

Gregorio Esparza Elementary School
Parent/Student Handbook



School Mascot: Eagles

School Colors: Navy Blue and White

5700 Hemphill Rd

San Antonio, TX 78228

Phone: 210/397-1850 www.nisd.net/esparza Fax: 210-431-5843

Follow us on Twitter @NISDEsparza

Gabriela Garcia, Principal

Gabriela Menchaca, Associate Principal

Northside Independent School District

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Esparza Elementary! This handbook is provided to give you lots of valuable information about your child's school. Please take the time to read the information. The following guidelines will be expected to be followed along with the district handbook.

As the 2021-22 school year begins, please know that every member of the school staff is dedicated to making this a happy and productive year for your child. With your support and interest in your child's education, we will work together to ensure a successful school year.

Our Mission: Transform the learning of all students while valuing diversity.

Our Vision: Every day, every student grows in confidence, curiosity, capability and resilience.

Our learners will be: Creators, Collaborators, Communicators, Critical thinkers, Leaders, Learners, Innovators and Solution-Finders.

Our Core Beliefs:

- Each student deserves a high quality and equitable education that honors their diversity and prepares them to engage, contribute, and succeed
- Students' health, safety, engagement, challenge, and support is directly linked to their academic achievement, social emotional development and future success.
- Positive and meaningful relationships among students, families, educators, and the community are vital to student success.
- Classroom teachers have the most impact on student achievement followed by campus principals.
- Esparza is essential to foster community and develop engaged, well rounded citizens.

At Esparza we truly BELIEVE that each student is capable of reaching his or her goals. We will instill in our students the confidence they need in order to be successful in all they do socially and academically. We will demonstrate overall excellence in all we do each day with your child, and trust that we will build positive working relationships with each of you. We look forward to meeting new families, seeing returning smiles, and having a school year filled with successes.

Attached is the Student-Parent Handbook with more about Esparza's procedures. This is going to be an AWESOME year, and we look forward to being your partner in your child's education. Together we will **Start Strong, Stay Strong, and Finish Strong!**

Respectfully,

Gabriela Garcia
Principal

Gabriela Menchaca
Associate Principal

SCHOOL HOURS: 7:45a.m. - 3:10p.m.

ATTENDANCE: Daily school attendance and punctuality are critical to student academic success. We understand that students may become too ill to attend school or you may have an occasional emergency that may prevent you from getting your child to school on time. However, in order for students to take advantage of all their learning opportunities and maximize their instructional time, they need to be here everyday and come to school on time. One goal the district is focusing on this academic year is to increase all campuses' attendance percentages. Therefore the attendance goal this year for Esparza Elementary is for us to reach at least 98%, so we are really striving to communicate the following daily school attendance and punctuality expectations to all of our kids and our families:

1. We will monitor all absences, tardies, and early departures very closely every day, and will be contacting parents by phone or a home visit if absences/tardies become a concern.
2. The first bell rings at 7:35 AM, and instruction begins promptly at 7:45 AM. Students are expected to be in their classrooms ready to learn by 7:45 AM.
3. Arriving late or leaving early from school counts as a partial-day absence, which is a violation of the Compulsory Attendance Law.
4. Students who arrive after 7:45 AM, must report to the office for a tardy slip before going to class.
5. Students arriving after 9:00 AM are marked absent.
6. Up to 10 parent notes for the school year are accepted for an absence to be excused, after that students must bring a doctor's note/or conference with administration/teacher; otherwise the absence is unexcused.
7. Parents of students with 3 unexcused absences will be served with an Attendance Warning Notice/Letter by the Associate Principal or District Attendance Officer; 10 additional unexcused absences will result in an Attendance Court Referral.
8. Please value the school day, try to make doctor's appointments after school or on weekends. However, if you must keep an appointment during the day, return the student to school so that your child is not marked absent, unless the doctor recommends home rest.
9. A student may have 1 tardy per 9-week period for a total of 4 tardies to have Perfect Attendance for the entire school year.

When a child is absent 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 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 3 days will result in an unexcused absence. After 10 instances, that notes are written by parent and/or guardian as an excused absence, the campus administration will decide whether or not to excuse the absence. Together we can reach our goal of 98%, and our students will continue to have the optimal opportunity of an exceptional education.

