

**2007-2008  
Parent & Student Handbook  
And Code of Conduct**



**Don T. Durham Elementary**

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**Teamwork Works  
at  
Durham Elementary School  
You Have A Hand In It!**

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The purpose of this book is to acquaint students and parents with the programs of studies, student organizations, regulations, and practices of Durham Elementary. New students will find within these pages the answers to many of their questions. Parents, as well as students, should familiarize themselves with the contents of this book in order that they may better understand the programs of the schools.

Attending school should be a most enjoyable experience. It is also an exceedingly serious matter that demands a high degree of cooperation between the home, school, teacher and student. Without cooperation and understanding on the part of all concerned, the maximum benefits of an education cannot be secured.

Please feel free to come by the office at any time for help in solving your problems. It is better to face situations as they arise than to hope that they will solve themselves.

Durham Elementary School has a responsibility to each student to uphold standards of excellence in scholarship, attitude and citizenship. To expect anything less than one's best in achievement, behavior, or personal attitudes would be failure on the part of the school to meet its responsibility to you, our community, state and nation. Education is not a right that can be demanded; it is a privilege that must be earned. Many times, the school may expect or require you to do something that is not the easiest for you, but the easiest is not always the best.

The staff of Durham Elementary sincerely hopes that your days with us will be both pleasant and profitable and that the education you gain will prepare you to face responsibilities of the future.

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## General Information

### ACADEMICS

The following subjects are taught in all grades K-4:

Reading	Handwriting	Social Studies	Physical Education
Mathematics	Health	Language Arts	Art
Science	Technology	Music	Library

### CITIZENSHIP

Students at Durham Elementary School are taught and encouraged to celebrate diversity in our society. Through the use of programs, plays, thematic units, history and other methods, students are able to experience the richness and excitement of our surroundings. Parents are invited to partner with the school as we impart knowledge and respect of individual differences, which add value to both our school and community.

### COLORS AND MASCOT

The Durham Elementary School mascot is a dragon and the school colors are green, black, and white. We encourage our students to identify with these symbols as a representation of our school pride and spirit. Fridays are our spirit day.

### ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

School hours are 7:55 a.m. to 2:55 p.m. for students in Grades K - 4. Students should not arrive at school before 7:45 a.m. and should leave for home promptly by 3:00 p.m.

### TRAFFIC FLOW AND STUDENT SAFETY

Use only one lane for dropping off and picking up students. There is an adult on duty to supervise. Our arrival times at Durham Elementary School are **7:45 a.m. to 7:55 a.m.**, and dismissal time is **2:55 p.m.** Please follow the crossing walk signals. Durham Intermediate School also uses the front of the school for their arrival and departure, so please be considerate of their traffic flow. Their school day is from 8:40 a.m. until 3:40 p.m. If you bring a child to school after 8:10 a.m., please be aware that the Durham Intermediate School buses use the front of the school. No cars may pass through.

**If you park in the parking lot, please walk your child inside rather than dropping him or her off in the parking lot.**

### TARDIES

Late arrival disrupts class and causes loss of instruction time. Students who arrive at school after 8:00 a.m. are considered tardy and must report to the office for an admission slip. Persistent tardies will prompt a call to the student's parents.

### ATTENDANCE

When students are absent, the work can be made up, however, the level of learning will not be the same as when the student has the opportunity to interact with the teacher and fellow students. State law mandates that students attend at least 90% of the days class is offered. An Attendance Review Committee may meet to determine whether or not academic credit will be awarded if students miss more than 90% of class days. Please refer to district portion of handbook for further information.

### PICTURES

During the fall, individual student pictures will be taken and group and individual pictures will be in the spring. There is a make-up date planned shortly after the fall session only.

### TELEPHONE

All classrooms have telephones. During school hours, calls go to teachers' voice mail and are returned during conference periods or after school. Please be sure that your child knows how he or she will get home and discuss what to do on rainy days before coming to school daily. Parents may leave a message concerning a change of transportation plans with the school secretary by 2 p.m. Messages are sent to classes well in advance of the dismissal bell.

Telephones in the building are for school business. *Students are able to use the phones for emergencies only.*

### VALUABLES

The school administrator and staff cannot be responsible for valuables that students bring to school. It is recommended that students leave all valuables at home. If special circumstances make it necessary for a student to bring substantial cash or other important items to school, these items can be safeguarded by registering them and leaving them in the school office.

