

Tomas Rivera Elementary School 2018-2019

Parent and Family Handbook



“Where Every Child is a STAR!”

**Principal – Roshaunda L. Thomas, M. Ed.
Assistant Principal – Melissa Bates
701 Newton Street Denton,
TX 76208
(940) 369-3800**



The Denton Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities.

I would like to welcome you to the 2018-2019 school year. We are excited about the new school year and look forward to having your children at Rivera Elementary!

A strong partnership between staff, students, and parents enhances the educational process. We seek your support as we strive to meet our instructional goals that are outlined in the Campus Improvement Plan, Denton ISD Scope and Sequence, and Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.

You will receive correspondence from our teaching staff specifying academic and behavior expectations for their individual classrooms. We have an open-door policy at Rivera Elementary. If you have suggestions or questions, it is your obligation to communicate with school personnel as it is our obligation to communicate with you when we have questions or concerns.

We believe that all children can learn and cooperate! We pledge that we will use our talents, determination, and dedication to provide quality learning opportunities and to assure that disruptive behaviors are not tolerated. We will be calling on you to assist us with both endeavors because we share your desire for having a classroom atmosphere which is conducive to learning.

You are your child's strongest advocate, and you make an educational impact which far exceeds ours. Please pledge your involvement and commitment to our academic and behavioral partnership.

This handbook you have been provided has been designed to inform you of those policies directly affecting you. It is important that all parents/guardians read and review the policies and guidelines set forth in this manual with their child/children on a regular basis. If you would like a hardcopy of this manual, please notify campus administration.

Please be aware that the term "the student's parent" in the handbook is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, or any other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student. Both students and parents should become familiar with the DISD Student Code of Conduct and the DISD Student and Parent Handbook. The DISD Student Code of Conduct is a document adopted by the DISD Board of Trustees and intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. Both documents may be found on the District's webpage.

In case of conflict between board policy (including the Student Code of Conduct) and any provisions of the Rivera Elementary Parent/Student Handbook, the current provisions of board policy and the Student Code of Conduct are to be followed. Also, please be aware that the Rivera handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy or other rules that affect the Rivera Elementary Parent/Student Handbook provisions will be made available to students and parents through newsletters or other forms of communication.

We, at Tomas Rivera Elementary, look forward to working with you to ensure the success of our students. If you or your child has questions about any of the material in this handbook, or desire a hard copy, please contact Mrs. Roshaunda Thomas, Principal at 940-369-3800.

Sincerely,

Roshaunda Thomas, M. Ed.
Principal

Mission Statement - Our mission is to provide a safe and engaging learning environment that motivates, inspires, and challenges students to succeed by working collaboratively with parents and each other to meet the needs of the "whole" child.

Vision Statement - At Rivera, we are preparing students to be responsible citizens, problem solvers, progressive learners, and positive contributors in a diverse and everchanging society.

General Guidelines for Tomas Rivera Elementary:

The information in this guide is intended to serve as a quick reference for families who have children at Tomas Rivera Elementary. Additional information can be found in the DISD Student Code of Conduct and the DISD Student and Parent Handbook. Both handbooks can be found at: <http://www.dentonisd.org/tab/parents>. It is our desire to revise and improve this guide each year. If you have suggestions for additions, please forward them to the office.

Attendance and Absences

Students are expected to attend school regularly and to be on time for classes in order to benefit from the instructional program and to develop habits of punctuality, responsibility, and self-discipline. Students who have good attendance are generally more successful and enjoy school.

By DISD Policy parents **must** send a written note for their child's absence within 72 after the hours after the child returns to school. If a child is absent for 3 consecutive days a doctors' note is required to verify the absences.

If a child must be absent a portion of the school day due to a medical appointment, the child may return to school prior to the end of the school day without penalty if the parent brings a note from the medical office.

According to DISD attendance policy, parents have 72 hours after the student returns to school to submit, in writing to the school, the reason for their child's absence. The child should return to school with a written excuse stating both the dates and the reason for the absence. Absences caused by illness, death in the family, some family emergencies, quarantine, or any other cause accepted under Texas Student Attendance Laws are considered "Excused" or "Verified" absences. If a child is absent due to family vacations, going out of town, or visiting relatives, the absence is considered by Texas Student Attendance Laws as "Unexcused" or "Unverified." All attendance notes are to be turned in to the Rivera front office within 72 hours of the absence or emailed to riveranotes@dentonisd.org. Excessive absences may result in a referral to truancy court.

