

DOSS
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Where Learning Takes Flight

**Parent/Student
Handbook**

2017-2018

Janna Griffin, Principal

LaTrese Smith, Assistant Principal

Bradford Hardie, Assistant Principal

Vickie Engel, Counselor

Shanna Riggsbee, Counselor

Doss Elementary

Welcome to the Doss Elementary family. Doss Elementary is a high-performing, diverse campus with a positive and collaborative campus culture. The staff and administration at Doss Elementary believe that it is our responsibility to assist all children in reaching their potential. Doss students consistently perform well on the state standardized tests, but we pride ourselves on being so much more than that. Students at Doss have the opportunity to develop their technology, social/emotional, and leadership skills. Doss Owls learn the value of being world citizens through our One World Language Program and other multi-cultural experiences.

Doss has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE and continues to consistently exhibit high academic standards. We look forward to working with you to provide your child with the best possible educational experience.

Doss Slogan

Where Learning Takes Flight

Doss Mission

The mission of Leona Doss Elementary School is to provide quality education and promote respect, integrity, and student success.

Doss Belief Statements

We believe that knowledge empowers and enriches lives.

We believe that every person has the right and responsibility to develop according to his or her potential.

We believe that every person is responsible for his or her actions.

We believe that families have the primary responsibility for the support of their children.

Doss Mascot

Owl

School Colors

Blue and White

Doss School Song

Chorus:

Just let your Doss pride show, let the people know,
We are winners here, Friends are always near,
so let your Doss pride show. Sing it high and low.
This school is the best, so let your Doss pride show.

My teacher told me something that everyone should know.
Just always do the best you can wherever you may go.
I'll never be unhappy, I'll never wear a frown.
If we just keep on smiling we can turn our world around.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

1. Place funds in your child's cafeteria account. On the day that you are running late or forget to pack a lunch, your child can enjoy a healthy lunch in the cafeteria, and your child will not miss class time running to the office to pick up his/her lunch.
2. Establish routines for homework. Young students will benefit from having a quiet area within view of a parent for homework time. Provide a snack and some wiggle-time prior to tackling the homework for the night.
3. Practice the Doss Social Emotional Learning lessons that will be coming home this year. These simple lesson focus on developmentally appropriate social/emotional skills for kids.
4. Read with your child nightly.
5. Have your child practice keyboarding skills once a week.
6. Arrive on time/early. Children feel better when they have time to adjust to the school day.
7. Join the PTA and participate in our school activities as you are able.
8. If you have a kindergarten student, please wait 6 weeks before coming up to have lunch with your child.
9. Tune in to Living Tree, the PTA Blast, and other school social media outlets in order to stay abreast of what is going on at Doss.
10. Communicate any special concerns that you may have regarding your child directly to your teacher. For example, if your child has a specific dietary restriction, health concern, or medical issue, please discuss this with your homeroom teacher so that we can best serve your child.
11. Update your phone numbers, home address, and/or email address in the main office when there is a change.
12. Please learn the classroom phone numbers for your child's teachers. If you need to leave the teacher a message, call the classroom directly. The teacher will listen to the message when he/she is able and will respond accordingly. There is no need to call the main office to be transferred to a classroom.

ATTENDANCE

Daily school attendance is key to academic success and should be the goal of every parent/guardian and child. Daily attendance and on-time arrival permits students to engage consistently with the presentation of information and in activities that extend beyond textbook assignments.

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to monitor their child's school attendance and ensure they arrive to school on time each day. Students should be in class each school day with the exception of illness, religious celebration, or a family emergency. A written note of explanation must be sent to the school within 48 hours of an absence.

Policy

The Texas Compulsory Attendance Law states that AISD can file a complaint against the parent/guardian of a student who has three or more unexcused days or parts of days within a four-week period. AISD must file a complaint if the student has 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period. For elementary campuses, "unexcused days or parts of days" are coded UNX (unexcused absence) or UT (unexcused tardy).

Excused vs. Unexcused

Students who are not at school at 8:00am are counted absent. Students who arrive late or leave early are counted tardy (tardy also means "absent part of day").

The following reasons will be accepted as excused:

- Healthcare appointments (doctor, dentist, etc.) - be sure to bring a physician's note to the front office
- Illness – if your child runs a fever, please keep him/her home until fever-free for 24 hours. Please bring a note from student's parent/guardian indicating that the student was ill
- Holy days

- Extenuating circumstances – ie. funeral or family emergency as approved by the principal
- Shadowing at another school with a note from the school – maximum of two days allowed

The following are common reasons for unexcused absences and tardies:

- Failure to provide documentation when the student is out ill, or failure to list correct dates on the note
- Being signed in or out during the day for a medical appointment without providing a note from the physician
- Travel
- Family event
- Oversleeping
- Car trouble or traffic
- Shadowing at another public or private school without providing a note from the school, or shadowing at a private school more than 2 days

CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

The school goals for student placement consist of the following:

1. Accommodate any academic needs of the student.
2. Provide the best student/teacher assignment to suit the student's individual learning needs.
3. Provide experiences resulting from a diverse group of students in each classroom.
4. Balance class populations by such factors as ability levels, new and returning students, and numbers of boys and girls.
5. Maximize instructional time by eliminating inappropriate combinations of students within the classroom.

