



Raul B. Fernandez Elementary School
Parent-Student Handbook
2024-2025

School Mascot: Bulldogs
School Colors: Yellow (Gold) and Black

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to Raul B. Fernandez Elementary School...home of the Bulldogs!

This parent-student handbook is provided to give you valuable information about our campus. The following guidelines will be expected to be followed and is a supplement to the NISD Student-Parent Handbook. This handbook is written to address campus-specific procedures and contains valuable information about your child's school. Please take time to read through this handbook and mark your calendar with all of the events.

As the 2024 - 2025 school year begins, please know that every member of the Fernandez staff is dedicated to making this a positive and productive year for your child. With your support and mutual interest in your child's education, we will work together to ensure a successful school year.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Barraza

Rebecca Zamora-Barraza
Principal

Fernandez Elementary's Strategic Framework



Mission

Speak love by teaching with courage, commitment, and compassion.

Vision

Our students will believe they are capable and important.

Learners will be:

Creators	Leaders
Collaborators	Learners
Communicators	Innovators
Critical Thinkers	Solution-Finders

Core Beliefs

- Each student deserves a quality education which honors their voice and prepares them to engage, contribute, and succeed.
- Students' levels of health, safety, engagement, challenge, and support are directly linked to their academic achievement and future success.
- Meaningful relationships among students, families, educators, and the community are vital to student success.
- Fernandez Elementary is essential to fostering community and developing engaged citizens.

About Fernandez Elementary

Our school first opened its doors in August of 1990. Our school mascot is the Bulldogs, and our school colors are black and gold. Our namesakes, Raul and Sylvia Fernandez, have been active members of our campus community ever since. Fernandez is a place where kids come to learn, but also to experience love and dedication from a staff that truly cares about them. We are a team at Fernandez, and our parents and families are an important part of what makes our school successful. We are proud to be partners with you in making our school a great place to be.

School Song

We love Fernandez. Oh yes, we do.
We love Fernandez, and we'll be true.
We pledge our loyalty to you.
Oh, Fernandez, we love you.

We love you Bulldogs. Oh yes, we do.
We love you Bulldogs, and we'll be true.
We pledge our loyalty to you.
Oh, Bulldogs, we love you.

School Chant

Who's that walking down the street?

It's the sound of Bulldog feet.

Bulldog strength and Bulldog pride

Comes from way down deep inside.

Others wonder how we rate,

Bulldogs know that we are

GREAT!

Campus Information

School Day (ECSE, Pre-K - 5th Grade): 7:45 - 3:00 p.m.

- Children who are not in their classrooms at 7:45 will be marked tardy.
- The school office is open from 7:00 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.

Morning Procedures:

- Our front doors will be monitored by a staff member and a fast pass will be required to enter with your child. If you forget your fast pass, you will be required to check in at the front office with a valid ID.
- Please always use the crosswalk to walk your child into the campus and model best safety practices.
- Students should be dropped off in the front of the building each morning. Please drop your students off at the curb, and do not let them exit on the street or lower parking lot as it is very dangerous and causes traffic congestion for the other parents.
- Parents and students may enter the front doors of the building at 7:00. It is not recommended to bring unaccompanied students to school prior to 7:00. Students arriving outside prior to 7:00 cannot be supervised by school staff.
- Parents may eat breakfast with their students between 7:00 - 7:35. All parents must depart the building before 7:40, so that we can secure the building for all students and staff.
- Patrols will be stationed on the right side of the curb to help assist students out of the car.
- Traffic tends to be the heaviest from 7:30 - 7:40 a.m., so please plan to arrive between 7:00 and 7:30 to avoid congestion and keep your student(s) from being late.
- Once in the building, students should go immediately to the cafeteria to eat breakfast or to their grade level hallway. Students will sit in their grade level hallway until their teachers bring them into the classroom at 7:40.
- For the safety of all, parents are only allowed in the cafeteria in the morning.
- The school building will be secured by 7:45 a.m. and parents will not be able to walk their child to the cafeteria and/or classroom. A staff member will be happy to escort your child.

Breakfast: Breakfast begins at 7:00 am. Breakfast will be free of charge for all students during the 2024 - 2025 school year.

Lunch: Lunch times vary according to grade levels. Lunch begins at approximately 10:55 am and ends at approximately 12:35 pm. The school will send out a yearly menu in the first day packet. This menu can also be downloaded from the district website. Lunch will be free of charge for all students during the 2024 - 2025 school year. Parents may bring lunch to their students, but we will not accept deliveries from restaurants or services such as Uber Eats, GrubHub, etc...