ARRIVALS: Students may enter the cafeteria at 7:00 a.m. Students may eat breakfast in the cafeteria and then go to their assigned area at 7:15 a.m. when supervision begins to wait for the bell to ring. Breakfast will be served from 7:00 – 7:35 a.m. In the mornings, **PK students will wait in the cafeteria with instructional assistants.** K-5th grades will wait in their hallway. All teachers will welcome students into class from designated areas at 7:35 a.m. Students who come on campus after 7:45 must report to the office to receive a tardy slip as security lobby doors will be locked at 7:45.

VIPs (Very Involved Parents) / CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS – Our VIP program recognizes ALL of the many ways that parents are involved in helping their children to be successful in school – field trip chaperone, classroom tutorial, reading with their child each evening, checking the assignment book, etc. If you are interested in becoming a VIP and/or serving as a classroom volunteer or a field trip chaperone during the school year, you must complete an online application at least two weeks prior to an event. This must be done EVERY SCHOOL YEAR.

Go to: www.nisd.net

Quick Links

Criminal History Authorization

Submit an Online Background Check Form

You will need to have this done so that you can attend classroom parties as well

PARENTS WITH YOUNGER SIBLINGS

If you are volunteering for an event/activity that requires supervision of students, please make prior arrangements for their siblings not attending Esparza. For the safety of your children and our students we want to ensure proper supervision is maintained.

BIRTHDAYS AND PARTIES: The 3 parties for the school year are the following:

Winter Party: December 17th @ 1:30pm

Valentines: February 14th @ 1:30pm

End of Year: June 2nd @ 1:30pm

On these days, students are allowed to bring and eat food items that are not normally permitted. Classroom teachers will send information as dates come closer. In recognition of student birthdays, parents are able to bring in non-edibles or cupcakes/cookies that are **prepackaged/store bought**. Students will be permitted to eat cupcakes in the classroom in the latter part of the afternoon. No food may be given in the cafeteria, other than for your own child, as per state guidelines. Balloons or flowers are not permitted and should not be delivered to school. Birthday party invitations can be distributed to classmates as long as all boys, all girls, or all students receive an invitation. We do not want any of our students to feel left out.

BREAKFAST & LUNCH This year Esparza Elementary will continue as a campus to allow all students to eat breakfast and lunch at no charge. Breakfast will be served from 7:00-7:35 a.m. Students must be in the cafeteria during that time if they would like to eat breakfast so they are not tardy to class.

LUNCH WITH YOUR CHILD— Due to limited space and contact tracing, parents are HIGHLY encouraged not to come and eat with their child this school year. You can, however, come and drop off their child's lunch at the front office. We also like to foster them being social with their friends by allowing them to eat with their classroom friends. If you do come, a designated parent table will be on the stage for your visit. You may bring outside food for your child but please do not give food to other students as this is against federal school nutrition regulations.

Esparza Student Pledge:

*I pledge to accelerate my mind and
my actions to always excel in all of
my academic and social endeavors.*

I will cultivate a desire to learn.

*I will learn the necessary skills
to achieve my goals.*

*I will demonstrate the knowledge
I have learned by realizing my goals.*

*I will always remember that
I am responsible for my life.*

*I am prepared to take
Full responsibility for all of my actions.*

*I am truly a unique and
Wonderful person . . .*

Because I am ME!

ESPARZA SCHOOL SONG

**Oh Esparza, I feel pride in my heart
when I walk through your doors
in the morning.**

**Oh Esparza, I feel strength in my mind
when I leave at the end of each day.**

**Oh Esparza, I have learned to become
all I have the potential to be.**

**And forever will you have a place in my heart,
Oh Esparza, you're special to me.**

**And forever will you have a place in my heart,
Oh Esparza Elementary.**

**by Deborah Beninati, 1990
former Esparza Music Teacher**

DISMISSAL is at 3:10 p.m. There are 2 pickup locations: front circle & east side parking lot.

Parents waiting for students are expected to wait in their vehicle. This precaution allows students to walk safely to their designated areas.

Students who are bus riders will be accompanied to the bus area at 3:10 p.m. All teachers wait with their students along the front or side of the campus for parents.

All children waiting for parents/ guardians to pick them up must wait at grade level designated areas along sidewalks.

At 3:25 p.m., all children remaining are brought to the office and staff begins to contact parents. Once inside the building, students must be signed out of the office. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will need to go to the office with proper ID in order to sign out students.

