Merlin Messenger

Parent Newsletter - December

With Winter Break just around the corner and 4 weeks left in the second nine weeks grading period, we are already gearing up for the second semester at McNeill Elementary School! We have a ton of fun and engaging activities and events planned for our students this month and we ask for your support in getting our students to school on time each and every day leading up to the break!

School Calendars and Hours Information & Survey

The survey window for the 2023-2024 Instructional Calendar and School Hours is **12/1-1/6.**
On December 1, parents will receive an email from K-12 (LCISD survey company) with the survey information.

Below you will find the Instructional Calendar and School Hours Information, along with the survey link for parents.
https://survey.k12insight.com/r/2324ParentAcademicCalendar

pdf 2023-2024 Instructional Calendar_ALL Options and Comparison Chart.pdf

Download
498.2 KB

2nd Nine Weeks Progress Reports

Progress reports for the 2nd 9 weeks are now available. Please check your Skyward Family Access account to view this document.

If you need help with Family Access, please contact our secretary, Mindy Gonzalez at mgonzalez06@lcisd.org.

Polar Express Day - Dec. 14

Winter Program - Dec. 15

Class Parties - Dec. 16

All parents on campus for class parties, must have a badge pre-printed from the front office. To have a badge pre-printed, you must have your driver's license or passport scanned. If you or a family member visiting our class holiday parties has not yet visited our campus this year, you must bring your driver's license to the front office to be scanned before December 16th. If you do not have your driver's license scanned ahead of time, please understand that you will wait until all pre-scanned visitors have received their badge before you are assisted. To bypass this wait time, please come in and get this done beforehand to get a "Fast Pass".

Also, you may not sign up multiple family members under one name on the visitor link. The reason you are not permitted to do this is because all visitors must have their own badge as the previous paragraph states. If you are one of the people, especially on the visitor link that has done this, please go back and register each family member visiting individually. This is the only way the front office can print you a badge. Please do this ASAP.

Your support with our safety procedures for class parties not only greatly helps our front office staff maintain control of wait time and crowds, but allows you quick, hassle-free entry. Again, if you do not register your visiting members individually, and/or do not have their driver's license pre-scanned, you will wait until all other register and pre-scanned visitors and volunteers have been issued their badge before you are assisted.

Please know that school-age children are not permitted to attend class parties on December 16th. As this is an early release day, parents will be permitted to sign their child out from their teacher's classroom at the conclusion of the parties.

Class Party Times

- Grades 3-5/SLC: 9:00-9:45am
- Grades PK-2: 10:00-10:45am

Please use the Visitor RSVP Link below to pre-register all visitors by Thursday, December 15th.

Thank you for your support of our safety measures!

Visitor RSVP Link

Please use the link above to RSVP for your child(ren)'s class party by Thursday, December 15th.

Winter Spirit Week for Students - Dec. 12-16

We are giving our Merlins an opportunity to participate in some fun Winter themed dress up days during the week of December 12 - 16!

Monday, December 12
"Deck the Heads" Wear your favorite holiday hat, antlers, elf ears (etc.)!"

Tuesday, December 13
"Athletic Wear" Wear athletic wear and/or warm ups

Wednesday, December 14
It's Polar Express Day! Wear your favorite PJs today!

Thursday, December 15
"Holiday Shirt and Socks Day" Wear your favorite holiday shirt and socks!

Friday, December 16
"Ugly Christmas Sweater Day" Wear your most festive/ugly holiday shirt/sweater!

If participating in themed dress days, please make sure attire chosen is within district guidelines and doesn't interfere with navigating through a normal school day - i.e. class, recess/PE, etc.

Early Dismissal - Dec. 16

Winter Break - Dec.19-Jan. 3

Good Attendance is Important, A Priority and Impacts Our School Rating!

At McNeill, we value our student's attendance as it is important in building responsibility which leads to success. When students miss school, they miss a valuable opportunity to learn. The staff at McNeill knows that kids are going to catch some sort of bug and parents must follow district guidelines to care for their sick child at home. Concerns have come forward that students are being checked out early or absent for a number of reasons unrelated to being ill, such as taking vacation trips for an extended period, when school is in session.

Please take a moment to review attendance requirements:

2022 - 2023 ELEMENTARY STUDENT HANDBOOK ATTENDANCE LAWS

OFFICIAL ATTENDANCE-TAKING TIME The district must submit attendance of its students to Texas Education Agency (TEA) reflecting attendance at a specific time each day. Official attendance is taken every day at 9:45 a.m.

