

# STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK

A supplement to the  
NISD Elementary Student-Parent Handbook



Dr. Caroline Wernli Elementary School  
1881 Arcadia Path  
San Antonio, Texas 78245  
210-398-2450

NORTHSIDE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dear Wernli Families,

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year! We are so excited to be part of your community and serve at Dr. Caroline Wernli Elementary School. We have worked together over the summer to prepare our campus and classrooms for another year of high-quality instruction and student engagement. We are eager to welcome our Wildcats to a new year of learning, leading, and building friendships.

Wernli Wildcats are on the prowl for knowledge! It is our vision that everyday, every student will grow in wisdom, character, and confidence. Our teachers and staff are committed to the following beliefs:

- Each student deserves a high quality education which honors their voice and prepares them to engage, contribute, and succeed.
- Prioritizing students' health, safety, engagement, enrichment, and support directly impacts their academic achievement and future success.
- Meaningful relationships among students, families, educators, and the community are vital to building student confidence.
- Student achievement is directly linked to a strong support system of family, school staff, and community.
- Public schools are essential to foster community and develop engaged citizens.

Please join us in providing our Wildcats with the foundations of learning, friendship and responsibility so they can fulfill their purpose in whatever lies ahead in their future.

This campus handbook is a supplement to the NISD Elementary Student-Parent Handbook and contains helpful information. 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.

As we begin a new year together, please know that every member of the Wernli 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,

*Lori Shaw*  
Principal

*Casey Feldt*  
Associate Principal



## Our Namesake

Dr. Caroline Wernli was employed in NISD from 1969-1993, where she served as a teacher, counselor, Assistant Principal, and Director of Student Teacher Placement at the University of the Incarnate Word. During her professional career, she served leadership positions with San Antonio Women Deans and Counselor Association, University of Texas Teacher Center, Phi Delta Kappa, and in a collaborative capacity with Region 20 Service Center, and the State Board for Educator Certification. Additionally, Dr. Wernli has held leadership positions with the Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators and the American Association of School Personnel Administrators. In two school districts, Dr. Wernli implemented mentor programs for newly hired teachers. At NISD, Dr. Wernli collaborated with the University of Northern Iowa to establish a student teaching program in NISD. Since retiring, Dr. Wernli has been an active volunteer at the school district and community level. In early 2000, Dr. Wernli worked with others to establish a NISD School Museum to collect, preserve, and share the history of NISD.



## School Hours

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

School office hours are 7:00 a.m.-3:45 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Children arriving after 7:45 a.m. are tardy. Because security doors will be locked at 7:45a.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. Our office staff will escort them to class if they need any help.



## 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 and Kinder students will report to the cafeteria. Students in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> will report to their classroom hallways or eat breakfast in the cafeteria, if needed. If you choose to walk your child into the building, please park in the parent lot located in front of the school. Visitors and parents will need to register in the front office for a visitor's pass prior to walking through campus doors if you are walking students to classrooms or having breakfast with them. The back drop off loop is designated for school buses. Please never park and exit your vehicle in the front drive as this area needs to be kept accessible to emergency vehicles. Teachers supervise students beginning at 7:15a.m. Supervision is provided as early as 7:00a.m. for bus riders and students eating breakfast in our cafeteria. If your child arrives before 7:15 a.m. and isn't eating breakfast they will wait in the front foyer area with one of our staff members.
- **Afternoon Dismissal Procedures**  
At the end of the school day, teachers accompany their grade level students to their appropriate dismissal location (Learning Tree, bus loop, or parent pick-up areas). Students waiting to be picked up remain with their grade level teachers until dismissed. Any children remaining after dismissal are brought to the office to contact their parents.

If you arrive early, please wait outside under the front porch for your child as teachers are unable to dismiss students in the hallway or classrooms. After a Wernli staff member takes your dismissal number, your child will meet you outside and you may safely cross the crosswalk to your parked car.

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. Please keep your car tag in a visible location of your front windshield, so a Wernli staff member can input the number, notifying teachers to dismiss your child.

We dismiss parent walk-ups first, in order to keep all students safe from moving vehicles.

Adults and safety patrols will supervise the opening of car doors for safe dismissal. Please remember to turn off cell phones in the front drive. 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
- Staff cannot buckle a student into a carseat. If you need to buckle the car seat, please pull up and park past the crosswalk to do so.



#### 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.

**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 398-2450 no later than 2:15.**

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 398-2450. Sending an email to your child's teacher may not be read until after dismissal, so please communicate directly with the front office. 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.

**If you are needing to pick up your child early from school, please do so prior to 2:30.** Students and teachers are transitioning to dismissal locations, making it difficult to locate students after 2:30.

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



#### Tardies and Early Outs

Arriving at school on time every day is extremely important. Children are tardy at 7:45 a.m. and announcements take place shortly after that. Information and instructions are given during the first fifteen minutes, which can affect the rest of the school day. If a child comes in late, he/she often misses out on this information.

Students arriving after 7:45a.m must come to the office, accompanied by the parent, to sign in and pick up a tardy slip beginning week 2 of the school year.

When students are picked up before the 3:00 dismissal bell, it is considered an early out unless you turn in a doctor's note to the front office.

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.

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 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.

It is our desire to work with families to address any attendance concerns at the campus level.

Absences <b>Excused</b> With a Note	Absences <b>Unexcused</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)



## School Nurse and Medication Policy

**\*\*All medications must be taken to the school office\*\***

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.) 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.



