

**Neff Elementary**

**Family Handbook 2024-2025**

**8301 Neff St**

**Houston, TX 77036**

**Tel: 713-556-9566**

**Fax: 713-556-5967**

## Website address: http://www.houstonisd.org/NeffES

## Follow us on Twitter: @Neff\_ES

# Contacts and Other Communication Information

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| **Principal** | **Mrs. Mahalet Negussie** | [**Mahalet.Negussie@houstonisd.org**](mailto:Mahalet.Negussie@houstonisd.org) |
| Assistant Principal | Ms. Aracelis Ortega | [AOrtega2@houstonisd.org](mailto:AOrtega2@houstonisd.org) |
| Assistant Principal | Mrs. Maury Bryant | [Maury.Bryant@houstonisd.org](mailto:Maury.Bryant@houstonisd.org) |
| Assistant Principal | Mr. James Ferguson | [James.Ferguson@houstonisd.org](mailto:James.Ferguson@houstonisd.org) |
| Counselor | Mrs. Carly Richard | [Carly.RichardJohnson@houstonisd.org](mailto:cheryl.fullmer@houstonisd.org) |
| Nurse | TBA |  |
| Wraparound Specialist | Mr. Romero Ramirez | [Romero.Ramirez@houstonisd.org](mailto:Romero.Ramirez@houstonisd.org) |
| CIS Representative | Mrs. Veronica Alch | [Veronica.Alch@houstonisd.org](mailto:Veronica.Alch@houstonisd.org) |

**Class Dojo:** Class Dojo will be the primary form of communication between teachers and staff, and families. At the beginning of the year, parents will be given instructions on how to sign up for Class Dojo. It is recommended that all parents check Class Dojo **daily**. Teachers will post messages concerning classroom news and activities and staff will post important information as well. Parents and teachers can also communicate directly through messages. Class Dojo will translate messages from English to a variety of languages to make it easier for everyone to stay in communication.

**Emails:** Classroom teachers, faculty and staff can all be reached by email or Class Dojo. To find a complete listing of email addresses please see “Grade Level Teams” at <http://www.houstonisd.org/NeffES>. Allow at least 24 hours for a response as teachers do not check emails during instructional time.

# School Calendars

Weekly calendars will be posted on the school’s Class Dojo page. This will include any events related to tutorials, after school activities, clubs, major assessments, and more.

For the HISD calendar, please visit <http://www.houstonisd.org/calendars>

# Arrival/Dismissal/Parking Procedures

# Starting and Finishing the School Day:

**Arrival:**

## School begins at 8:00 a.m. Monday-Friday. The building opens to students at 6:30 am.

**Car Riders and Walkers:** All car riders will be dropped on in the front circle drive. Car riders and walkers will enter the school through the side door. Please follow the directions of the staff guiding traffic. Do not stop directly in front of the doors. Carpool opens at 6:30 a.m. **SUPERVISION** starts at this time for all students as they walk to their classrooms. At 8:00 a.m. instruction starts, and tardies will be issued if students are late.

**Bus Riders:** Buses will arrive from the back circle drive. Students will walk directly to their classrooms.

# Tardies:

The instructional bell rings at 8:00 a.m. and the school day begins. Please make sure your child is at school on time. ***Your child will be counted tardy after the 7:45 a.m. bell rings.***

## Dismissal:

## The dismissal process begins at 3:50 p.m. Monday-Friday for all students. Please ensure that you communicate your dismissal plans for your child with their teacher. If there is a change in dismissal plans for any reason, please communicate the change with the teacher and the front office to ensure that your child is sent to the correct dismissal area.

**Bus Riders:** Buses will arrive and depart from the back circle drive. Students will be called from their classrooms to the blacktop to organize into their bus groups and will be walked to the buses.

## Car Riders: All students will be issued 2 car tags. The tag must be displayed in their car window to help dismissal run smoothly. For safety reasons, students will NOT be released to cars unless the tag is visible.

## 2nd and 3rd Graders: Will be dismissed through the circle drive on Neff Street.

## Carpoolers, 4th, and 5th Graders: Will be dismissed through the back circle drive on Tanglewide Street.

## Note: Parents who walk up to either car rider line will be asked to wait until the walkers are dismissed and meet their child at the exit gate on Neff Street. All students who are listed as “*car riders*”, will be released to a car. If you plan to walk up to pick up your child, your child will be listed as a “*walker*” and you can pick them up from the exit gate on Neff Street.