DOCUMENTATION AFTER AN ABSENCE When a student is absent from school, the student upon arrival or return to school, and within **5** days of the absence must bring a note signed by the parent, medical professional, or court official giving the date(s) of the absence(s) and describing the reason for the absence. The campus will document in its attendance records for the student whether the absence is considered by the district to be excused or unexcused. Please note that, unless the absence is for a statutorily allowed reason under compulsory attendance laws, the district is not required to excuse any absence, even if the parent provides a note explaining the absence. ***(If a student needs to attend a medical appointment, please obtain an excuse for missing class from the doctor's office.)***

DOCTOR'S NOTE AFTER AN ABSENCE FOR ILLNESS Upon return to school, a student absent for more than five consecutive days because of a personal illness **must** bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's extended absence from school. Otherwise, the student's absence may be considered unexcused and, if so, would in violation of compulsory attendance laws. Should the student develop a questionable pattern of absences, the principal or attendance committee may require a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's absence from school in order to determine whether the absence or absences will be excused or unexcused.

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent without permission from school; from any class; from required special programs, such as additional special instruction, termed "accelerated instruction" by the state; or from required tutorials will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action. A court of law may also impose penalties against both the student and his or her parents if a school- aged student is deliberately not attending school. A complaint against the parent may be filed in court if the student: Is absent from school for ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year.

Afterschool Club Information - December

Our afterschool clubs are well underway. It is important that parents pick students up on time. We appreciate your support! Below you will find a list of afterschool clubs, meeting date, and sponsor name. Please reach out to the club sponsor with any questions.

Club Name

MCA - Mondays

- December Dates: 12/5, 12/15
- Sponsor - Mr. Yoon

NEHS - Tuesday

- December Date: 12/13
- Sponsors - Ms. Gutierrez/Ms. Patterson

Girls Above Society - Wednesday

- December Date: 12/14
- Sponsors - Ms. Gutierrez/Ms. Patterson

Choir - Thursdays

- December Dates: 12/1, 12/8
- Sponsor - Ms. Garnes

Fieldtrip Reminders

Lamar CISD wants every student to enjoy safe and engaging experiences while on field trips. To ensure a safe and positive trip for our students, a few field trip reminders have been included below.

- Due to safety and liability concerns, siblings are not able to attend field trips in Lamar CISD. This procedure has been established to ensure a safe and positive trip for our students.

- Parents attending fieldtrips must check in at the front office with a valid ID prior to meeting your child at the fieldtrip location.
- Parents must provide their own transportation to and from the fieldtrip.
- If you would like to check your child out after the fieldtrip you must return to McNeill Elementary and check your child out from the front office.
- Students are not permitted to leave with their parents from the fieldtrip location.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation to ensure a positive experience for all of our students.

Smart Tags & Bus Rider Implementation

Dear Lamar CISD Parents,

We are requesting every student bus rider be prepared to show their Smart Tag identification badge when they board and exit transportation starting on Monday, November 28, 2022, the first day we return from the Thanksgiving Break.

The Smart Tag ID badge is a safety tool for students, parents, and drivers. The photo immediately identifies the student, and the vertical or horizontal orientation indicates secondary or elementary grade levels. The badge allows parents to check the exact times when a student boards and exits the bus. Additionally, the Parent Portal gives users the ability to see where the bus is in live time.

The Elementary and Secondary Student Handbooks do require students to have their Smart Tag ID badge when they board and exit the bus (see p. **64** for Elementary; see p. **51** for Secondary). Based on the student's grade level, there may be consequences for a student who does not show their Smart Tag for 5 consecutive days (5 days for Secondary). We encourage parents to visit our district website for more information on Smart Tags in the student handbook (https://www.lcisd.org/departments/).

For the safety of our students and staff, we want all bus riders to follow this rule and may enforce a "No Tag, No Ride" rule in the future. If your student has not received their ID badge, please contact your campus directly. We appreciate your understanding, and we look forward to working together in making sure all students arrive to school and get home safely every day.

Yours in safety,
Lamar CISD Transportation

Smart Tag Information

Good news, we have received our materials to begin printing Smart Tags. Once money is received, please give us 24 hours to get the tag printed and returned to the student.

