

Gene Witt
Elementary



2022-2023

Student Handbook

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Student Hours

Kindergarten through 5th Grade - 8:25a.m. - 3:15p.m.

VPK & PreK ESE - 8:25a.m. - 11:25a.m. All PreK extended day programs are until 3:15p.m.

School Cafeteria Schedule

Breakfast - 7:55a.m. - 8:20a.m.

Lunch - 10:40a.m. - 1:00p.m.

Faculty Hours

7:40a.m. - 3:25p.m.

Office Hours

7:30a.m. - 4:00p.m.

School District Numbers

Manatee County School District Office (941) 708-8770

Bus Transportation (941) 782-1287 or 708-8800

Office of Student Assignment (941) 708-4971

Gene Witt Elementary (941) 741-3628

School Fax		(941)741-3630
Principal	Connie Dixon	81001
Assistant Principal	Karen Barrett	81002
Student Support Specialist	Amy Lindsey	81015
School Counselor	TBA	81004
School Counselor	Cynthia Deras	81007
Senior Secretary/Bookkeeper	Lisa Blakemore	81003
Registrar	Amie Golden	81006
Front Office	Kayla Kissinger/ Bev Jackson	81000
Clinic	Angela Meyer	81011
School Nurse	Susan Wheeler	81010
Head Custodian	Lenny Draper	81069
Cafeteria Manager	Carmen Palacios	81013

Who is Mr. Gene Witt?

Our school's namesake, Mr. Gene Witt, was an educator, father and grandfather of six. He was involved in the Manatee County Education system for 38 years. Mr. Witt started out in Manatee County as a teacher of biology, science, and physical education. He then moved into the position of Dean, Principal, Director of Secondary Schools, Assistant Superintendent, and Superintendent. He was the Superintendent of Manatee County Schools for 11 years. Until the time of his passing, Mr. Witt was a frequent visitor to our campus, always supporting our school events. He was a loving man known to find humor in his life no matter the situation. He always expressed how honored he was to have our school named after him. The staff and families of Gene Witt Elementary will forever be thankful for all that Mr. Witt contributed to our school and community.

Vision

The vision of Gene Witt Elementary is to become one of the top 50 elementary schools in the state of Florida, meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of all students to best prepare them for their future to become a positive, productive, global citizen.

Mission Statement

Gene Witt Elementary School will work together to assist all students in reaching their highest potential academically and behaviorally with respect for others while fostering life-long learning.

Manatee County School District Calendar 2022 – 2023

8/10/22	First Day of School
9/5/22	Labor Day / No School
9/12/22	Qt.1 Progress Reports Posted in FOCUS
10/6/22	End of Qt. 1
10/7/22	Record Day / No School for Students
10/12/22	Qt. 1 Report Cards Posted in FOCUS
11/2/22	Early Release Day / Dismissal at 1:50
11/11/22	Veteran's Day / No School
11/18/22	Qt. 2 Progress Reports Posted in FOCUS
11/21 – 11/25/22	Thanksgiving Break / No School
12/21 - 12/23/22	Hurricane Make-up Days (if necessary)
12/22/22	End of Semester 1
12/23/- 1/9/23	Winter Break / No School
1/10/223	Students Return
1/12/23	Qt. 2 Report Cards Posted in FOCUS
1/16/23	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day / No School
2/8/23	Qt.3 Progress Reports Posted in FOCUS
2/20/23	Presidents' Day / No School
3/1/23	Early Release Day / Dismissal at 1:50
3/9/23	End of Qt. 3
3/10/23	Record Day / No School for Students
3/13 - 3/17/23	Spring Break / No School
3/22/23	Qt. 3 Report Cards Posted in FOCUS
4/7/23	Good Friday / No School
4/21/23	Qt.4 Progress Reports Posted in FOCUS
5/24-5/26/23	Early Release Days / Dismissal at 1:50
5/26/23	Last Day of School / End of Semester 2

Attendance/Withdrawal Procedures

Attendance Policies

Children are required to be on time and attend school daily unless the individual is sick or there is an emergency. When your child is absent, please call the attendance line, (941) 741-3628 and give the child's name, teacher and reason for the absences. Your child will be marked unexcused if we do not receive a call and the district will call to notify you of the absence. Obtain an excuse form from your doctor whenever possible for absences due to illness. Family trips are considered unexcused absences. Any student not in the classroom by 8:25a.m. should report to the office to request a tardy slip. Three unexcused tardies or unexcused early departures will equal one unexcused absence.