**Walkers and Parent Walk-Up:**

Walkers will be dismissed after the school buses have left campus. This is for the safety of our walkers. They will be dismissed through the side door near the soccer field.

## NOTE: Parents should not enter the building at dismissal but are asked to wait patiently at the designated pick-up location. School personnel focus on keeping track of all students and their pick-up arrangements. Teachers cannot use this time for conferences.

Our main concern is your child’s safety. **After 4:45 p.m. there will be no adult supervision available for your child in the front office. After 4:45 p.m., the remaining student’s parents will be called and after consecutive late pickups, a conference will be scheduled to discuss options for dismissal.**

**PARKING: Parents** are **not** allowed to park in the circle drive during arrival and dismissal. Parents may not park in the parking lot, unless they have an appointment with school personnel. This is not a parking area to drop off or to pick up children. Please obey all laws pertaining to school buses.

# Attendance

## Attendance:

Prompt and daily attendance is extremely important to your child’s education. In addition, our school’s rating and funding are affected by the attendance rate.

Attendance is taken daily at 9:30 a.m. To be counted present for the day, your child must be in the classroom at 9:30 a.m., unless the child reports the same day with a medical excuse. In the event your child is absent, please send a note to the school with the following information:

1. Student’s First and Last Name
2. Date(s) of the Absence
3. Reason for the Absence

# Excused Absences:

The only acceptable excuses for absences are personal illness, illness or death in the family, religious holidays, participation in school activities with the principal’s permission, and weather or road conditions making travel dangerous. By Texas Education Code S21.034(f), students shall be excused from attending school for the purposes of observing religious holy days when it is a tenet of their faith that they must be absent from school during such time. Travel, vacations, or extended holidays are not excused absences. The school must receive written notification of absences for holy days before the day.

If your child has a doctor’s appointment, he/she will not be counted absent as long as the child returns to school before noon on the same day and brings an excuse from the doctor. Written excuses for absences or tardy days must be in the school’s possession no later than three days after the date of absence. **Absences without a written note are automatically recorded as unexcused.**

Excessive absences and/or tardies are referred to the attendance personnel within the district office. ***Excessive absences or tardies may also result in retention for any student.***

HISD uses an automated telephone system to alert parents of a child’s absence from school. The system asks you to phone the school immediately. You do not need to call the school if you have already submitted an attendance note. **You will still receive the automated call regardless of whether you have already informed the school of an upcoming absence.**

## Procedures for Leaving Early:

* + Please send an email, note, or Class Dojo message informing the classroom teacher.
  + Come into the office and sign your child out of school.
  + School office personnel will call for your child to meet you in the office.

## Due to the end-of-the-day transitions, children will not be called to leave early after 2:30 p.m. In the event of an emergency, contact a school administrator.

Multiple occurrences of early pick-up of students are strongly discouraged and may impact your child’s attendance.

**Compulsory School Attendance Laws**: **TO PARENTS OR PERSONS STANDING IN PARENTAL RELATION TO CHILDREN THIS HANDBOOK SERVES AS NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS**

The Texas Education Code §25.095 requires the school district to notify a student’s parents in writing at the beginning of the school year (this handbook serves as this notification) that if the student is absent from school for (10 or more days or **parts** of days) within a six-month period in the same school year or on (3 or more **parts** of days) within a four-week period:

1. The student’s parent (or legal guardian) is subject to prosecution under §25.093; and
2. The student is subject to prosecution under TEC §25.094.

It is the parent’s duty to monitor the student’s school attendance, require the student to attend school, and request a conference with a school official to discuss the absences. The parent is subject to prosecution under §25.093 (b) for failure to require their child to attend school.

# Breakfast/Lunch/Snack Information:

**Breakfast:** Breakfast is free to all classroom students from 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. If your child arrives at school after 8:00 a.m., they may not have an opportunity to receive breakfast.