PARKING

The east parking (left side when looking at the front of campus) is intended for parents and the community.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call 210-397-1850.

CHANGE IN TRANSPORTATION – If you are changing how your child is going home, please send a note / email to your child’s teacher. Please do not change how your child is going home after 2:00pm. This makes it difficult to ensure your child is in the right place for dismissal.

DRESS CODE POLICY: Esparza is a uniform campus. Esparza’s dress code policy for students is in accordance with Northside’s policy as explained in the NISD Student-Parent Handbook.

UNIFORM:

TOPS: Navy or white collared shirts, sweaters, sweatshirts, or jackets worn during the day must be navy or grey (NO decorations). Shirts must be tucked in. Hoodies are not permitted. We want to be consistent with our Middle School for a smooth transition.

BOTTOMS: Khaki, navy, or dark blue denim shorts, pants, or skirts. (NO decorations)

Specific Guidelines:

- Grades 3-5 shorts and skirts must be no more than 4 inches above the knee. Shirts must be tucked in; Undershirts must match uniforms and be navy or white. Unconventional or multi-colored hair is not permitted.
- Earrings are not permitted for boys; Only two earrings per ear will be allowed for girls. For safety issues, hoops can’t be larger than 1 inch in diameter and dangles will not be permitted.
- Necklaces and chains are NOT to be visible; bracelets are limited to two per arm.
- Scarves, hats, and other head covering are not permitted inside the building;

- Jackets and coats other than navy and grey are considered outerwear and are not to be worn inside the building.
- Shoes should have flat heels; tennis shoes are recommended.
- Unconventionally colored, multi-colored, spiked or Mohawk hairstyles are specifically prohibited.

EARLY PICK UP/DISMISSAL: School is dismissed at 3:10 p.m. If your child must leave school earlier, parents must come to the office and sign their child out. We ask that all students who are going to be signed out early, be signed out by 2:00. Students will only be pulled out of class after 2:00 on an emergency basis. Students will only be released to individuals listed on the emergency health card and proper identification will be required. For the safety of all children, we will not release students to individuals who are not on the emergency health card or individuals who do not have proper identification. It is therefore important for parents to update the medical emergency health card information as changes occur.

GRADING: All Northside Elementary campuses issue grades using a nine week grading period. Report cards and progress reports are instrumental in providing parents with feedback as to student progress and mastery of the NISD Promotion Standards. In addition, you are encouraged to visit the Home Access Center (HAC) at www.nisd.net to view your child's grades and attendance.

MONDAYS: COLLEGE SPIRIT DAY: Students may wear a college shirt every Monday this year. Students must wear a uniform shirt if not wearing a college shirt.

FRIDAYS ESPARZA SPIRIT DAY: Every Friday is Spirit Day. All students are encouraged to wear an Esparza school shirt. Esparza Elementary T-Shirts will be on sale in the month of September.

MEDICATIONS: The nurse is permitted to administer first aid only. The nurse does not diagnose illnesses, but takes notes of symptoms and notifies the parent of the observations. A child with a temperature will need to be picked up. A student should be fever-free for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school. Please try and schedule medications to be given at home. In circumstances where medication needs to be given at school, it should be taken directly to the nurse by the parent. No medications may be kept in the classroom. Only medication prescribed by a physician may be taken at school; this includes over the counter medication. A medication form must be completed and the prescription must be in the original prescription container. Long term medication may be administered only if the physician completes the school's Special Health Form at: www.nisd.net/healthservices. Parents must pick up leftover medication. Medications

will be thrown away two weeks after parent notification.

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA): The Esparza Parent-Teacher Association extends a cordial welcome to all parents and urges you to join and participate in the organization's activities throughout the year. Assisting our school through PTA benefits all children, helps pay ½ of all field trips, instructional materials, student/teacher incentives, etc. More information will be coming from the PTA President, Josie Vazquez.

TESTING—Students in grades 3-5 will take the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) assessment. Teachers will be communicating via weekly newsletters to provide information regarding any upcoming test dates. These tests are lengthy and require a lot of focus and endurance from our children. It is important for the students to be in bed early the night before the test, preferably by 8:30 if possible. During the state assessments, parents are unable to have lunch with their children.

