



RIDGETOP

Family and Student Handbook

2023-24

Rattler Pledge

**I think of others as well as myself.
I think of us along with me.
We are a family that is beautiful
Because of our diversity.**

Welcome to Ridgetop Elementary School!

We are excited about having you as a member of the Ridgetop family. We look forward to building a positive and long-term relationship with you, as we work together to provide your child with the best educational experience available. You can be assured that we will take the professional education of your child very seriously.

Communication is an important ingredient to the success of your child while at Ridgetop. It is important and encouraged that you keep in close communication with your child's teacher(s) throughout the year. You will be receiving communication from your child's teachers in the form of ClassDojo, email, newsletters, information sheets, and your child's class papers for your review on a regular basis. Please make a place in your home to keep important papers from school. Always feel free to communicate with your child's teachers about any questions or concerns. Please let the front office and the classroom teacher know if there are any changes in phone numbers at home, work, cell phones, and if your home address changes.

Ridgetop is an outstanding school which has maintained its goals of bilingualism, biliteracy and multiculturalism! Ridgetop continues to demonstrate innovative programs through parental engagement, high standards of excellence, a dedicated staff and administrators who maintain contact with the students and community. Students are developing skills and knowledge in reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies, social and emotional development, fine arts and physical fitness based on an effective curriculum and instructional program. Today, Ridgetop continues its leadership role in Austin ISD as a model for creative teaching techniques, social and emotional learning, the utilization of technology to enhance learning. It will continue to be a priority for us.

Our special accomplishments are possible because of the dedicated and enthusiastic TEAMWORK of the Ridgetop students, teachers, staff, administrators, parents, families, and Partners in Education. The future of Ridgetop looks exciting and bright because our past demonstrates a tradition of excellence and the present is filled with teamwork, a passion for kids, and life-long learning for all.

Mission Statement

All Ridgetop students are developing bilingual learners from day one. Our mission is to welcome these developing bilingual learners and their diverse language backgrounds into an academic and social culture that fosters the development of bilingual, biliterate, multi-culturally aware members of society by providing a holistic teaching approach that nurtures empathy through experiential learning.

Rattler Student Standard

Be Safe. Be Responsible. Be Kind.

ASSESSMENTS

Ongoing formal and informal assessments are vital for knowing our students' current academic levels and closely monitoring their progress. We use specific beginning of the year formal assessments and follow the district guidelines regarding yearly assessments.

Assessments

Beginning Of Year (BOY)

PK-CLI

Kinder- TX-KEA

K-5 MAP Growth Math and Reading

SLO(Student Learning Objective)

Middle Of Year (MOY)

PK-CLI

Kinder- TX-KEA

K-5 MAP Growth Math and Reading

SLO(Student Learning Objective)

End Of Year (EOY)

PK-CLI

Kinder- TX-KEA

K-5 MAP Growth Math and Reading

State Assessments

STAAR

3rd- ELAR(English Language Arts and Reading) and Math

4th- ELAR(English Language Arts and Reading), Math, and Writing

5th- ELAR(English Language Arts and Reading), Math, and Science

TELPAS

K-5th Emerging Bilinguals-Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing

FitnessGram (PE assessment of physical fitness)

3rd- 5th- October and April

ATTENDANCE

When it comes to school, students who miss school... miss out. Attendance boosts student achievement, improves the quality of your child's educational experience, and it prepares them for college, good careers, and successful adulthood. For every day of school missed, it takes two or more days for a student to catch up. Except in the case of illness, many school absences can be avoided with a little extra effort.

Parents, join forces with us to eliminate absences that can be prevented by making every effort to schedule medical and other appointments outside school hours and by making sure your children get plenty of sleep so they arrive at school on time. Give your child every opportunity to succeed in Austin ISD and graduate to success, by encouraging him/her to attend school on time and ready to learn, every day. Please remember: Every Day Counts.

RIDGETOP ELEMENTARY ABSENCE POLICIES and GUIDELINES:

When a student is absent the parent/guardian must **send written notification to the office** within 48 hours (2 days) after the student returns to school, the note must list student's full name, date of birth, teacher's name and reason for the tardy/absence. **If you have a physician's note stating that the student was out due to illness/treatment please submit it to the office (you may ALWAYS have the physician's office fax the note directly to the office, fax # 512-414-2022).** If a student is absent 3 or more days, you must contact the school to notify attendance clerk before 10 a.m. no later than the third day.

Excused and Unexcused Absences and Tardies

Excused (with note or documentation)- medical, illness, religious holy days, court appearances, citizenship activities, and military dependent

Unexcused- vacations, car problems, sleeping late, bad weather, and travel

TEA attendance laws govern AISD attendance policies. Each campus is required to collect and maintain documentation for each student's daily attendance record. These records are subject to audit to prove compliance. Please refer to AISD website for more information regarding attendance policies.