**Lunch**: Students may obtain a free lunch or bring one from home. Please send students to school with healthy lunches. **Soda, energy drinks, and candy are not permitted.** Students may bring a water bottle to school to refill as needed. (No glass bottles are allowed). Please honor allergies in the classroom when preparing snacks. ***Please mark every personal item with your child’s name.***

# Health/Illness Policy

We would love it if all children could be at school daily; however, we know that illnesses occur. An ill child needs to be at home. The following symptoms are to help determine when a child should not be brought to school:

* A child has had excessive coughing, fever, vomiting, or diarrhea in the last 24 hours.
* A child’s illness is suspected of being contagious.
* A child needs more care than the teacher can give while caring for other students.
* All students must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.
* *A child is exhibiting symptoms of Covid-19 as determined by Nurse Singer in conjunction with HISD Health and Medical Services.*

A note or e-mail from the child’s parent or guardian written to the child’s teacher is required for an excused absence. If a child becomes ill during the day and warrants going home, the nurse will call for the child to be picked up as soon as possible. All parents must establish an emergency plan in case of a child’s illness. If a child gets hurt during the day, the nurse will make all attempts to inform the parent of any injuries. Notices will be sent home concerning student(s) in the classroom/grade level who have been exposed to communicable diseases such as lice, strep throat, or chicken pox. Please notify the school nurse if your child has a communicable disease or has been exposed to one.

## Allergies:

Parents of children with severe allergies must contact the school nurse to ensure a safe learning environment.

**Medications:** If your child needs to take over the counter or prescription medicine during the school day, the parent and doctor must fill out a “Medication Dispensing Form” (you can get this form from the nurse). All medications, whether over the counter or prescription, must be in a pharmacy container with the prescription label prescribed for the student.

# Additional School Information

## Dress code:

* + Head coverings such as hats and caps may not be worn in the classroom unless the teacher approves.
  + Shorts, skirts, skorts, and dresses worn above the knee must pass the fingertip test (this means the skirt must be below the student’s fingertip when her hands are relaxed by her side).
  + Shorts or leggings must be worn under skirts and dresses. Leggings are NOT to be worn by themselves.
  + All clothing and accessories must be free of profanity, suggestive or provocative language and/or symbols, advertisement or promotion of alcohol, tobacco, or drug use, and/or reference to or association with gang activity.
  + All clothing must cover the entire midriff area, chest, back, and top of the shoulder area.
  + Pants must be worn at the waist.
  + Shoes must be tennis shoes appropriate for running and playing.

Parents will be contacted if there are dress code concerns.

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| **Clothing Item** | **Style** | **Colors** | **Special Comments** |
| **Tops** | Long or short sleeve polo- style shirt | **Solid** red, white or navy | Official Bush Logo shirts are permitted.  Oversized shirts are **not** permitted |
| Oxford cloth, button down shirt | **Solid** white | Long or short sleeve |
| Official Neff Logo T Shirts | Red, white, or navy | **ONLY** official Neff logo T-shirts are permitted with no design alterations |
| Long sleeve shirts worn under uniform tops | Solid Red, White or Navy | No other colors are permitted under uniform tops. |
| **Bottoms** | Pants or Capri pants | Solid navy or khaki | Must fit at the waist. |
| Shorts or Skirts  Tights, leggings, pants worn **under** skirts, shorts, or jumpers | Solid navy, khaki, or denim | Must be finger-tip length or longer.  Leggings are permitted only under skirts, shorts, or jumpers, and **cannot be worn by themselves as pants** |
| Plain blue jeans | Blue denim only | No holes, or rips, no low riders, no fringe, no oversized legs, no embroidery, no overalls |

**Uniforms are MANDATORY for the 2024-2025 school year.**

**Grading Policy:**

Teachers will assign grades to students that reflect their mastery of a concept or assignment. All students are responsible to give their best effort when completing their assignments and assessment. If a student receives less than 70% on an assignment, they are able to retake or correct that assignment for a final grade of 70.

PROMOTION STANDARD REQUIREMENTS

* Requirements for students in grades 2 include:
  + passing with at least 80% mastery on the High Frequency Word Exam- Recognizing and reading words that appear very often in written and spoken language.
* Requirements for students in all grades include:
  + meeting state requirement of overall yearly average of 70 or above and the local requirement of an average of 70 or above in four core courses: reading, other language arts, mathematics, and science or social studies.
  + having sufficient attendance\*

\* Sufficient attendance: A student’s total number of unexcused absences cannot exceed 10% of class meetings.