The Rivera Attendance Committee shall excuse students from attending school for observing religious holy days. In this instance, parents or guardians must submit a written request for the excused absence **prior** to the date of absence.

Absence make-up work may be requested through the classroom teacher. Generally, students will have one more day than the number of days missed to complete the assigned work. Teachers will make every effort to provide the work for students that are absent. It is generally better to wait until the child returns to school before requesting the work. Requests can be made through a handwritten note, or by email or phone contact.

Arrival and Dismissal

Students **should not** arrive at school before 7:10 AM and should leave for home promptly after school is dismissed at 3:00 PM. Upon arrival at school all students should report to the designated area. Once students enter the building, regardless of the time, they should not leave the campus without parent and school permission until their release at 3:00 PM. Students are not allowed to remain on the Rivera playground or campus after dismissal without permission from teachers or administration. Unsupervised students on school grounds after dismissal will be brought to the school office. Parents/guardians will need to come in to the front office with the Car Tag to sign out students picked up prior to 2:30 PM or late (after dismissal duty has ended).

***To ensure the safety of your child, we highly recommend that parents do not make changes in dismissal procedures for their child during the first two weeks of school. This is to encourage students to become familiar with routine dismissal procedures.*

The south side of the building parent loop should be used as a drive through for delivering and picking up children. If you need to come inside the school **briefly**, you may park in the staff parking lot. We ask you to use the Crosswalk for you and your child's safety at all times. Parents are encouraged not to park in the front of the building between the hours of 7 AM - 8 AM and from 2 PM and 3:15 PM.

For safety reasons, parents walking their children in daily must leave a valid photo ID at the front office prior to exiting the front office and entering the school building in the mornings.

Denton ISD is encouraging parents to no longer walk their student(s) to their classroom door. This allows us to clear the main corridors at an earlier time, secure the main areas of campus free from visitors and have an up-to-date account of who is in our building at the start of each day.

Parents of students in our Pre-kindergarten programs will need to meet the assigned teacher or support staff member at the designated drop-off location, where the students will then be escorted to class. If you plan on eating breakfast or lunch with your child, you will also need to sign-in at the front office prior to entering the cafeteria.

If you are late or need access to your child after the school bell rings at 7:40 a.m., please come to the office and check in with our staff. They can assist you with your needs. If parents wish to discuss concerns with the teacher, etc., they are encouraged to make an appointment.

****Please note, if you wish to change the way in which your child gets home, you must call the Rivera front office prior to 2 PM. Verbal messages from students will not be accepted. If this is the case, the student will be sent home their “normal” way.** In an effort to not compromise the safety of students, compliance with the regularly scheduled dismissal time (3:00 PM) is expected. Students will not be called from the instructional setting after 2:40 PM for early release and/or dismissal. We expect that each parent will utilize the parent pickup/drop off location located on the south side of the school building.

Bicycles

It is the responsibility of each bike rider to see that the bicycle is properly secured with a lock. Students riding bikes should lock them at the bicycle rack located near Newton Street in the front of the school building. Bicycles must be walked on sidewalks and parking lots adjacent to the building. This is for the bike rider’s safety as well as the safety of others. After school, students should promptly leave the bike racks and go to their after-school destination. Students should be reminded that they must not sit on or ride another student’s bicycle unless the owner is present and has given permission to do so. The school is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen bicycles.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)

At the discretion of the classroom teacher, Rivera students are encouraged to bring their own electronic devices to school for instructional purposes only, with a signed permission slip and district Acceptable Use Policy on file. Neither the Rivera campus, nor Denton ISD, assumes responsibility for lost, damaged, or stolen devices.

Bulletins and Flyers

Parents and community members should seek administrative approval prior to display of flyers/bulletins. Pending principal approval, the documents will be signed, dated, and placed in a visible, public location for a maximum time period of two weeks. You are to submit flyers to Peachjar to obtain district approval for mass campus distribution. Please visit Peachjar: <https://www.peachjar.com/>

Cafeteria

The cafeteria is maintained as a vital part of the health program of our school. Money may be placed on a student’s account on a periodic basis by sending cash or checks made payable to the Rivera Elementary Cafeteria by making a direct payment to the Rivera cafeteria manager, or by setting up an online account at <https://www.schoolcafe.com/>.

