

# Merlin Messenger

Parent Newsletter - First Day of School

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McNeill Elementary School



**MEET THE TEACHER**

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 9TH**  
**5:00-7:00 PM**

COME & GO EVENT - 

MEET YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER & DROP OFF SUPPLIES

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**BEGINNING-OF-YEAR FORMS**



Dear Parents/Guardians,

For the 2023-2024 school year, all required Lamar Consolidated ISD beginning-of-year forms must be completed online through the Skyward Family Access Center.

Offering these forms digitally allows you the convenience of only updating information that has changed from last school year, while also helping us maintain accurate information in our student information system. Instructions, important dates and technical assistance regarding the online forms can be found by clicking [here](#). Included on this page is a link to reset your Family Access username/password if you have forgotten it.

Online forms will be available through the Family Access Center starting July 26th and all forms need to be submitted no later than September 15th. Your student's schedule will not be available online through the Family Access Center until all of the beginning-of-year forms are completed for your student and after the campus has released schedules. Student schedules will be available online on Wednesday, Aug. 9th if all online forms have been completed.

For those who need access to a computer or the Internet, computers will be available on campus Monday – Thursday, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. starting August 1, 2023.

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## FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL – MONDAY, AUGUST 14TH

Monday, August 14th is the first day of the 2023-2024 school year! We are so excited to see all of our Merlins. Our teachers and staff have been hard at work preparing for the school year.

Just a few reminders:

- The building will open promptly at 7:15 am Monday morning.
- Parents are able to walk their Merlins to class **on the first day only**.
- Please be patient during afternoon car rider dismissal while students adjust to the routine. The car rider line will move more smoothly as the week progresses.
- Ensure that you have communicated with your child's teacher how they will be going home for the first day and the remainder of the school year.

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## DISMISSAL TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

We need your help to ensure that we know how your child will go home this school year. If you were unable to attend Meet the Teacher or complete the QR code for your child, please do so now. A form will need to be completed for EACH child that attends McNeill. We appreciate your help in ensuring that we know how your child goes home.

Please click the link or scan the QR code below to access the form.

<https://forms.office.com/r/a3g6YVUqiG>

# McNeill Transportation 2023-2024



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## HELPFUL TIPS FOR A HAPPY FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

**McNeill Parent 1st Day of School Helpful Tips 2022.pdf**

[Download](#)

128.5 KB

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## FRONT OFFICE

**\*\*We anticipate a very BUSY front office during the first week! \*\***

If you need in person assistance during the first week, please park in our visitor's lot and come inside the foyer. We will have a sign-in sheet at the table when you walk in. Please have a seat. To preserve the privacy of families, we will serve one family at a time in the office area. Please be patient.

In order to make sure all students are safely in class and our morning car rider line has ended; we

for a long period of time, please consider arriving after 8:30am for assistance.

If you need to complete registration, please complete the online pre-registration application **before** coming to the school. Be sure you have in your possession the following when you come to the school: your child's birth certificate, shot record, social security card, your ID, and your proof of residence (executed lease, light bill, gas bill, or water bill) in your name.

Thank you for your patience!

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## ARRIVAL

Our doors open at 7:15am. **Parents will be allowed to walk their children to class on the first day of school ONLY.** Please park in designated parking spots or along the street. We are asking that parents not block other cars in preventing them from leaving. Please use the front doors when walking your child into the building on the first day. Bring your child's supplies if you did not do so at Meet the Teacher.

Students will be given their SMART Tags during the first days of school. Once received, they should wear them with their lanyards to school daily. Any student who loses their SMART Tag will need to purchase a replacement one. Replacement tags can be purchased in the front office for \$5.

**Please place a label on the front of your child's shirt with their name, grade level, and the teacher's name on it. This is especially helpful for Pre-K/K students who are hesitant to speak. We will have plenty of staff available to help students get to class.**

Car riders – Our doors open at 7:15am. Please do not drop your child off before this time. There is no adult supervision before 7:15am. Drop off is at the back of the school. Please do not wait for 7:35 to drop off your child. The line will be long, and your child will be late to school.

**Remember, everyone being dropped off must go through the carpool line after the first day of school. For everyone's safety, we are no longer allowing parents to park and walk students across the busy bus lane. Parents who attempt this will be asked to return to your car and enter the car rider line.**

Bus riders – Everyone riding the bus must register through the SMART Tag system.

Walkers/Bike riders- These students will walk/ride their bikes using the sidewalks in front of the school.

**Students will go straight to their classrooms at 7:15am on the first day of school ONLY unless they are eating breakfast.**

After the first day, students will sit in their grade level hallways until they are released to go to class at 7:15am.

