

**Howard Early Childhood Center
Alamo Heights ISD
Handbook
2017-2018**



7800 Broadway
San Antonio, TX 78209

Dear Families,

Welcome to Howard Early Childhood Center where the *tradition of excellence* in the Alamo Heights Independent School District begins! We hope your experiences will provide a wonderful foundation for your child and your family. It is our hope that your child will develop lifelong friendships and a love of learning. We focus on “Thinking Heads, Feeling Hearts, and Helping Hands.”

This handbook contains information to acquaint you with our program for young children. Please read this handbook carefully for reference during the school year. You may want to read Appendix A first if you are interested in monthly activities. If you have any questions concerning any of the information provided, or if you have a question regarding something not covered in the handbook, do not hesitate to contact us.

We are looking forward to working with you. Together we can make this important year a productive, successful, and happy experience for your child.

Sincerely,

Susan Peery
Principal
210-832-5900
speery@ahisd.net

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PHILOSOPHY

The Howard Early Childhood Program is founded upon the respect for and understanding of the developmental needs of the children served. The purpose of our program is to provide opportunities for each child to experience the joy of learning and to develop intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally.

In order to lay a solid foundation, we believe that children need many firsthand, concrete experiences, rich in language. Further, we believe that learning should take place in a positive environment where the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each child are recognized at all times.

Thus, we are committed to seeking out and developing the abilities of each child as well as providing stimulating activities, which allow children to discover, to experience, to observe, and to think, with attention given to the encouragement of creativity in an atmosphere of learning and growth. The concepts, knowledge, and skills acquired in this year will provide the foundation upon which subsequent learning is based.

GOALS

Our goal is to align our work with the AHISD Profile of a Learner so that each child successfully begins to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attributes s/he will need to pursue individual dreams and positively impact the world upon graduation from high school. ALAMO HEIGHTS LEARNERS:

- Seek knowledge and understanding
- Develop a healthy sense of self
- Think critically and creatively
- Communicate and collaborate
- Employ skills for life
- Engage socially and globally

CURRICULUM

Above all, our curriculum responds to the varied learning and developmental needs of young children. Each decision about the curriculum is made based on what is age-appropriate, individually appropriate, and socially and culturally appropriate. These are the three core principles outlined by National Association for the Education of Young Children.

The following principles, based both on firsthand, day-to-day experience and extensive research into how young children learn, are taken as fundamental:

- Children come to school with different knowledge, concepts, and experiences. It is important that new learning be connected to something that is known and relevant.
- The curriculum is presented in an integrated format, recognizing that content areas in instruction are naturally interrelated as they are in real life experiences. Content is planned around themes. The themes are developed through learning centers and activities. Often children are free to plan and select activities to support their individual learning experiences. The theme approach includes activities in language arts, social studies, creative dramatics, music, art, science, math, or any combination of these. Learning is regarded as a process rather than a collection of facts.
- The curriculum provides opportunities for all children to develop to their greatest potential in a manner that is consistent with what we know about how young children learn and develop.
- In AHISD K-2, we have adopted Phonics Dance, which is an active, brain-based program that involves connecting letters and sounds to a picture, a chant/rhyme and motions. Children use these multi-sensory supports for reading and writing.
- In math, children work to gain a strong foundation in number sense that goes much deeper than oral counting and/or number recognition. This foundation enables them to understand how place value and math operations (addition, subtraction) work. We engage children in a problem-solving model so they have a tool or thought process to solve more challenging problems.
- Children are engaged in active, rather than passive, learning activities. Learning takes place as children touch and manipulate things. As they develop, they move from concrete activities to those that are representational, and from representational to symbolic. Spontaneous play, either alone or with other children, is a natural way for young children to interact, problem-solve and to understand their environment. Play is respected and valued as an appropriate way of learning.

- During a typical week, children have learning opportunities beyond the classroom. These include physical education in the gym, music and movement, library experiences, yoga, computer lab work, simulated HEB play, and social play during recess.
- Thanks to our PTO we have ARTWORKS© come in six to seven times per year to do art lessons for children who attend Howard all day. The children learn about an artist and simulate that artist's style to create their own products.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips will be scheduled throughout the year to supplement areas of study. Transportation will generally be provided by AHISD school buses. Occasionally there may be some walking trips. A field trip fee of \$30 is due by the end of September to cover the cost of field trips for the entire year; however, no child will be excluded from attending because he is unable to pay. A permission form signed by the parent or legal guardian must be on file at the school for a student to participate in field trips. In some cases we may request parent volunteers to attend the fieldtrips. **All volunteers must have a cleared background check on file. The background check must be renewed every school year and takes at least one week to clear.**

To begin the process, visit the AHISD website (www.ahisd.net) and download and print the Criminal History Form under the Personnel Department section. Be sure to check the volunteer spot on that form when filling it out, and then submit the form and a copy of your driver's license to one of the secretaries at Howard. You can either drop your completed form off at the Howard office or mail it to the school address The criminal background check takes several days to process. Please plan accordingly.