Fees:
$5-replacement SMART Tag (tag and plastic case)
$1-black lanyard

$1-plastic case

Dreambox - Setting Up a Family Account

Setting Up a New School Family Account.pdf

Download

167.7 KB

DREAMBOX: Setting Up a New School Family Account

To set up access, your student must first log in to **CLASSLINK** (YOU MAY ACCESS CLASSLINK THROUGH THE LCISD WEBSITE). You will need:

- A laptop, Chromebook, or desktop computer. You will not be able to set up a Family Account using an iPad.

2) After your student has logged in to CLASSLINK, click the **Set up parent access** link in the bottom-right corner of the screen. The **Parent Account Setup** page will open. (Please contact your child's homeroom teacher if they don't know their login information).

3) Enter the email address and password you would like to use to access your Family Dashboard, and then click **Submit.**

4) After you have created the account and linked your student, you can choose to:

- let your student return to the play environment
- link another student by repeating the steps above, or
- access your Family Dashboard.

Note: It can take up to 24 hours for your student's data to appear in your Family Dashboard.

After setting up your Family Account, you can log in to your Family Dashboard from play.dreambox.com using the email address and password you used to create your account.

How to Access MackinVia Lightbox

MackinVia Lightbox is a reading app that students can use at home to read non-fiction books. Please see the steps below to use MackinVia Lightbox with your child.

How to Mackinvia Lightbox.pdf

Download

298.0 KB

Nurse's Corner

With all the illness we are seeing at this time, I wanted to send out some reminders on a few rules of the clinic. As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Nurse Mager.

2022-2023 Beanstack Challenge

This year we are challenging all McNeill students to read at least 20 minutes a day, 5 days a week and keep track of that reading using the Beanstack site. As you read and log your minutes, you'll earn cute virtual badges in your Beanstack account.
The top grade level, class, and student will be highlighted weekly during our video announcements.

Beanstack is located in ClassLink. To log reading time, open Beanstack and select the blue Log Reading link at the top of the screen. Click on Log Minutes, select the date, and then enter the number of minutes spent reading and the title of the book read or use Start a Reading Timer to have Beanstack keep track of your minutes while you read.

Happy Reading, McNeill Merlins!

Arrival / Dismissal Reminders

A few additional reminders have been added for clarification:

- Doors open at 7 am with the tardy bell ringing at 7:30 am. Please plan accordingly in order to have your child arrive to school on time.
- Please refrain from getting out of your vehicle during drop off or pick up as we have safety patrol and staff on hand to open doors for our students.
- Students are unloaded and loaded on the passenger side of the car for safety.
- Parents are not permitted to walk up to our car rider loading zone to pick up their child if they are designated as a car rider.
- Cell phone use is not permitted in school zones.
- Follow the posted speed limits while in the school zone.
- Do not make a U-Turn in the middle of the street.
- Use the cross walk if you choose to walk your student to the front door.
- Street parking regulations in Texas: 15 feet away from a fire hydrant / 20 feet away from crosswalk at an intersection / 30 feet away from stop signs.
- Double parking is not allowed so please do not drop your student off in the middle of the road. Either pull to the curb or come through the back drive to be greeted by our friendly safety patrol students.

Rainy Day Dismissal Procedures

On inclement weather days, we will implement our Rainy Day Dismissal procedures to ensure all students get home safely. All dismissal procedures will remain the same for car riders, bus riders, daycare, and YMCA students. Please note the changes below for walkers and bikers in the event of a Rainy Day Dismissal.

Walkers & Bikers

- Students will report to the library and sit by grade level.

- After the bus and day car buses have departed, parents of walkers/bikers may make their way to the front of the school.
- Parents will be asked to sign their child out with one of the staff members in the front foyers.
- Students will be released from the library to the parent after they have been signed out.

In the event you would like to change your child's transportation method, please contact the front office before 2 pm. Thank you in advance for your understanding as student safety is our top priority.

Tardies and Early Pick-ups

We attribute our achievement success to several factors, one being bell to bell teaching! Here at McNeill Elementary School, our students can go straight to class at 7 AM and begin learning activities right away!

Any student not in class at 7:30 AM will be counted tardy. Students will be routed to the front office to get a tardy slip before being released to go to class.. Our announcements start promptly at 7:30 AM, therefore all our students need to be in class to hear important daily information.

