



13618 ST. MARY'S LANE, HOUSTON, TX 77079 | (713) 251-7700

Family Handbook

2017 - 2018

A note from our Principal...

Dear Wilchester Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to Wilchester Elementary, an exemplary school that is committed to educating the “whole child.” We are proud to support SBISD’s T-2-4 goal of doubling the number of students completing a technical certificate, two year degree or four-year degree, by 2017. To support these goals we strive to provide challenging academic content in a safe and nurturing environment. As well, we focus on character as well as social and emotional development with our students. Our success is built on the strong belief that through parent and staff collaboration, we can meet the needs of all our learners.

We strive to instill a lifelong love for learning, so that each child will benefit from an innovative and inspiring education. Each day our students develop their skills in problem solving and critical thinking. The faculty and staff are driven towards excellence by their desire to stay current with best practices for learning. The implementation of instructional strategies makes learning come alive for students.

If you should have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact me at any time. I look forward to getting to know you and working alongside you.

Your partner for a successful 2017-2018 year,
Rian Evans
Principal

A note from our PTA President...

Welcome to Wilchester Elementary! The Wilchester PTA is an active organization that supports the teachers and staff, the community, and Spring Branch ISD. The mission of the PTA is: To make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children. Our PTA provides resources for programs such as field trips, staff salaries, technology, science lab, garden, art, music, classroom support, and cultural arts.

Becoming a member of the PTA is important! The PTA is the primary source of school communication with weekly emails and monthly newsletters. Membership ensures your inclusion in these communications. You can join the PTA through our website: www.wilchesterpta.com. You will also find valuable information and resources on the site. It is updated frequently, so check it often. There are numerous ways to become involved at Wilchester through the PTA. We love volunteers! You can volunteer for both PTA focused events and classroom activities. Look for more information about online volunteer sign-ups once school begins.

I encourage you to attend the Grade-level Coffees during the week of September 5th. An invitation will be sent home with your child with details about the coffees. The Grade-level coffees will give you an opportunity to learn more about classroom and PTA events and activities, and you'll also be able to meet and talk with other parents.

Please plan to attend the first PTA meeting on Wednesday, September 13, 2017, at 12:00 pm in the Flex Room. You will hear from representatives of our numerous committees. Starting at a new school with a busy PTA can seem intimidating, but we welcome your input and ideas! Wilchester PTA would not be the vibrant organization that it is without the ideas and energy of our parents.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions, concerns, or comments.

Welcome to the Wildcat family!

Leslie Valentine
Wilchester PTA President
leslievalentine@hotmail.com

A note from the Welcome Committee...

We are here to help make your transition into our school as smooth and easy as possible!

Wilchester is a very special school. We are confident that your children will feel welcome and safe here, while receiving an exceptional education.

We have outstanding teachers, an excellent staff, and a wonderful community of involved parents.

This handbook is provided to help answer some basic questions and get your year started off smoothly. Just a few years ago our children were starting at Wilchester, we were new, and we felt quite overwhelmed.

We are keenly aware that this handbook can't possibly answer all of your questions, therefore, please contact us at any point if you have additional questions or concerns. No question is too small or too silly when it comes to our children. We are here for you all year long and will do our best to help.

Our goal is for you to have a great experience at Wilchester this year.

Sincerely,

Melynda Boerm
mcboerm@yahoo.com

Natalie Mandery
nmandery@sbcglobal.net

Cassie Greenway
Cassie.greenway@gmail.com

Courtney Robertson
courtneydevinerobertson@gmail.com

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

At the beginning of the year, you will complete a Transportation Form stating how your child will get to and from school (e.g. bus, bike, etc.). The school will follow this form unless you submit a change of transportation.

Morning Arrival

Please do not bring or send children to school before 7:30am. Beginning at 7:30 am, students wait in the cafeteria, with supervision, until they are dismissed to class at 7:45am. No child may go to class prior to 7:45 am without teacher permission. Students arriving between 7:45 and 7:55 am go directly to class. Class begins at 7:55 am for all students and grades.

How does carpool work?

The carpool line can be long and slow at the beginning of the year. We appreciate your patience! You can help by having your child gather all school items when you pull into the school lot. Beginning at 7:40, teachers and WCE 5th grade students will open and close your car door when you have pulled up to the cone at the loading/unloading area. You should not get out of your car while loading/unloading children. *Cell phone usage is prohibited in the carpool line.*

All cars should approach the school heading north on Yorkchester, turn right into the lot, and circulate counter-clockwise around the main staff parking lot for drop-off. Do not drop off on St. Mary's or Glenchester, as there is no supervision for your children at these locations.