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES: We encourage conferences throughout the school year as questions or concerns arise. All teachers will be arranging a conference once each semester with every parent. A parent or teacher may request conferences any time during the school year; however, these conferences must be pre-scheduled. The teacher cannot be expected to stop instruction to the entire class when a parent unexpectedly arrives. Thank you so much for your understanding with this matter. We want every minute of instruction to count for our students. It is to everyone's advantage that you discuss concerns with your child's teacher first before calling an administrator. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, you are free to call an administrator. We want for our teachers/parents to develop a positive, trusting, working relationship that will best benefit student **success!**

Beginning of the Year parent conferences will be held October 4th – October 29th.
Mid-year and end of year conferences are only required for those students not meeting promotional requirements. Parent conferences can be requested at any time during the year.

PARENT OBSERVATIONS

All parent observations must be limited to a 15-minute session and planned at least 2 days in advance. Notify administration of the observation.

PROCEDURES FOR SIGNING IN: For security purposes, all parents and visitors must go through the front office to sign in, show picture identification, and receive a visitor badge. All visitors must present a picture ID that will be scanned for a background check. No one will be allowed in without a picture ID that has not been scanned. With our security lobby, we want to ensure that we are practicing the safest practices for our students. Therefore, all access to the

campus will be closed to visitors until checking in at the front office's window. The security doors will be locked from 7:45-3:30. If your child arrives tardy to school, it is important to park, sign in your child, so they can receive a tardy slip, and walk to class. Once students dismiss from the campus security lobby doors, they will lock again and not be unlocked. If you have a conference with a teacher after 3:30, please ensure you pre-arrange it so the teacher can let you in. Thank you so much for your support in this endeavor because your child's safety is a priority for us.

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION: All adults on campus are seen as role models for our students/your children. Therefore, we ask all parents, guardians, and community members to demonstrate respect towards each other and use appropriate voice tone and language at all times when on campus. Students surround our campus daily whether it is in the parking lot, cafeteria, or hallways and they need positive and appropriate role models.

STUDENT ITEMS: Please put your child's name on clothing and school items so that they can be returned if they are found around the campus. There will be a lost and found located in the front office. In order to ensure the quality of the academic school day, certain items are not allowed on campus grounds. Examples include any type of toy, iPods, electronic devices, games, trading cards, toy guns, or any other items that could be viewed as a distraction. If these items are brought to school, they will be collected and will remain in the administration office until a parent/guardian comes to pick them up. Items left at the end of the school year will be discarded. If a toy gun or toy that can be viewed as a weapon is brought, consequences for bringing such items will be given by the administration.

STUDENT DROP OFF/PICK UP: Student drop off in morning, and pick up in afternoon will continue to be in front of campus. Please ensure that you are only entering through the designated areas, and not dropping off/picking up your child in bus loop area. It is neither a safe nor a fair practice for some parents to utilize the bus loop as a means of student drop off/pick up. We would not like to see our community receiving citations from NISD police for entering a non-designated entrance/exit. In the afternoon, students K-5th grade that are waiting for parent pick up will be asked to sit in their 'designated grade level area.' As you pull into the loop, you will see grades 4 & 5th to the sides of the campus front doors, followed by 3rd grade at benches, 2nd, 1st, and Kindergarten will all be seated in front of campus on sidewalk. Please assist us with maintaining the grass area in the front of our campus by keeping children from walking/running through grass. We want to ensure our campus stays beautiful.

CELL PHONES: Students having cellular phones must keep the devices turned off and in their backpack during the regular school day. District employees shall confiscate any cellular phones from students who violate this policy.

TRAFFIC PATTERNS: In an effort to expedite the flow of traffic in the parent pick up/drop off lane, we have developed a traffic flow pattern with ONE traffic lane in the morning and ONE lane in the afternoon. We ask that for the safety of our students, parents, and staff, you drive through the parent drop off lane and do not release your child in the parking lot. Your patience during heavy traffic times is appreciated. Please do not leave your vehicle unattended because this is a fire hazard and prevents proper traffic flow. Northside ISD police Department has reviewed our traffic procedures and will adhere to all posted signs to help with traffic flow. Please ensure during drop off and pick up, you drive up to “Car 1” sign to prevent traffic back up.

Please be mindful of our Safety Patrols during pick up and drop off. NISD Police Department will make frequent trips to our campus during pick up and drop off times.