Dismissal:

**Students may not be picked up by taxis or ride-shares such as Lyft, Uber, etc...*

There are two after school dismissal areas:

- **PreK - 1st Grade (Front drive pick-up):** The front drive pick-up is the designated pickup area for Pre-K, KG, and 1st grade students only. Siblings of these students who are in 2nd – 5th grade will join their younger siblings in this pickup area. Please follow these guidelines:
 - a. For faster service, display your student's iDismiss number prominently in your window.
 - b. Please remain in your cars and pull up through the right side lane only.
 - c. Please remain in your car and allow the staff (car monitors) to help get your child to the car.
 - d. Please pull forward to the furthest car monitor so that we can get as many cars as possible in line to pick up the children.
- **ALE and 2nd – 5th Grade (Back Bus Loop pick-up):** The back bus loop is the designated pick-up area for our buses and for our daycare vans. While the buses and vans are priority, we will also have our 2nd– 5th graders picked up in the back bus loop to shorten wait times and reduce traffic congestion on Ridgebrook. We will only be able to continue with this if the bus and daycare pick-ups are uninterrupted. Please follow these guidelines:
 - a. For faster service, display your student's iDismiss number prominently in your window.
 - b. Do not block the sidewalk when entering the bus loop from Ridgebrook.
 - c. Do not go past the orange cones if you arrive early. We must save space for our buses.
 - d. Do not park on the bus loop.
 - e. Do not exit your vehicles. We will open car doors for your student(s).
 - f. Please pull forward to the furthest staff member so we can get as many cars as possible in line to pick up the children.
- **Walkers:** Walkers will be consolidated in a central location prior to being released at 3:00 through exterior doors. Walkers will be escorted off campus, but will not be walked to the corner. Please consider the following before designating your child as a walker:
 - a. Unless they are accompanied by a responsible older sibling, walkers should be in 2nd, 3rd, 4th, or 5th grade.
 - b. Walkers should be able to get home by themselves. Unfortunately, we have had multiple situations where parents said their student was a walker when they really intended to pick them up from the corner. This creates traffic issues, but it also creates scary and dangerous moments for kids when their parents are late or unable to pick them up.
 - c. Walkers are unsupervised when they walk home. Please make sure your student is able to handle this responsibility.

d. Parents who want to meet and walk home with their students should use the parent “walk up” option described below. Parents should also use this option if they want to drive their students home but do not want to wait in line (i.e., park, pick up, and leave).

- **Parent Walk-Up (Pick-up):** Parents may walk to the front of the building to pick up their students. Please have your students name and iDismiss number available. This option is ideal for parents who want to walk home with their kids, or parents who want to avoid the line by parking in the front and picking up their student.

Alternate Dismissal for Walkers: As a way of ensuring student safety, there may be occasions (severe weather, etc.) in which our students’ dismissal for walkers will be different from the normal procedure. Walkers will be kept inside the building until the inclement weather, etc.. passes and conditions are deemed safe to dismiss. Parents will be notified if conditions do not improve.

School Bus Service: School bus service is made available to students who live two miles from school. Ask in our office or call the Northside Transportation Office at (210) 398-1550. Additional information can also be found at www.nisd.net and clicking on Boundaries and Buses.

Change of Way Home for Students: If you need to change your child’s normal dismissal routine, please call the office no later than 2:00 p.m. This is to ensure that the message reaches the teacher in time for dismissal.

Late Pick-up: All students must be picked up from campus by 3:00 p.m. We are not staffed to provide after-school care for students who are not picked up on time. We understand that emergencies happen. Please reach out to the campus as soon as possible if you are running behind. If you are late, please come inside the building to sign your student out.

Student Attendance








We expect all our Bulldogs to be at school daily and on time. Absences are either excused or unexcused. Excused absences are illness, religious holiday or death in the immediate family. Vacations are considered to be unexcused. When your child is absent, please send a note to the front office upon his/her return with the reason and date for the absence.

Please keep in mind family vacations will not be accepted as excused absences. All absences, including excused absences count toward the 90% rule (more than 17 absences).

- Perfect attendance is the best attendance, but we know that this isn’t always possible. Illnesses and emergencies are sometimes unavoidable.
 - If your child has a fever, diarrhea, or is vomiting, please keep them home.
 - They must be fever free without the use of medication for 24 hours in order to return.
 - If your child has allergies or a cold they may be able to attend school.

- Generally speaking, we see an academic impact on kids who are absent more than six days per year (excused or unexcused). The same is true for students with multiple tardies (more than ten in a year).
- Students who miss more than 17 days of school per year (excused or unexcused) are considered “chronically absent”.
- Students who are absent from school may not participate in an after school activity that day.