PK – 5th students will be able to eat breakfast in the cafeteria daily until 7:40am. Remember, SMART Tags are also students' "lunch cards".

We recommend you using the online system, School Café, to add money to lunch accounts. The cafeteria will not provide change when students make cash transactions. The additional funds will be added to the student's lunch account.



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## DISMISSAL

**IMPORTANT:** Please be sure your child's teacher knows how your child will be getting home on the first day of school. We will be calling on the first day to confirm transportation. Please give us a number that someone will answer.

Transportation changes- Transportation changes **MUST** be made before 2:15 PM. Please call the office or send a note with your child to indicate a change for the way your child normally goes home. These are delivered to the classrooms at 2:15pm. Therefore, we cannot accept changes after 2:15 pm. If you want to check your child out early for appointments, that must be done by 2:15 pm. as well. We will not release students for early pick up after 2:15 pm. This information is in the LCISD Student Handbook. Please try and keep the way your child goes home as consistent as possible. This decreases the likelihood of a mistake occurring.

**Bus**-LCISD Transportation is highly recommended for all students who are eligible. The buses are the first mode of transportation to leave each day. The buses will load and leave early the first 3 days of school. Parents are advised to arrive at the bus stops early on these days. Give your child's bus a 15-minute window before and after the publish time as drivers work to ensure everyone is accounted for and dropped off at the correct stop. PK and K students will only be released to an authorized adult listed in the SMART Tag System. Please bring your ID to the bus stop on the first day for verification. SMART Tags will be scanned each time your child gets on and off the bus, for lunch meals in the cafeteria, and in the library for checking out books.

**Daycare**- Daycare vans will line up behind LCISD Transportation. Students will be loaded in the daycare vans after the school buses have been loaded and have left. Please let your child's teacher know the name of the daycare your child will attend as well as the branch if it is a chain daycare, i.e. Kids R Kids Bella Terra.

**Car**-We anticipate a large number of car riders this year, so we are asking you to please be patient while we dismiss students safely. Please have your child's name and grade level written clearly on the sentence strip provided at Meet the Teacher or on a piece of paper. Place it on the passenger side dashboard, so that the person calling the names of the car riders can see it. The drop-off/pick-up line is at the back of the school right passed the playground.

**Walkers/Bikers** – They will be dismissed by grade level. PK/K students will be released to a parent/guardian only. Parents are not allowed to walk up to the school to meet your children. Please meet them at the edge of the front parking lot entry (for those who live in the direction of the park) and all others at the 4- way stop (Mason and Lakemont Bend). Please do not park your car in the street and wave for your child to run across traffic. This is very dangerous. If your child is a walker, you are saying that they are responsible enough to get home on their own without adult assistance. **If you do not want your child to walk home without an adult, please make sure to communicate that with the teacher prior to the first day of school. If they have older/younger siblings that they will walk home with, please communicate that information to the teachers as well.**

We know it might take a few days to develop a routine that works for your family. **It is very important that students' transportation is consistently set as soon as possible.**

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# \* McNeill \*

DRESS CODE

## SHIRT TOPS

Collared (polo style, no logo)  
solid color tops in red, white,  
navy blue and yellow.



## BOTTOMS

Solid color khaki, navy blue or  
blue denim jeans, slacks  
shorts, skirts, or jumpers.



## OTHER

No backless shoes, flip  
flops, Crocs, sweatpants,  
overalls, hats, caps, or  
skate shoes.



## IMPORTANT

Parents,

Please help to ensure that your child is in dress code everyday. Outside of dress down days, students are expected to adhere to our campus dress code. Thank you in advance for your help.

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## MCNEILL STUDENTS EAT FREE BREAKFAST & LUNCH

McNeill Elementary has been added as a CEP campus for the 2023-24 school year. Due to this all McNeill students will eat free breakfast and lunch. Students will still be required to pay for A la Carte (snack) items sold by the cafeteria. A la Carte items will not be available for sale until September 11, 2023. For more information please see the flyer below or visit the Child Nutrition website.

### English CEP Press Release.pdf

[Download](#)

111.6 KB



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## LUNCH VISITOR REMINDERS

**Beginning September 5th**, we will begin welcoming lunch visitors back on campus. Please see the reminders below regarding our lunch visitors and procedures.

Lunch visitors will be welcomed daily during. Lunchroom visitors are limited to **TWO visitors** per child per day.

As a large campus, our space is very limited, and we must be creative with how we safely accommodate lunch visitors for parents who would like to eat with their children. There will be one lunch table and the lounge area designated for visitors. Please be sure to sit in these areas only.

Visitors may eat **ONLY** with their child. Visitors may not provide food for children who are not their own or interact with them.

Visitors must sign in at the front office with a government issued identification card or a passport to receive a pass. After the scheduled lunch time, parents must leave the building.