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| **Academic Subjects** | **Conduct** |
| **A** 90–100 = Excellent | E = Excellent |
| **B** 80–89 = Good; above average | S = Satisfactory |
| **C** 75–79 = Satisfactory; average | P = Poor; below average |
| **D** 70–74 = Passing; below average | U = Unsatisfactory |
| **F** Below 70 = Unsatisfactory; failing |  |

## Cafeteria Essential Agreements:

There are general guidelines for making the cafeteria an enjoyable place to eat in for all students:

* + Classroom teachers will take students to the restroom before or after lunch. Students will only be allowed to leave the cafeteria in the event of an emergency.
  + Whether in line or at the table, students are to use a quiet voice to converse with others.
  + Once seated, students should remain seated.
  + Students should raise their hands if a need arises; adult monitors will help in any way.
  + Students are to keep their areas clean of food and trash.

## School Phone Calls:

If there are any changes in your child’s daily routine, please let the classroom teacher know in writing as soon as possible. The school telephone is for emergency use only. In the event of an emergency, please contact the front office before 2:30 p.m. Calls after this time cannot be guaranteed to reach the student. Student cell phones are not permitted for use during the school day.

## Electronic Devices and Toys:

All electronic devices and toys (i.e. iPhones, iPods, games, reading devices, fidget spinners, stuffed animals, etc.) should remain at home unless approved by the administration. *This includes watches or bracelets which have texting or phone capabilities.* Neff is not responsible for the loss of personal electronic devices and other personal items. Students are not allowed to use personal devices to communicate. All communication should be facilitated by a Neff employee. **Cell phones are NOT permitted during school hours.** If a student is using a cell phone during the school day, the phone will be confiscated and taken to the office. Parents are responsible for picking up the device from the office and paying a $15 fee.

## Birthday Acknowledgements:

A birthday is a big day for a student! If you would like to acknowledge your child’s birthday at school, please follow the current procedure:

* + Provide enough individually wrapped, store-bought treats for every student in the classroom.
  + Treats may be edible or nonedible (stickers, pencils, and mini-games).
  + **Be mindful of allergies in the classroom. We are a nut-free campus! Do not send any snacks that are made with nuts.**
  + Treats are handed to classmates at the end of the day as they exit the classroom or during recess.

**Social Media:**

With the advent of social media, communicating and sharing things online has become a prevalent part of all our lives. While there are many examples of the positive and beneficial use of social media, there are severe downfalls that are affecting our students. Children’s brains are still growing, and this makes them very susceptible to the negative effects of social media. We have seen a rise in cyberbullying, depression, anxiety, poor self-image, and thoughts of suicide. Monitor your child’s use of social media at home. You can limit their screen time and app usage. Be on the lookout for apps like Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, and even Facetime calls. If you need more help learning about these apps or how to monitor screen time, reach out to the SEL team on campus and we will help you. If you notice that your student is struggling with depression, bullying, self-image, or anything else, please contact our Counselor

# Parent Involvement

Parents are always welcome at the school, but we also want the campus to be safe and secure. Therefore, no adults may be in the building without signing in at the front office. A badge must always be worn as required by HISD. Please do not be offended if a staff member asks you to return to the office for proper identification. This badge gives you permission to go to the location you have identified to the office staff upon your arrival. Please limit your visit to the specified location. Please see Morning Arrival and Dismissal Procedures. There is no access to hallways or classrooms.

## Involvement in School Activities:

NEFF offers parents many opportunities to become involved in school life. Regardless of your time availability, there’s a task that’s right for you. Volunteering provides a great way to learn more about your child, meet other parents, and get to know the school and faculty better while doing a good deed. To volunteer, you must complete the VIPS application online at <https://www.houstonisd.org/vips>. You can also check out the NEFF website for a list of events and opportunities to sign up and volunteer. Once approved, volunteers may volunteer in any HISD school for the current school year.

It is very important that the information you enter on the application matches your government-issued identification card including your full legal name. This information will be used to process the required annual background check. (See lists below of acceptable forms of ID). Your background check will be processed within 3-5 business days. It is important that you provide a valid email address so you can be notified as to the status of your application and for future communication. An email address is required to complete the application process.