SCHOOL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

SCHOOL HOURS FOR STUDENTS

The daily schedule for each of our programs is listed below:

Kindergarten	7:50 a.m - 3:00 p.m.
Headstart	7:50 a.m - 3:00 p.m.
Pre-Kindergarten*	7:50 a.m - 11:25 a.m. (morning) 11:25 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (afternoon)
PPCD (3 & 4 year olds not yet eligible for Pre-K)	Determined by ARD committee

**Eligible pre-kindergarten students may also attend a Head Start program in a classroom here at Howard. For more information about Head Start offerings, please contact their office at 832-5912.*

SCHOOL OFFICE HOURS

The school office is open Monday through Friday from 7:15 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. Teachers are on duty from 7:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Buses may arrive as early as 7:10am so we have designated faculty members ready to receive children at that time.

ADDRESS OR TELEPHONE CHANGE

It is essential for children's safety and well being that school personnel have the following information current at all times:

Correct Address

Telephone Numbers (Home, Work, Cell)

Emergency Contacts

Parents are requested to keep the office informed of any address or telephone changes that occur during the school year.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

School hours for students: 7:50 am – 3:00 pm

- Parents of car riders are asked **not** to drop off their child before 7:15 so that we may attend to our bus riders from 7:10am – 7:15am.
- Children eating breakfast at school are to go directly to the cafeteria upon arrival.
- Children not eating breakfast and arriving before 7:40 a.m. are to go to the foyer.
- Children arriving between 7:40 – 7:50 are to go directly to their classrooms.
- Children arriving after the 7:50 bell are to go to the attendance office for a tardy pass before going to their classrooms.

We ask your cooperation in the arrival and dismissal of the children. Please help us keep our children safe by following the safety rules outlined in the next section.

Safety Tips and Reminders for Arrival and Dismissal

- To assist the staff in calling your child, please write your child's name and teacher's name on the folder provided.
- Staff members will be on duty to open doors and assist children in getting in and out of your vehicles.
- While waiting for your child, please remain in your vehicle. If, for any reason, you must leave your car, drive to the parking lot and park.
- Be prompt in unloading/loading your vehicle. Sign papers, write notes, etc. before coming to the drop-off/pick-up lanes.
- Please limit your conversation with your child's teacher to a greeting during drop-off/pick-up lanes.
- Do not park or drive in the bus lane in the front of the school (Broadway entrance).
- Drive slowly and cautiously. Observe all signs. Use of cellular phones is prohibited in school zones.

FAQ about Arrival and Dismissal

Where do I drop off my child in the mornings for arrival?

- Children are to be dropped off and picked up on the Lorenz driveway in the following designated areas:

Head Start, PreKinder & PPCD - Enter the parking lot using the inside lane closest to the building. Stop at the East door and unload.

Kindergarten – Enter the Lorenz drive in the outer lane. Move past PreK drop off and merge into inner lane and proceed up towards the West door.

Staff members will be there to direct you.

Where do I pick up my child in the afternoons for dismissal?

- **Bus riders** will board the buses in front of the school (Broadway).
- **Head Start, PreKinder, PPCD, & Carpool**s – are to be picked up in front of the school AFTER buses and Day Care buses.
- **Kindergarten** – are to be picked up on the Lorenz driveway using both lanes.

Staff will be present to help children get into their cars.

What if I walk to get my child?

- **Kinders**—Please stand in the specific car rider area where your child’s teacher’s name is labeled on the windows. We ask that you not gather outside the exit doors. Let the teacher know you are walking off with your child.
- **PreK**—You may wait outside in the front of the building until buses have left. Then you may come into the front foyer.

What if I need to change how my child gets home?

You **must** send a note and/or call the school if there is a change in how your child goes home. For example, the child is usually a bus rider but will be a car rider for a day. Children are not allowed to ride different buses in the afternoon for play dates. They can, however, be dropped off in different locations on the same bus with prior written notice.

Do you have after school care at Howard?

The YMCA offers after school childcare, called Prime Time, and uses our school facilities, primarily the gym and playground. This program has its own set of rules and procedures and any questions or concerns should be directed toward the YMCA staff.