It is very important that students are at school everyday, on time and stay for the entire day. Just as tardies impact learning over time, early pick-ups also cause students to miss instruction. Please help us by minimizing early pick ups. If you must pick up your students early for appointments, our cut off time is 2:00 PM.

Lamar CISD Police Department Information

School safety is important to everyone in Lamar CISD. As a community, we must continue to collaborate and discuss how we can continue to maintain a safe and comfortable learning environment for our students and staff. For information about our police department & safety in Lamar CISD click on this link: https://www.lcisd.org/departments/school-safety

SRP Information (Standard Response Protocol)

Preparedness is important should any type of emergency occur on campus. Lamar CISD utilizes a protocol called SRP to activate should an emergency occur on campus. All staff members have been trained on how to activate this protocol. Click on this link to review the information: https://www.lcisd.org/departments/school-safety/standard-response-protocol

- **Secure** – occurs when a threat or hazard is outside of the school building. Students will remain or return inside the building. Staff will help recover students and colleagues outside the building, take roll and increase their situational awareness.
- **Lockdown** – occurs when a threat or hazard is inside the building. Students will stay quiet and out-of-sight. Staff will lock the classroom door, turn off lights, maintain silence and obscured visibility, take roll and wait for first responders to open the door.
- **Evacuate** – occurs when students and staff must move to another location. Students will leave all but cell phones behind, form a single-file line, show hands and be prepared for changes. Staff will lead students to the evacuation location and take roll, if possible.

- **Shelter** – occurs when the need for personal protection is necessary, such as during a tornado or biohazard situation. Students and staff will employ appropriate safety strategies. Teachers will also take roll to account for students.
- **Hold** – occurs when there is a need for students to clear the hallways for issues, such a medical emergency. Students will remain in their classroom until they receive an “all clear” and classes will continue as they normally would.

Visitors / Volunteers

Visitors-All visitors will need to sign in at the front office with a state issued ID. Visitors must wear their raptor name badge and report to the area that is indicated on their badge. For the safety of all school community members, visitors should enter/exit through the front area of the building only.

Volunteers- We will have volunteers through the building during the school day. We will communicate with the PTO and community when we will begin allowing workroom volunteers to come on campus. That volunteer time will be coordinated by the PTO. Those volunteers will only be allowed to work in the workroom. They will not be allowed in any other area of the building. Each person will have to be cleared through a background check with LCISD in order to volunteer in the workroom

Birthday Treats

The birthday treat exception does not constitute a birthday party; therefore, other items (party favors, treat bags, balloons, and flowers) cannot be brought to school. Because of the time constraints, the treat is limited to one item per classmate, and it must be a store purchased single serve item (i.e. cupcake, cookie, etc.) so that it can be served, eaten, and cleaned up within a reasonable time. Although we cannot prohibit a parent/grandparent from providing food/treats for his/her child’s birthday, parents and grandparents may be held personally liable for an adverse reaction a student may have as a result of food brought in by parents or grandparents.

The district discourages food being brought in by parents/grandparents for the following reasons:
• Protect instructional time
• Student food allergies (peanut, gluten, eggs, etc.)
• Student medical conditions
• Liability assumed by person bringing in food

Birthday treats will be distributed to students at the end of the day.

PTO NEWS

December Spirit Nights

Our December Spirit Nights will be held on the following dates:
December 7 - Texas Roadhouse

Yearbook Information

YEARBOOK ANNOUNCEMENTS

WINTER 2022

TIME IS RUNNING OUT!

Order your copy of the 2022-2023 yearbook before it's gone!

Three easy ways to order:

1. Go to **Balfour.com** and type in our school name **McNeill Elementary School**. Purchase a yearbook online using a credit or debit card.
2. Make a payment using Venmo to McNeill Elementary PTO **@McNeill-PTO**
3. Complete the form below and return to front office with your cash or check attached. Make checks payable to: **McNeill Elementary PTO**

While supplies last

For questions or concerns, please email Delores Williams at **merlinyearbook@gmail.com**

Cost: $35

Student Name _____

Teacher _____ Grade _____

Parent/Guardian Name _____ Phone _____

Email (optional): _____

# of Yearbooks _____ X $ _____ = _____ Total Cost

Payment Method (check one) ☐ Check ☐ Cash

WE WANT YOU, FOR OUR YEARBOOK!

