



**Austin Elementary
Student Handbook
2016-2017**

5435 Roberts Drive
Dunwoody, Georgia 30338
678-874-8102

Items contained in this handbook will be updated as needed to remain current with school and district policies and practices.

Lisa Martin, Ed.D.
Chief Academic and Accountability
Officer for Curriculum and Instruction



Dr. R. Stephen Green
Superintendent

Office of Federal Programs
1701 Mountain Industrial Blvd
Stone Mountain, GA 30083-1027
678-676-0329

FY17 RIGHT-TO-KNOW LETTER

August 11, 2016

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

In compliance with the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, **Austin Elementary School** would like to inform you that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student's teacher(s). The following information may be requested:

- 1) Whether the teacher has met the Georgia Professional Standards Commission's requirements for certification for the grade level and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- 2) Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or other provisional status through which Georgia qualifications or certification criteria have been waived;
- 3) The college major and any graduate certification or degree held by the teacher;
- 4) Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.

Please know that our staff is committed to helping your child reach his or her highest academic potential throughout their school career. That commitment includes making sure that all of our teachers and paraprofessionals are highly skilled and are providing quality instruction to your child.

If you wish to request information concerning your child's teacher's qualification, please contact the Principal, **Dr. Ann Culbreath** at (678) 874-8102.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dr. Ann Culbreath".

Dr. Ann Culbreath
Principal

Date Letter Sent to Parent or Guardian with Student Handbook - (08/11/2016)

Austin School Mission Statement:

The mission of Austin School in partnership with staff, parents, and community is to provide a safe, nurturing environment where challenging and creative teaching occurs utilizing state of the art resources. Individual learning needs will be met and students will develop into confident, productive members of society.

School Colors: Navy and white

School Mascot: The Austin Eagle

School Hours: 7:45 A.M. – 2:30 P.M. **Students may arrive no earlier than 7:25.**

Arriving and Departing School

Walkers should use sidewalks wherever possible. Children should be instructed to stay on the sidewalks and to respect the property of others. Upon reaching the crosswalk at the school, students should remain on the sidewalk until the crossing guard instructs them to cross. Bike racks have been provided for parking bicycles. For security reasons, all bikes should be locked to the rack. Bicycles are not to be ridden on school grounds or on the easement leading from Witham Drive. It is strongly recommended that no children under grade 3 ride bicycles to school. Students should not arrive prior to 7:25 A.M. The warning bell will ring at 7:40. The final bell will ring promptly at 7:45 A.M. Students who report to school after the 7:45 A.M. bell will be considered tardy.

In order for a student to be counted present for a day, a student must be in attendance for at least one-half of the instructional day according to the Georgia Department of Education (arriving or departing prior to 11:15 am).

Dismissal:

2:15 Buses and Day Care Vans

2:20 Independent Walkers and Bikers

2:25 Carpool students

The School Bus

School bus transportation is provided for all students who reside at least 1.5 miles from the school. Students are to ride only the bus assigned to them. Unruly behavior on the bus will not be tolerated. The safety of all students on the bus is jeopardized when one student misbehaves. A student who refuses to abide by the rules may be suspended from riding the bus.

Early Dismissal

Except when going home at regular dismissal time, students are not allowed to leave school grounds. Should it become necessary for a child to leave school early, a parent or guardian must report to school and sign out the child before the child will be dismissed. The adult checking the student out must show proper identification. This regulation is necessary for the safety and protection of our children.

No one will be checked out after 2:00. If there is a change in the way your child goes home, a [“Change of Dismissal Form”](#) must be completed and sent to the teacher the morning of the day the change will occur. The form can be located on our school website under Parent Resources.

Attendance Policy

Austin Elementary will follow the guidelines for unexcused absences/tardies as outlined by the Code of Student Conduct booklet:

Unexcused Absences and/or Truancy

Lawful absences are defined by Georgia Law as follows: illness; death in the family; religious holiday; instances which attendance could be hazardous as determined by the DeKalb County School System; service as a page in the legislature.

NOTE: STATE LAW

State law indicates any parent/guardian who does not comply with compulsory attendance mandates (O.C.G.A 20-2-690.1[a]) shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be subject to a fine not less than \$25 and not greater than \$100, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties, at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction. Each day’s absence from school in violation of this part after the child’s school system notifies the parent/guardian of five unexcused days of absence shall constitute a separate offense (O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1[b]).