### LOST AND FOUND

All clothing is placed in the Lost and Found in the hallway near the cafeteria. Money, jewelry, or any other articles of value are turned in to the office. Items not claimed are donated periodically to charity. Please mark your child's belongings.

### PETS

No pets of any kind are allowed at school. Teachers may give special permission for pets to be brought to school as part of a special display or activity. However, under no circumstances may a potentially dangerous pet be brought to school.

## ASSESSMENT

CISD requires all students in Grades K-4 to participate in the state mandated literacy assessment. All assessments at the beginning of the year are the first six (6) days of school; all K-4 students will be released at 11 a.m. Transportation is available.

## REPORT CARDS / GRADING SYSTEM

Report cards are a source of information for parents so they will know what kind of work a child is doing. They are sent home with students on the Thursday following the end of each six weeks. Parents must sign the report and the student must return it to school. Report cards are mailed home the last six weeks. In order to receive a report card, a student must be in attendance three or more weeks of the six weeks reporting period.

Students in Grades Three and Four receive numerical grades:

A = 100 – 90      B = 89 – 80      C = 79 – 70      F = 69 and Below

The following letter grades are given in Art, Music, and P.E., Handwriting, and Conduct:

E = Excellent                      N = Needs Improvement  
S = Satisfactory                  U = Unsatisfactory

To be promoted, a student must have an overall average of 70 in English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. A student must have a 70 average in English/language arts and math on classwork, as well as 70 percent mastery on the essential elements for that grade level. Attendance requirements must also be met.

Students in Grade Two receive letter grades for science and social studies. Students in Grade Two receive numerical grades for mathematics, reading and writing.

Students in Grade One receive E, S, N, and U in all subjects. The Kindergarten report card is a checklist of skills that a student has mastered.

Progress Reports are sent home at the three-week period for students scoring below a seventy-five (75). All fourth graders receive a progress report regardless of their grades.

## CONFERENCES

Each teacher will host one parent conference during the 1<sup>st</sup> semester depending on the grade. Additional conferences can be scheduled as needed by parent or teacher.

We encourage a parent who desires information or wants to raise a question or concern to confer with the appropriate teacher, counselor, or principal. A parent who wishes to confer with a teacher may call the office for an appointment during the teacher's conference period or request that the teacher call the parent during a conference period or at another mutually convenient time.

## HOMEWORK

A reasonable amount of work should be done on a daily basis at home to reinforce skills learned during the school day. Every night, some time should be spent reading and working with math facts. This gives students the opportunity to develop desirable independent study habits and responsibility. Some nights, a student may need to complete work that was unfinished at school. Occasionally, special projects will be assigned.

Approximate homework schedule: (in addition to reading 20 minutes a night)

Kindergarten      -10 minutes a night  
1<sup>st</sup> Grade            - 15 minutes a night  
2<sup>nd</sup> Grade            - 25 minutes a night  
3<sup>rd</sup> Grade            - 30 minutes a night  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade            - 40 minutes a night

## LATE WORK

Late work assignments may have 10 points deducted for each day it is late up to three days, after which a grade of seventy (70) will be the highest grade earned. After three (3) days, the student will receive a zero (0) for the assignment.

## MAKE-UP WORK

Students will have one day for each day missed that is excused. After a student has been absent three (3) days, a parent may request his or her work.

## STUDY SKILLS PROCEDURES - Keys to Academic Success

A parent can help his/her child be aware of skills and techniques which make learning easier and more enjoyable. The following are student guidelines for achieving good study habits:

1. Come to class with pencil, paper and other necessary materials.
2. Be an active participant in class. Listen well and take part in class.
3. Ask questions to clarify problems.
4. Plan your day and schedule time for homework.
5. Use what is learned and apply it to new situations.
6. Strive to do the very best work possible. Just "getting by" is not a worthwhile goal.

## ADMISSIONS

New Kindergarten students must be five (5) years old on or before September 1 of the school year in which they are enrolling. New First Grade students must be six (6) years old on or before September 1. A physical examination is recommended when a student enters school for the first time. Ages must be verified by a birth certificate, and immunization records must be complete.

## STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Parents/guardians who wish to enroll a student in school should report to the office with an immunization record and birth certificate (if enrolling the child for the first time) or withdrawal record from the last school attended. Proof of residency shall be required for every new student. Minimum proof shall consist of the latest electric and water bills and/or utility deposit receipt from a district residence in which the student and/or his/her parent resides, and other such corroborating proof the district may require. Please call the Durham Elementary office if you change your place of residence or phone number during the school year.

## ADDRESS CHANGE INFORMATION

If there is ever a change in the home address, home telephone, or parents' places of employment, one of the school's office staff should be notified immediately. Parents should tell the office staff if there is any change in the information listed in the emergency section of the registration card.

## EMERGENCY INFORMATION

In case of an emergency, each student is required to have on file at the school office:

1. Parent(s) or guardian(s) name(s).
2. Complete and up-to-date address.
3. Home phone number and parent(s) work phone number(s).
4. Emergency phone number of friends or relatives.
5. Physician's name and phone number.
6. Medical alert information.

## COMMUNICATION (Newsletter)

Current and upcoming events are published monthly in the Dragon Details. This newsletter contains items of interest to parents and students. Classroom teachers send home a weekly newsletter as well. Dragon Details is on the Durham Elementary School website. Please inform the school office if you require a printed copy to be sent home all year. Each grade level and ENCORE class will make information and plans available through TeacherWeb; this program is also available on the website.

## LUNCH

All students in grades K-4 have a 30-minute lunch period. Students have a choice between a hot plate lunch, sack lunch or a salad each day. A menu is sent home at the beginning of each month so that parents and students will know what is offered daily. **One** extra dessert may be purchased and students have a choice of milk or juice. A free or reduced price lunch is available to those children who qualify. Parents may pick up an application in the school office. Computerized lunch cards are utilized by the students and may be paid for daily, weekly, or monthly depending on how much money is deposited into the student's account. Students will not be interrupted during instructional time informing them to pick up their lunch in the office.

## PARTIES

Durham Elementary School celebrates three (3) parties a year - Winter Holiday, Valentine's Day and End of Year. Communication is handled by the classroom teacher and room mom. We love honoring students' birthdays by reading their names over the announcements!

No elaborate treats or decorations are allowed. **Due to safety factors, no balloons of any kind are allowed at school.** If party invitations are passed out at school, **every** child in the class must receive one. Special treats (cupcakes, etc.) may be brought for your child's class on his/her actual birthday. They will be eaten in the cafeteria during the regular lunchtime.

## FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an important part of the curriculum and philosophy of our school. Learning takes place inside and outside the classroom. As a school, our belief is that field trips can enrich and enhance the academic experience at Durham. They are scheduled by teachers throughout the year. Sometimes a small amount of money may be requested from each student to help defray transportation or facility use costs.

We believe that field trips are a privilege, not a right. Our expectations for students are that they will be good examples and models for classmates and younger students. If a student proves through his/her personal behavioral choices that they are not responsible to represent Durham at the highest level, then he/she will not be permitted to go on the trip.

Alternative activities and instruction will be provided to students not attending field trips. Students should come to school during regular hours to participate in these planned alternative activities.

In the event that the school chooses to deny a student from attending a field trip, any funds that are refundable will be returned to the parents as soon as possible.

## **DISCIPLINE**

### **Bullying**

Students at Durham Elementary School are encouraged to respect all individuals they come in contact with in the school setting. Bullying will not be tolerated and is considered a Level IV Offense in the Student Code of Conduct. Bullying includes the initiation or participation in intimidation by name calling, using racial or ethnic slurs, making derogatory statements, or threatening physical violence. Students shall not engage in bullying one another; furthermore, no student shall encourage, permit, or assist any other person in bullying. A substantiated charge of bullying shall result in disciplinary action. Parents and students are invited to partner with the school as together we model respect of individual differences.

See CISD Behavior for the detailed discipline plan.

### **BUS CONDUCT**

The driver is responsible for discipline on the school bus. Misconduct is reported to the Principal, who will take appropriate disciplinary action. Students who do not conduct themselves properly may lose the privilege of riding the bus. Parents are encouraged to supervise children at the bus stop.