Breakfast at Rivera is available to all students who elect to eat breakfast at school, free of charge. Serving time is from 7:10-7:40 AM. If you would like additional information about the Free or Reduced Federal Lunch Program, online applications are available on the Child Nutrition webpage, available at www.dentonisd.org. For all other questions, you may also request to talk to our cafeteria manager by calling the front office at (940)369-3800.

Parents may not interrupt instructional time for students who have forgotten their snacks or lunches. These items are to be dropped off at the front office, and the student will be called up to retrieve them prior to lunch or snack time.

Additional Information:

*Students should not bring drinks in glass bottles.

*Lunch and snack contents should have some nutritional value.

*Excessive lunch charges are not allowed; however, qualifying PreK students may eat breakfast and lunch daily with parent supervision. *Please check with the classroom teacher for the daily lunch schedule and for changes on “special” days, such as Early Release Days.*

Change of Address, Telephone Number, or Emergency Numbers

It is very important that every student maintain an up-to-date address, telephone number, email address, and emergency contacts’ list in the school office. The names you list on the enrollment/health cards are the ones you are authorizing to pick up your children from

school. If that information changes, you must notify the school office **immediately** so that the appropriate documents can be updated to reflect the change.

Classroom Parties

There will be three classroom parties during the year: Winter Holiday, Valentine’s Day, and the end of the year. Easter, Halloween and additional holidays are not considered one of the three classroom parties for the school year. There will be no in-class birthday parties at any grade level. If students wish to provide treats for classmates as a birthday celebration, please clear it with the classroom teacher first. Care should be taken to provide enough treats for the entire class. **These treats should be shared within the classroom within the last hour of the school day.** Children should not bring invitations for a private party to school, **unless the invitations include everyone in the student’s class.** Children who do not receive invitations do not always understand why they are being excluded. Celebrations for additional holidays are not to be scheduled at school. Classroom parties are always **under the direction of the classroom teacher.**

Rivera Elementary has several students with severe allergies. So, prior to any food/latex products being included in a school party, the classroom teacher must provide approval. When planning with the classroom teacher, be sure to check about student allergies. Special consideration must be given to products containing nuts, eggs, cinnamon, and/or latex, in addition to more products.

Conferences

Parent/Teacher Conferences are encouraged! A parent may schedule a conference with their child’s teacher at any time during the school year. Each classroom teacher has a direct telephone number that will be provided within their “Welcome Back” newsletters. Teacher contact information may also be found on their school websites.

Daily Schedule

7:10	Students may enter the building and report to the cafeteria
7:10-7:40	Breakfast is served in the cafeteria
7:25	Students may enter classrooms
7:25-7:40	Teachers are in classrooms supervising students
7:40	Class Begins; Students are tardy if they arrive after 7:40 AM.
9:35	Daily Attendance Accounting
3:00	All students are dismissed

Pre-Kindergarten hours 7:40 AM – 10:40 AM & 12:00 (noon) – 3:00 PM

Data/Target Binders

Data/Target binders will be established for every child in compliance with campus policy. Binders should be used as a regular communication tool between home and school. It is the expectation that parents will review and sign, noting they are aware of their child’s progress prior to the end of the nine weeks’ period. In the event a child is consistently performing poorly, a conference will be scheduled to discuss the child’s performance. Parents may request a conference to discuss their child’s progress at any time.

Dress Code

Detailed DISD dress code information can be found in the Student Code of Conduct. The Student Code of Conduct can be found at <http://www.dentonisd.org/parents>.

Emergency Drills

Rivera Elementary will follow the DISD Guidelines found in the district Emergency Management Plan which requires regular drills for student safety. Drills will include fire, tornado, lockdown, building evacuation, and campus emergency drills. For additional information about drill guidelines, contact campus administration.

Homework

Homework that is brought to school after 7:40 AM **will be placed in the teacher's mailbox**. Teachers are expected to check their boxes during their planning periods to pick up these items. Instructional time will not be interrupted for students to come to the office to retrieve forgotten items. Homework is meant as a tool to reinforce classroom learning.

Lost and Found

All lost and found articles, *except* for jewelry, glasses, money, electronics, and wallets, should be turned in to the lost and found area in the Rivera cafeteria. The items listed as "exceptions" should be turned in to the front office. All unclaimed lost and found items will be discarded in October, December, March, and May. The Rivera campus assumes no responsibility for lost or unclaimed items.