What about Bike riders?

Students must be in 2nd grade or older to ride bikes to school. Bike racks are located along the playground fence. Please review bicycle rules with your child, as the neighborhood streets are busy. Your child must wear a helmet and needs a bike lock to secure their bike.

Can I walk my child in the building and to class?

Parents are welcome to park and walk their students to class the first week of school. After the first week, parents may walk children as far as the glass security doors. On the first Friday of each month you can walk your children directly to their classrooms.

Afternoon pick-up (beginning at 3:00 pm)

- **Carpool Line:** Operates the same as the morning. Car riders will gather in the front office and be called as parents arrive. Expect long lines the first few weeks!
- **Buses:** Students load buses from the cafeteria. If your child's bus has not arrived at your house on time, please call the SBISD transportation office at (713) 251-1060. Bus Drivers adhere to the Blue Card System for Pre-K and Kinder students. The adult responsible for picking up your child at the bus stop MUST have a blue card with your child's name in order for him/her to exit the bus.
- **Walkers & Bikers:** These students will be escorted to playground gate for dismissal. Students must be in at least 2nd grade to be dismissed by their teacher to walk home alone. Walkers must use the crosswalks! The Blue Card System will also be utilized for all Pre-K and Kinder Walkers and Bike Riders, so a responsible adult must show your child's blue card in order for your child to leave the school as a Walker or Bike Rider.

What if my child will be going home a different way than he/she normally does?

A note with a parent signature must be sent to school for a change of transportation. A printable copy of this form can be found on the PTA website. A parent will need to drop a note off at the front desk if you realize a change of transportation needs to be made once your child is already at school. *All changes need to be made before 1:00 pm.* Email is not a reliable source of communication for these changes.

If you plan to pick up your child before school ends, send a note to the teacher. Parents may not go to the classroom to pick up their children. Allow about 10 minutes for your child to pack up and arrive at the office. Students will not be released from class to wait for a parent in the front office. PLEASE NOTE THAT NO STUDENTS WILL BE RELEASED AFTER 2:45 PM, so you cannot pick up your child after this time.

ABSENCES AND ATTENDANCE

What if my child is running late and arrives tardy?

Any student not in his/her classroom by 7:55 am will be counted tardy. If you are running late, park and walk your child to the front desk. The receptionist will write your child a slip and then your child will walk to class.

What if my child is late - arriving after 9:00 due to illness or an appointment?

After 9:05 am the district counts your child absent. Walk your child in to the front desk to sign them in for the day. You may receive an automated email and phone call alerting you that your child is absent. A school note from the doctor is always helpful and may qualify as an excused absence depending on the circumstance. Please contact our registrar, Sakala Matthews, if you have any questions.

What do I do when my child is sick?

If your child wakes up sick, please email your child's teacher AND the registrar sakala.matthews@springbranchisd.com. There is also a Submit Absence link on the website that will go directly to the registrar. There is no need to call the school if you have emailed. Please be sure to send a note with your child the day they return outlining the reason for the absence. Without a note, the absence is considered unexcused. Texas law requires students to be in attendance 90% of the time.

What about Missed Assignments?

Students are expected to make up assignments and tests after absences. Teachers do not prepare work ahead of time for students to take on family trips. The teacher may assign make-up work. All work missed receives one day of make-up time for each day absent. Students in grades 2-5 will receive a zero for any assignment or test not made up within the allotted time, unless prior approval is given. Teachers may assign a late penalty to any project turned in after the due date.

VOLUNTEERING AT SCHOOL

How do I volunteer in the classroom?

You will need to check in at the front desk, show your ID, and get a volunteer badge each time you come onto campus.

Every year, the district office must clear **all volunteers**. Use the link on the district website, www.springbranchisd.com or on the Wilchester PTA website. Register as soon as possible as the approval process can take up to two weeks.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency or inclement weather, the school will contact you through a Principal's call out - this can be by email, text, and phone depending on your preference. Parents will need to report to the main office if they wish to pick up their student.

Inclement Weather

In this rare event, the Principal will send a call-out/eblast alerting parents/guardians by 2:30pm. If inclement weather is determined, our walkers and bike riders will not be released to go home their regular route. Instead, they will need to be picked up in person at carpool, by their parent or guardian, for the children's safety.