The following apply to all unexcused absences:

Number of Unexcused Absences	School Action Per Occurrence
1 - 2	School notifies the parent of absence.
3 - 5	School notifies the parent of absence and refers student to the counselor or assistant principal who will then meet with the student and/or parent for the purposes of discussing the reasons for absences and signing an attendance contract.
6 - 7	Letter sent to parent/guardian informing him/her of the student’s absences and the administrative and legal consequences of continued absence from school.
8+	Counselor will make a referral to the school social worker to conference with the parent/guardian and student for assessment and/or possible referral to Juvenile Court, Solicitor-General’s Office, DFACS, or other agency.

Late to School

Students are expected to be seated and ready to begin work at 7:45 a.m. It is important that students be at school on time each day. If a student arrives after 7:45, parents must escort and sign their child in at the Main Office. Students who are tardy are required to sign in with a parent and are given a slip to admit them to class. **Parents are not to escort children directly to class.** Tardiness not only has a negative impact on the student, but it also interrupts the instructional program in the class room. Medical and dental appointments are examples of an excused tardy to class. Examples such as traffic, oversleeping, and car trouble will result in an unexcused tardy to class.

Withdrawal from School

A note should be sent to the student's homeroom teacher several days before withdrawal. The note should state the child's last day, new address, and new school that the child will attend. If it is possible, parents should come to the registrar's office to complete documentation and get all forms prepared so your child's records can be sent to the proper place. Please make sure all textbooks are returned, all library books are returned, any fines paid, and all lunch charges are paid in full.

School Visitors/Volunteers

The DeKalb County School District is an open system and encourages parent participation and involvement. To assure safety of all students, parents must ring the bell, present a picture ID, and sign in at the front office upon arrival at the school. All visitors and volunteers will also be required to wear a visitor/volunteer badge. Please call ahead to schedule a time with an administrator if you would like to visit a classroom. Classroom observations will be scheduled for 20 minutes in length and parents will be accompanied by an administrator. Parents should limit activities that would distract students or teachers. The rights of all students to privacy and a proper learning environment must be strictly observed.

Dress for Success (School Uniform) Information

Uniform participation is expected. These guidelines have been created to establish and maintain a positive learning environment for all students.

Boys: Pants or dress shorts should be solid navy or khaki, neat and fitted at the waist. Blue jeans or athletic shorts (Austin colors) may be worn on Fridays only. Baggy pants sweat pants, and athletic shorts/pants are not allowed. Monday through Friday, shirt (short/long-sleeved) should be solid navy, white or light blue, with or without Austin logo. Logos, other than the Austin logo, should be no larger than the size of a quarter. Shirt styles include polo, turtleneck, button-down and crew neck. Austin spirit wear shirts may also be worn with uniform pants Monday through Friday. Students are encouraged to tuck in shirts.

Girls: The same clothing listed above, with the addition of skirts, skorts, jumpers or capri pants in solid navy or khaki, or the Austin blue plaid. These items, including shorts, should be no shorter than three to four inches above the top of the knee with or without tights or leggings. Shorts should be worn under skirts and jumpers for P.E.

Athletic or tennis shoes are appropriate footwear and should not leave black scuffmarks. Hats and bandannas should not be worn inside the school except on theme days or if special (i.e., religious, medical, etc.) circumstances exist. Scout uniforms, Chess Club T-shirts, etc, are permitted on their designated meeting days only. All other items such as hair accessories, jewelry, socks, belts, jackets and backpacks should be appropriate for school.

Students who do not comply with the Austin Uniform policy will be sent to clinic to change clothes and parents will be notified.

Toys, etc.:

Radios, electronic games, toys, and toy-like items are not to be brought to school. These items will be collected and held for parents to pick up.

Telephone Use

The school phone number is 678-874-8102. In an emergency, telephone messages will be taken to students. Please discourage the use of the phone for any other purpose. Personal responsibility is enhanced if students learn it is their job to remember lunch money, lunch box, homework or projects. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Electronic devices, radios and cell phones

Radios, iPods, electronic games, and toy-like items are not to be brought to school. If these items are present during the instructional program, these items will be collected and held for parents to pick up. If a student has a need to bring a cell phone to school, it must remain off and in the book bag during school hours. No one is allowed to take pictures or video of other persons at school without the expressed permission of the principal (O.C.G.A. 20-2-1183).

Personal Belongings

Students should not bring money, toys, jewelry, or expensive items to school. The school is not responsible for such items that are lost or stolen at school.

Pets

For the safety of all, we ask everyone to cooperate in keeping pets off the school campus.