TEXAS ATTENDANCE LAW

Texas law requires that students be in attendance a minimum of 90 percent of student days. Your child must attend school at least 160 days this year in order to be passed or placed in the next grade. Excused and unexcused absences count as non-attendance days. Parents will be notified by letter if there is a concern about their child's attendance. Parents may appeal to a local campus Grade Placement Committee in the event their child has been absent more than 10 percent of the student days. The Grade Placement Committee may consider extenuating circumstances, the child's performance, and many other factors when determining whether it is appropriate for the student to be passed or placed in the next grade. **Attendance is taken at the beginning of school each day. Students must be here prior to 10:30 a.m. in order to be counted present for the day.**

RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS

(Excerpt from Administrative Procedures approved by the State Board of Education's Daily Register of Pupil Attendance):

"Students shall be excused from attending school for the purpose of observing religious holy days when it is a tenet of their faith that they must be absent from school during such time. Excused days for travel under this paragraph shall be limited to not more than one day for travel from the site where the student will observe the holy days. Such students shall be counted in attendance for Foundation School Program purposes. School districts shall be required to provide make-up work to students who have been excused under this paragraph. School districts shall be required to give students a reasonable amount of time to complete such make-up work, and the school district shall be given a reasonable amount of time to grade such make-up work. If the completed make-up work is of satisfactory quality, the student's days of absence shall be considered as days of attendance for compulsory attendance purposes."

You should note that this statement includes any religious organization and that the students are to be counted present and coded properly on the attendance register provided that the parent of guardian requests permission in writing for the purpose of observing holy days.

CAMPUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

The purpose of the Campus Advisory Council is to assist the school and its leaders in evaluating and recommending direction in the area of school programs, student progress, budgeting and school services. Members also communicate the mission, success and direction of the school to other parents and the community. Membership in the CAC is determined by self-nomination and the appointment and/or election of individuals including parents, professional staff, classified staff, community members and the principal. Application forms will be advertised on Living Tree in the spring or may be picked up in the school office.

Any resident of AISD or staff member may speak to the CAC during Public Comments by signing up at the beginning of the meeting. These comments are limited to three minutes. Agenda items must be submitted 14 calendar days in advance. Agendas will be posted on the front window and in the front hallway.

CAFETERIA FOOD INFORMATION

Breakfast is served daily from 7:15 - 7:35 a.m. Students and adults are welcome to eat in the Ridgetop cafeteria.

All information about breakfast and lunch prices will be given to parents during the first week of school.

Students may bring lunch money daily or purchase funds through the district-wide electronic prepayment system(School Café). This system allows you to purchase funds in any dollar amount which may be used for lunch, breakfast and/or snacks. Students will be issued a PIN number which will remain the same throughout their school career. They will enter their number on a keypad at the cashier station to access their funds.

You may purchase funds during cafeteria operating hours, except during serving time. Please place money in an envelope with your child's name, teacher's name, amount of money, PIN #, and date. **Checks cannot be accepted.** If you have questions, please contact the cafeteria manager at 512-414-4469 x41854. **Please do not call the school for menu information.** Menus are sent home at the beginning of each month as well as on the AISD website.

If a student forgets to bring lunch money to school or loses his/her money, the school will provide a lunch and send home a note to let the family know. Prepayment is an effective way to avoid the problem of keeping up with lunch money. The official district lunch and prepayment options are available online at: www.schoolcafe.com

CAFETERIA PROCEDURES AND EXPECTATIONS

RATTLER CAFETERIA EXPECTATIONS:

Be Safe

- Stay seated
- Keep food to yourself

Be Responsible

- Raise you hand instead of standing up

Be Kind

- Clean up after
- Walk when it is time

Parents are always welcome to visit for lunch as a lunchtime volunteer. Please sign in at the office before coming to the outdoor cafeteria. You may visit with your student as you support the other students. If you need to take your child from the outdoor cafeteria, please check with the office.

CLASS PLACEMENT

Current teachers and administration will place children with teachers they determine to be appropriate; we do not accept specific teacher requests. Much time and energy is taken into placing kids where they will be most successful.

Teachers prefer not to be asked to recommend a teacher for your child. Teachers are also unable to honor a request to see that your child is placed in a certain teacher's classroom.

CLASSROOMS

You are welcome to visit your child's classroom at Ridgetop Elementary (pending COVID/District guidelines). Please follow these guidelines:

1. Contact your child's teacher to determine an appropriate time for your visit.
2. Report to the school office and sign in before going to the classroom. (If it is your first time visiting please have your Driver's License or picture ID available.)
3. Visits are limited to **one hour or less unless prearranged with the teacher**. Please observe quietly in the area designated by the teacher.
4. Please do not bring other children.
5. If you wish to discuss your visit, please set up another time when you and the teacher may talk. You must have completed the APIE volunteer form prior to visiting classrooms.