When riding a bus to or from school or on a field trip with your class, students are expected to follow these safety rules:

1. Stand off the street and away from the curb while awaiting the bus.
2. Arrive at the bus stop on time both before and after school so that it won't be necessary to run to catch the bus.
3. Wait until the bus is completely stopped before moving toward it. Permit small children to board first.
4. Use the handrail while boarding the bus. Crowding on the steps is unsafe.
5. Go directly to your seat and be seated.
6. Keep all parts of your body in the bus and out of the aisles.
7. Do not distract the driver. His/her full attention should be on safe operation of the bus.
8. The emergency door in the rear of the bus is to be used in an emergency only and not as an entrance or exit.
9. Help keep your bus clean by not throwing trash, candy, or chewing gum on the floor or on the seats.
10. Students may not get off the bus into private cars at any other than the normal stop except in emergencies. If the parents want the child to get off the bus at any other than the normal stop, a note of authorization from the parent must be given to the Principal, and then to the bus driver.
11. When a student gets off the bus, he/she should move quickly away from the unloading area. A rider is not permitted to throw anything out of the bus.
12. Students must ride their assigned bus.

### **Bus Safety Goals**

1. To provide every student an orderly, safe, timely means of transportation.
2. To provide drivers with an environment in which they can transport students in an orderly, safe and timely manner.
3. To have all student misbehavior corrected in such a way that the student accepts responsibility for the misbehavior, learns from the consequences, and maintains the dignity of the student.
4. To affect and maintain positive relations between students, drivers, parents, and administrators.

### **Bus Safety Rules**

1. Passengers shall follow the driver's directions at all times. Should the student need to talk with the driver, a conference should be arranged at an appropriate time through the school administration. During a route is not an appropriate time for a driver to explain or conference with a student.
2. Passengers shall board and leave the bus in an orderly manner.
3. Passengers shall board and leave the bus at their designated stop.
4. Students must have written permission from their parent(s) to disembark at a stop other than their own.
5. Passengers shall not stand in the bus except to board and leave.
6. Passengers shall not deface the bus and/or its equipment.
7. All bags, band instruments, and other objects must be kept out of the aisle.
8. Arms, hands, heads, legs, and all other objects must be kept inside the bus.
9. Passengers shall not throw objects inside the bus or out of the windows.
10. Passengers shall not possess or use tobacco or illegal drugs.
11. Passengers shall not hold objects out of the window.
12. Inappropriate conduct, such as scuffling, obscene language and gestures, loudness, and rudeness/disrespect shall not be tolerated and will subject the student to disciplinary actions.
13. Upon leaving the bus, the passenger will wait for the driver to signal before crossing in front of the bus.
14. Students will not harass or haze other students.
15. No food or drink will be allowed on the bus.

As with all discipline guidelines, these rules are not inclusive. Should some behavior occur which is not mentioned in the rules above or in the steps below, the driver will use his/her best judgment and either implement the consequences on the bus or refer the incident to the building level administrator.

## DRESS CODE

A student is not considered appropriately dressed if he or she is, or tends to be, a disruptive influence in class or at a school-related activity because of the mode of dress or appearance.

The policy concerning dress and grooming shall be as follows:

### Boys

1. Hair should be clean and well groomed at all times.
2. Boys should not wear earrings.
3. No tank tops will be allowed.
4. Very short shorts, bike shorts, athletic shorts, etc. are not appropriate for classroom wear. Form-fitting shorts or pants (i.e. bike shorts) are not permitted to be worn alone. If they are worn underneath walking length shorts or pants, the shorts or pants that are worn on the outer side need to be of appropriate length.
5. Students shall not be allowed to wear clothing which has hems that are frayed.

### Girls

1. Shorts must be first knuckle length of a fist hand or longer. Dresses or skirts shall be a reasonable length in proportion to the height of the individual. Foundation garments must be worn.
2. No bare midriffs or halter tops shall be worn. No backless attire is acceptable.
3. Very short shorts, bike shorts, athletic shorts, etc., are not appropriate for classroom wear. Form-fitting shorts or pants (i.e. bike shorts) are not permitted to be worn alone. If they are worn underneath walking length shorts or pants, the shorts or pants that are worn on the outer side need to be of appropriate length.
4. Students shall not be allowed to wear clothing which has hems that are frayed.