Messages

Parents are encouraged to discuss all pertinent arrangements with their child before arriving to school. Parents must provide **written notes for the teacher** explaining any changes in the student schedule, normal home procedures, student pickup and drop off patterns, or other pertinent information. All changes in dismissal procedures must be received by the school office **by 2:00 PM**. Those messages called in after 2:15 PM cannot be guaranteed to be delivered to the student before dismissal.

Medications

All medications administered at school must be accompanied by a doctor's order, including all prescription and over-the-counter medicines. Elementary students are not allowed to carry medication on them at school at any time. If you have questions about a medication your child takes, please contact our school nurse at (940) 369-3805.

Nurse

Each school has a full-time registered Nurse that provides many health services for students including:

1. Emergency first aid, safety awareness and accident prevention;
2. Assessment of individual health needs, with appropriate nursing intervention and referral;
3. Vision screening, hearing screening, Type II Diabetes Risk Assessment or (AN) screening and spinal screening required by the state; and
4. Serving as a health resource for students, parents, and staff including individual health counseling and classroom education programs.

Students complaining of illness at school will be referred to the School Nurse. Students **are not** to use classroom or cellular phones to call home when not feeling well. If a student is too ill to remain at school, the School Nurse, **only**, will make the call to send the student home. If a child is out ill for 5 consecutive days a doctor's note is required to verify the absences.

Children who have the following symptoms should stay home and not come to school until they are symptom free for at least 24 hours without the help of medication, or until your doctor sends a note that states the condition is not contagious, and it is clear to return to school:

1. Fever over 99.5 degrees;
2. Vomiting or diarrhea;
3. A rash associated with a fever; 4. Head lice or scabies.

Parking

Visitors are asked to park in the Rivera Visitor Parking Lot. This will allow us to help traffic move more efficiently around the building.

Parent Volunteers

Rivera considers its parent volunteers as a very special resource. Parents are encouraged to get involved at Rivera by joining the PTA. All parents who plan to have direct contact with students through work in a classroom, class parties, or field trips **must** complete the required "Background Check" form. Volunteer paperwork will be made available on the Denton ISD website as soon as it is available. Please visit <http://www.dentonisd.org/Page/48779> to complete the necessary paperwork. Based on background checks, campus administration will make recommendations about parent involvement.

Personal Property Brought to School

Students are cautioned not to bring extra money, toys, or other valuable items to school. Students will be warned the first time the item is found and will be asked to leave the item at home. The next time the student is found with an inappropriate and/or disruptive item at school, the item will be taken and the student's parent/guardian will be notified. The item will be held in the school office for parent pickup.

Some teachers allow use of e-readers, iPads, iPods, iPhones, tablets, cell phones, and other electronic devices, etc. If these devices are brought to school, they are to remain in the student's backpack, unless being used for instructional purposes. The school is not responsible for loss or damage to electronic devices brought to school.

Pets

All animals brought or kept at school MUST be approved by the principal BEFORE being brought to school.

PTA

The Rivera Elementary PTA provides services and support to students, parents, and staff. We encourage each family to become members of this organization. Parents are encouraged to watch for all announcements and to support all PTA projects sponsored during the school year.

School Pictures

School pictures will be taken two times during the school year, once in the Fall and again in the Spring. Flyers will be sent home with students in advance of Picture Day and will include pricing information. For additional information about school pictures, please contact the school office at (940) 369-3800.

School Programs

Rivera Elementary offers many programs that both enhance student learning and provide extensions of the school academic program. Some of the programs include:

Choir is an optional activity offered to 4th and 5th grade students. Students tryout and are selected as participants. Students will present programs and participate in other activities outside the school day. Choir rehearsals are generally held after school, once per week. As a contingency of participation, all Rivera Choir students are expected to attend these practices. The Rivera Music Teacher is the staff sponsor of the Choir program.

Student Council is comprised of 4th and 5th grade students who campaign and are elected by their peers. These students attend weekly meetings, promote school spirit, represent the school at official functions, and conduct community service projects. Rivera staff members serve as faculty sponsors of this organization.

Other programs that are offered at both Rivera Elementary, as well as other elementary schools in the district include: EXPO, the DISD Gifted and Talented Program; Special Education Services; Special Reading and Math Instruction, K-2 and 3-5; Dyslexia; and Counseling Services. For additional information about these programs, please contact campus administration.