ATTENDANCE/ABSENCES/TARDIES

Regular attendance is essential to success at school. Thus the improvement of student attendance is always an ongoing goal for our school.

Our school board policy states: “The district shall notify a student’s parent if the student has been absent from school, without excuse under Education Code 25.087, on three days or parts of days within a four week period. It is the parent’s duty to monitor the student’s school attendance and the parent is subject to prosecution under Education Code 25.093.”

We encourage parents to send their child to school every day unless he/she is ill and to see that their child arrives no later than 7:45am each morning to allow adequate time to get to the classrooms. We further encourage parents to schedule out-of-town trips on weekends and school holidays.

Absences

Certain absences are considered by the State as excused absences: personal illness or illness or death in the immediate family, weather or road conditions that make travel dangerous, and other circumstances acceptable to the principal or superintendent. When returning to school after an absence, the parent must send a note, call the office, or email the data clerk at lesquivel@ahisd.net. You must include the child’s name, your name, the date and the reason for the absence. Medical and dental appointments will be considered excused absences if the child brings a note from the parent verifying the appointment; whenever possible please ask for a note from the doctor/dentist. If possible, parents are requested to schedule these appointments so that they do not cause the child to miss classes.

Children may be excused during school hours for necessary appointments with a written request from the parent. The child should be picked up in the school office so the parent or adult can sign the child out of school. Be mindful of dismissal times when parking and picking up your child for afternoon appointments.

Reporting Absences

Please call the school when you know your child will be absent due to illness or other circumstances. The office will receive phone calls beginning at 7:30AM. Please give your name, student’s name and reason for the absence. If you take your child to the doctor, request a note and the absence will be excused. Upon your child’s return to school, send a signed note from the parent or guardian with the child’s name, date(s) of absence(s) and reason.

Tardies

Parents are requested to help their child receive the most from the school day by ensuring he or she arrives by 7:45 a.m. The tardy bell rings at 7:50 a.m. When a child is late to school, s/he misses individual attention from the teacher and may miss directions or announcements causing a loss of prime bonding and instructional time. If your child is tardy (enters the building after 7:50), you must park and walk your child

into the attendance office for an admittance slip to class. Children who arrive after 9:00 are counted absent for that day unless they have verification from a medical provider that an appointment was kept on that day.

The attendance office handles all procedures for absences and tardies. Parents are encouraged to call the attendance secretary when a child is going to be absent or late. The phone number is 832-5900.

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

The school office should be notified immediately when a child moves out of the district. If a child moves to a different address within the district, parents must again furnish the office with proof of residence.

To withdraw a child expeditiously, parents need to inform the school at least two days in advance. A child must also return all library books, any materials belonging to the school and pay any monies owed for food in the cafeteria. When all accounts are cleared, the child's records will be issued.

CAFETERIA/LUNCH

The school cafeteria serves breakfast and lunch. Breakfast is served from 7:15 – 7:45 a.m. Each class is scheduled for a 30-minute lunch period. Parents may pre-pay their child's lunches by adding money to their child's account. Information on setting up your child's account may be found at www.ahisd.net on the Nutrition Services page. You may also send cash or a check made out to AHISD to the cafeteria in an envelope clearly marked with your child's first and last name and the name of his or her teacher. Please note that if your account is overdrawn, your child will be provided an alternate lunch. We ask that you keep your account up to date.

You may also access the menu online through the AHISD Nutrition Services web page or go www.healtheliving.net. You may call (210)832-5940 for questions or comments about the menu. Our cafeteria will accommodate children with food allergies who have a form completed by a doctor on file with the school nurse.

Children may also bring their lunch from home. Glass bottles and carbonated drinks may not be brought for safety and nutritional reasons. Milk may be purchased separately.

Children may qualify for reduced-price or free breakfast and lunch. The District participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch based on a family's financial need. Applications are available online at www.schoolmealapp.com. A new application must be completed each school

year and are available beginning August 1st.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent involvement is crucial to the success of an early childhood program. When young children see their parents and school faculty and staff working closely together, they feel more secure about their experiences. In order to foster and nurture a close working relationship with parents, we are highly committed to the following:

- making all parents feel welcome and comfortable.
- communicating regularly with parents through phone calls, emails, notes home, conferences, calendars, and newsletters.
- inviting parents to express their ideas and opinions about the school and the program to both the teachers and the principal.
- encouraging parents to bring any concerns that arise to the teacher's attention promptly.
- providing many opportunities for parents to become involved in their child's schooling.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION - PTO

All parents are encouraged to join the Howard PTO which provides tremendous assistance/support to our school. Dues are \$10.00 per family per year. Money raised from membership dues is used to support the school program and additional donations are gladly accepted. Please review the PTO website and the PTO monthly calendar to see when meetings will occur. We offer noon luncheon meetings as well as an occasional evening meeting. All parents are invited to attend these monthly meetings.