I NEED TO STAY HOME IF...

I HAVE A FEVER	I AM VOMITING	I HAVE A RUNNY NOSE	I HAVE A PERSISTENT COUGH	I HAVE DIARRHEA	I HAVE A RASH	I HAVE HEAD LICE	I HAVE AN EYE INFECTION	I have a communicable disease
								
Temperature of 100.2 or higher	Within the past 24 hours	With yellow/green discharge	Croupy Cough	Within the past 24 hours	Impetigo, ringworm, or body rash with itching or fever	Itchy head, active head lice or nits	Redness, itchy, and/or “crusty” drainage from eye(s)	Flu, Measles, MRSA, etc.
I AM READY TO RETURN TO SCHOOL WHEN I AM...								
Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication i.e. Tylenol or Motrin	Free from vomiting for at least 24 hours and have had at least 2 solid meals	On required antibiotics for at least 24 hours	Cleared by my doctor and have a note specifying my continued symptoms are not contagious to others	Free from diarrhea for at least 24 hours	Free from rash, itching, open sores, and fever. And I have been evaluated by my doctor, if needed	Treated with appropriate lice treatment at home and proof is provided that I no longer have lice or nits	Evaluated by my doctor, have begun appropriate medication, and/or have a note from my doctor stating I may return to school	No longer contagious and the incubation period for any communicable disease has passed

Appointments: We strongly encourage parents to schedule appointments after school hours. If this is unavoidable, the child will be called to the office upon parent arrival. Please return with a physician’s note to excuse the absence.

Student Welfare & Safety

Visitors: We ask that all visitors check in and pick up a visitor’s badge from the school office upon arrival. All visitors must show a valid driver’s license when signing in for a visit. For the safety of your children, all driver’s licenses will be scanned through our RAPTOR system. Any adult not wearing a visitor’s tag will be stopped by staff members and asked to check in at the office.

Having Lunch with your child: Parents are encouraged to eat breakfast or lunch with their children. Please remember the following guidelines:

- Only your child will be allowed to eat lunch with you. Adults visiting for lunch must be listed on the student emergency list and must be indicated that contact is allowed at school.

- Parents must sign in and eat at the designated parent table in the cafeteria when eating lunch with their child during the student's regularly scheduled lunch time.
- Students must return to class with their teacher.
- **Parents who eat breakfast or lunch with their child should not share or provide food to other children. Parents should only interact with their children.**
- Parents who eat breakfast or lunch with their child should refrain from using student restrooms.
- Parents who eat breakfast or lunch with their child should exit the building after eating and should not escort the student to their classroom or anywhere else on campus.
- Parents or lunch visitors are not allowed to take pictures, video, or make audio recordings of other Fernandez students during their visit.

Cell phones & Smart Watches: All cell phones must be powered OFF and placed in backpacks prior to the academic day and must remain in backpack till after dismissal. Cell phones are not allowed to be used on the bus.

Should a student have a smart watch, the watch cannot be used to communicate with others during the school day. This causes a disruption and distraction during the school day as would a phone. If it continues to cause disruption, the student will be asked to leave the device at home and replace it with a non-smart watch. Student's are more than welcome to leave the device powered OFF in their backpack during the day and turn it on after dismissal.

Pets: Animals may not be brought on school grounds, even during dismissal. Proper documentation/vests may be requested for service animals

Toys/Gadgets/Dangerous Weapons: Toys may not be brought to school unless the teacher sends home a note. (For example: Show 'n Tell, Special Event, etc.) This includes trading cards (Pokemon Cards) and electronic devices. Please note that the school is not responsible for lost, damaged, or traded items.

No one may bring a weapon or items associated with weapons for any reason. Prohibited items include fireworks, toy guns, water guns, pocket knives, toy knives, Boy Scout knives, etc. Please seriously review all of the above with your child.

Behavior & Discipline: All students are expected to abide by the Northside Independent School District Code of Conduct. The NISD Code of Conduct can be found through the link: <https://www.nisd.net/schools/handbooks/elementary>.

One of the most important requirements of a good learning environment is appropriate behavior of each student. We believe each child has the right to learn in an environment that is free from disruptions and/or the threat of harm from other students.

Please refer to the Northside ISD Parent-Student Handbook for in-depth information about student discipline. Fernandez is a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) campus. This means that we take an approach to student discipline anchored on teaching expectations and reinforcing positive behaviors through recognition.