Teacher Conferences

All teachers welcome the opportunity to discuss your child's progress. Morning or afternoon conferences can be arranged by scheduling through the teacher. Additionally, afternoon/evening conferences will be scheduled twice a year.

Please note: The first and most important job of the teacher is student instruction. Therefore, you are requested not to go to the classroom during instructional time. You may stop by the office if something needs to be delivered or you may write a note and leave it in the teacher's mailbox. To protect instructional time, teachers are not allowed to confer with parents during the time they have responsibility for students. You are requested not to go to your child's class during this time.

Lunches

Student lunches are \$2.50. Adult lunches are \$3.50. Extra milk may be purchased for an additional \$0.80. Ice cream is \$1.00 and may be purchased on designated days. Bottled water is sold for an additional \$0.80. Additional items may be available for purchase as well. Lunches may be paid online at Myschoolbucks.com. With this program, you can check lunch balances and fund the account from your computer, phone or fax. If you are sending a check or cash, please send prepaid money in an envelope that is labeled with your child's name, homeroom teacher, and what the money is for (ex. 4 lunches and 2 ice creams).

Based on School Council recommendations, Austin Elementary has a policy of **no outside fast food in the cafeteria**. This includes carbonated soft drinks and items not brought from home. Such a policy maintains a focus on the nutritional program of our school as set forth by the DeKalb County School District. In addition, it provides an environment of equity and fairness for all of our children who do not have the opportunity for "special treat" lunches. The school administration and Council appreciate your support in adhering to this policy.

You are welcome to join your child for lunch. Please send a note with the student so that we can include you in the lunch count. We ask that you sign in at the visitor desk in the front hall and wear a VISITOR BADGE which will be available at the sign-in desk.

Clinic

The clinic, located adjacent to the main office, provides the students and faculty of Austin with minor first aid when needed and takes care of sick children until a parent or guardian can pick them up. The clinic is staffed by a health care registered nurse from 8:15 A.M. - 2:15 P.M. Teachers will never give medication. If a student must have medication while at school the parent must obtain a medication consent form from the nurse, have the physician complete the form and return it to the clinic. Medication containers must be clearly labeled in original packaging and will be secured in the clinic. All medication will be administered by the nurse.

Accidents

Despite all precautions and supervision, accidents will occur. In the event your child is injured, we will provide first aid if needed, make every effort to make him/her comfortable, and then contact the parent immediately. In cases of serious injury, action will be at the direction of parents if they can be contacted. For the safety and security of your child, it is vital that the office has updated telephone numbers on file at all times.

Accident Insurance

Parents may purchase student insurance for their child. This insurance is provided by a reputable insurance company designated by the DeKalb County School System. The insurance covers a student from the time he/she leaves home in the morning until he/she returns home in the afternoon. A preferred plan and a basic plan are available for purchase. Applications and cost of coverage will be provided to each parent/guardian at registration and may be purchased at any time during the school year. No other insurance is carried on students by the school or school system.

Sudden Emergencies

DeKalb School officials deal with sudden emergencies caused by storms or tornadoes with efficiency and concern for safety of students and staff members. However, it is most important that parents be aware that they are responsible for their children if dismissal from school takes place. When severe weather watches are announced, immediate emergency procedures are taken for student safety in schools or to dispatch students to their homes. The DeKalb School Superintendent or his designee makes the final decision as to whether or not to dismiss school. The DeKalb School System never dismisses students without this authorization. The school principal makes essential decisions about the safety of all personnel and students under his/her supervision.

Change in Family Situations

It is vital that you notify the school as soon as possible when any change in the family situations occur that affects the custody of the child either permanently or temporarily. Please make sure that the school has current telephone numbers (at least two) and email addresses where the parents/guardian can be reached at any given time. Any court documents containing custody information and visitation rights must be on file at the school in the Main Office. Any information regarding who may and may not pick-up the child must be on file in the Main Office, and the classroom teacher needs to be notified.

Lost and Found

Any article of clothing or book found on the school grounds is taken to the lost and found cabinet located in the cafeteria. All unclaimed articles are given to a charitable organization periodically. Parents will be notified prior to items being donated. Because of this, parents are strongly urged to clearly label all their child's personal possessions, and to check the lost and found cabinet to retrieve any lost items.

Discipline

The DeKalb County School District issues a Code of Student Conduct handbook to each student yearly. Every student (PreK-5) is subject to the rules and regulations as outlined in this handbook. Each student or parent is given the handbook during the first week of school. The acknowledgement receipt should be signed and returned to school.