Yearbook photographers can't be everywhere, so if you've got great photos of school events or with your school friends, please share them with us!

TO UPLOAD PHOTOS FROM YOUR MOBILE DEVICE:

- Search for Balfour Image Share in your app marketplace
- Download the app, create your account
- Enter our project number 305986

(OPTION: Point your web browser to images.balfour.com to upload photos from your computer.)

The last day to submit photos is **March 3, 2023.**
If you have any questions, please email Delores Williams at merlinyearbook@gmail.com.

* All photos subject to review. We cannot guarantee all submissions can be used in book.*

Memory Messages

NOW AVAILABLE FOR A LIMITED TIME

ONLINE ONLY

Deadline is **Friday, February 24, 2023**

While supplies last, space is limited.

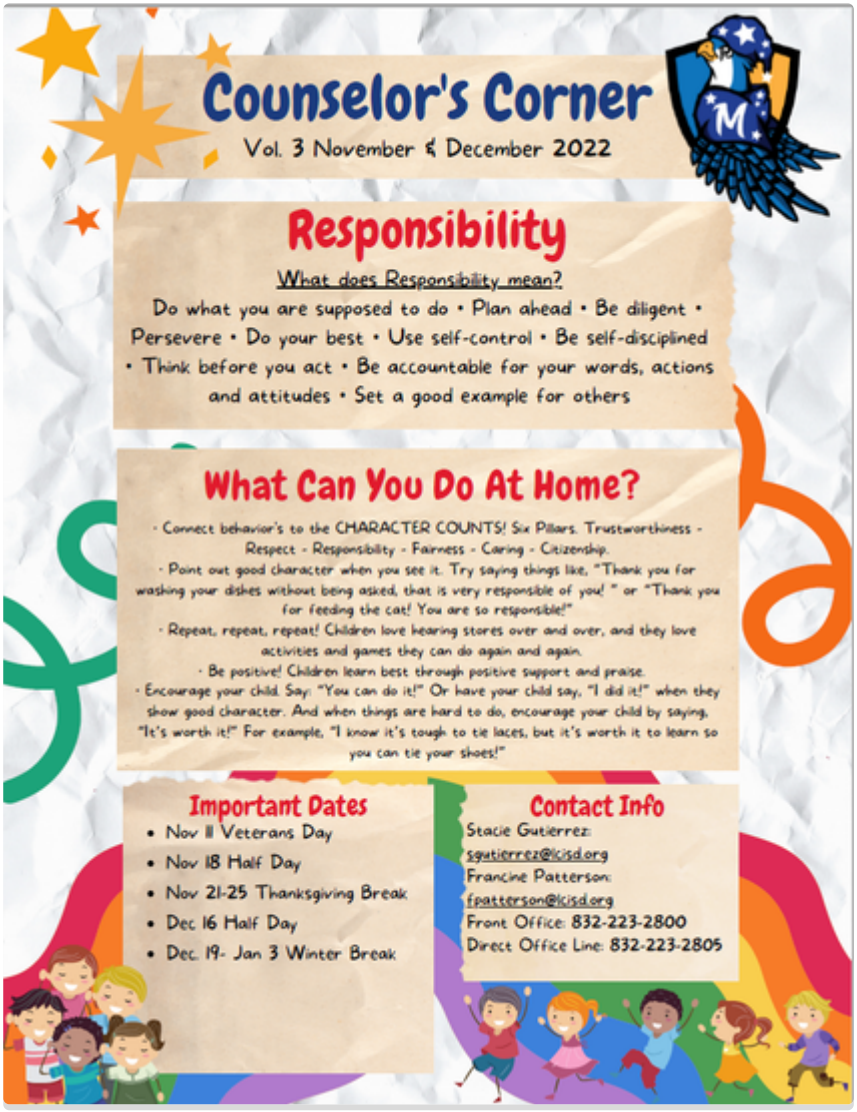
Questions? Contact Delores Williams at merlinyearbook@gmail.com

Here's your chance to make your favorite student feel special. Go to www.Balfour.com and create a personal message that will appear in the 2022-2023 McNeill Yearbook. Options available are shown in the example below.

(EXAMPLE SHOWN IS NOT ACTUAL SIZE)

All messages will be reviewed and subject to approval.

COUNSELOR'S CORNER



Counselor's Corner

Vol. 3 November & December 2022

Responsibility

What does Responsibility mean?

