

**It is our mission at Cowan Elementary to nurture and inspire children to achieve their personal best everyday.**

**We believe. . .**

**In developing life-long learners by establishing clear and high expectations based on current best practices for teaching and learning.**

**That communication and involvement between school, parents, students, and community are essential to prepare students to be productive members of society.**

**Cowan Elementary is a positive, supportive, and safe environment that develops healthy risk-taking, responsibility, and respect.**

**The learning community must set high expectations for students by providing engaging activities that develop higher order thinking skills.**

#### **Attendance**

Our doors are unlocked by 7:00 am. Students report directly to the dining room. Students who choose to eat breakfast will need to do so as soon as they arrive. Morning assembly begins at 7:20 a.m. Teachers will pick up students at 7:30 and take them to the classroom.

To receive the maximum benefit from classroom and instructional participation, it is important that your child report to school on time each day. Any student who joins the class any time after 7:45 a.m. is considered tardy, which is defined as a partial day absence.

If your child arrives after 7:45 a.m., you **must** walk your child in and sign-in your child in the notebook in the main office.

Parents should send a note with their child upon the student's return explaining an absence or tardy. If the child visited a

doctor or dentist, an excuse from the doctor or dentist must be sent to the office within three days in order to excuse the absence or tardy. We strictly follow district policies for excusing an absence or a tardy.

When a student accumulates three partial or full day absences without parent documentation a letter is generated by the district to warn parents about compliance with state compulsory attendance laws.

State law mandates that elementary students be in attendance a minimum of 160 days. If a student misses 10 or more days or partial days within a six-month period in the same school year or on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period, charges must be filed against the parent for non-compliance in accordance with compulsory attendance laws.

Dismissal time is 2:45 p.m. Teachers will release students only to a parent or to person designated on the emergency care card. If you are picking up your child, you may walk up or drive up to do so. If you choose to drive, please stay in your vehicle the entire time you are in the circular drive. If you walk up, please wait outside the building. This will allow teachers to get all students to the appropriate place as quickly as possible. **Your cooperation in both instances is greatly appreciated.**

Students who are not picked up by 3:00 will be brought to the office to contact a parent or guardian. YMCA provides after-school care for those parents who cannot pick-up their students by 2:45pm. Please contact their office at 236-9622 for rates and availability. Additionally, there are several daycares which pick up students to transport to their facilities. Please contact our office for a complete list.

In order for students to change their routine after school, a note **must** be provided to the teacher. Without a note from the parent/guardian, regular after school procedures for that student will be followed. **Please do not call the office to change student method of transportation after 2:00 p.m.**, as we cannot guarantee that the student will receive the message in time.

If a child is to leave school before 2:45, the parent should send a note to the teacher. Please note that leaving prior to the end of the school day will constitute a tardy or partial day absence. If the child visited a doctor or dentist, an excuse from the doctor or dentist must be sent to the office within five days in order to excuse the absence or tardy. **The child will not be called to the office until a parent or guardian arrives** in order to reduce instructional time missed. Please be prepared to show proper identification for the safety of the children.

#### **Best Left at Home**

Students are advised that the following items are not permitted at school. The item will be confiscated and will need to be picked up by a parent:

- Glass containers
- Trading cards
- Laser pointers
- Toys
- Any item that shoots a projectile
- Permanent markers
- Any item with a blade
- Fireworks
- Martial arts

#### **Cell Phones and Portable**

##### **Electronic Devices**

Possession of a cell phone or other portable electronic device, including MP3 players, iPods, Nintendo DS and PSPs at school is a privilege. When in possession of a device at school, it must remain off and out of sight. If a student violates this privilege, the device will be confiscated and parents will be notified to pick up the item in the office. The student may also face disciplinary action.

On test days, students may not possess electronic devices on their persons as they can be used to cheat

on exams. Therefore, students will be required to empty their pockets prior to a test to make sure these devices are not in their possession.

### Classroom Visits

Parents are encouraged to visit our school and play an active role in their child's education. If you would like to visit your child's classroom, please schedule a visit with your child's teacher.

We ask if you are dropping off items (lunch, homework, etc.), for your child that those items are left at the front desk. We do our best to deter interruptions to instruction whenever possible.

### Communication

A school newsletter containing items of interest to parents and students will be distributed once or twice a month. You may choose to receive these via email or hardcopy.

Parents are encouraged to call Cowan Elementary (841-2700) with questions, concerns, and kudos. Your call will be returned within 24 hours.

If a problem does arise, please contact the office after speaking with the staff member involved.

### Dining Room / Food Service

Breakfast is available each morning from 7:05 to 7:30. Students should be in line by 7:25 in order to eat breakfast.