This handbook is reviewed with all students during the first week of the school year and immediately following each school break. Parents are asked to discuss the school system's rules to ensure that your child has a full understanding.

Austin Elementary is committed to providing a learning atmosphere that encourages study and focus on improvement of skills. For that reason, Austin School guidelines are developed within the framework of the DeKalb district policy, which reflect commitment to an orderly classroom instructional setting. Each teacher has developed a Classroom Discipline Plan, which is discussed with students, posted in the classroom and sent home to parents. This plan will clarify behavior expectations for every child.

All staff members are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective discipline within the school. The DeKalb County School District believes that the educational environment must be

favorable if students are to take advantage of its comprehensive program of educational services.

Good discipline is essential to a productive and meaningful learning environment. Each student who receives a Student Discipline brochure, will have the opportunity to review and discuss the contents with the teacher, and will pass a county designed test on the contents of the brochure and those that are outlined in the classroom. The Austin character education program also supports self-discipline by emphasizing respect for self and others and respect for school.

Media Center

Students have flexible access to the library media center when it is open throughout each school day from 7:30 A.M. – 2:10 P.M. (with teacher permission). The teacher-librarian and teachers collaborate to include information literacy and technology skills into subject area lessons. Students may check out up to five books (depending on grade level) for a 2-week period. Overdue notices are sent home bi-weekly, with students having their checkout privileges suspended until books are returned or paid for. Please see the [Library Handbook](#) link on the Media Center page of [AustinElementary.com](#) for more information.

Instructional Program

An educational program should encourage the total development of each individual and should promote intellectual curiosity, independence, objectivity and creativity in these individuals. At Austin, the instructional program ensures that each student will experience the enjoyment of a challenge, the excitement of success and the development of a good self-image. This is accomplished by employing innovative teaching strategies, cooperative learning and by exposing students to the total curriculum. In addition, in the spring of each school year we welcome parents to complete a “Confidential Placement Concern Form” that allows the parents the opportunity to identify any specific concerns that would assist us in properly placing the student for the upcoming academic year. Classes are carefully balanced and any request to move a student is only considered by the administration when it becomes an academic concern that cannot be resolved in the child’s current placement.

Textbooks

Textbooks are furnished to your child by the DeKalb County School District on a loan basis and should be treated as borrowed property. It is the student’s responsibility to protect textbooks. Students must pay for loss or damage to textbooks. Students who lose textbooks shall be assessed according to the DeKalb County listed price for the lost textbook. Students who return textbooks that show wear more than what can be attributed to normal use will be assessed according to the damage.

Subject	Adopted Text
Mathematics	Math Georgia/consumables
Reading	Houghton-Mifflin- Harcourt Storytown
Social Studies	Houghton-Mifflin

Science	Houghton-Mifflin – Grade 1 Harcourt – Grades K, 2, 3, 4, 5
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Bookbags

Students are allowed to carry book bags that are appropriate for elementary school (no distracting slogans, no stuffed animal toy bags). Students are encouraged to keep book bags tidy and cleaned out each night.

Homework

Homework is a very important part of the instructional program and is one means by which families can spend quality time together and support the school in improving student learning. Homework will be required daily as part of the course of study. Homework encourages independent work, responsibility, proficiency and good study habits.

Make-up Work for Excused Absences

It is the student's responsibility to secure and complete any assignments missed due to an excused absence. In the case of an excused absence, students will be **allowed 3 days** to make up missed assignments. Please allow 24 hours for the teacher to get the assignments ready. Teachers are not required to provide make-up work for unexcused absences. In addition, teachers will not provide make-up work prior to a student being absent.

Report Cards

DeKalb Schools are on a semester system. A Progress Report is sent home on the 4.5th, 9th, 13.5th week of each semester. The Progress Reports will give you information on the performance at that point in the semester. Report Cards are sent home at the 18th and 36th week. These are the grades that become a part of a student's permanent record and transcript. The grading system for DeKalb County is:

Academic		Conduct	
A	90-100	S	Satisfactory
B	80-89	N	Needs Improvement
C	71-79	U	Unsatisfactory
D	70		
F	Below 70		
E	Excellent		
S	Satisfactory		
N	Needs Improvement		
U	Unsatisfactory		

Deficiency Reports

Deficiency reports are a means of reporting to parents that a student is not progressing satisfactorily in either academic work or conduct. These deficiencies should be signed by the parents and returned to the teacher.

Parties

Parties are held for each class twice a year. Winter and Valentine's Day parties are planned by the room mothers in cooperation with the teachers. There are no end-of-year parties.

