

Travis Heights Elementary Pre-K 2018-2019



Welcomel

Welcome to Travis Heights Pre-K! This is your child's introduction to public school; it will set the tone for his or her academic career. We are pleased to be working with you and it is our goal to make this a positive experience for your family. The following are some helpful hints, specific to Pre-K, which will help things run smoothly this year.

Meet the Teachers

Andee Cooper, PPCD Teacher and Ruth Shaker, PPCD Teaching Assistant

My name is Andee Cooper and I am the PPCD teacher at Travis Heights Elementary. I have been a Special Education teacher for 6 years. I will be starting my Master's in Early Education Special Education with a focus in Autism this year. I have an 8 year old daughter, and I enjoy knitting, sewing, baking, and gardening.

Sarah Wakefield, Pre-K Teacher (ESL)

My name is Sarah Wakefield. I am originally from Iowa, but have called myself a Texan for the past 17 years. I am a graduate of the University of Texas and have taught Pre-K and Kindergarten for the past 13 years. In my spare time I love spending time with my family and friends, camping, hiking, cooking and travelling.

Els de Jong, Pre-K Teacher(Bilingual)

Hello! I was born in Panama and lived in Puerto Rico, New Jersey, and Argentina as well as Houston until 6th grade when we moved to Houston permanently. I attended college in San Marcos at Southwest Texas State University. This will be my 20th year teaching and my sixth year at Travis Heights. I love animals, travelling and the outdoors.

Edith Rios, Pre-K Teacher(Bilingual)

I am from the beautiful west Texas town of El Paso. I graduated from UTEP and recently obtained my M.Ed. at UT Austin so I consider myself a Miner/Longhorn. This is my 12th year at Travis Heights Elementary. I am a vegan, and don't eat meat or animal products. I have two dogs, Tenoch, and Luna.

Arrival

Travis Heights participates in the districts *Breakfast In the Classroom* program, or BIC. Classroom doors open at 7:35. Older students (Kindergarten through 5th grade) who arrive before 7:35 **must** go to the gym and join their class. All pre-k students arriving before 7:35 **must** report to the cafeteria, where they will be accompanied by a staff member who will accompany them to the classroom at 7:35. Breakfast will be provided in the classroom. At this time, as your child transitions to PK, we gently ask you to drop your child off and head out, giving him or her an opportunity to socialize with friends and engage in classroom activities and routines. **The tardy bell rings at 7:40 am and BIC ends at 7:55 am.** In the future and if the need arises, your child's teacher may ask for parent volunteers to assist with BIC. If this is something that you may be interested in, please contact your child's teacher.

Attendance

Bringing your child to school **on time every day** is a big factor in how successful he or she will be in school. You are helping your child create good habits that build responsibility and ensure success! Pre-K students are held to the same attendance policies as all elementary school grades. Because attendance is so crucial for a child's success, the state of Texas has a compulsory attendance law which requires children who are enrolled in school to attend school every instructional day. This law applies to all students from Pre-K to 5th grade at our campus. You can read more about our attendance policy on the district's website, and/or through our Attendance Clerk, Gio Montalvo. Please always be on time when dropping off and picking up your child.

Absences

When your child is absent from school due to illness or another reason, you must send a note or doctor's excuse upon his/her return. If your child is sick but does not visit a doctor, you may hand-write a note. Notes are turned in to our attendance clerk, Miss Montalvo. You can find a deposit box that is sorted by grade level in the office. Please do not send your child to school if he or she has taken medication and/ or had a fever, vomiting, or diarrhea in the previous 24 hours.

Visitors

For safety reasons, everyone must enter the school through the front doors. Anyone in the school building must sign in with the office staff. All visitors are asked to please wear visitor badges. We appreciate your cooperation in keeping our campus safe.

Dismissal

Pre-K dismissal is at 2:15 p.m. **You must pick up your child promptly at 2:15 pm.** The Pre-K teaching staff must attend to professional obligations that begin immediately after dismissal. It is important for your child's sense of security that he or she does not feel forgotten. Late pick-ups are considered unexcused tardies. Parking in faculty lots is not allowed and becomes a safety issue for our students/campus. Please park on the street or in designated visitor areas. Please walk from your car to your child's designated dismissal area.

School Supplies

The Pre-K school supply list is available from your child's teacher and on our website. Please label your student's backpack, jacket, and spare clothes. Please do not write your child's name on supplies because some will be used on a community basis. Please supply as

many of these items as possible. If you are unable to bring an item or unable to locate an item, please let your child's teacher know.

Backpacks

Children need to bring a REGULAR SIZED backpack to school each day. Backpacks with wheels are discouraged. The children will use these to carry homework, Wednesday folders, and other important communications, safely from school to home and back. Please label backpacks on the outside where your child can see his or her name since there are always duplicates. Please check your child's backpack every night for important classroom information and student work. We thank you in advance for helping your child keep his/her backpack and homework folder neat, tidy, and free of old work.

Clothing & Shoes

*Please send a change of clothes-including socks and underwear. **Each clothing item must be labeled with your child's name.** These will remain at school during the year. Please send extra clothing in a big ziplock. If your child needs to change in to his/her extra clothing his or her soiled clothing will be placed in a bag and sent home with him or her. Please replace the spare change of clothing promptly.

*Children need to wear clothes that they can play in. There might be an occasional accident when children will get dirty from an art activity, water play, food spills, playground dirt, etc.

*Please help your child practice zipping pants, snapping, and/or belting. These are skills that are needed for independent toileting. We cannot assist the children in the restroom.

*Pre-K children do a lot of running, jumping, and climbing. We ask that children wear shoes that will allow for this type of activity.