Student Cell Phones

Students are allowed to have their cell phones with them in school; however, they must remain in students' backpacks on vibrate during the school day. If a student's cell phone rings during the school day, if it is deemed a disruption, or he or she is found using it inappropriately, the device will be collected by the teacher and returned to the student at the end of the school day. On the next occurrence, the device will only be returned to the parent after a conference regarding the inappropriate behavior. On the third occurrence, the phone will be taken and turned in to campus administration until the end of the school semester. Inappropriate usage is a student texting, taking photos/videos, making phone calls, searching the web and using social media during the school day, unless being directed to do so by the classroom teacher or being used as part of the classroom instruction.

Student Desks & Cubbies

Students' desks, lockers, and cubicles are school property and remain under the control and jurisdiction of the school even when assigned to an individual student. Students are not to share or place items in others' lockers or cubicles, and students are fully responsible for the security and contents of their assigned desks, cubbies, and/or lockers. Students must be certain that their backpacks and other personal items are sealed at all times and are not to be shared with others. Searches of desks, cubbies, or lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable suspicion to believe that they contain articles or materials that do not belong to the individual, or those prohibited by policy, whether or not a student is present.

Student Safety

Denton ISD has implemented a districtwide card access system designed to make our schools safer. All exterior doors will be opened and closed through a timed computerized system. The only visitor access during the school day will be through the front entrance/main office on Newton Street. To gain entry to the building, all visitors must push the “doorbell” button located to the right of the front entrance.

Tardies

Prompt arrival at school is expected of all students. Late arrival disrupts class and causes a Loss of Instructional Time. Any student who arrives at school after 7:50 AM is considered tardy. Excessive tardies will be reviewed for further action. Students that are consistently tardy are in violation of the state attendance policy and are subject to being turned in to the district Truancy Office. The official start to the school day is 7:40 AM.

Telephone

Students may use school phones to call for lunch money, homework, or other school related items. Students are not allowed to use the phone to make social arrangements such as requesting permission to go to a friend’s house after school. Students will not be called to the phone from class due to the academic interruption this causes. Messages can be left on a teacher’s voicemail or in a note to the teacher that will be delivered to the student.

Textbooks, Library books, and Resources

Textbooks, library books, and instructional resources are provided by the school district. However, if one of these items is lost, misused, or damaged beyond reasonable wear, the student must pay for it. Report cards may be held at the end of the school year until fines/replacement costs are paid. Literacy Library books are considered textbooks. To find out the cost of the item, you may contact the Assistant Principal at (940) 369-3800.

T-Shirts

Every Friday is designated as Rivera T-shirt day! Students are encouraged to wear the Rivera T-shirt of their choice to show their school spirit. T-shirt order forms are located in the front office.

Visitors

All visitors must enter through the front entrance on Newton Street, sign in, and obtain a Visitor Badge before going to other areas of the school building. Lunch, classroom parties, field trips, etc. may be attended by a child’s parent or guardian. Non parents/guardians that are visiting may attend these events with the student’s parent or guardian. However, without them, written permission from the parent/guardian must be obtained and received in advance of the visit. No visitors are allowed on the playground.

Parents are welcome to schedule a time to observe their child’s classroom. According to Denton ISD policy, these observations must be arranged in advance with campus administration and the classroom teacher. Observations should be limited to one class period or about 45 minutes. Visits by school-age friends and relatives are not allowed. **Deliveries to students during the school day are not allowed.**

Tables are set aside in the cafeteria for parents wishing to eat lunch with their child. Parents may only eat lunch with **their** child. Students may not invite their friends to the table.

Conferences during the school day should never interrupt instruction. The teacher is available for parent conferences during her conference period, before 7:10 AM, or after 3:00 PM. Conferences are scheduled at the availability of the classroom teacher.

Please note, no visitors of any kind will be allowed on campus on state testing dates.

Wednesday Envelopes

Folders will be provided for each student to take home completed assignments and other types of information to parents each Wednesday. *All* Rivera students will be on this schedule, and *all* Rivera parents expect these folders on Wednesday afternoon.

Withdrawing from School

Parents of students moving or transferring to another school should **notify both the classroom teacher and the campus receptionist several days in advance**. The appropriate withdrawal documents will need to be completed by both the teacher and the front office. The necessary documents for enrollment in the new school will be provided to you upon personal withdrawal.