BIRTHDAYS

A child's birthday is a very special time and our teachers will recognize a child's birthday in an appropriate way. Birthday parties are NOT held during the school day. **However, you may make arrangements with the teacher to bring a snack or treat for the students to enjoy at 2:55 p.m. If you wish to distribute birthday invitations at school, all children in your child's homeroom must receive an invitation.** At Ridgetop, we support and promote healthy food choices. We strongly recommend that parents bring either non-food items for their child's class birthday treat (stickers, books, special pencils, etc.) or healthy food offerings over the traditional cupcakes, cookies and other type items. See your child's homeroom teacher for recommendations and remember that birthday treats/party favors of any kind will not be distributed until end of day and that celebrations may only take place at the end of the school day (at teacher discretion). No birthday celebrations may take place earlier than 2:55 pm. Each grade level team will follow a similar policy in birthday celebrations (food recs/other treat recs/start times for celebrations); therefore, each team will explain their more specific protocols at Back to School Night or through other communications. **Let's support healthy food habits now for lifelong healthy habits later!**

GRADE LEVEL PROGRAMS

Students will not be excused from class to attend siblings' programs. This interferes with instruction and learning in their classroom.

Thank you for helping us with these concerns. Our goal is to provide a comfortable environment in which students can focus on school tasks. These guidelines will assist Ridgetop in maximizing student instruction by limiting interruptions.

BOOKS

Textbooks, library books and school materials are very expensive. When any of these are lost or damaged it is the responsibility of the student and his/her parent/guardian to pay for the loss or damage. Failure to return books from the library or to pay for lost books will result in interruption of library privileges for the student responsible.

DEVICES

Students should not bring non-district issued devices. Phones, watches and other electronics can be distractions in the classroom and will be asked to stay in backpacks. Smart watches may be worn, but all internet access must be shut off. Students should not be able to text anyone with their watches. Families should not be able to message students. This is a disruption for not only the student, but the whole classroom.

COMMUNICATION

In our effort to foster a cohesive team for our students, we strongly encourage parents to get their questions answered and concerns heard by communicating with teachers. Administration supports all the stakeholders in our amazing community and thus wants teachers and parents to openly engage in transformative conversations that build relationships. Administration will direct parents to teachers before next steps are taken. Please be reassured that teachers will respond to emails or Class Dojo messages within 24 hours.

Look for posts on ClassDojo, emails and Monthly SMORE!

- In our efforts to go **GREEN**, Ridgetop will send home much pertinent information regarding upcoming school events via ClassDojo, School Messenger, and on the Ridgetop and PTA websites. Other information for specific teams will be located on ClassDojo. The office will also send communication through ClassDojo or School Messenger. **In order to ensure active participation in ClassDojo, you must get registered through your classroom teacher.**
- As a service to Ridgetop families, the PTA and office may distribute information regarding student clubs, classes, sports and recreational events. The information may be posted on ClassDojo and occasionally flyers will be distributed to students in their take home folders. The Amigos PTA is also limiting paper. Again, most information and communication will be disseminated on ClassDojo or displayed on the PTA and school websites: www.ridgetoprattlers.com. **If you are connected to nothing else, be connected to Class Dojo!** Any other APPS are not school sponsored-What's App, etc.

DAILY CHECKLIST

Please ask yourself these questions before you drop your child off at school each morning or put him/her on the bus to go to school:

1. Does my child have all the items required for the day for his/her grade level?
2. Have I provided for my child's lunch?
3. Have my child and I discussed and agreed on his/her after school plans?
4. Is my child healthy (fever-free before returning to school)?

Once the school day has begun, classrooms may be interrupted for emergencies only. Non-emergency messages will be placed in the teacher's mailbox or may be emailed. Helping your child remember lunch, lunch money, library books, transportation arrangements, etc. minimizes classroom interruptions. If your child has forgotten something important for that day, please deliver the item to the office, and your child's teacher will be notified. **Parents may not interrupt classes to make deliveries of lunches, backpacks, folders, etc.**

WHAT SHOULD NOT BE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL

Students should not bring:

- Skateboards, roller blades, scooters, heely shoes
- Electronic items (cell phones/smart watches must be kept in backpacks)
- Laser pens/pointers
- Card collections, stuffed toys, toy cars, toy guns, knives, nail clippers, electronic games
- Water guns or water pistols
- Poppers, fireworks, matches and lighters
- Pets
- Items that are treasured and would cause distress if they are lost
- Items which disrupt the learning process
- Weapons of any kind
- Tobacco and alcohol products

School personnel cannot be responsible for any item brought to school by a child. During the school year, exceptions may be made under special circumstances that have been previously approved by the classroom teacher or school administration.