Do what you are supposed to do • Plan ahead • Be diligent • Persevere • Do your best • Use self-control • Be self-disciplined • Think before you act • Be accountable for your words, actions and attitudes • Set a good example for others

What Can You Do At Home?

- Connect behavior's to the CHARACTER COUNTS! Six Pillars. Trustworthiness - Respect - Responsibility - Fairness - Caring - Citizenship.
- Point out good character when you see it. Try saying things like, "Thank you for washing your dishes without being asked, that is very responsible of you! " or "Thank you for feeding the cat! You are so responsible!"
- Repeat, repeat, repeat! Children love hearing stores over and over, and they love activities and games they can do again and again.
- Be positive! Children learn best through positive support and praise.
- Encourage your child. Say: "You can do it!" Or have your child say, "I did it!" when they show good character. And when things are hard to do, encourage your child by saying, "It's worth it!" For example, "I know it's tough to tie laces, but it's worth it to learn so you can tie your shoes!"

Important Dates

- Nov 11 Veterans Day
- Nov 18 Half Day
- Nov 21-25 Thanksgiving Break
- Dec 16 Half Day
- Dec. 19- Jan 3 Winter Break

Contact Info

Stacie Gutierrez:
sgutierrez@lcisd.org
Francine Patterson:
fpatterson@lcisd.org
Front Office: 832-223-2800
Direct Office Line: 832-223-2805

HELPFUL DOCUMENTS

22-23 MCNEILL SCHOOL PARENT COMPACT

pdf McNeill Elementary School Parent Compact 2022-2023.pdf Download 115.0 KB

pdf Spanish - McNeill Elementary School Parent Compact 2022-2023.doc SP.pdf Download 114.6 KB

22-23 PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Parent and Family Engagement Policy 2022-2023.pdf

Download

233.7 KB

Spanish McNeilll Parent and Family Engagement SP.pdf

Download

215.8 KB

SMART TAG REGISTRATION

Smart Tag RegistrationSteps-English.pdf

Download

321.5 KB

Smart Tag RegistrationSteps-Spanish.pdf

Download

351.4 KB

BACK TO SCHOOL MEAL RATES

Back to School Meal Rates.pdf

Download

501.2 KB

Student Meal Rates One Pager for Parents (8.5x11) WM.pdf

Download

2.1 MB

MEAL RATES AND MENUS

Child Nutrition

lcisd.org

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

2022-23 Dress Code

2022-2023-elementary-dress-code.pdf

Download

989.2 KB

2022-23 School Supply List

2022-23-elementary-school-supply-list.pdf

Download

139.2 KB

DATES TO REMEMBER:

Our calendar will not be as involved as it has been in previous years. We will adjust accordingly as the disease activity levels change.

DECEMBER

- December 1: Progress Reports Posted in Skyward Family Access
- December 1: 2nd Grade Fieldtrip
- December 1: Book Fair Family Night Event (5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.)
- December 2: Book Fair Ends
- December 3: UIL Competition @ Wertheimer
- December 7: PTO Spirit Night @ Texas Roadhouse
- December 9: PTO Dress Down Day: Festive Friday (students Pay $1)
- December 12: "Deck the Heads" Wear your favorite holiday hat, antlers, elf ears (etc.)!"
- December 13: "Athletic Wear" Wear athletic wear and/or warm ups
- December 13: Big Kahuna Fundraiser Delivery
- December 14: It's Polar Express Day! Wear your favorite PJs today!
- December 15: Winter Program @ 9:00 a.m.
- December 15: "Holiday Shirt and Socks Day" Wear your favorite holiday shirt and socks!

- December 16: “Ugly Christmas Sweater Day” Wear your most festive/ugly holiday shirt/sweater!
- December 16: Class Parties (Gr. 3-5/SLC: 9 a.m.-9:45 a.m.) / (Gr. PK-2: 10 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.)
- December 16: Early Release @ 11:30 a.m.
- December 19-January 3: Winter Break (No School)

December Parent Calendar

McNeill Elementary

Email: jearine.jordan@lcisd.org
Website: https://www.lcisd.org/campuses/mcneill/home
Location: 7300 S. Mason Rd., Richmond, TX 77407
Phone: (832) 223-2800
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/McNeillMerlins

After all the hard work and dedication, we are proud to announce that McNeill is an
A
RATED
CAMPUS
5 DISTINCTIONS