HOMEROOM PARENTS

Homeroom parents assist with class parties, in communicating information to parents within the class, in accompanying the class on field trips, and in providing other assistance requested by the teacher.

Parents wishing to serve as homeroom parents should indicate this on the Volunteer Sign-up Form completed at registration or they may contact the PTO Volunteer Coordinator.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Parent volunteers help in the classroom, library, or wherever assistance is needed. Parents who would like to volunteer their service on a regular or occasional basis may sign up with the teacher during the August Meet the Teacher/Orientation Program or at Back to School Night. You may also contact the PTO Volunteer Coordinator or the school office to express your interest in volunteering.

If you are interested in volunteering in a position requiring interaction with children, you will be required to undergo a **background check**. To begin the process, visit the AHISD website (www.ahisd.net) and download and print the Criminal History Form under the Personnel Department section. Forms are also available in the front office. Be sure to check the volunteer spot on that form when filling it out, and then submit the form and a copy of your driver's license to one of the secretaries at Howard. You can either drop your completed form off at the Howard office or mail it to the school at the address on the back cover of this booklet. The criminal background check takes several days to process. Please plan accordingly.

HIGH SCHOOL HELPERS

Each year a number of Alamo Heights High School students choose to be assigned to Howard as teaching assistants as part of a Child Development class they take at the high school. They are supervised by a high school teacher and the Howard staff and are here at least four days out of the school week. Many choose to spend extra time at Howard at special events or activities.

CLASSROOM AND LUNCH VISITATIONS

All parents are encouraged to visit their child's classroom. If you plan to stay and it is a regular instructional day (not a special activity), please contact your child's teacher to schedule a day and time, indicating the reason for your visit.

After the first two weeks of school, parents and grandparents are encouraged to visit during the lunch period. The first two weeks allows the children time to adjust to the lunch routine and schedule. Keep in mind that the lunch period provides children with an excellent opportunity to interact with their peers so we ask that you limit your visits to once or twice a week. This will make your visit during lunch all the more special.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Teachers communicate with parents in a variety of ways: phone calls, text messages, handwritten/typed notes, Bloomz App, and See Saw app. When using the phone or texting, please understand that a teacher's first responsibility is to the children in the classroom. They will not respond during instructional and/or supervisory times. Also, we all try to practice the key of "Balance", so please be respectful of their time in the evenings. Your child's teacher will outline parameters for communication.

Please check your child's tote/folder daily for any communication. Teachers send home monthly calendars outlining events for their classrooms. We encourage you to place this on your fridge or in a visible location for quick reference. The principal sends home "Monday Mail" electronically every Sunday afternoon/evening. This communication contains important information from Howard, our PTO, and our District/Community.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

All parents are requested to share in their child's education and progress by participating in two regularly scheduled conferences--one in the fall, the other one in the spring. During the conference days, children are dismissed early at 12:00 p.m. to allow teachers time to conference with parents. See the AHISD calendar for specific dates.

Additional parent conferences may be arranged by calling the teacher for an appointment.

VISITORS

Parents and others visiting our campus are to enter the building using the doors near the office on the Broadway side of the school. All other doors will be locked or will automatically lock after the school day begins. Teachers and staff members are not authorized to open any locked doors for parents or visitors. You are also reminded to **sign in with a picture ID** and obtain a **Visitor's Pass** from the office when visiting our school. All adult visitors must have a picture ID to enter the building.

PARENTS LIVING IN SEPARATE HOUSEHOLDS

When parents of a student are separated, involved in divorce proceedings, or are divorced, the principal will respect the rights of custodial and noncustodial parents equally, except when a court order exists concerning special restrictions. It is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with a copy of such a court order if restricted access to students or student information is requested.

Parent rights include access to student records and school mailings, attendance at parent/teacher conferences and other campus events or activities and Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee meetings. It is also important the noncustodial parent inform the school office of his/her name, address and phone number if he or she wishes to be consulted regarding his/her child or placed on the school's mailing list.