DRESS CODE

(adapted from District guidelines and policy)

In order to maintain a safe and respectful learning environment at school, our students will attend school dressed in clothing that is appropriate to the school setting and weather conditions, and is also suitable for participation in physical education and outdoor activities.

1. Basic Principle: Certain body parts must be covered for all students at all times.

- Clothes must be worn in a way such that abdomen, genitals, buttocks, breasts and nipples are fully covered with opaque fabric.
- All items listed in the “must wear” and “may wear” categories below must meet this basic principle.

2. Students Must Wear*, while following the basic principle of Section 1 above:

- A shirt (with fabric that touches the waistband in the front, back, and on the sides under the arms), AND
- Pants/jeans or the equivalent (for example, a skirt, sweatpants, leggings, a dress or shorts), AND
- Tennis Shoes or safe active wear shoes with closed toes (students K-5th grades will have P.E. every day)

3. Students May Wear, as long as these items do not violate Section 1 above:

- Religious headwear
- Hats facing straight forward or straight back and must allow the face and ears to be visible to staff and not interfere with the line of sight
- Hoodie sweatshirts (wearing the hood over head is allowed, but the face and ears must be visible to school staff)
- Fitted pants, including opaque leggings, yoga pants and “skinny jeans”
- Ripped jeans, as long as underwear and buttocks are not exposed
- Tank tops, including spaghetti straps
- Halter tops
- Athletic attire

4. Students Cannot Wear:

- Violent language or images
- Images or language depicting drugs or alcohol (or any illegal item or activity). or any other substance prohibited under FNCFL(LEGAL)
- Hate speech, profanity, pornography
- Images or language that creates a hostile or intimidating environment based on any protected class or consistently marginalized groups
- Any clothing that reveals visible undergarments (waistbands and straps excluded)
- Swimsuits (except as required in class, field trips, or athletic practice see “Extracurricular Activities”)
- Accessories that could be considered dangerous or could be used as a weapon
- Any item that obscures the face or ears (except as a religious observance)

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips taken during the year will be determined by the grade levels. If there is space, the teachers will invite parents to help support the students. **As this is a special time with you and your student, siblings or other students are not allowed to attend.** Teachers will provide parents information about each trip in a timely manner.

GRADE/REPORTING PROCEDURES

- Teachers will offer one conference in the fall for the parent of every child in their homeroom. Spring conferences will be at parent or teacher request. Please make plans to attend.
- Parents receive feedback on their child’s performance through the papers that come home and access to current grades on the AISD Parent Cloud.
- Interim reports will go home at the mid-point of the nine weeks for students who are failing or at risk of failing.
- Parents will receive an approved AISD report card each nine weeks.

A teacher or a parent may request a conference at any time to discuss student work habits, behavior, the grading system, the curriculum, or how to help the student at home with school assignments.

GROUPING POLICY

Placement of Students:

Ridgetop remains committed to providing an educational setting that fosters the maximum development of each student's abilities and talents. It is the responsibility of the school to determine instructional placement. Ridgetop teachers will determine each second through fifth grade student's math and language arts needs through a variety of assessments (including previous teacher recommendation). Each child is carefully and thoughtfully placed in a class where he/she can work successfully and be challenged. If you have concerns about your child's placement, please discuss it with the classroom teacher.

Student Grouping:

All students receive instruction at or above grade level. Enrichment opportunities are provided for all students. Identified gifted and talented students additionally are clustered with other identified students in their area of identification. GT/TE(Gifted & Talented or Talent Explorer) students in grades 2-5 may also be invited to participate in enrichment groups that meet weekly before, after or during school. More information coming as we boost our GT/TE program.

HEALTH OFFICE

Our school enforces the state laws for requiring records of mandated immunizations or proper exemptions. Any information, guidelines and forms are available from the school nurse.

MEDICATION POLICY

Only those medications that are necessary for a student's medical care and need to be given during school hours will be administered at school. Most medicines that are needed, even up to three times a day, can be given at home.

When a student's medicine must be stored or administered at school, Texas Education Agency Code requires that:

1) Medication must be in its original container, labeled with the student's name, name of medication, directions for administration, and current date. Prescription medicine must have the doctor's name on the label and the doctor must be licensed in Texas. Non-prescription medicine must have the student's name handwritten on the container.

2) The "Parent Authorization of Medication at School" form must be completed, one form for each medication. Directions for administration may not conflict with instructions on the medication label. This form is available in the Health Room and also on the AISD website (Parents>Health Services>Forms>Parent Medication Authorization).

Medication that is needed for known emergencies, such as asthma, diabetes, or serious allergic reactions, may be stored and administered at school, but MD and parent must complete specific forms. Please ask the school nurse for the necessary forms.

If there is a change in dosage or frequency, a new "Parent Authorization of Medication at School" form must be completed and a doctor's written order must be given to the school nurse. This order may be emailed or faxed to the school (fax 512-459-9187).

