

Matt Arthur Elementary School
Student Handbook
2023 - 2024



Dr. VaRee W. Harrell, *Principal*
Mrs. Robin Rooks, *Assistant Principal for Instruction*
Mr. Shaun Parsons, *Assistant Principal for Discipline/Title IX Coordinator*
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Dr. Mark Scott, Superintendent
Houston County Board of Education
P.O. Box 1850, 1100 Main Street

Dear Parents,

On behalf of the staff at Matt Arthur Elementary School, I am happy to welcome you to the 2023-2024 school year! We are looking forward to a productive partnership with you to ensure our children can achieve their highest potential. We recognize that in order to be successful in school, our children need support from both home and school. As partners, we share the responsibility for our children's success and want you to know that we will do our very best to carry out our responsibilities. We ask that you guide and support your child's learning by ensuring that he/she:

- 1) Attends school daily and arrives on time, ready for the day's learning experience
- 2) Completes all homework assignments given by teachers
- 3) Reads daily to develop a love for reading and to improve literacy skills
- 4) Knows that you expect him/her to succeed in school in order to be college and career ready

Please consider joining our PTO program as our students can greatly benefit from your involvement and contributions to the school's program and its operations. PTO works diligently to provide our school with many special events such as Frosty Fridays, talent show, field day concessions, and Teacher Appreciation Week events. A volunteer registration form will come home the first week of school. Please sign up to become a volunteer as it is vital to the success of our students and school!

We will continue to use Class Dojo for daily communication between school and home. Please be sure you read it each day. Any change in dismissal must be sent through Dojo or call the office before 3:00 so we can ensure that your child is sent home the proper way.

We look forward to another wonderful year and appreciate your support!

Sincerely,

VaRee W. Harrell

Dr. VaRee W. Harrell

Principal

PROCEDURES FOR DROP-OFF AND PICK UP

Students are allowed to enter the school at 7:45 AM and report directly to the cafeteria. At 8:00 AM, students will be dismissed to homeroom classes. Drop off is **ONLY** at the car rider ramp. If parents/guardians plan to walk students into the building (to the vestibule doors only), they must park in the side parking lot and walk the students all the way into the building (not permitted to walk students to class). **Parents are NOT allowed to drop off students in the side parking lot or in the front of the school where buses unload. For dismissal:** Students will be dismissed from school at 3:30 PM. Bus dismissal is handled through our Silent Dismissal System in the classrooms. Car riders: When a parent arrives at the school for student pick up in the car rider line, a school staff member will enter the carpool number into the system that displays in the classroom. It is **REQUIRED** for parents to have the student number with them each day in the car rider line. *We will not accept a picture of the number; you will need to have the number card.* Parents are to enter the double car rider lanes and merge to single lane as the designated spot for morning and afternoon. Neighborhood Knights (walkers) are the students that live within walking distance of the school. Parents are not park on Wingfield Way, Hawk's Nest or the new church parking lot to pick up students that leave as walkers. This is not a safe practice. All students should be picked up from school by 3:50 PM. If your child is still at school at 3:55 PM, they will be sent to the office and parents will have to come in the front office to pick them up. If arrangements cannot be made for your child to be picked up by 3:55 each day, you will be asked to register for our After School Program (ASP). Please understand that our procedures are in place to keep our students safe. Safety is the number one priority for Houston County Schools.

ATTENDANCE

The instructional day is from 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM. Students will be admitted at 7:45 AM, not before. It is essential that students are picked up from the school by 3:50 PM. A parent who continues to drop off students before 7:45 AM or fails to pick them up after 3:50 PM will be reported to the appropriate authorities (reference: BOE policy JGGA).

We ask that students arrive on time each day for Knight Academy (Academic Opportunity time). Knight Academy time will begin promptly at 8:30. Our Knights will be working on areas where they need additional support or enrichment to move them further in their studies. You do not want your child to miss this important time during the instructional day.

If your child is tardy, a parent must sign him/her in at the office prior to reporting to the classroom. Parents are **REQUIRED** to sign a child out before leaving the campus. We also want to limit the number of early dismissals. School does not end until 3:30. If at all possible, we ask that you schedule appointments, dance lessons, etc. after 3:30. Our goal is to prepare your children with the academic skills necessary to be prepared for middle school and beyond. In order to accomplish our goal, they need to be at school. Students should not be picked up for early dismissals after 3:00 as our office staff is busy preparing for dismissal. Thank you for your cooperation.