All lunches *must* be paid for in cash or using the online credit card payment service ([www.mylunchmoney.com](http://www.mylunchmoney.com)). Please call 841-2724 for more information. Prices are as follows:

Breakfast	\$1.25
Lunch	\$2.35
Milk	\$ .65
Adult Lunch	\$3.25

Students who forget lunch money will be allowed to call a parent prior to their lunch period. Sandwiches and milk will be available for those students whose parents are unable to

deliver their lunch or lunch money.

### Discipline

Every morning at assembly students make the following pledge:

**I promise,  
To respect myself,  
To respect others,  
To respect property,  
And to respect learning.**

Every student is expected to understand and abide by Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code, the Austin Independent School District Code of Conduct, and the Dennis Cowan Elementary Discipline Management Plan.

### Dress Code

Cowan Elementary follows the AISD dress code:

The student's dress and grooming shall not create a health hazard to the student's safety or the safety of others. Shoes should be worn at all times.

- o Improperly fitting clothing; baggy pants, oversized shirts, elongated armholes, overly tight garments, and clothes that improperly expose body parts;
- o Tops that are strapless or backless, spaghetti straps, or have low cut necklines;
- o Shorts and skirts that are short enough to be distracting;
- o Makeup and artificial nails;
- o Gang associated clothing or colors;
- o Hats or caps worn inside the building (except for religious requirements)

### Emergency/Crisis Management

Teachers are expected to keep their classroom doors locked at all times for the safety of the children. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact the principal.

Cowan Elementary has a campus Crisis Management Plan in place. Students practice drills throughout the year to increase the chance that all students will

be safe in case a real emergency arises.

### Health Services

The school has a health team consisting of a Registered Nurse (RN) and a School Health Assistant (SHA), who will assist your child with illness, injuries, and chronic medical conditions at school. The health team is assigned to more than one school, so the RN and SHA have alternating regularly scheduled hours at each campus. If your child has a chronic condition, such as asthma, seizure disorder, diabetes, or anaphylaxis, please consult with the RN to develop a plan of care for the student.

### MEDICATION AT SCHOOL

**The health office does not have any stock medications.** If medication will need to be administered at school, please accompany your child to school with the medication to complete the necessary authorization forms. **All medication must be in the original, labeled container. Please do not send single pills in a plastic baggie to school.** Prescription medication must have the prescription label with the child's name, prescribing physician, dosing instructions, and current date. Over-the-counter medicine must be in the original, labeled container, and the dose must be age-appropriate. When the medication is no longer needed at school, it must be picked up by an adult. The health team is not allowed to send medication home with the student. Only asthma inhalers, with parent permission, will be sent home with the student.

**General guidelines that the health team follows:** It is extremely important for the health team to be able to contact the parent in the event of illness or injury at school. **Please make sure all current contact phone numbers and emergency contacts are updated, not only with the teacher but with the main office as well.**

- o Fever greater than 100.3 will require that you pick your child up from school. The child needs to be fever-free **without using any fever-reducing medicine** before returning to school. **If your child has a fever at**

- home, please do not give them a fever-reducing medicine and send them to school. Non-aspirin** products should be used to control fever because of the threat of Reyes Syndrome.
- Coughing and sneezing spread germs. Please teach your child to cover his/her mouth and nose with their shirt or arm when coughing or sneezing, then follow with good hand washing.
  - If your child is vomiting due to illness, he/she needs to be kept at home. If the vomiting begins at school, you will be asked to pick up your child if the vomiting is thought to be contagious. If your child has fever and continues to vomit, please call your doctor.
  - Diarrhea, frequent, loose bowel movements, may be accompanied with fever and/or cramps, and it may follow an episode of vomiting. If your child has two or more loose bowel movements at school, you will be asked to pick him/her up. Your child will need to remain at home until 24 hours after the diarrhea has stopped. If your child has blood in the bowel movement, fever, or does not seem to be getting better, please call your doctor.
  - Eye Infections: often called Pink eye, a red eye with a yellow or green discharge may be caused by a viral or bacterial infection. It usually lasts 4-7 days. The infection is easily spread from one person to another, so frequent hand washing

is the most important thing to control the spread of infection. A child with an eye infection should remain at home until the discharge is gone or you have a note from your doctor stating that the child may return to school.

- All students identified with live lice will be sent home at the end of the school day after contacting parent/guardian. Parent/guardian will be advised to treat their child for head lice. The name of the treatment product must be provided to the school. After the child has received treatment, the student can return to school. If only nits, lice eggs, are present, you will be notified with suggestions for resolving the problem. **Please check your child's head at least weekly for signs of lice.**

#### **ATTENDANCE**

Children's educational success depends upon their regular and consistent attendance at school. Please do not send your child to school sick. The best treatment for minor illness is at home. Keep your child at home if there is fever of 100 degrees or more. Please call the school office to report the absence. This assists with tracking what illnesses are being reported to the school.