Medications that cannot be identified in the "Physician's Desk Reference" cannot be given at school. This includes medicine from other countries, herbs, loose medicine in envelopes or baggies and different kinds of pills in a single container.

The school will not provide any medications, including acetaminophen. Parents must provide all medication.

For prescription medicine, ask the pharmacist to prepare two labeled containers, marking one for school use, so a container may be at home and at school.

NOTE: Changes in medication dosage or frequency are to be documented by the physician's written authorization.

WHEN A STUDENT BECOMES ILL

Please do not send your child to school sick. The best treatment for minor illness is at home. You may contact your child's teacher to request school work if you feel it is needed. Please notify the school of any infections that may put other students at risk.

Please keep your child home from school if your child is experiencing any of the following:

- **Fever (100.0 or higher) in the night or morning before the start of the school day.** Students must be fever-free for 24 hours without using any fever reducing medication (ibuprofen *Advil/Motrin or acetaminophen *Tylenol).
- Vomiting during the night
- Diarrhea at the start of the school day
- Eye infection with discharge
- Frequent coughing

Please cover any wound with a dressing before student comes to school. Instruct your child in basic infection control (hand washing before meals and after using the restroom, coughing into elbow rather than hand, not putting fingers in eyes, nose or mouth). Please ensure your child receives at least ten hours of sleep and never misses breakfast before school. ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO DRINK PLENTY OF WATER AND GET PLENTY OF REST.

EMERGENCY CONTACT

Parents must provide telephone numbers where they or designated persons may be reached in the event of illness or injury. The school is not equipped to care for ill children who require medical attention. In the event your child requires immediate medical care and we are unable to reach you or other contacts you have listed, EMS will be called. Parents/guardians are responsible for paying the EMS charges or any other medical expenses incurred under these circumstances.

- Please include cell numbers on your child's emergency care card and **keep numbers updated.**

HOMEWORK POLICY

Generally speaking, Ridgetop ES is no-homework campus. However, we do want to encourage nightly reading, as well as activities that foster language development, cultural awareness, and developing healthy relationships with self and others. Additionally, research does show that specific homework for specific purposes for specific students can be effective. Therefore, teachers will make a professional judgment on effective homework that will facilitate student practice, student interest, and student growth. We ask parents to allow teachers the professional space to think critically about students and their needs in this area.

RELIGIOUS MATTERS POLICY AND GUIDELINES

Policy:

- All students and staff members are expected to be tolerant and aware of each other's religious views. Therefore, no particular religious belief or non-belief will be promoted or endorsed by the school or its employees, and none should be disparaged. Students and staff may request to be excused from participating in practices which are contrary to their religious beliefs in accordance with the Austin Independent School District (AISD) policy.
- As religion is one aspect of any cultural heritage, and as Ridgetop Elementary School has committed to providing a fully-rounded education, it recognizes that one of its educational goals is to advance the students' knowledge and appreciation of the role that religious heritage has played in the social, cultural, and historical development of civilization, in an age-appropriate manner.

Guidelines:

1. Teaching about religion and religious observances within the context of the curriculum is appropriate. It is further recommended that the focus be on themes such as sharing and giving, the diversity of family celebrations, community action, principles of religious freedom, and religion and its relationship to the law, rather than holidays being a course of study in and of themselves.
2. The time spent on holiday activities should not detract from the main focus of school instruction any more than any other aspect of studying history and culture.

3. Religious symbols which represent a religion, rather than a holiday, (i.e., cross, Star of David, crescent, etc.) may be used as curriculum aids provided their use is intrinsic to the learning experience, and they are presented objectively. These religious symbols may not be used as decoration for holidays, nor as the basis for teacher-initiated student art projects. The use of religious symbols which are not solely representative of religion itself, but which represent a particular holiday (i.e., Christmas trees, jack-o-lanterns, dreidels, etc.) may be utilized as part of a balanced curriculum.
4. Music, art, literature, and drama having religious themes or basis may be permitted as AISD curriculum dictates.
5. The school calendar should be prepared so as to minimize conflicts with religious holidays and observances or all faiths.
6. Ridgetop will adhere to the AISD policy concerning religious materials, which states that, "Religious texts or materials shall not be distributed to students, but may be indexed, shelved, and circulated as library materials."
7. Religious holidays will not be celebrated at school parties. School parties will continue with their focus of being a happy coming together for our students.

SCHOOL DAY

Grades PK-5: 7:40 a.m. – 3:10 p.m.

Instruction begins promptly at **7:40 a.m.** Students may arrive as early as 7:15 a.m. They will be supervised by staff in the cafeteria. Students may enter their classrooms at 7:30 a.m. in order to give them adequate time to prepare for the school day (unload backpacks, sharpen pencils, etc.)