SCHOOL CLINIC

What if my child gets sick?

Nurse Myrtle Herbst is our full-time school nurse. She handles all medical situations that arise at school and administers all medications given to children. You must give Nurse Myrtle the required form before any medications can be given to your child at school.

What about nut allergies?

Wilchester is NOT a nut/peanut free campus. However, any snacks or birthday treats that are brought to school to be shared amongst the students **MUST BE NUT/PEANUT FREE**. This includes pecans, almonds, cashews, and pine nuts, as well as pumpkin and sesame seeds. This will help keep all our students safe from any potential reaction. Teachers and staff are not able to accept snacks containing any type of nut product.

If you have any specific questions or need additional information, please contact Myrtle Herbst directly at myrtle.herbst@springbranchisd.com or by calling the front office.

SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

All families will receive periodic school communications from Principal Rian Evans and their child's classroom teacher. In addition, when you join the PTA, you will receive the weekly PTA eblast which includes details on upcoming school events. See the PTA section (pg .10) for information on how to become a member.

COMMUNICATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS & ACADEMIC RECOGNITION

Day to Day Parent Communication

- Email is the best way to communicate with your teacher.
- All parents are encouraged to access their student's academic progress online using Skyward Family Access. You can request your username from the front desk by showing your ID and signing the appropriate form. A Skyward app is available to download for free.
- Classroom teachers will ensure that assignments and test grades are entered into this system (Skyward) in a timely fashion.
- Please allow 24 hours for teachers to respond to your email concerns.

Student Progress

- Spring Branch uses four nine-week grading periods.
- **Teacher Conferences** – teachers will conduct conferences in the first 9 weeks as well as in the spring. A conference can be arranged throughout the year at your request.
- **Progress Reports** – All students in 1st – 5th grade will receive an Academic Progress Report midway through each 9-week grading cycle.
- **Report Cards** – All students in 1st – 5th grade will receive report cards at the end of each 9-week grading cycle. Pre-K & Kindergarten will receive their 1st report card at the end of the 2nd 9 weeks.

Academic Recognition/Honor Roll

- **Principal's Honor Roll** – A student must earn an A in all academic areas and achieve at least an S in work habits/performance/conduct in each 9-week grading period.
- **A/B Honor Roll** – A student must earn an A or B in all academic areas and achieve at least an S in work habits/performance/conduct in each 9-week grading period.

These awards will be distributed at the end of the school year to 1st-5th grades.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

It is our goal to maintain an exemplary learning community and to help students make good choices, accept responsibility, and develop interpersonal skills. Wilchester will continue to use the Love & Logic approach to caring for our students. In addition, the SBISD Student Code of Conduct will be followed. All classroom expectations will be made clear to students and parents. It is our hope that our students, parents, and staff of Wilchester Elementary will work together to make this year a success for all children.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

Students are expected to follow the SBISD and Wilchester Dress Code Guidelines. Please support your student in dressing for success by following these guidelines.

SBISD Dress Code Guidelines

- Clothing should be neat and clean.
- Clothing or appearance that in the Principal's judgment may cause disruption or interference with normal school operations is prohibited.
- Clothing with obscene or distasteful slogans or that advertises tobacco, alcoholic beverages, drugs, or "gang insignias" is prohibited.

Wilchester Dress Code Guidelines

- Students can wear shorts or skirts of appropriate length.
- Tennis shoes must be worn on days attending Health Fitness.
- Students may not wear caps or hats except on special days.

Parents will be asked to bring a change of clothes to school if their student is dressed in a manner contrary to these guidelines.

LUNCH TIME

Cafeteria Etiquette/Conduct

Students are expected to act in an appropriate manner when in the lunchroom. Students should be able to independently open all lunch containers sent from home.

Can I have lunch with my child at the school?

Yes! You must show your ID and pick up a Visitor's Pass when you check in at the front office. In the cafeteria, sit with your child at the designated tables off to the side.

Lunch Money

Students may pay for their lunch by the day, week or month. Please make checks payable to SBISD and include your child's ID number. You can get your student ID from your child's classroom teacher. You can prepay, view, and manage your child's cafeteria account balance online at www.parentonline.net. We highly recommend this over sending cash/check with your child.

Lunches - \$2.00 (Includes milk)

Be aware that students can also purchase a variety of a-la-carte items at their discretion. You may want to talk to your child about what they can and can't purchase at lunch!