#### **DIET**

Assist your child in staying healthy by encouraging him/her to eat a balanced diet from all the different food groups; remember that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Breakfast provides the needed energy fuel to begin the day and is available at most schools. Drinking water is very important also. Too little water can lead to dehydration and the following symptoms: fatigue, headache,

dry mouth, muscle weakness, dizziness and lightheadedness. These symptoms interfere with the learning process and prevent students from performing at their best. How much water should my child drink in a 24 hour period?

- 1 - 3 years about 4 cups
- 4 - 8 years about 5 cups
- 9-13 years about 8 cups for boys and about 7 cups for girls
- 14-18 years about 11 cups for boys and about 8 cups for girls

#### **REST**

A healthy child also needs to be well rested. If a child is not sleeping enough or not sleeping well, it can lead to poor concentration and the difficulty completing tasks or making decisions. Other effects of too little sleep include: changes in behavior and mood, decreased glucose metabolism, lowered immune system and becoming accident prone.

How much sleep does my child need? Children 4-11 years old need approximately 10-12 hours of sleep Children over 11 years old need approximately 8-10 hours

#### **Nancy Sticklen RN**

Cowan School Nurse (512)841-2729  
Patton School Nurse (512)414-1370  
nancysticklen@austinisd.org

#### **Linda Horton SHA**

#### **Lost and Found**

All items found on campus are placed on the clothing rack outside the main office. Parents and students are encouraged to check there for lost items. Please be sure to put your child's name on all of their belongings.

#### **Office Hours**

The school office hours are from 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

#### **Parties**

Cowan Elementary recognizes that each child's birthday is special. All birthdays for the week are celebrated each Tuesday at morning assembly. No class-time is allotted for birthday celebrations. If you choose to bring cupcakes, please follow the guidelines listed:

- Parents may bring cupcakes at the **end** of their child's lunch period. They need to be brought and shared only with the students in their child's class. Please do not distribute leftovers to friends in other classes, as it often results in upsetting children not given one.
- Many parents do not want their children eating cupcakes due to Diabetes or other health issues. Each teacher will collect the number of students eating cupcakes and the number of students opting for a healthy snack. Parents delivering cupcakes will need to provide a healthy snack alternative for those students. Ideas include, but are not limited to the following: a piece of fruit, packaged cheese and crackers, etc.
- Parents of students opting for a healthy snack need to prepare their children to not receive a cupcake. We want to avoid meltdowns that could potentially distract instructional time.
- Parents need to be here to serve the cupcakes and healthy snacks to the class. Lunchroom monitors will be busy ensuring safety and are not provided for cupcake distribution.
- Non-food items are another great alternative.
- If you choose to send party invitations to school to distribute, please do so only if there is one for every student in the class.

### **Report Cards**

Report cards will be issued once every nine weeks. Please review and sign the report card envelope and return it the next day. Only the envelopes are to be returned to the homeroom teacher.

In Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grades, academic progress will be reported in Reading, Writing, Listening/Speaking, Mathematics, Social Studies/Science/Health, Art,

Music and Physical Education using the following scale:

Advanced	4
Skilled	3
Basic Understanding	2
Needs Improvement	1

Your child's teacher will contact you if your child's grade will be a 1.

In 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grades, numerical grades will be assigned for Reading, Writing, Listening/Speaking/Critical Viewing, Mathematics, and Science. You contacted for grades below a 73.

Personal Development for all grade levels will be reported as follows:

Consistently	4
Frequently	3
Occasionally	2
Rarely	1

### **Special Programs**

A variety of programs are available for students with special needs. Please discuss your child's situation with his/her teacher.

### **Testing**

All students in kindergarten, through second grade are administered Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI). Students in grades 3, 4, and 5 are administered the State of Texas Academic Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) tests.

### **Library**

The library is an integral part of the school's educational program.

The librarian will collaborate with teachers to develop students' appreciation of quality literature, general library knowledge, and research skills.

Matters regarding lost or damaged library books should be resolved through payment. The student will be unable to check out another book until the matter has

been resolved. If a lost book is found during the current school year, the money will be reimbursed.

Library volunteers are always needed to assist with student checkout, shelving books, and other light clerical duties.

### **Who's Who Superintendent –**

**Associate Superintendent of Area One Elementary Schools –**  
Ariel Cloud

**Principal –** Debbie Warnken  
**Asst Principal –** Rebecca Phillips  
**Counselor –** Michelle DeMarco-Pundt

### **School Office Staff**

Patricia Reyes-Payne, Secretary  
Jill Duarte, Registrar  
Laura Smykal, Clerk

### **Cowan School Song**

**A bright new day**  
**is waiting for you**  
**At Cowan School,**  
**where dreams come true.**  
**Coyote strong**  
**and united are we.**  
**Joyfully singing**  
**and proudly learning;**  
**Working so confidently.**  
**Cheer for the purple**  
**and green!**  
**Ahoo!**