### Student Body

1. Students shall wear no head covering within the school building except on Fridays as determined by the teacher.
2. Pictures, emblems, clothing, or writing on clothing that are lewd, offensive, vulgar, or obscene; that depict a cult; that represent gang membership, or that advertise tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs, or any other substance prohibited under school policy are prohibited. Also prohibited is any clothing or grooming that, in the Principal's judgment, may reasonably be expected to cause disruption of or interference with normal school operations.

3. No sunglasses may be worn within the school building.
4. Specifically prohibited for school are jeans, shorts, or other apparel with rips, holes, or frayed / fringed edges.
5. The building administration will use its discretion in questions concerning the dress code. Where there is a question on the dress or appearance of a student, the school authorities' decision will be final. The dress and grooming standards can be changed if they interfere with the students' education or cause a disruption on the campus.

School administration may approve dress code variances for a special occasion.

If the Principal determines that a student's grooming or dress violates the dress code, the student shall be given an opportunity to correct the problem at school. If not corrected, the parent will be notified.

## Health Services

### COMMUNICABLE OR CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

Parents of students with a communicable or contagious disease are asked to telephone the school nurse so that other students who have been exposed to the disease can be alerted. Students with certain diseases are not allowed to attend school while their disease is contagious. These include chicken pox, mumps, measles, ringworm of the scalp, head lice and fever.

### HEALTH CLINIC

The school nurse is responsible for health records, immunizations, school medications, and general medical conditions. She keeps records of students' health and weight and does vision and hearing screenings on students. Referrals are sent to parents when children need follow-up physician visits.

Please do not send your child to school if he/she is ill or has a temperature of 100° or if vomiting. The health and safety of all children will be enhanced by following these guidelines. If your child becomes ill, you or someone designated by you will be contacted to pick up your child. It is **imperative** that all phone numbers be completed on the enrollment card and be updated **immediately** should they change during the year.

## Special Programs

### COMPUTER LAB

Students are scheduled to work in the computer lab on a weekly basis. Students are instructed in the use of programs and they are given the opportunity to create technology based projects.

### QUEST

QUEST is a pull-out class offered for those students who have been identified as gifted and talented. Kindergarteners through fourth graders are screened for eligibility on the basis of the criteria for the program.

### C.A.R.E. PROGRAM

C.A.R.E. reading classes, taught by trained reading specialists, are offered to identified students to foster reading success. Parents of these students are notified of selection.

### SCIENCE LAB

Students have the opportunity to attend a Science Lab where they will participate in science related experiments based on the T.E.K.S. (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills).

### LIBRARY

The library is open during regular school hours and is supervised by a certified librarian. Classes visit the library on a weekly basis for checkout, lessons on research, library skills, as well as for literature appreciation.

Students are allowed to use the library during the school day with the permission of their classroom teacher. They may use the library to read, check out books, return books, do reference work, or work on special projects. Students are allowed to check out one or two books, depending upon their grade level, for a period of two weeks. There is no fine for overdue books, but lost or damaged books must be paid for.

The library collection is constantly updated and expanded. Books are chosen for educational purposes as well as recreational reading. A variety of audio-visual materials is available for teacher use in the classroom. A selection of magazines and audio books is also available for student checkout. All materials are chosen according to the District selection policy.

## Parental Involvement

### PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

Parents are encouraged to join and take an active role in the Parent Teacher Organization. Meetings are held on a regular basis and include topics of interest as well as special programs. The PTO sponsors a telephone directory of Durham students and communicates through a monthly newsletter. They sponsor several fund raising events a year with the proceeds going to purchase instructional supplies for the classroom and pay for special programs for the students. (Participation in fund raising events is always voluntary.) Information about the PTO is available at registration and in the school office. Tina Wasserman is the PTO President for the 2007-2008 school year.

### PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Durham Elementary has an excellent Parent Volunteer Program. Many parents and friends work in classrooms with students and help teachers prepare learning activities. Others help in the library, copy room, lunchroom, office, special classrooms, or on the playground. Some jobs can be done at home by those parents who are unable to come to school to work. Please contact the Parent Volunteer Coordinator for details. We especially need workers for the library for 2007-2008. Contact Debra Albertini if interested.

