

Tips for Westside Families

We know that starting a new school year can be stressful. Here are some tips to help everyone get off on the right foot!

1. ******Read through this document and spend some time reading through content on the school and PTA websites!** Why?
 - a. You'll find important information all over the place!
 - b. You'll be able to answer some of your own questions!
 - c. You'll find ways *you* can help our school (especially on the PTA website)
 - d. You'll discover Westside is a great school!
2. **Label everything!** Label water bottles, lunch boxes, backpacks, jackets, and anything else you send with your child to school! Things get lost, forgotten, or even confused with another child's things. Labels are so helpful when these events happen!
 - a. Need labels? If you go here campaigns.mabelslabels.com and select "**Westside Elementary PTA (Cedar Park)**", some proceeds from your order are donated to our school!
 - b. More instructions can be found here:
<http://westside.my-pta.org/content.asp?PageID=39>
3. **Get a good water bottle--or two!** We encourage our students to stay hydrated, so each student is allowed to have a water bottle. They only need one, but having a spare is useful for the nights you just don't have time to clean it, or if they forget it at school. If they ever do forget, don't worry--they can always use the water fountains! Please make sure it doesn't leak!
4. **NEW THIS YEAR:** To show our school spirit, we are asking that ***students wear their school shirts every Friday***. They're also great to wear on field trips! Shirts will be available for purchase at Kinder/New Family Orientation, Open House, and on the PTA website (Store tab).
 - a. If it's not up on the website yet, keep checking!
5. **Learn the traffic patterns and follow them!** We do our best to be efficient, especially at drop-off and pick-up times. Be patient, and follow the routes! If we all synergize, everyone will be safe and everything will go smoothly. (To find the map: Go to school webpage>Campus Information>Dismissal Map)
6. **If you can, adjust car seat locations to reflect the school traffic patterns so your child won't have to walk around your vehicle.** It helps keep your child safe during busy times at the school! Our goal is to have children only exit out next to the curb. We understand there may be limits to this.
7. **Have your child practice buckling and unbuckling while entering and exiting your vehicle if they will not be using bus transportation.** It is a valuable life skill and can help speed up the lines. That said, please be patient when in these lines. Allow yourself plenty of time!
8. **Try not to schedule appointments immediately after school.** Picking up your kids will take a few minutes. We work hard to ensure the lines move quickly, but please allow

time for this. It should also be noted that just because you're first in line doesn't mean your child will be the first one out of the school, so schedule accordingly.

9. **Drop off your student(s) early!** It gets really busy around the school right before the tardy bell rings at 7:45 am, so plan ahead a bit. Things happen, so try not to be in a hurry.
10. **Pack backpacks the night before.** All of our students will have things to turn in at some point. Try to have them pack everything they'll need the night before and put their stuff in a designated spot near the door. It makes mornings so much easier!
11. **Set up a good bedtime routine.** If your kids are getting enough sleep, they'll get up on their own at the correct time each morning. Consult your doctor for more information about the appropriate amount of sleep for your child and proper bedtime routine.
12. **No phones in the school zone!** This is the law! Let's keep our kids safe.
13. **All grades have snack time.** Please send snacks that do not make a mess. No candy, please!
 - a. Some snack suggestions are:
 - i. Goldfish
 - ii. Pretzels
 - iii. Dried fruit
14. **All students are required to wear closed-toed shoes for P.E., which students attend daily.** It is for their safety. They can change before P.E., but most parents find it easiest to send their child in closed-toed shoes every day.
15. **If there is anything going on at home that may be upsetting your child, please notify your teacher and/or the school counselor.** It is important that all children feel safe and supported, so if your family pet dies, or a parent receives a diagnosis, or anything else happens that will affect your child's day, please let your child's teacher know if you feel comfortable doing so. We want to ensure all of our students are supported so they can enjoy school!
16. **Don't be afraid to ask your teacher questions!** Seriously! They want to see all of their students be happy and successful!
17. **Be a part of our community!** We are so fortunate to live in a wonderful community, and we'd love for you to join us! This is what truly makes our school special, so we want to encourage you to be active in your child's education! Here are some suggestions:
 - a. Come to events for your child
 - b. Attend PTA meetings
 - c. Volunteer in your child's classroom
 - d. Check out Rocket Radio News one day. This is when the entire school assembles in the MPR for morning announcements before dispersing to their classrooms. (Tues.-Fri)
 - e. Come have lunch with your child (To find the lunch schedule: Go to school webpage>Campus Information>Lunch/Conference Schedules)
 - f. Offer to cover your teacher's lunch duty so he/she can have a longer break
 - g. Volunteer with the PTA. They're doing some great work for our school!