PROBLEM SOLVING—Expressing Concerns

Parents are encouraged to communicate with the teacher/school should concerns or problems arise relating to their child or any phase of the school program. If a concern relates to the classroom, parents should first arrange a conference with the teacher. If a resolution is not reached, the principal or assistant principal should be contacted. Should any problem remain unresolved at the campus level, please refer to district policy.

CONDUCT

At Howard, discipline is viewed as teachable moments. Changing behavior takes time and the staff at Howard is committed to working with students on developing positive social, emotional and behavioral skills, which will help them be successful both inside and outside the school setting. This focus on the development of the *whole child* is fostered through the on-going teaching of social and life skills.

In Alamo Heights, we have three overarching principles which guide our discipline efforts:

Be Safe.

Be Responsible.

Be Respectful.

In order to actualize these principles, the following school-wide expectations have been established to ensure both the safety and well-being of the students and staff at Howard:

We use our listening ears.

We use our walking feet.

We keep our hands, feet and objects to ourselves.

We follow directions right away.

In addition to the school-wide expectations, teachers develop individual classroom expectations with their students that support both teaching and learning in the classroom setting.

When students have difficulty adhering to expectations, interventions are in place for holding the student accountable for the behavior, while also teaching replacement behaviors for future use. When concerns arise, we believe that it is essential for home and school to work closely in an attempt to support the student in developing responsible behavior.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

Students are taught *The Keys of Excellence* from the Quantum Learning Network as the basis for the character education program. These eight life skills complement our school-wide expectations:

- Ownership – *Tell the truth. Take responsibility for your actions.*
- Balance – *We work to have a smart brain, strong body and happy heart.*
- Integrity -- *Do the right thing. Make the right choice.*
- Failure Leads to Success – *Learn from your mistakes*
- Speak with Good Purpose – *Words are powerful. Use them in a positive way.*
- This is it – *Pay attention and use your time wisely.*
- Commitment – *Put forth good effort and don't give up.*
- Flexibility – *Be open to doing things differently. You don't always get what you want, but teachers will work to give you what you need to be successful.*

All students receive ongoing instruction to develop these skills. Staff members use literature and projects to make the character traits concrete and meaningful to the students.

HOWARD TOTE BAGS

You are encouraged to purchase and use a Howard Tote Bag. The bag is sold by our PTO before school starts and at the "Meet the Teacher" sessions. These totes are easier for the children and the teachers to use to take notes, folders, and other items to and from school and home.

Optional: You may have your child's name monogrammed on the tote. This service is available at Meet the Teacher for a fee. We encourage you to monogram your child's first name only.

BRINGING ITEMS TO SCHOOL

Toys, games, or similar items can be a distraction from planned activities and should be brought to school only if they pertain to the study of a topic or to "Show and Tell". Teachers will provide parents with the "Show and Tell" schedule for their classes.

Extra money or items of extreme value, such as expensive jewelry or handheld video games, should not be worn or brought to school at any time.

DRESS AND GROOMING

Students are encouraged to dress neatly, comfortably, and appropriately for learning activities. It has been our experience that boots and long dresses are often difficult for children to move in, especially during physical education classes; jewelry is often distracting and easily misplaced; and midriffs, bareback, and tank tops are uncomfortable in air-conditioning.

No special clothing is required for physical education; however, students are requested to wear tennis shoes or other soft-soled shoes as a safety precaution.

It is extremely helpful for children to practice manipulating buttons and zippers at home so they can remove and put on outer wraps here at school.

Parents are also urged to mark all removable clothing with the child's name so items can be easily returned when misplaced.

LOST AND FOUND

Labeling all personal belongings (caps, sweaters, coats, gloves, tote bags, lunch boxes, etc.) is a great help in returning lost items to the proper owner. Students who have lost

articles should inquire in the school office or check the Lost and Found in the cafeteria. Items not claimed from Lost and Found at the end of the school year will be given to a charitable organization.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

While we recognize birthdays are special occasions for young children and their families, we like to keep birthday celebrations at school simple. Parents may choose to have lunch with their child on this special day or send a birthday snack. Healthier choices are preferred. All snacks must be served in the afternoon after the children have eaten lunch. Please communicate with the classroom teacher for the best time and the best way to celebrate the big day. If you want to distribute invitations to birthday parties outside of the school day, be sure you have an invitation for each one of your child's classmates.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS

Please review Appendix A: The Bear Facts. This document outlines special events and celebrations throughout the year. Based on the AHISD Nutrition Policy, the following events are waived from this policy: the three parties, Halloween activities, American Indian Celebration, Rodeo, and Mini-Fiesta.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Health—School Nurse

Howard ECC has a Registered Nurse on campus daily for:

- assessment of injuries & illnesses.
- administration of daily and “as needed” medications.
- annual health assessments for vision, hearing, height and weight.
- overseeing and maintaining immunizations requirements and records.
- coordinating a plan of care for students with health concerns, severe allergies/asthma and medically fragile children.
- serves as a resource for parents, students and staff.