Flip-flops, high heels, and boots are strongly discouraged for safety reasons. If your child's shoes have laces, please use double knots. We love velcro shoes and Y-ties.

*Open shoes (such as sandals or Crocs) are very uncomfortable for your child because they get rocks and small pebbles in them on the way to the playground and while playing at the playground.

Homework

Homework is a great opportunity for students to share their learning. The Pre-K homework routine should be established as a positive experience. Each Pre-K teacher offers homework in a slightly different manner with the same goals and objectives. You can support our curriculum and your child's learning through practice and purposeful play at home. Please let us know how we can help you develop these routines. Materials and books sent home should be returned promptly and in the same good condition. To begin positive and productive habits, we suggest that you do the following:

- Find a "quiet" place to help your child complete the home assignment.
- Try to make this a fun time for learning. Please support your child, but do not do the activity for him or her.
- Give your teacher feedback; this will help with instruction.
- Read to your child for at least fifteen minutes every day and talk about what has been read.

Independence

Pre-K students are learning to take responsibility and gain independence. We ask that parents encourage their children to do the same at home. Some ways you can help are:

- Provide a safe place at home where your child can keep school belongings.
- Give your child opportunities to take care of his/her own belongings (with support, of course).

- Include your child in family jobs, such as setting the table, feeding the pet, sorting clean laundry, etc.
- Let your child make choices about things such as what to wear. This is a very empowering opportunity to review colors and vocabulary! Families will benefit from doing this the night before school.
- Give your child opportunities to problem-solve. The development of critical thinking skills is essential in the learning process.

Behavior

Learning-appropriate behavior and school expectations can be challenging for some children. Learning to work, play, and share with others may be a new experience for many. After the school year begins, we will send home our classroom expectations so that you can support your child through positive discussion, reinforcement, and encouragement. Each teacher uses picture cues, procedure charts, transition activities and set daily routines to encourage appropriate behavior.

Rest Time

Each day Pre-K students will rest for approximately 45 minutes (this time decreases as the year goes on). They are not required to sleep, although many do. Students may bring a blanket (something the size of a beach towel) to rest with. Please make sure that they will fit inside a backpack, as they will frequently be sent home to be laundered. The large, 2.5 gallon sized, zip-lock bags that we ask for on the school supply list are for storing blankets. To ensure hygiene, and help prevent/reduce the spread of head lice, please make sure that your child's blanket fits in a bag this size.

Birthdays

Each child is recognized on his or her birthday. AISD's wellness policy states: "Parents may bring items to celebrate their child's birthday; however, they cannot be provided to students in the cafeteria during meal service times. Birthday food items may only be shared after the last scheduled class of the day." You can read more about the Wellness policy on the district's website.

Snacks And Water Bottles

Each class provides time for a small snack. Parents are asked to bring a daily snack for their child. Most teachers ask parents to provide snacks for children to share with their peers on some kind of snack rotation, where every family takes turns providing snacks. These snacks should be low in sugar and healthy. Suggestions are goldfish crackers, cereal (without milk), bananas, animal crackers, cheese crackers, dried fruit, etc. Please consider our hard-working custodial staff when choosing snacks for the classroom; some snacks can be extra messy. Each child should also bring a water bottle that is labeled with his/her name.

Wednesday Folders

Pre-K, along with the other grades at Travis Heights, will bring home a Wednesday folder with handouts and student work. Please check your child's backpack for this folder every Wednesday. It will contain papers that stay at home and papers that must be signed and returned. The folder's cover has a signature box that you must sign, indicating that you received the information. It also includes a space for communications. Please have your child return folders every Thursday.

Parent Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are a requirement at Travis Heights and they are a valuable time to discuss your child's progress and individual goals. We all look forward to meeting with you and sharing your child's successes. We see this as a time to communicate ideas and concerns. Conferences are held in the fall and the spring, but we are all available to meet with you personally or over the phone. Conferences are available on regular school days after 2:15.

Volunteering/Visiting the Classroom

We hope that you will participate in your child's education by volunteering in the classroom and/or with our campus. For safety purposes we do have some requirements for volunteering, such as a yearly background check. To learn more about the volunteer requirements please visit our Campus website, travisheightselementary.com and click on the volunteer button. You can also scan the qr code below, or type in the following link: <https://www.travisheightselementary.com/volunteering/>



Once you have completed the volunteer process and background check, we look forward to your visits. It is fun to watch your child learn and interact with his or her peers. We ask that you wait until school has been in progress for several weeks before visiting. This will allow all children to have transitioned comfortably into their new environment. Please enter through the front doors of the building anytime you visit our campus. Visitors will need to sign in at the office and receive a visitor's badge.

Field Trips

Pre-K will take several field trips/study trips during the year. We will inform you in advance so that you can make arrangements if you would like to attend. **All field trip volunteers are required to take a volunteer training class.** Fees for the trips will be due prior to the trips because of bookkeeping requirements by the school. (Money will not be accepted the day of the field trip.) We hope that you will join us on one of these trips. Due to safety concerns, siblings are not permitted to attend.

THES ROCK TICKETS

Pre-K students participate in the positive behavior management system used at Travis Heights. The purpose of this program is to

provide consistent, school-wide expectations for all students. Please look for the signs posted in the common areas and our classrooms so you can be informed. Family discussions can encourage your child and provide clarity and reinforcement of appropriate behavior.

Contacts

We are pleased to be partners in your child's education! Please feel free to contact us with questions, concerns or ideas. We kindly ask that you please do not call during class time. It is more likely that we will check our e-mail before school, during lunch, and during planning times throughout the day and will receive that message before a phone message. We will do our best to answer all calls and e-mails in a timely manner. Communication is a key element in your child's success in school. Thank you!

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