Grade Level	Lunch Time
PreK	11:10-11:40
Kinder	12:10-12:40
1 st	12:40-1:10
2 nd	12:30-1:00
3 rd	11:55-12:25
4 th	10:25-10:55
5 th	11:15-11:45

CLASSROOM INFORMATION

Homeroom Parents

Each class has two homeroom parents who coordinate activities. Grade level coffees are held in August and September. This is an opportunity to meet your room parents and sign-up to volunteer. An invitation will be sent home within the first few weeks of school.

Classroom Parties

Each class has two official parties per year: the winter party (normally held the last day of school before winter break) and the Valentine party. Parents who are cleared volunteers are invited to attend and assist with the parties. All parties are coordinated by grade level Party Chairs.

How do I celebrate my child's birthday?

Check with your child's teacher about bringing snacks or birthday treats to school. These are typically handed out at recess. Birthday party invitations cannot be handed out at school.

What are Specials?

Specials are enrichment classes during the day. Students in K-5th grade attend Music, Art, Health Fitness, and Library. Each grade level rotates to a different Specials class depending on the day and time. At the beginning of each year, you will receive your class schedule for Specials.

Grade	Recess	Specials
Pre-K	10:00-10:30	10:35-11:05 (Rest Time 1-1:30)
Kindergarten	12:40-1:10	9:45-10:35
First	12:10-12:40	8:55-9:45
Second	1:00-1:30	8:05-8:55
Third	11:25-11:55	12:25-1:15
Fourth	10:55-11:25	1:15-2:05
Fifth	1:35-2:05	2:05-2:55

Field Trips

The PTA funds one field trip per year per grade level. Additional field trips may be scheduled if funds allow. Field trips coincide with grade level curriculum. Your child's teacher will provide specific information prior to each field trip. Students are required to wear the official Wilchester field trip shirt on these trips to help keep them safe and easy to identify. These shirts are provided at no charge by the PTA from the Spirit Sales Committee. Parents are often needed as chaperones.

What is Field Day?

Field day consists of a variety of fun games in a station format. Field Day is on November 17th and takes place on the playground. Many cleared volunteer parents are needed for this event. If you are interested in helping the Health Fitness teachers with this event, please contact Anne Daily at mary.daily@springbranchisd.com or Paula Baker at paula.baker@springbranchisd.com.

PTA

Membership

Becoming a paid member of the PTA will give you the ability to vote, participate, and receive communication about important school news and events. Even if you are not able to volunteer, join the PTA to receive information about campus events and community opportunities.

To join, go to the PTA website, www.wilchesterpta.com, click "Join the PTA", and complete the registration form. You can also order printed copies of the directory from this link. See the Directory section below for more information.

Meetings

PTA meetings are held once a month on Wednesdays at noon. For a complete schedule, please check the PTA website calendar <http://www.wilchesterpta.com>

Calendar

The PTA calendar is located on the PTA website. Use the "Add" button to download the dates to your calendar on your smart phone or other digital format. All dates are subject to change.

Communication

- *Tuesday Folder:* Each Tuesday a folder will come home in your child's backpack with classroom work and hard copies of PTA information. Hard copies will be limited to items that require parent response, e.g. field trip permission slips, information related to major PTA events and one-time requests items. These items will also be posted on the school and PTA websites under Campus News.
- *Weekly Email Blast:* Every Tuesday an email will be sent to PTA members highlighting information regarding upcoming events.
- *PTA Website:* <http://www.wilchesterpta.com/> The Wilchester PTA website is the primary online source of information for everything at Wilchester Elementary.
- *The Wilchester Press:* This is Wilchester's printed monthly newsletter. It is sent home in the first Tuesday folder of each month to every student.

Directory

The school directory is the primary source for parents to contact other parents and students. The website, My School Anywhere, is used to input family contact information and to provide online access to the directory. A printed, bound directory is also available for purchase. To purchase a printed copy, go to the PTA website and select "Join the PTA".

To add your family's information to the directory, go to <http://tinyurl.com/wcedirectory>.

1. Enter student's last name and your email
2. Click "Add a Student" to enter each student's first name, grade, and teacher (if you do not know the teacher, leave it blank, and we will complete that for you later)
3. Enter household information (parent names, phone numbers, email, home address)
 - a. Please type your information EXACTLY as it should appear in the directory (no caps, not in all lower case)
4. Review Directory Display Options
5. Confirm by entering your initials
6. Save
7. You will receive an email once the online directory is available for access

Spirit Sales

Spirit Sales items (T-shirts, shorts, headbands, stickers, etc.) are always available for order online through the PTA website. Spirit Sales will have a booth set up at Meet the Teacher day and on the "First Fridays".