Parents are notified when a child is ill or with a serious injury so it is very important to keep your contact information up to date through the Home Access Center or HAC. We encourage you to add a relative and close friend to this contact list in the event you are unable to pick up your student from school due to illness. Only the individuals listed for your child will be allowed to pick up your student and we will notify you, the parent or guardian, first at all times.

Medication

If your child requires medication during the school day, has an Epi-Pen or an inhaler, please call our school nurse or stop by the clinic for the appropriate form. Only

medication with a prescription label will be administered. Please do not send any medication to school with your child. Parents need to bring the medication to the clinic with the appropriate paperwork. For more information on medications, common health concerns or the question, “When should my child stay home from school?” please visit AHISD.net > Departments > Campus Nurse News.

Immunizations

The Texas Department of State Health Services governs the immunization requirements that we adhere to for each child. If your child has an exemption for reasons of conscience or for a medical condition this needs to be filed with the State of Texas and a copy kept in your child’s permanent record. For a list of the current, minimum immunization requirements or the exemption process please visit www.dshs.state.tx.us for more information, call our campus nurse or visit the Campus Nurse News on our website.

For any health-related questions or problems, contact our school nurse at 832-5903.

WELLNESS

We know physical activity is important for five year olds. Kindergartners have two twenty-minute recesses within the school day. They also attend PE (Physical Education) daily for 30 minutes. We encourage movement in Music class, which is three times a week for 30 minutes. In addition, we are offering Yoga for thirty minutes every other week. Yoga helps with flexibility and mindfulness.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Students, teachers and other district employees participate in the following emergency drills during the school year. A fire drill must occur within the first ten days of school. We will do our best to inform you of these drills so that you can help prepare your child and/or engage in follow up discussion.

- Fire drills
- Lockdown
- Shelter in place
- Tornado/bad weather drills
- Reverse evacuation drill

Explicit evacuation instructions are provided in the *Emergency Procedures Guide*, which is placed in every classroom.

SPECIAL NOTE FOR PARENTS

Smoking and the use of tobacco products shall be prohibited in all district buildings, at all school related events, and on all district property.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

(SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT)

The Alamo Heights Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or handicap in access to or employment in its programs or activities.

Any person having inquiries concerning the district's compliance with regulations regarding nondiscrimination should contact:

Kris Holliday, Director, Special Education and Pupil Services

Educational Development Center

705 Trafalgar

San Antonio, Texas 78216

Phone: (210) 442-3700

Notification to Alamo Heights ISD Residents of Rights under FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and student over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. These rights are:

The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the School principal (or appropriate official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the School principal (or appropriate official), clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

Parents must consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. (NOTE: FERPA requires a school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or eligible student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.)

The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Options and Requirements For Providing Assistance to Student Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need or May Need Special Education

If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the person listed below to learn about the district’s overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Students having difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial, compensatory, and other support services that are available to all students.

At any time, a parent is entitled to request an evaluation for special education services. Within a reasonable amount of time, the district must decide if the evaluation is needed. If evaluation is needed, the parent will be notified and asked to provide consent for evaluation. The district must complete the evaluation and the report within 60 calendar days of the date the district receives the written consent. The district must give a copy of the report to the parent.

If the district determines that the evaluation is not needed, the district will provide the parent with a written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parent of their rights if they disagree with the district. Additionally, the notice must inform the parent how to obtain a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards – Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities*.

The designed person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education is:

Ann Beuhler

Contact Person:

210-442-3700

Phone Number:

APPENDIX A

Howard Early Childhood Center

BEAR FACTS



A Guide to Howard's School-Wide Activities, Terms, and Events

AUGUST

MEET THE TEACHER

Approximately one week before school starts, your child's teacher will call you and introduce herself. Later that week, your child will have an opportunity to meet his or her teacher and find the location of the classroom. You will be given a packet of information to complete and return the first week of school. Please make every effort to attend this "Meet the Teacher" session.

COLOR DAYS

During the first eleven weeks of school, children at Howard will learn a song about each color. On Thursdays, every child, teacher, and staff member are encouraged to wear something with that color. Be creative! If you do not have an item that color, a paper shape with the color of the week pinned on your child's shirt or pants would be perfect.

BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT

After school has been in session for two to three weeks, you will be invited to an important Back to School meeting. At this meeting, you will learn about the curriculum, daily schedule, classroom procedures, and more. You will have an opportunity to sign up for volunteer positions. Childcare is provided for younger children so that parents can attend this informative session. A brief meeting is held in the cafeteria before parents are dismissed to the classrooms.

SEPTEMBER

In September, most teachers begin using volunteers and there are many ways you can help throughout the school year. Individuals who volunteer must complete a Criminal Background Check form available online or in our school office. This process takes several days especially at the beginning of the school year.

Here are a few of the ways you can help...

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Beginning of the Year Helpers — Many volunteers are needed at the beginning of the year to open car doors, escort children to their classrooms, help in the cafeteria during lunch, etc. Contact the PTO to see how you can help.

Homeroom Parents—Parents are encouraged to sign up to help during class

parties and to assist the teacher with special classroom activities. A meeting is held in September to review guidelines for class parties. Homeroom parents also act as the point of contact to facilitate communication with other parents in the classroom.

Library Volunteers — Children go to the library once or twice a week with their classes at a regularly scheduled day and time. Volunteers are needed to read selected books to the class during part of the time the class spends in the library.

Cafeteria/Lunch Room Volunteers — Lunch in our school cafeteria is a new experience for most of our children. Children need help opening milk cartons, yogurt containers, cereal boxes, etc. They also enjoy talking to and getting to know other adults. Cafeteria monitors are on duty but extra help in the cafeteria is always needed throughout the year.

Special Event Volunteers — There are many activities throughout the year when extra help is needed. A few of the events are listed on the following pages. Some of the events include *Picture Day, Food Drives, Special Visitors, etc.* Call the school if you ever have a few extra minutes. We assure you there will be some way you can help!

BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT

Parents are invited and strongly encouraged to attend this event. Teachers will provide an orientation in which they review their expectations and routines for the year. A brief PTO meeting will be held prior to going to your child's classroom.

TEDDY BEAR PICNIC

Children are invited to bring a teddy bear and invite family members to enjoy lunch in our courtyard.

HOWARD RAFFLE

This is the major fundraiser for Howard School and PTO parents begin work on it months before school begins. Funds raised from this raffle are used to purchase curriculum and enrichment materials, fund playground improvements, and other important efforts. Donations are accepted from businesses, parents, and other individuals. You can help in by donating items for the raffle or by selling and purchasing tickets. The drawing is usually held in October.

OCTOBER

FIRE SAFETY

October is Fire Safety Month. Children enjoy fire safety lessons and demonstrations conducted by firefighters from the Alamo Heights Fire Department during the month.

HOWDY PARADE

We participate in the Howdy Parade as part of AHISD Homecoming Week. The Principal, Assistant Principal and the PTO President ride in the parade. Mini-Mules typically ride in a trailer also. Members of the community sit in their yards or along the street to cheer for the parade members.

PICTURE DAY

Each child's picture is taken and purchase choices are given to parents. A percentage of the sales is given to our school and used to supplement the purchase of instructional materials and supplies.

HALLOWEEN/FALL ACTIVITIES

Classrooms celebrate this event in a variety of ways. Teachers enlist the help of parent volunteers to plan and facilitate the day's activities.

NOVEMBER

AMERICAN INDIAN CELEBRATION

Howard students celebrate Native Americans and Thanksgiving with a culminating event, which includes dances and participating in authentic games. Teachers may ask for additional items for this activity. PTO provides a Sign-up Genius for you to volunteer to help at an activity or to provide food items or other donations.

FOOD DRIVE

As we approach the holiday season, Howard students learn about generosity and compassion. To connect the concept with a meaningful experience, Howard students collect canned and dry goods to donate to the St. Anthony de Padua food pantry. Classes often walk to the church located one block from our school to personally make the donation.

VETERANS DAY CELEBRATION

Last year we held our first Veteran's Day Celebration. We invite any veterans in our children's family or in the community. The children honor our veterans

through song. A brief reception is held after the ceremony.

DECEMBER

AFTER SCHOOL ENRICHMENT

Parents of Howard students are given the opportunity to register for a wide variety of afternoon enrichment experiences. The classes are held after school at Howard for four days one week (Monday through Thursday) in December and another week in the spring. Parents are responsible for registration including fees and transportation. Registration is on a first-come-first-served basis. Classes fill quickly so get your registration and fees in early.

POINSETTIA SALES

You will have a hard time finding prettier poinsettias than the ones sold by the Howard PTO. Beautify your home, office, or give these beautiful plants away as a gift. Delivery of plants is in December but look for order forms in November. Pick-up location is at Howard School.