Students should present a written excuse within five (5) days after an absence whether excused or unexcused. Failure to do so will result in the absence(s) remaining unexcused. When 5 unexcused absences have accrued, the student is considered truant and the parent must come to the school to sign a truancy contract. At MAES, we allow up to 10 parent notes then notes from a doctor will be required. Any parent/guardian who fails to comply with the requirements of this policy and Georgia law shall be subject to sanctions imposed by the courts of Houston County. Mr. Parsons manages attendance if you have any questions or concerns.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

Prescription medicines will be given to students by school personnel only when prescribed and ordered by a physician. The following guidelines must be met:

1. Medication forms (HRS-29) are available to be filled out by the physician and parent in case of long-term medication (more than 2 weeks).
2. All medication must be presented to the school office in a prescription labeled bottle that includes name, date, instructions, name of drug and name of issuing physician.
3. Antibiotics or other medications which are to be dispensed three times daily should be dispensed at home unless there is a medical reason for doing otherwise.
4. Non-prescription medicine such as Tylenol, will be given only for a short-term duration (less than 2 weeks) and only when in the original container and accompanied by form HRS-29C with directions for administering.

SICK CHILDREN

Please refer to the following guidelines when considering **returning** a child to school following an illness.

1. A child must be **fever-free for 24 hours without medication before returning.**
2. A child with strep throat must be on an antibiotic for 24 hours before returning.
3. A child with possible conjunctivitis (pink eye) must be seen by a doctor and may only return to school with a doctor's note.
4. A child with chicken pox may only return to school when all lesions have begun to heal.

A sick child must be kept home if she/he:

1. Has had a fever* in the past 24 hours.
2. Has a fever* of 100 degrees or higher.
3. Is nauseous and/or vomiting and/or has diarrhea.
4. Has been exposed to a contagious disease and is exhibiting signs/symptoms of the disease.

*A fever refers to a temperature of 100 degrees or more without the use of Tylenol or Advil or other fever reducing medications. Our system nurse recommends **NOT** to give your child aspirin or any aspirin products. A high occurrence of Reyes syndrome has been associated with viral infections and the use of aspirin.

Children who have been at home because of illness are not allowed to come to school for parties and/or special events such as clubs, practices and/or dances.

PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for promotion to the next grade, students in grades K-8 are expected to achieve 95% attendance. Students who achieve 90-94% attendance may be promoted at the discretion of the building principal if:

- All absences are justified and validated as set forth in policy JBD
- Circumstances warrant
- All work is completed satisfactorily in a timely manner
- Academic achievement meets requirements for promotion

SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE

When it is necessary to impose discipline, school administrators and teachers will follow a progressive discipline process. The degree of discipline to be imposed by each school official will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior of a particular student and will consider the student's discipline history, the age of the student and other relevant factors.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- For Physical Education, your child will only be given one combined grade each grading period for both behavior and participation. Students will be graded S, N, or U. Not being prepared for class will affect your child's grade.
- Please check your child's dojo for his/her specials schedule and help ensure that your child is prepared for class.
- Students are to wear soft-soled shoes or tennis shoes to PE. If girls wear dresses or skirts, we strongly encourage them to wear shorts underneath.
- If your child becomes injured and is unable to participate, we must have a note from a parent or guardian to be excused for three or more classes. We will expect a physician's statement.

RECESS/BREAKS

- Each grade level will be given recess/break time dictated by the school master schedule. Healthy snacks are STRONGLY encouraged.
- If your child cannot participate in Physical Education due to injury or illness, he/she will not participate in physical activity during break.

SCHOOL PARTIES

MAES allows two school parties per year (Christmas and End-of-the School Year).

LUNCH WITH YOUR CHILD

The school system changed the policy and parents will not be allowed to eat breakfast or lunch with their child. This is for safety reasons. We also ask that lunch not be delivered to the office each day. Parents may drop off lunchboxes if the child forgot it at home, but students will not be called to the office daily to get lunch. We want to protect the learning environment with as few interruptions as possible.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers will work with PTO for special events like Frosty Friday, paint night, etc. We will not be able to have volunteers work in classrooms.

WATER BOTTLES

Students are welcome to bring a refillable water bottle with them as we have fountains specifically to refill them. We do have regular water fountains, but some students prefer their own bottle to reduce germ exposure.

WEATHER

Several times a year we seem to get severe/dangerous weather right at dismissal time. Keep in mind that administrators may delay letting children leave the building if lightening is in the area. We will communicate on Dojo when these situations occur so, please be sure the person picking up your child is connected to Dojo. If we are under a tornado warning, parents are welcome to come inside for safety, but no students will be permitted to leave. During severe weather, our office staff may be required to take cover for their safety so always be patient with them if they cannot answer the phone or be out in the front office to greet you.

Please sign and return this last page to your child's teacher letting us know you have read, and you understand the following:

1. Drop off and pick up procedures
2. Car rider and Neighborhood Knights (walkers) procedures
3. Attendance procedures
4. Medication procedures
5. Sick children's procedures
6. Discipline procedures
7. Lunch procedures
8. Severe weather procedures

Parent Print Date

Parent Signature Date

Child's Name _____

Homeroom Teacher _____