**Parents are highly discouraged from dropping off lunches or having lunch delivery services at school. The constant deliveries are a disruption to the instructional environment. Students should bring easy to open items with them daily for lunch and snacks to minimize contact. No nut-based snacks for the classrooms.**

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## NEW SCHOOL HOURS

# NEW SCHOOL HOURS

EFFECTIVE 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR

As one of the fastest-growing districts in Texas, it is our responsibility to anticipate and respond to the needs of our students, parents, and staff – now more than ever.

With campuses stretched across 385 square miles, our families and staff have spent the last two years combatting bus driver shortages and long transit hours, and the challenges have only increased.

To alleviate these growing pains, our Trustees approved new school hours at the February board meeting. We have designed the following four-tier system, which will be implemented at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year. This shift ensures that we have enough drivers for each route and eliminates the need for comeback routes.

Our commitment to serve the community is strong. Thank you for staying engaged. Your involvement ensures that our District carries on a proud tradition of excellence.



7:15 AM to 2:40 PM Elementary (Group A)  
7:45 AM to 3:10 PM Elementary (Group B)  
8:25 AM to 3:50 PM High School  
9:05 AM to 4:30 PM Middle School & Junior High

Group A		Group B	
Adolphus	Hubenak	Bowie	Meyer
Arredondo	Hutchison	Dickinson	Pink
Austin	Lindsey	Frost	Smith
Beasley	Morgan	Gray	Tamarron
Bentley	Phelan	Huggins	Thomas
Campbell	Ray	Jackson	Travis
Carter	Seguin	Lang	Williams
Culver	Velasquez	McNeill	

For more information, please visit [www.LCISD.org/hours](http://www.LCISD.org/hours).



## VISITORS/VOLUNTEERS

**Visitors**-All visitors will need to sign in at the front office with a state issued ID. Visitors must wear their raptor name badge and report to the area that is indicated on their badge. For the safety of all school community members, visitors should enter/exit through the front area of the building only.

**Volunteers**- We will have volunteers through the building during the school day. We will communicate with the PTO and community when we will begin allowing workroom volunteers to come on campus. That volunteer time will be coordinated by the PTO. Those volunteers will only be allowed to work in the workroom. They will not be allowed in any other area of the building. Each person will have to be cleared through a background check with LCISD in order to volunteer in the workroom

## SMART TAGS/STUDENT I.D. BADGES

Ensuring the safety and security of the students riding on buses is our highest priority. To facilitate and support this safety initiative the District has implemented the Smart Tag system to promote and ensure a positive school bus riding experience for all Lamar CISD students. Students are issued Smart Tag ID cards with an electronic chip Smart sensor (please do not modify the ID

cards, or place holes in the card). The student's name is printed on the front of the card, and there is no student information stored on the card.

**Students must have one or more Transportation Release Guardians listed within the students Smart Tag Parent Portal.**

To ensure the safety of the children, parents/guardians or an authorized person is encouraged to be at the bus stop each day when their child is picked up and dropped off.

- Drivers will only release a student to approved guardians at the stop and must be in possession of a picture ID so the driver can verify release authorization via the Smart Tag system. **If a driver is unable to verify release authorization the student will be returned to campus.**
- Parents must register this information within their students Smart Tag profile via the Smart Tag Parent Portal.
- Parents are also responsible for keeping the information current.
- Parents/guardians and children should know their route number, school name, and stop location.
- **Children in grades Pre-K/KG (i.e., Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten) MUST** be received by an adult, parent, or authorized receiver at the designated bus stop and designated time. This could be an older sibling.
  - Parents should be at the stop ten (10) minutes prior to bus arrival.
  - Individuals receiving a Pre-K/KG student from a bus, will need to be in possession of a picture ID so the driver can verify release authorization via the Smart Tag system. **If a driver is unable to verify release authorization the student will be returned to campus.**
  - Should there be no one at the stop to receive a PK/KG student, the child will be taken back to the school for the parent to pick up.
    - Should this occur more than twice in a semester, the third occurrence may result in the child losing bus riding privileges.

### Smart Tag RegistrationSteps-English.pdf

[Download](#)

314.0 KB

### Smart Tag RegistrationSteps-Spanish.pdf

[Download](#)

343.2 KB

## SMART TAG REMINDERS

- Students will be required to wear their SMART Tags daily. They should wear them with their lanyards to school. No items should be attached to lanyards.
- All students will start receive SMART tags by the end of the first week.
- Any student who misplaces their SMART Tag will need to purchase a replacement one. Replacement SMART Tags can be purchased for \$5 in the front office

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## SNACKS

Students are allowed to bring a snack to school daily if they choose. Please keep in mind that snacks need to be a healthy choice. Please do not send chips, candy, or anything that requires a utensil. A healthy snack will give your child the nutritional boost he/she needs during the day. Please keep in mind that snack time will be 10-15 minutes long. Students should be able to continue working in class while consuming their snack. Do not send in anything that needs to be refrigerated. Below is a list of good snacks to consider. **DO NOT SEND ANYTHING WITH PEANUTS OR PEANUT BUTTER.**

Students will be allowed to get drinks from the water fountain.