WINTER HOLIDAY PERFORMANCE

We will have two evenings in which Kindergartners will present a musical performance. North Hall will present one evening and the South Hall will present the second evening.

HOLIDAY PARTIES

The holiday season at Howard is a fun time for students, teachers, and parents. Parents are solicited to coordinate with the teacher to provide activities, crafts, and refreshments to celebrate and honor this season.

JANUARY

KINDERGARTEN PREVIEW

An opportunity to learn about the kindergarten program is offered, beginning in January, to prospective parents through the Howard Kindergarten Preview sessions. At these sessions, future kindergarten students are assigned to a kindergarten teacher's classroom where they will learn about kindergarten at Howard. While students are in the classrooms, parents will attend an informative session about our school and its programs. The session culminates with a tour of Howard. Be sure to tell your neighbors and friends about this program. All prospective families are encouraged to sign up for one of these sessions that continue into March.

FEBRUARY

100th DAY

Howard students celebrate the 100th day of school engaging in a variety of activities which may include:

- Bringing in a collection of 100 items from home.
- Making a 100th day snack at school.
- Engaging in math activities and centers to reinforce counting to 100.

You may be asked to send items to school for the activities scheduled for the day. It is also a great time to volunteer to help in the classroom.

CLASS GROUP PHOTO

A photographer comes once a year to take a photo of each class. Watch your child's calendar for which day the class picture will be taken in order to assure they attend that day. A proof will be sent home with pricing information. This class photo becomes a great memento of the kindergarten year.

VALENTINE'S DAY

This day is celebrated with a party and a card exchange. Most teachers request that children prepare cards at home for each child in the class. Many teachers also ask parents to mail one Valentine card to their child at school. A special postal worker will deliver the cards throughout the day. You may be asked to help with games and activities at the party or provide food or party supplies.

BOOK FAIR/TEXAS TEA ROOM

A Book Fair is sponsored by PTO and held in the library from 8:00—2:00 each day for one week. Parents are invited to drop in and take their child to the book fair. In conjunction with the book fair, each class is assigned a special day to eat lunch in the front foyer which is decorated in a Texas theme. There is no special menu for lunch during this week. Following lunch, parents and children visit the book fair. If parents are unable to attend, they can send money and teachers will help children select a book.

MARCH

RODEO

Classes highlight the study of Texas through a variety of activities that may include the following: ranch-themed outdoor games, activities, and fixin' vittles. Wearing western attire is encouraged and your child may be asked to make a "stick horse" at home to use at the rodeo. Parents may be invited to participate

by helping with games and activities and/or rustling' up supplies.

SPRING BREAK

Spring Break is held in March each year and it is a great time to relax, rest, and rejuvenate in preparation for the remainder of the year!

APRIL

TRANSITION TO FIRST GRADE

Activities to facilitate the transition from Howard to first grade may begin as early as April. Watch your child's calendar for information about meetings and other activities.

LITERACY ON THE LAWN

Parents and family members are invited to join their children for lunch in our courtyard and engage in some reading time picnic-style.

RACE TO READ

Our librarian hosts this challenge. Children are encouraged to read books with their family members and at school. Books can be read to, with or by the children. Once children achieve a goal, they earn a medal.

MINI-FIESTA

A day-time, age-appropriate version of NIOSA is held during this special time of year. Howard's Mini-Fiesta is held on Thursday of Fiesta Week. This outdoor fiesta is enjoyed by children, parents, and teachers and includes booths of activities, food, and fun. PTO, with the help of many parent volunteers and teachers and staff, put on this event. PTO provides a Sign-up Genius for you to volunteer to help at an activity or to provide food items or other donations

DUAL LANGUAGE/SPANISH IMMERSION MEETINGS

Sometime in April, our Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Curriculum and Instruction, will hold two information meetings in the Howard Cafeteria about these two language programs at Woodridge and Cambridge. Attendance at one of these two meetings is required to be eligible for the programs.

MAY/JUNE

VISITS TO FIRST GRADE

Teachers accompany the children to their first grade campus one day in May. Parents are invited to meet their children at the receiving campus. Children are given a tour of the first grade classrooms and building. Parents should watch for evening meetings held for parents of entering first graders held by the elementary school campuses.

END OF YEAR ACTIVITIES

The end of year is celebrated through a variety of activities that may include: Splash Day, Camp Day, student performances, special field trips, and other fun activities. You will receive information about these activities from your child's teacher.