Our overall goal is to provide the best possible educational experience for your child. After spending the entire school year with each child, the professional opinion of the teachers is very valuable in determining the optimum placement of each student. Input from the staff, faculty, counselor and parents will be considered in the class placement process. **Requests for specific teachers cannot be honored.**

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Classroom management begins with highly engaging instructional practices. Doss teachers will establish high expectations for learning and for behavior in each classroom.

As part of Capturing Kids' Hearts, the classroom teacher develops a Social Contract with his/her class. The Social Contract serves as a guide for how students will behave and how they will treat each other. Teachers utilize the CKH four questions to address individual behavior as needed. Doss teachers establish clear expectations and consistent classroom routines in order to provide the best learning environment for each student.

CLASSROOM VISITS

When you visit Doss Elementary, we ask that you register at the school office upon arrival and wear a school guest tag for the duration of your visit. Visits to your child's classroom are welcome at Doss Elementary School. In order to assure the continuous quality of education that we offer at Doss, we ask that parents observe the following guidelines:

1. Please make an appointment with your child's teacher in advance.
2. Report to the school office before going to the classroom.
3. Teacher-student interaction should not be interrupted.
4. Observe quietly in a location designated by the teacher.
5. Adults only, please.
6. If you wish to discuss your visit, please set up a conference with the teacher after school hours.
7. Limit visits to 15 minutes.

COMMUNICATION

1. There are multiple means of communication at Doss Elementary.
2. All primary communication from the Principal will be through Living Tree. This is a closed communication tool that you will be signed up for at the beginning of the year.
3. Facebook and Twitter are both utilized by the Principal and by the Doss PTA.
4. Doss PTA also utilizes Instagram.
5. Doss PTA sends a weekly newsletter via email.

COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

Doss staff members and administration stand ready and willing to work with you to address your concern.

Most student or parent complaints/concerns can be addressed by discussing the issue with the individuals involved. Start with the classroom teacher. If the issue cannot be resolved, you may call the principal for assistance. The administrations' goal is to assist you in working through any challenge that may arise in an efficient and fair manner. Also, the principal has instituted a "principal's parking lot" which is posted in the front lobby for public comments. Your feedback is welcome and appreciated.

DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Doss school discipline plan is based on the Positive Behavior Support program and the Capturing Kids' Hearts philosophy. We believe that each child is responsible for his or her own actions. Doss teachers work to establish a strong sense of community in each classroom. A class Social Contract is developed by the students to guide the class throughout the year. Positive rewards are offered to recognize appropriate behavior. If a child is sent to the office for a behavioral concern, parents will be called by the school.

DOGS ON CAMPUS

Do not bring dogs on the campus unless authorized by the teacher for a special occasion.

DRESS CODE

Students are dressed appropriately for school when their attire and hair do not distract others from learning, and they are able to actively participate in all activities during the school day. All students have a formal physical education class (ask your child for the schedule) and need to wear appropriate clothing and shoes that day. No caps, hats, or unnatural hair color unless approved for special campus activities. Clothing may not advertise, condone, depict, or promote the use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs. Also prohibited is clothing with vulgar or obscene language, or with images or writings that disrupt the educational setting. Specific items of clothing that may not be worn to school are: backless tops, baggy pants, elongated armholes, fake nails and make-up, gang-associated clothing or colors, low-cut necklines, overly tight and improperly fitting garments, oversized shirts, shorts and skirts that are distracting, spaghetti straps (i.e. straps that are less than two inches), strapless tops, slippers, and hats or caps inside (*except for religious headwear*). If the principal or designee determines that dress is inappropriate, the student shall be given the opportunity to correct the problem at school before calling home for help.

EMERGENCY CONTACT

Parents must provide telephone numbers where a responsible adult may be reached in the event of illness or injury. If your child needs emergency care and we cannot reach you or others you have named, we will call EMS. Parents are responsible for paying any medical bills from EMS and the hospital they use.

HOURS OF OPERATION - 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Students may enter the building after 7:15am and wait in the cafeteria. When the 7:30 am bell rings, students will be dismissed to classrooms. Instruction begins promptly at 7:45am. It is very important that students arrive on time and ready to learn. The school day ends at 2:57pm. If your child is not picked up on time, he/she will wait in the area near the cafeteria doors until 3:30pm. Parents/guardians may pick up children there.

If an emergency occurs and you are unable to pick up your child, please contact the school office to make special arrangements for your child. **Please note** that students are not allowed to return to the classrooms after 3:00pm.

IMMUNIZATIONS AND TB TEST

Our school enforces the state laws for requiring records of mandated immunizations or proper exemptions.