Yearbook

A school yearbook is published each year and available for purchase through a fall online sale. Yearbooks include individual pictures by class and grade level photo collages. Parents can submit photos of school and extracurricular events for use in the yearbook.

Wildcat Tracks

Wildcat Tracks is a newsletter of articles written by students. Any student can volunteer to write an article. The PTA coordinates and distributes Wildcat Tracks three times a year.

Math Stars/Reading Stars

These at home programs allow your child to complete additional work above required nightly homework for an award at the end of the year. For additional information go to the PTA website.

Fundraisers

The PTA has three key fundraisers: auction, carnival, and underwriting, as well as a variety of other activities throughout the year.

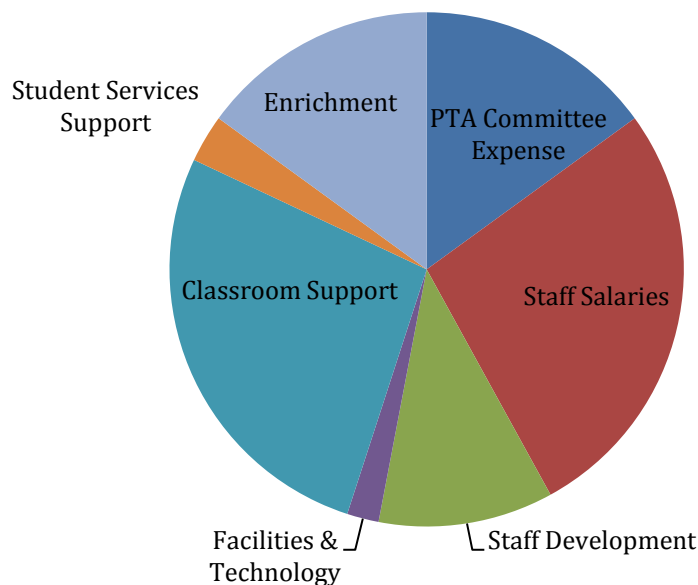
- **Auction** - Auction is Wilchester's largest fundraiser. It is a themed evening event held every other year, in the fall, for parents only. Proceeds from this event provide funding for two school years. 2017 is not an Auction year, so you can enjoy this great fundraiser in the Fall of 2018.
- **Carnival** - Carnival is a yearly fundraiser on a Friday afternoon in May. Carnival will be held in May 2018. This fun celebration for kids and families has game booths, rides, blow up jump houses, raffle prizes and plenty of fun food. Volunteer opportunities include helping with solicitations, donations, set-up/take down and block chairs. Each homeroom is responsible for a booth at carnival. Parents volunteer at these booths.

- **Boosterthon-** Boosterthon is a school wide fundraiser that is designed to motivate and encourage each and every student from grades Pre-K through 5th grade through a nine day series of character building pep rallies and Fun Run. The goal of Boosterthon is to build up student confidence and character and a healthy lifestyle while raising money for our school. Students are asked to get pledges based on a number of laps completed during the Fun Run.
- **Corporate & Family Underwriting** - Underwriting is a contribution campaign in which 100% of the proceeds directly benefit the PTA budget. Family donations, company matching programs, sponsors, and grants are all included in underwriting. These donations can be made through our pta website at wilchesterpta.com. If you are unsure whether your company matches donations to our school, you can also visit www.dobelthedonation.com/wilchester.

Other sources of revenue include: Used Book Sale, Spirit Sales, Family Fun Night, and Box Tops. The PTA recognizes that not every family can participate in every event; however, having a variety of ways to donate and support our school gives each family an opportunity to donate in a way that is personally interesting and fits their budget. Truly - every dollar counts!

Wilchester PTA is a non-profit organization; therefore, we work hard to have a balanced budget, in which our revenues equal our expenses (Curriculum, Enrichment, Committees, Facilities).

2017-2018 PTA Budget



Recycling

Paper - Bring mail, office papers, catalogs, shredded paper, flattened cardboard boxes, newspapers & advertising inserts to the green and yellow bin in Wilchester's back parking lot.

Plastic - A new program is being implemented to recycle plastic waste from lunch containers.

Box Top\$

The funds generated from redeeming Box Top\$ directly benefits our library. Clip the Box Top\$ from products you purchase and place them in the receptacle in the library, send them to school with your child or turn them in at the front desk.