Our daily schedule will continue look different this school year. Students Kinder through 5th grade will attend physical education classes every day and 225 minutes of art and music within a 2 week period. Special Areas schedule coming soon.

RIDGETOP ELEMENTARY TARDY POLICY:

School begins **promptly** at 7:40 a.m. Students must be **INSIDE THE CLASSROOM** at 7:40 a.m. Students who arrive in the classroom after 7:40 are TARDY. A TARDY student that arrives **after 7:40 a.m. MUST** go to the office and get a TARDY SLIP BEFORE he/she goes to class. **ALL TARDIES ARE UNEXCUSED** until the office receives documentation stating the reason* he/she was tardy (documentation must be submitted within 2 days). If documentation states an approved reason* the student's record will reflect a tardy on their record but it will be an excused tardy.

TARDIES HAVE THE FOLLOWING EFFECT:

The child misses out on instruction. The class is disturbed. The teaching is interrupted.

Excessive tardies may be reported to the court system.

Pick Up Time:

All children in grades PK-5 should be picked up promptly at 3:10 p.m. School personnel are not always available to supervise students when they are not picked up promptly. When a child has not been picked up by 3:15 p.m., the teacher will bring the student to the office and call parents.

Please do not ask/allow your child to wait for you on the playground until you pick him/her up. Again, there is no supervision and it can be very dangerous to leave children on the playground unattended after school.

Picking Your Child Up Early:

If you should need to pick your child up before the school day ends, please come by the office, sign yourself in to the school and sign him/her out. Leaving school early is also considered a TARDY. A slip will be created for you to take to the child's teacher before their release. Children may not be released to anyone except a person designated by the legal guardian. Children are released only to persons listed on their registration information. Should any circumstances require a change, please notify the office. When checking your child out for a medical appointment, please provide a doctor's note when returning to school.

Our main concern is that all students be safe and supervised at all times. Following these guidelines assists us in ensuring each child's safety.

SOCIAL and EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Social and Emotional Learning

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is a process for helping children and adults develop fundamental skills for life effectiveness. SEL teaches the skills we all need to handle ourselves, our relationships, and our work effectively and ethically. These skills include recognizing and managing our emotions, developing caring and concern for others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, and handling challenging situations constructively and ethically. Ridgetop is a SEL Seed Campus and it is truly part of our culture and incorporated both formally and informally throughout Ridgetop. Specific lessons are taught on a consistent basis by our classroom teachers and reinforced by monthly counselor lessons.

Student Code of Conduct

A positive atmosphere is essential to high levels of student achievement. One key component of this atmosphere is the absence of disruptions. Ridgetop wants students to experience a threat free environment at all times. The following behavior plan will be used to maintain a positive environment where students take personal responsibility for their actions:

Ridgetop Student Standard (this along with classroom expectations will be clearly posted in every classroom)

I will be responsible for my own learning and my own behavior.

Students' Rights

Every student at Ridgetop has the right to learn in a positive environment. Students who interfere with the educational rights of other students will participate in a SEL reflection activity. Those students who consistently interfere with the classroom instruction will be subject to conferencing with administration, the school counselor, and/or parents.

Highly valuable items and those with sentimental value should remain at home as the school is not responsible for the loss or theft of such items.

Not Acceptable Student Behaviors:

Physical aggression toward other students, staff, or property
Disrespectful to people or property
Leaving campus without permission
Use of abusive or profane words or gestures, including sexual harassment, bullying, or threats
Disrupting the educational process
Bringing dangerous items to school
Use of prohibited substances

Sexual Harassment/Bullying

Ridgetop Elementary School is committed to creating a safe, healthy learning environment for all students and encourages respect, dignity and equality among students. Thus, sexual harassment and bullying of students, teachers and staff will not be tolerated at school or school-sponsored/school-related activities. All students are expected to avoid any behaviors known to be offensive, and to stop these behaviors when asked or told to stop. For more information, please refer to the district policy at <https://www.austinisd.org/general-counsel/title-IX> or <https://www.austinisd.org/respectforall/resources/bullying>

Consequences

Any report of sexual harassment or bullying found to be true will result in appropriate disciplinary action, according to the nature of the offense and the Austin I.S.D. Student Code of Conduct. In some circumstances, the student or employee may be reported to the police.

Reporting

Students who believe they have been the target of sexual harassment or bullying by a student, employee of the school district or any third party on the campus should IMMEDIATELY contact a counselor, teacher or school administrator.

False Reporting

False reporting is a serious offense. If the school discovers that someone made a false report on purpose, the person making the false report will be disciplined.

We appreciate your support as we work together to teach our students to become constructive and productive individuals.

