted beyond the cafeteria.

For any student whose parent is not here at the start of lunch time, we will ask that he/she go through the cafeteria line and receive a lunch tray. This is to ensure that every child receives lunch. Student lunch deliveries through apps such as DoorDash, Uber Eats, etc, are not permitted any time.



## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips for educational purposes are an important part of the instructional program. They are used as a teaching extension directly related to the content of the grade level or subject area.

Teachers may ask parents to chaperone small groups of students. Chaperones are required to apply for a criminal background check and be cleared before serving as chaperone.

A permission slip must be signed and returned by a parent before a child may attend a field trip. If there is no permission slip signed, the child will not attend the field trip. Students are expected to ride the school bus to and from a field trip.



## **FOOD AT SCHOOL**

Elementary schools are required to follow nutrition rules established by the Texas Department of Agriculture. Parents may choose the food items sent to school for their own child, but may not send food or purchase food for other students. Please be aware that some students may experience food allergies, so it is important that children not share food at school. Students are also prohibited from selling food fundraising items to students during the school day or extended school day.

Please inform your child's teacher if your child has an allergy that would impact him/her participating in birthday treats.



## **HEALTH APPOINTMENTS**

It is recommended that health appointments be made after school releases at 3:00 PM. However, if a student is absent for part of the school day due to an appointment with a healthcare professional, a note from the healthcare professional must be provided to the office upon the child's return, and the partial absence will not be documented as a tardy or an absence. If a student is absent for the entire day due to an appointment with a healthcare professional who provides a note, it will count as an Excused Absence.



## **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Parent-Teacher Conferences are encouraged throughout the school year and are to be pre arranged at the request of the parent or the teacher. All parents will be invited to a conference during the first semester. Building a positive partnership between home and school is a priority for our staff. Please trust that our teachers sincerely care about each child and want to work with you to ensure your child's success.



## **PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK**

It is important for you to read the online handbook carefully as it contains the policies and procedures for all NISD elementary campuses. There are permissions that must be granted for your child to appear on social media, yearbooks, newsletters, etc. If you have any questions regarding the settings for your child, please contact our attendance secretary.



## **PTA**

We encourage each parent and extended family members to support our PTA by becoming a member of the Dr. Linda G. Mora Elementary School PTA. There is no obligation to volunteer, but there are many opportunities for those enthusiastic to support our children! The cost for each member is \$8.00 (\$9.50 online).



## **SCHOOL COLORS & MASCOT**

We are the Mora Bearcats. Our school colors are red, black and silver. Spirit Day will be celebrated each Friday. Students and staff are encouraged to wear their Mora shirts to show school spirit! Shirts may be purchased from the front office for \$10 as supply is available.



## **VOLUNTEERS**

Mora staff members welcome and appreciate enthusiastic volunteers. We invite you to assist teachers and PTA by signing up for various volunteering opportunities that occur during the school year. All volunteers must submit and pass a background check before volunteering with students. This includes tutoring, mentoring, small group work and field trips. Please go to [nisd.net](http://nisd.net) to complete the short form. Be sure to select Mora as your campus. Administrators check the list regularly, and you may call the school to verify that you have cleared the background check.



## **WEBSITE**

Visit our school website at [nisd.net/mora](http://nisd.net/mora), follow us on Twitter at [@NISDMoraES](https://twitter.com/NISDMoraES) or Facebook at Mora Elementary NISD

**\*\*We rely on our families to help be the eyes and ears in our community and share any information relevant to student safety. If at any time you have information regarding real or perceived threat to students' safety, please contact the District's 24 hour anonymous tip line: 210-397-SAFE. Northside Police will follow all leads. Thank you for our continued partnership in assuring our school is a safe and vibrant learning community.**