We use a progressive system of consequences that can begin with verbal reminders to the student or communication with parents for minor infractions. Students who continue to display inappropriate minor behaviors or students who display behaviors that cause harm to others may have more serious consequences. More serious consequences may include time outs, in-school suspensions, or off-campus suspensions.

General Student Grooming Guidelines: Campus Administration, after consulting with the School Advisory Team and considering school/community needs, may have additional dress or grooming regulations that are campus specific. Final determination of acceptable dress and grooming rests with the Principal or his/her designee and cannot be appealed. To aid students and their parents in making decisions about appropriate dress and grooming for schools, the following guidelines are established. We ask our Bulldogs to dress within the guidelines set forth by Fernandez Elementary and Northside ISD. Please refer to the 2024 - 2025 NISD Student-Parent Handbook for further information. Here are some guidelines for you to consider:

- Shorts of mid-thigh length may be worn at all school levels. Suggestive and/or indecent shorts will be prohibited.
- Mid-thigh length skirts, skorts, and dresses may be worn at all levels. There should not be a cut or slit in the clothing that extends above the mid-thigh. Suggestive and/or indecent styles will be prohibited. These requirements also apply to school uniforms.
- Appropriate footwear must be worn; footwear which has toes reinforced with steel, hard plastics or similar materials are specifically prohibited.
- Roller-skate shoes are not permitted on campus. Athletic shoes are required for Physical Education. Boots, sandals, and Crocs are not permitted during PE.
- Hair must be neat and clean. Unconventional hairstyles that distract from teaching and learning will be prohibited.
 - This includes unnatural dye-colored hair; regardless of student gender.
- Headwear (hats, bandannas, hoods, etc...) must not be worn in buildings.
- Any clothes that are suggestive or indecent or which cause distraction are not acceptable. Specifically, oversized clothing, tank tops, muscle shirts, halter tops, spaghetti straps, exposed backs or midriffs, and see-through garments are not permitted.
- Indecent/inappropriate patches, writings, or drawings on clothing are prohibited.
- All pants are to be worn at the waist (no "sagging") Tight fitting pants (e.g. tights, spandex, bicycle pants, etc.) are also prohibited. Frays or holes above the knees are prohibited.
- Body piercing jewelry is prohibited except for rings, studs or other traditional jewelry worn in the ear. Tongue rings and tongue studs are not permitted.

Please keep in mind that students have recess every day and go to PE every other day. Rubber soled shoes or tennis shoes are the safest shoes for your student to wear. If students are wearing a skirt or dress on PE days they may wish to wear shorts under their skirt. Please make sure that all tops/shirts extend past the top of your students pants, shorts, or skirt when they lift their arms. Student shoes and/or clothing shall not excuse participation in school activities.

Legal Documents: By law, if parents are legally separated or divorced, each parent has equal rights to the custody of the child/children UNLESS a parent has a court order that indicates which parent has custody of the child/children. Sometimes, the court order will also state certain conditions regarding the child/children that the school should be aware of so that the school can follow these conditions. The school MUST HAVE A CURRENT COPY OF THE COURT ORDER SIGNED BY A JUDGE ON FILE. Otherwise, either parent may check the child out of school with proper identification.

Medical Release and Emergency Information: It is very important that we always have an updated number where we can reach you in case of an emergency. Please keep the office updated with any change of cellular numbers or telephone numbers at home or work.

Medications:

- Any and all medication should be delivered to school by a parent/guardian.
- Antibiotic and other short-term prescription medications may be administered at school upon written request from the parent/guardian. Medication must be brought to school in the original prescription bottle. Request is good for two weeks unless stated otherwise by a physician.
- Long-term medication may be given only if the Medication/Special Procedures form is completed by the attending physician and the medication is brought in the properly labeled prescription bottle. Parent/guardian fills out the bottom portion of the form. The Medication/Special Procedures form must be filled out for each school year.
- **Non-prescription medication cannot be dispensed to, or carried by, a student at school, this includes cold medications, cough syrups, cough drops, throat lozenges, vitamins, herbal medications, and essential oils.**

Celebrations & Food Safety

Food at School: Elementary schools are required to follow nutrition rules established by the Texas Department of Agriculture. Parents may choose the food items sent to school for their own child, but may not send food or purchase food for other students. These guidelines apply to field trips as well as activities provided during the extended school day, with two exceptions: school parties and a third special day as designated by the campus principal.

Classroom Parties: Elementary schools may have 3 parties each year - Winter, Fiesta and EOY party. Party refreshments are only permitted on these occasions. Classroom teachers will communicate party day/time as well as any need for donations.