If you choose to send in a drink, please **Do Not** send in any glass bottles, soda or sport drinks.

Please note that if students bring an unapproved snack, they will lose the privilege of having snack.

- |             |                   |                       |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| ★ Pretzels  | ★ Animal crackers | ★ Goldfish crackers   |
| ★ Muffins   | ★ Crackers        | ★ Granola/cereal bars |
| ★ Apples    | ★ Carrot sticks   | ★ Graham Crackers     |
| ★ Pop tarts | ★ Banana          | ★ Cereal              |

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## EARLY PICK UP AND TRANSPORTATION CHANGES

If you take your child out of school before dismissal time, you will need to report to the office to sign him/her out. Your child will stay in the classroom until you arrive. If it necessary for someone other than the parent/guardian pick up your child, that person must be signed, dated note with the child. The person picking up your child must show photo identification to the office staff. Accumulated time of early pick-ups is calculated by minutes in lost instruction time. Request to check out your child must be done prior to 2:15 pm.

Any changes in the normal transportation of your child must be stated in writing with a parent/guardian signature. We ask for everyone's help in not making changes frequently. However, we understand that in rare cases, unexpected changes will need to happen. These can be called in to the front office by 2:15 pm. **We are not able to process changes after 2:15 pm.** This includes parents that come to the campus without prior notice to pick up their child. Any change in transportation arrangements for any student requires a note to the teacher. Make sure you write your child's first and last name, teacher's name and indicate the date(s) for the change and how the child is going to go home. We ask that the parents not email the change since there maybe times that a teacher is not in attendance or does not have a chance to read their email.

**Please note on early release days the latest you can pick up is 11:00 am!**

# YEARBOOK INFORMATION

## Yearbook News

Aug-Oct 2023

### Welcome Back Merlins



Our early bird sale is happening now! For the lowest price of the season, you can pre-order your 2023-2024 Yearbook for just \$30! Don't miss out! Order yours today!

### Three Easy Ways to Order

1. Order Online at [www.balfour.com](http://www.balfour.com)
2. Make a payment using VENMO to @McNeill-PTO
3. Send cash or check to the front office, checks made payable to: McNeill Elementary PTO



SCAN ME

*Life is too short to wait.*



### Photo Shares

We would love to feature your back to school photos in the yearbook. Please email your photos to Delores Williams at [merlinyearbook@gmail.com](mailto:merlinyearbook@gmail.com)

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**YEARBOOKS ON SALE!**


2023-2024 Yearbooks are  
now on sale for just \$30!

Three easy ways to order:

1. Go to [Balfour.com](https://Balfour.com) and type in our school name [McNeill Elementary School](#). Purchase a yearbook online using a credit or debit card.
2. Make a payment using Venmo to McNeill Elementary PTO @[McNeill-PTO](#)
3. Complete the form below and return to front office with your cash or check attached. Make checks payable to: [McNeill Elementary PTO](#)

For questions, please email  
Delores Williams at [merlinyearbook@gmail.com](mailto:merlinyearbook@gmail.com)

Sale ends 10/27/23, scan to pre-order now!



Cost: **\$30**

Student Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom/Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone : \_\_\_\_\_

# of Yearbooks \_\_\_\_\_ Total Cost \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Method \_\_\_\_\_ Cash \_\_\_\_\_ Check \_\_\_\_\_ Venmo  
(check one)

**YearbookNews\_Fall2023.pdf**

[Download](#)  
4.3 MB

**HELPFUL DOCUMENTS**  
**2023-24 School Supply List**

**23-24-school-supply-list.pdf**

[Download](#)  
179.5 KB

**DATES TO REMEMBER**

\*Our calendar will not be as involved as it has been in previous years. We will adjust accordingly as the disease activity levels change.\*

## AUGUST

- August 9 - Meet the Teacher
- August 14 - First Day of Instruction



### McNeill Elementary

Email: [jeanine.jordan@lcisd.org](mailto:jeanine.jordan@lcisd.org)

Website: <https://www.lcisd.org/campuses/mcneill/home>

Location: 7300 S. Mason Rd., Richmond, TX 77407

Phone: (832) 223-2800

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/McNeillMerlins>



McNeill Elementary