We do not have birthday parties at school. Parents may send in a treat which will be shared during lunch time with the class the student sits with at lunch. Parents are not to share birthday treats with students in any other class. No classroom time will be devoted to birthday celebrations. In addition, birthday favors, goodie bags, balloons and gifts are not allowed at school. Students are not allowed to sing Happy Birthday or light birthday candles while in the cafeteria. Please do not send birthday party invitations to be distributed at school.

Please retain this notice for future reference.



Carpool



Bike Riders



Walkers



Bus Riders



Daycare Van Riders

Austin Elementary Arrival-Dismissal Procedures

NOTE: Each family is given a carpool number tag (*to be hung from rear-view mirror during car pickup*), no matter how your child will normally arrive at and leave school. Although the number is not necessary for arrival, it is essential for an efficient and orderly dismissal, especially during an emergency situation. Please feel free to ask for a replacement tag if it becomes worn.

ARRIVAL

- School begins promptly at 7:45 am. We have a warning bell that rings at 7:40 am.
- Bus students who arrive before 7:25 am will immediately report to cafeteria upon arrival.
- Earliest arrival for walkers, bikers, and carpoolers is 7:25 am. Please report immediately to homeroom. The bike rack is located at the bus lane. Bikes must be locked. There are two carpool lanes in the morning. Students may be dropped off at either the front door or back circle.
- Student safety patrols and school adults are on duty to assist students.

DISMISSAL

- Parents will designate ONE means of dismissal for the student at registration: walk/bike, daycare van, bus, or carpool. All dismissal changes must be submitted to the child's Home Room teacher on a Change of Dismissal Form that should be brought in the morning of the day the dismissal will be different. E-mailed notices, however, are not acceptable since teachers may not have time to check their messages prior to dismissal. If no written notice is provided, the child will be dismissed as designated by the parent on the registration form.
- Early Dismissal**—If you need to check out students early, please do so before 2:00PM.
- Bus & Daycare Van Dismissal**—Students will be called to board buses and daycare vans starting at 2:15 PM.
- Bike Rider and Walker Dismissal**—Students walking or biking home will be dismissed with a 2:20 PM and are expected to leave school grounds immediately to clear pedestrian traffic before carpool begins.

- ❑ **Carpool Dismissal**— At 2:25 PM, all carpool students go to the cafeteria for carpool dismissal. They must remain quiet to hear carpool numbers called over the teacher’s walkie-talkie. Only after a student’s carpool number is called—indicating that someone has arrived to pick him up—does he report to the flagpole area outside.

Students wait at the flagpole area until they see their cars in the appropriate loading lane. Once your child is in your car, please take down your carpool tag to let the monitors know that your carpool is complete. If your child is not at the flagpole, please leave your carpool tag up. We will ask you to turn right into the holding lane (area along the side of Austin) and wait while we re-announce that your carpool is now in the holding lane.

CARPOOL NOTES

- ❑ Make sure that you have (or anyone else who will pick up your child has) the assigned number showing during dismissal. **If a car does not have a carpool number showing, we will expect the driver to park and check out students in the main office.**
- ❑ Do not park your vehicle along the front curb or front circle at any time. **This is a fire lane and you/your car may be ticketed.** If you need to park, do so in a designated parking space.
- ❑ **Students are not allowed to cross carpool traffic for any reason.** Students will exit and enter cars via passenger-side doors and at the curb ONLY. Our goal is to take advantage of green traffic lights and have the maximum number of cars in loading/unloading areas. This may mean that your car will not stop in a spot closest to the front entrance of Austin. **In consideration of others, please pull your vehicle forward as far as possible when “waved up” by duty staff or patrols so that we can use all appropriate space.**
- ❑ The yellow railing near the flagpole designates a NO ZONE. Please pull past the railing if there’s room or stop before the railing for drop off or pickup.
- ❑ Please be aware that we have only enough room for one lane of traffic in each direction. **Do not pass cars while in the carpool line for any reason!**
- ❑ As a courtesy, duty staff will do their best to assist students with opening car doors. However, students may get out/in on their own as long as the carpool line is not moving or being waved on and the child’s car is stopped in an appropriate area. **Please encourage your child to exit/enter your vehicle independently at an appropriate place.**
- ❑ Please be aware of your speed as you proceed through carpool, especially if you’re running late or are in a hurry. Safety first!
- ❑ The back gate and circle will not be accessible for afternoon carpool. The lower parking lot by the back circle is locked daily from 7:45-2:45.