- h. Offer to get supplies for teachers (Don't forget the specials teachers--P.E., library, art, performing arts, any therapists your child might see at the school. They all need supplies!)
 - i. If you work during the day or have very young children at home, offer to do "homework" for your child's teacher! Can you staple packets together? Can you cut some things out to set up for an activity? Can you make some folders for a teacher? Can you help the teacher make a PowerPoint presentation?
 - j. Meet with your child's teacher and work with him/her to address any behavioral or academic concerns. Remember, our teachers want what's best for your child, too.
18. **Get to know other parents and get their contact info!** It's nice to have someone to ask if you have questions or feel like you're missing something!
19. **It is not the end of the world if the principal calls you!** Yes, there is something that needs addressed, but we're all parents (even our principal!), so we know children are not always perfect. Do your best to address issues, but remember the staff is on your side--let's work as a team! All children are capable of being happy and successful!
20. **Read with your child daily--even weekends!** Ask your child's teacher for more specific recommendations, but read! Allow your child to pick out books they find interesting. Ask them questions for understanding! Westside Rockets read!
21. **Read the school emails.** We are trying some new things this year to simplify communication from the school. That said, it can still be overwhelming. Please read anything your teacher sends out and the weekly newsletter that will be emailed out on Mondays from our staff and PTA. All of it is important information, and we want to keep everyone aware of what is happening at our school! Designate a few minutes each night to catch up on school communication.
22. **In/out visitor rules:**
- a. **All guests are required to check-in at the front office every time they enter the school.**
 - b. **You must present a photo ID.**
 - c. **You must also exit through the front office.**
23. **Please don't park in the circle (the front drive of the parking lot).** This drop off zone is reserved for buses and may only be used if given administrative approval.
- a. Please note: **The handicap accessible spots are in this area and are available for anyone who needs them.** We'd like to ensure those with disabilities can easily access our campus, so we request that others use designated parking spots instead of the circle.
24. **The front parking lot is closed from 7:25-7:45 am.**
25. **Children need to be fever free, vomit free, and diarrhea free for a full 24 hours without medication before they return to school from illness.** There are so many reasons for this, including protecting other students and staff from illness, as well as ensuring your child is healthy enough to participate normally at school. This is district policy, and enforced by our wonderful school nurse!
26. **Remind your child not to share food or drinks with other students.**

- a. Please talk to your child about food allergies. Even if they do not have any allergies, some of their friends might.
 - b. This is also in an effort to prevent illness!
- 27. Teach your child to wash their hands after using the bathroom and before eating.**
They should use warm water and soap for at least 30 seconds! This is one of the easiest ways to prevent the spread of germs.
28. Hats are not allowed, with the exception of certain theme days. **You will be notified of these days! Please teach your child not to share hats!** (Don't forget to label hats, too!)
- 29. Our school motto: Lead. Grow. Inspire.**
- 30. Attendance is taken at 8:45 am.**
- 31. Please send in a note for your child's absence, even partial day absences!**
- a. If your child saw a healthcare provider, please ask them for a school absence note. Otherwise, please send a parent note.
 - b. For a form you can use: Go to school webpage>Parent/Student Resources>Absence for Students (under the Forms heading). Remember to sign it!
 - c. ALL NOTES should be turned in within 2 days of a student's return.
 - d. Students may place notes in the black mailbox in the front entry of the school. They can ask the front desk for help if they need assistance.
 - e. Parents can fax the note (with parent signature) to 512.570.7005
 - f. Parents can take a picture of the note (MUST include parent signature!) and email it to: kim.klement@leanderisd.org
32. Do NOT worry about which teacher your child is placed with. All of the teachers are amazing and qualified professionals!
- 33. Take some time to show your appreciation to our wonderful teachers and staff!**
Not every school is as amazing as ours, so write an outstanding person a nice email, or get them a favorite treat. Even a simple "thank you" shows your appreciation and respect for the people who protect, educate, and help our kids!
34. ***Don't worry if you feel behind--everyone feels like that! You are doing fine!

This year, our focus is on building our community. We have so many wonderful staff members and families at our school who are working together to make sure every child succeeds! Please join us! We can't wait to see you on campus!

-Parents, Teachers, and Administration