Birthdays: Our students enjoy celebrating their birthday at school. They are encouraged to visit the front office for a birthday sticker and pencil.

- Please note, as stated in the NISD Parent-Student Elementary Handbook “invitations to private celebrations may be passed out at school only if every child in the classroom receives one or if every girl in a classroom receives an invitation to a girl’s party or every boy in the classroom receives an invitation to a boy’s party.”
- Parents are encouraged to recognize their child’s birthday with non-food items, such as pencils, erasers, stickers, etc.
- Parents may send store-bought or individually packaged cupcakes or cookies (no cakes or drinks) for their child’s classroom to recognize their child’s birthday.
- Due to the possibility of student food allergies, please notify your child’s teacher beforehand.
- Please contact your child’s teacher if you do not want your child to eat cupcakes from classmates.
- Cupcakes will not be eaten in the cafeteria and will be passed out to the children the last 10 minutes of the school day. This is done to minimize disruption to instructional time.
- Parents will not be allowed to take the cupcakes to the classroom, but the front office will make sure they are delivered to the classroom.
- No balloons and/or flowers may be delivered to students during the school day.

Spirit Days: We encourage students to wear a college shirt every Monday. Every Friday is a school spirit day, students may wear any Fernandez Bulldog school spirit shirt. School shirts will be available for purchase through our Fernandez PTA.

Student Clubs: Academia is an important part of student life, but there is so much more to being a student at Fernandez! Our staff graciously sponsors several clubs and activities throughout the year. We encourage you to have your student participate in at least one of these clubs or activities this year. It will support their social and emotional skills and give them a connection to school outside of academics.

Parent & Family Engagement

Parent and Family Engagement: We encourage parents and family members to participate in their student’s education as much as possible! This adds value to the student’s experience, as well as the campus in general. Here are some ways families can be involved.

PTA: The PTA mission statement is “to make every child’s potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children”.

You can participate in PTA as a member or as a board member for only \$10. Your membership helps our campus in so many ways. Our goal is for 75% of our students to have a family member participate in PTA and 90% of our staff. This is an easy and important way to send a message to our kids about the value of parent involvement.

Watch D.O.G.S.: We got off to a great start last year, and we want to see this initiative grow starting this fall! We will have a meet and greet and we hope to see many positive male role models attend and learn how to support their students and the campus.

Campus Communication

We know that being aware of what is happening at Fernandez, including upcoming campus events will help with your family’s schedule. Here are several ways that our administration and teachers will reach out to you:

- **School Messenger:** School Messenger will be the primary means of mass communication from me to the community. This will come in the form of emails or an automated phone call. Please make sure your contact information is up to date in order to avoid missing important messages and updates.
- **Phone Calls:** Teachers are unable to receive calls from parents throughout the day. Please reach out to the front office for urgent communication.
- **See-Saw and Class Dojo:** These are great tools that enable families and staff members to communicate with ease. Please keep the following in mind when you use these platforms:
 - Teachers may not respond to messages during classroom instruction time. If you send a message through Class Dojo or See Saw during the day, please know that teachers may not check them until their conference period or after school. Please call the front office for any urgent communication needs.
 - Messages sent after a teacher’s work day is done may not be viewed or responded to until the following day. We want to make sure our staff members have an opportunity to reset and spend quality time with their loved ones!
- **Email:** This is always the most reliable means of communication. This is especially true for administrators. If you want to contact the principal or associate principal, email is much more effective than Class Dojo. You may contact us at: rebecca.zamorabarraza@nisd.net or marissa.barboza@nisd.net
- **District Website:** (<https://www.nisd.net/>) This is a great place to find district information and updates.
- **Campus Website:** (<https://www.nisd.net/fernandez>) Campus specific information can be found here. The campus newsletter will be emailed monthly, but it can always be accessed on our campus website.

- **Home Access Center:** (<https://hac.nisd.net>) This is the best way to stay connected with up to date information about your student's grades, attendance, library books, and so much more. If you need help setting up an account, just call the front office.
- **Please note: We will respond to parent communication as soon as possible, but always by the end of the next school day.**



**Raul B. Fernandez Elementary School
Parent-Student Handbook
2024-2025**

I, _____, have read and understand the policies and procedures outlined in the Fernandez Elementary Parent-Student Handbook.

I acknowledge that I have shared the information within the handbook with my child and they understand the rules and expectations explained in the Parent-Student Handbook.

Student's Name: _____

Classroom Teacher: _____ Grade: _____

Parent or Guardian's Name: _____

Parent or Guardian's Signature: _____

Date of Acknowledgement: _____

*Please complete and return this form to your child's teacher.