### Birthdays

Birthdays will be recognized in the classroom, and parents are welcome to bring in store bought treats to share with the entire class (pre-packaged or individually wrapped). Please do not provide treats that require cutting and serving, for example cakes or cookie cakes. Please consult with the classroom teacher regarding food allergies in the class. If you send birthday invitations to be distributed at school, please provide invitations for the entire class.



### Class Parties

Each class will have two school parties and a third special day designated by the campus principal. For the 2023-2024 school year, the two school parties will be the Winter party on December 15th and the Fiesta Party on April 25th. The third designated day will be the End of Year parties on May 31st.



### Cell Phones/Mobile Devices

Cell phones are to be turned off and kept in students' backpacks while at school. Students not complying with this policy may have the cell phone secured by their teacher or administrator until a parent picks it up.



### Communication from School

Campus digital newsletters will be emailed to parents each Friday. This newsletter will communicate upcoming campus events and important school and district information. Please take the time to read these newsletters.

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.



### Controlled Access & Raptor Sign In

Parents and guests are welcome at Wernli 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. **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.

There is only ONE Entrance and ONE exit, which 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 3:45p.m., entrance to our campus may only be granted when prearranged with a staff

member.



### Controlled Access & Learning Tree

Parents picking up children enrolled in Learning Tree are asked to park and remain in their cars in the driveway area by the bus loop/cafeteria doors. All other campus doors will be locked. Please call 210.398.2492 and a designated Learning Tree staff member will be assigned to provide entry to parents.



### Student Behavior

Students are expected to display proper respect for school staff and fellow students and to 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. Wernli 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 B (Code of Student Conduct) of the Northside Student-Parent Handbook. (NISD Safeline telephone #: 397-SAFE).



### Dress Code

Wernli Elementary will follow the district dress and grooming policy. Please keep in mind the following items. 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. 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. Tight fitting pants (tights, spandex, bicycle pants, etc.) are also prohibited. Frays or holes above the knees are prohibited. Hair must be neat and clean. Unconventional hairstyles that distract from teaching and learning will be prohibited. Administration will review any concerns about dress code and contact parents if necessary. Please review the NISD Elementary Student-Parent Handbook for additional information on dress code.



### Cafeteria Accounts

You may pay for meals online, check balances, set up low balance alerts, submit meal applications, view purchases, view menus and set purchase restrictions by visiting [School Cafe](#).



### Family Lunch

You may eat lunch with your child any time except on the days when we are administering the STAAR test. On those days we cannot have visitors or parent volunteers on campus. Certain



tables are reserved and are to be used when parents eat with their child. All parents/visitors eating with students must register in the front office for a visitor's badge. To ensure student safety and supervision, only students whose parents (or immediate family members listed on the emergency card) are present may eat at the parent/student tables. All other students must remain with their designated class. Please sign in at the front office and then go directly to the cafeteria to meet your child. Stopping by the classroom disrupts the routine at a difficult transition time. Teachers will appreciate your cooperation with this request.



### 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.



### 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.



### 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 health care 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. When registering your child, you were asked to read The Parent-Student Authorization information, which explained the Family



Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and required that you answer 3 statements. Please consider this information carefully, as it allows or restricts your child's picture to be shared on Wernli and District social media sites and in our Wernli yearbook. The Northside's policy regarding the Acceptable Use of the District's Technology Resources and permission for Web Publishing was also included in the registration process. Students will not be allowed to use the campus computers until the Acceptable Use form was acknowledged and accepted. You may change any three of these responses at your convenience, by notifying our office staff.



#### PTA

We encourage each parent and extended family members to support our PTA by becoming a member of the Dr. Caroline Wernli Elementary School PTA. There is no obligation to volunteer, but there are many opportunities for those enthusiastic to support our children!




#### School Colors and Mascot

We are the Wernli Wildcats. Our school colors are royal blue and black. Spirit Day will be celebrated each Friday. Students and staff are encouraged to wear their Wernli shirts to show school spirit!



#### Visitor Name Tags/Safety:

At Wernli, the safety of our students and staff is one of our top priorities. **To maintain campus security, all visitors will need to complete a background check and check-in through the front office to receive a visitor's badge, prior to entering campus.** Whether it be walking your child to their classroom or having breakfast/lunch with them, visitors will need to wear a visitor badge issued at the main office at all times. In an effort to alleviate long lines while maintaining campus security, we ask that you send your information to us in advance if you are planning to be a frequent visitor. We will create a Wernli Paw Pass for you to use throughout the year. When visiting campus, you will need to show your ID to the front office and they will issue you your Paw Pass. Before leaving campus, you will return your Paw Pass to the office until your

next visit. Completing the Paw Pass application (click [here](#)) or use this QU code  will help us know who to expect on campus while expediting the check-in process. Failure to submit your information in advance may result in a delay while we complete the check-in process upon your arrival. **Additionally, you will need to complete the NISD Background Check by clicking [here](#) or scanning the QR code.**



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: 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.

When visiting our campus, you are welcome to use the visitor restrooms located outside the cafeteria and library. Adult visitors are to refrain from using student restrooms.



## Volunteers

Wernli 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 Wernli as your campus. Administrators check the list regularly, and you may call the school to verify that you have cleared the background check.



## Web Sites

Visit our school web site at [nisd.net/wernli](http://nisd.net/wernli) or follow us on Twitter at @NISDWERNLI and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/NISDWernli>