To provide safety for our students, all volunteers must be registered through the HISD RAPTOR Volunteer Program and approved before volunteering in any capacity at NEFF. Please visit the NEFF front office for more information.

## Safety Procedures for PTO/After School Events:

NEFF hosts many events after school hours. Parents are responsible for supervising their own children at these events. However, in the event of a missing child or emergency, the administrator on duty is the point of contact. If you need assistance, please go to the office or an administrator. If the emergency cannot be resolved in a short amount of time, the administrator will implement the HISD emergency procedures outlined in the red emergency handbooks located in the front office and inside the door of every classroom on campus.

## Volunteer Badges:

All visitors must provide their driver’s license at the front office to get a visitor’s badge as well as be VIPS approved. Your driver’s license number will be registered into our Raptor system and all approved visitors will be provided with a name badge that must always be worn in the school. It is very important to always wear this name badge when you are at the school as a volunteer or on school business. Wearing a name badge will facilitate others getting to know you and will enforce security in our school. Do not open a door for any visitor. Volunteer badges require scan-in upon arrival and scan-out when exiting the building.

## Classroom Participation:

Class activities are enriched by parents who are willing to talk about careers, hobbies, cultures, or other interests with the students in the classroom or grade level. Parents are invited to go on field

trips, help teachers with projects at school or at home, help with classroom celebrations. ***Parents must be cleared in the RAPTOR volunteer management system to volunteer and/or attend classroom parties.***

**Lunch with your Child:**

Parents are welcome to eat lunch with their child on Spirit Luncheons. Communication on dates will be on Class Dojo.

## Classroom Visits and Conferences:

If you would like a conference with your child’s teacher, please contact the teacher by email or Class Dojo to find out the best time for you to meet. Each teacher schedules conferences so there is no disruption of the instructional day.

**Room Parents:** Room parents are **invaluable** members of the classroom. Room parents will do a variety of tasks such as plan classroom celebrations, communicate with parents in the class, help the teacher get volunteers for the classroom, solicit volunteers from the class to work events, organize class gifts for the teacher, and most of all keep parents up to date with what is going on in their child’s classroom. Room parents are a part of our NEFF Family and work to help support our students.

## Field Trip Chaperone:

Chaperones may be requested by the classroom teacher to assist in the supervision and learning experiences of the students during field trips. Each chaperone must have prior approval through the VIPS and obtain/wear their Volunteer Badge.

# Family and Student Services

# Sunrise Center:

# Sunrise Centers, a new initiative of Houston ISD, are service hubs designed to provide HISD students and their families with a variety of resources. Sunrise Centers are co-located in community spaces and are a one-stop-shop for social service support, providing access in high-need areas.

# Email: [sunrisecenters@houstonisd.org](mailto:sunrisecenters@houstonisd.org) Phone: 713-556-8484

# Communities in School (CIS):

# Communities In Schools provides student support specialists to work with students and their families within the campus community. We provide or coordinate support services for students living in situations that place them at risk and/or have difficulty navigating the academic and non-academic barriers to stay on the path to graduation. The services provided by Communities In Schools are confidential, and the specifics of cases are not discussed without permission from the student and/or primary caregiver. In addition, we engage community partners and volunteers to effectively and efficiently address both the academic and non-academic needs of students. Please reach out to Ms. Alch for more information at [Veronica.Alch@houstonisd.org](mailto:Veronica.Alch@houstonisd.org) or call 713-556-9566.

# Counseling:

Our counselor is committed to supporting students’ social/emotional needs. As an advocate for students, school counselors promote a positive environment that enhances students’ ability to properly manage the social/emotional demands of their lives. School counselors use appropriate methods to promote a school environment designed to propel students toward positive mindsets and behaviors supporting social/emotional development through direct (e.g., classroom curriculum, group counseling, and individual counseling) and indirect (e.g., collaborating or consulting with staff, families, or communities) services. If you feel like your child needs support in any of these areas, please contact Ms. Richard at [Carly.RichardJohnson@houstonisd.org](mailto:Carly.RichardJohnson@houstonisd.org) or call 713-556-9566.

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