LEAVING SCHOOL DURING THE DAY

Any student leaving the school during school hours must be signed out in the office by a parent or guardian who is listed on the emergency card. Do not go directly to the classroom to pick up your child. For security, your child will be called to meet you in the office. You must notify the office if someone other than a person on the card will be picking up your child for appointments, etc. Proper identification must be provided. Any time away from school is counted as a tardy.

LOST AND FOUND

Please label your child's sweaters, coats and lunch boxes. Items with a child's full name are promptly returned. Found items are taken to the lost and found area in the hall near the cafeteria. The lost and found items will be displayed outside the cafeteria for students to identify. Each month all unclaimed items will be donated to a charitable organization.

MEDICATION

For the safety of all students, prescription and non-prescription medication can only be administered from the school office. School regulations require the office to maintain written requests from parents explaining time and dosage, etc. Forms are available in the office. All medications must be in original containers and correctly labeled. Teachers and the office staff are willing to assist with medications, but it is the responsibility of the child to report to the office for the medication.

RELIGIOUS MATTERS POLICY AND GUIDELINES

Doss students and families share a wide range of religious beliefs and expectations. Since public schools are non-religious entities, Doss will remain neutral in regard to religious expression.

All students and staff members are expected to be tolerant of each other's religious views. Therefore, no particular religious beliefs or non-beliefs 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 that are contrary to their religious beliefs in accordance with the AISD policy.

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 or beliefs being a course of study in and of themselves.
2. Symbols that represent a religious holiday may only be utilized as curriculum aids provided their use is relevant to the learning experience. Religious symbols may not be used as decoration.
3. The campus calendar should be prepared so as to minimize conflicts with major religious holidays and observances for all faiths.
4. The class parties in December are referred to as Winter parties and will not contain symbols related to the Christmas holiday.
5. We recommend the PTA school-wide Room Parent Coordinator be thoroughly versed in the policy established by the CAC, and that an orientation be provided for all Room Parents, particularly the Grade Level Room Parent Coordinators.

STUDENT BIRTHDAYS

Students may come to the office to say their name on the announcements for their birthday. Do not send any snacks/treats for birthdays/celebrations, as this is against policy. Balloons and flowers are also not allowed. However, on this special day, the classroom teacher will recognize your child.

TARDIES

It is very important that children arrive on time to school each day. Class begins promptly at 7:45 am. Any time missed during the school day is considered a tardy. A conference with the parents and principal, assistant principal or counselor will be requested if tardies are excessive. Tardies will be recorded and will be reported on report cards.

STUDY FIELD TRIPS

Each grade level takes a variety of field trips each year. Teachers will send information home explaining the purpose of the trip and will ask for parent/guardian permission. The permission slip must be signed and returned for your child to be able to participate.

TECHNOLOGY AT SCHOOL

Doss Elementary values the use of technology for our digital natives. We are in the midst of developing clear and concise policy for use of personal digital devices at school. At this time, our guideline is “as encouraged or allowed by the teacher.” It is important to note that your child is responsible for the device if it comes to school. If it is a reader (like Kindle) or an iPad with apps, teacher discretion determines when and where use is allowed. Our goal is that ALL students have equal access to technology while at Doss and that ALL students use technology safely. All parents are asked to sign a technology agreement at the beginning of the year.

TELEPHONE USE

The school phone is a business phone and we receive and make many calls during the day. Therefore, we must limit students’ calls to emergencies only. This means that after school visits to friends must be arranged outside of school. Students may use the classroom phone only with teacher permission. Student phones must remain off during the day and placed in backpack.

TEXTBOOKS

State-approved textbooks are provided free of charge for each subject or class. Students and parents are responsible for cost of damage to or loss of a textbook.

TRAFFIC

Take time to review the appropriate drop-off and pick-up spots for your children prior to the first day of school. Older children will be asked to go to the pick-up area of the youngest child in the family.

The student pick-up process is completed in 15 minutes. Your patience and compliance with the pickup map are greatly appreciated. In addition, do not perform u-turn on North Hills, do not double-park, do not leave your car in a pickup zone, and do not talk on your phone in the school zone.

VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS

All visitors and volunteers must sign in at the office and wear a visitor or volunteer badge/sticker before going to the classrooms or the cafeteria. These procedures are essential for the security of the campus.

WEDNESDAY FOLDERS

Wednesday folders are utilized by the PTA, the teachers, and the administration to relay information to parents. Take time to review the folder with your child, sign where requested by the teacher, and return the folder with your child on Thursday.

WHAT CAN BE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL

Children are not allowed to bring any items to school that are dangerous, valuable (too dear that it cannot be lost), or that distract other children. In general, children should only bring items for “show and tell” as requested/approved by the teacher. Do not allow stuffed toys, toy cars, toy guns, knives, nail clippers, expensive games, or jewelry to be brought to school. Books are always appropriate. Ask the homeroom teacher for guidelines on technology in the classroom.