Classroom Manage vs. Administration/Counselor Managed Behaviors

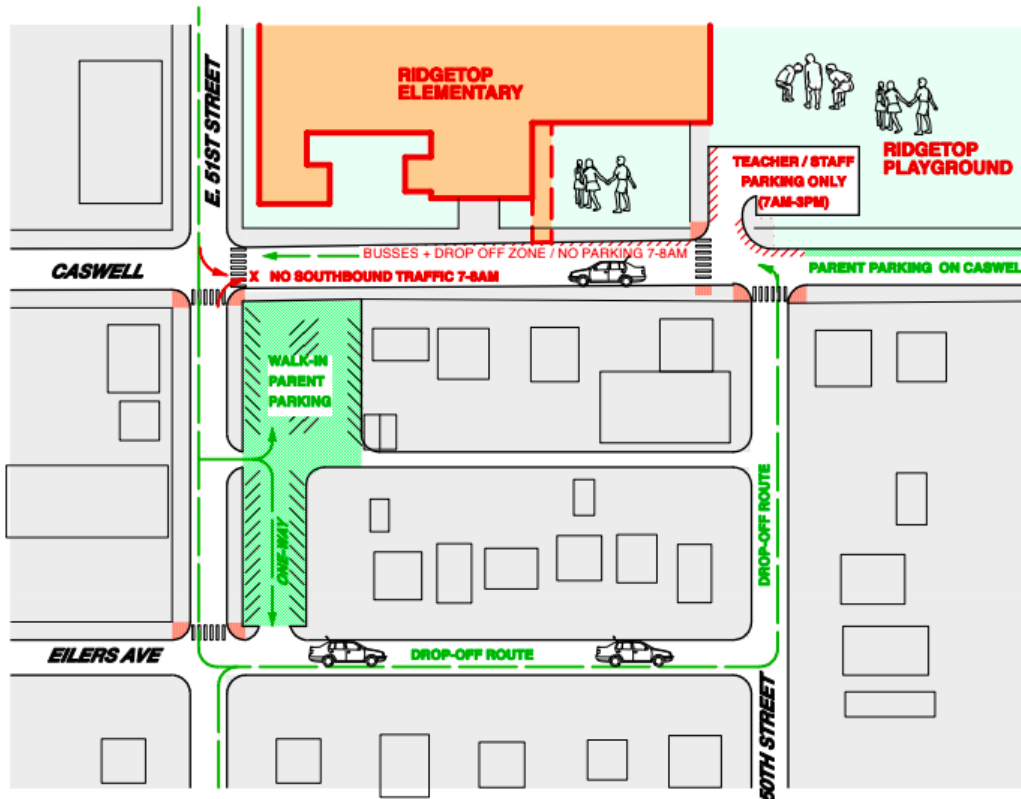
Throughout the school day there may be instances of behavior that warrant intervention from the campus behavior specialist, administration, or counselor. However, often the positive behavior supports already in place on the classroom level are sufficient to prevent or manage problem behavior. While each instance of observable behavior is different, examples of classroom managed behaviors and administration managed behaviors include:

Classroom Managed	Administration/Counselor Managed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inappropriate language ● Non-compliance ● Disruption ● Physical Contact ● Cheating ● Property misuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Physical altercations (fights) ● Chronic bullying ● Assault ● Committing an obscene act ● Major property destruction ● Leaving Classroom/Area

TRAFFIC PLAN

All traffic should be traveling north on Caswell Ave. to enable students to exit cars on the side of the school building. If parents want to park and bring students to the building, they may park on the street or in the Ridgetop Baptist parking lot. We request that all Ridgetop community members use the crosswalk with the crossing guard, if crossing Caswell. Please do not park in the yellow lane. You may stop there to drop off a student. Please see the Traffic Plan map on our website.

RIDGETOP ELEMENTARY MORNING TRAFFIC PLAN



TRANSPORTATION

General Guidelines:

1. **Drivers must not park and exit their vehicles in the yellow bus lane during pick-up or drop-off times. Drivers cannot leave your vehicle on the school side of Caswell to walk your child to the door. Austin Police Department will ticket empty parked vehicles.**
2. Cross the street only with crossing guards. **DO NOT LET YOUR CHILD CROSS THE STREET ANY PLACE OTHER THAN A MARKED CROSSWALK.** This includes crossing between stopped cars to get to your car in the street.
3. Please observe posted No Parking, no U-Turn and other traffic signs during designated times.
4. Please **DO NOT** block residential driveways or move trash cans.
5. **Please DO NOT PARK AT ANY TIME, or drop off or pick up students in the teacher parking lots.**
6. Parents must provide written notification each time there is a change in transportation arrangements. Otherwise, your child will be sent home in the regular arrangement (bus, carpool, etc.)
7. Written notice must be sent if you wish your child to walk, bike, or scoot home from school.

Pick-up Procedures:

1. Teachers will group students in designated areas for pickup. Students are to stay with their assigned teacher.
2. Prekindergarten & Kindergarten- Please park in one of the areas allowed and walk to the area for pick up.
3. 1st and 2nd Grades- Students will be waiting under covered walkway for pick up. It is okay to pull up to the curb **after the buses have left.**
4. 3rd, 4th, and 5th Grades- Students will be waiting on the blacktop for pick up.
5. Students and teachers must use the exit assigned for their grade.
6. Bus students will leave at 3:08 so the buses can leave the front of the school clear for parent pick up at 3:10 p.m.
7. **DO NOT ALLOW CHILDREN TO ENTER THE STREET TO GET TO YOUR CAR. LOADING IS CURBSIDE ONLY!**
8. If your child is not at the pick-up spot when you arrive, either park or circle the block so that others may pull up which allows traffic to keep flowing.
9. LAW prohibits the use of handheld communication devices in SCHOOL ZONES, drivers cannot use a cell phone while in the pick-up line.

BUS RULES AND PROCEDURES

Children must be at the bus stop waiting for the bus when it arrives each morning. The route would be delayed if the bus driver waited.

Students are expected to comply with the following bus rules:

1. Stay in your seat.
2. Keep head, hands and feet inside the bus.
3. Don't throw objects inside the bus or outside the windows.
4. Do not eat or drink on the bus.
5. Keep the bus clean.
6. Do not be destructive.
7. Be courteous. The use of abusive or profane words or gestures, including harassment or threats, is prohibited.
8. Use of alcohol, tobacco or other substances is prohibited.
9. Cooperate with the driver.
10. Bus driver is authorized to assign seats.

A student who does not follow these rules will be sent to the office by the adult supervisor. The principal or designee will talk to the child, send home a warning, and try to contact the parent to discuss the situation. If a student breaks the rule a second time, he/she may be suspended from riding the bus for one to three days. When the student is suspended from riding the bus, the parent must furnish transportation to and from school.

School personnel supervise the unloading and loading of buses in the morning and afternoon. Buses leave the school at approximately 3:05 p.m. Children must go to the bus as dismissed by grade levels.

VISITING OUR CAMPUS

Visitors on campus must sign into the office to receive a visitor's badge. **Please wear your badge on the upper chest area that is visible to everyone on campus.** This is for safety and security purposes. Please make sure to turn your sticker into the office as you leave. If you are on campus for a meeting, please know that students that are tardy will be given their passes to class first.

WEATHER POLICY

AISD Recess Policy

When properly clothed, elementary school-aged children can participate in safe, vigorous play in an outdoor environment in most weather conditions. Increased caution should be practiced when temperatures reach below 40 degrees, including the wind chill factor. Remind families to dress children with appropriate clothing for them to go outside; dress for the outside rather than the inside. Dressing for the outside weather is also important should the students be evacuated outside the building in the case of an emergency.

Temperature considerations and proper clothing are as follows:

- Below 60 degrees: jacket or long sleeves recommended
- Below 50 degrees: coat and long pants recommended
- Below 40 degrees: gloves and hats with long pants and coat are necessary

Schools should honor reasonable requests from families that a student be allowed to stay indoors. Requests based on health reasons must be honored.

Asthmatic children, in particular, may need special accommodation of their needs during cold weather. The family and school must work to determine when the child should not participate in outdoor activities because of health concerns.

WELLNESS

Mindfulness- purposeful quiet time to reflect, think, breath, and/or center your mind and body

Brain Breaks- teacher led stretching and breathing to provide a needed break between academic tasks

Track- running laps to support healthy habits and Marathon Kids

Recess- 30 minutes of unstructured free play a day

FAMILY AND STUDENT AGREEMENT

RIDGETOP ELEMENTARY 2023-2024

In order to reach our goals as a professional group of educators, parents, and students, we must all be united in our quest of excellence.

The following agreements are for all families and students to follow and live up to. The following agreements are our expectations of each other.

Above all, the agreements signify that as a member of the RIDGETOP ELEMENTARY Community, I will:

- adhere to our Family and Student Handbook guidelines
- support my child's teacher, learning environment, and child every day
- support collaborative decisions with my child's teacher and school
- work diligently and purposefully each and every day in order to ensure that my child is a successful reader, writer, mathematician and scientist
- maintain professional communication with school staff in the school setting and school events
- have professional conversations when I do not agree or opinions may differ

I have read the Ridgetop Elementary Family and Student Handbook for the 2023-24 school year and agree to follow the policies and procedures set forth within.

As a member of the Ridgetop Elementary community, my signature is a statement of my word to follow the agreements and policies set forth in this handbook.

Please sign and return this agreement to your child's teacher by September 8, 2023.

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Caregiver Name - Please Print Caregiver Signature Date

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Caregiver Name - Please Print Caregiver Signature Date

Child's Name Homeroom Teacher Grade