Requesting Missed Homework

- ✓Request homework from the teacher
- ✓Give the teacher time to get the work together
- ✓Don't leave requests for homework on the attendance line

Withdrawal Procedures

Please notify the school in writing or come to the school office and sign a withdrawal form at least one day in advance if it becomes necessary to withdraw your child.

Please make sure your child's lunch account is paid in full and all books and supplies have been returned. Unpaid balances, including Media Center fees, follow students and will need to be paid in order for students to graduate from this district.

Student Drop off/Pick up Information

Please make arrangements with a childcare provider if your child needs care prior to 8:00a.m.
Staff members on campus may be attending meetings and cannot supervise children before 8:00a.m.

Dismissal from the front office:

- If it is necessary to pick up your child before 3:15p.m., please come to the front office **before** 2:45p.m.
- The secretary will contact the teacher with instructions to send the student to the office.
- Under no circumstances will a teacher release a student to a parent unless the parent has a note from the office or the teacher has been contacted over the classroom intercom.

Students leaving campus early:

Please send a note if your child has to leave early during the day. This will help the teacher to have assignments and backpacks ready when the student is called to the office.

Dismissal Changes:

If you have a change of transportation home for your child, you must write a note in the student's agenda, or send a dated, signed note for kindergarten and Pre-K students.

Updated Information

All changes must be made by the **enrolling parent**. Changes may include, address, phone numbers, names of emergency contacts/people permitted to pick up your child, daycare or medical information, etc. Keeping this information updated ensures the safety of your child.

Instructions for Riding the School Bus

A school bus driver has the responsibility of transporting 50-70 students to and from school each day. In order to ensure each child's safety, parents are asked to instruct and have children learn the following school bus regulations:

1. Stand at least 10 feet off the roadway while waiting for the bus.
2. Stay in your seat at all times when the bus is moving.
3. Keep your arms and head inside the bus at all times.
4. Walk 12 feet in front of the bus and wait for operator's signal before crossing the road.
5. Unnecessary conversation with the operator is dangerous. Please remain quiet unless there is an emergency.
6. Outside of ordinary conversation, classroom conduct is to be observed. Operators are allowed to "put the bus on silent" when complete silence is required.
7. Absolute silence is required at all railroad crossings.
8. The operator is in full charge of bus and students. Students must obey the operator.
9. The operator will assign students to certain seats to promote order on the bus.
10. No eating, drinking, or smoking is allowed on the bus.
11. Students must be on time: the bus can not wait for those who are tardy.
12. Riding the bus is a privilege. Do not abuse it.

PARENTS, PLEASE NOTE:

Violating these rules may result in your child being reported to the school Principal who has the authority to take disciplinary action, including suspending your child's riding privileges or suspension or expulsion from school. Each student boarding the bus will be given a copy of the transportation procedures and a registration card. Please fill out the card and return it to the bus driver as soon as possible. Make sure to go over the complete list of rules and safety procedures with your child. This will help to ensure that everyone has a safe and pleasant experience while on the bus.

Bus riders must have their current school ID badge on in order to board the school bus.

Bicycle Safety

The following Florida Bicycle Laws must be followed to ensure safety to and from school:

1. All students MUST wear a helmet mandated by State Law.
2. Ride single-file close to the right side of the street.
3. Only one person on a bike.
4. Obey all traffic signs and signals.
5. Register your bike with the Manatee County Sheriff's Department.

Upon arrival to the school campus, they must walk their bicycle to the bike rack. At dismissal, students are not permitted to ride their bike until they reach the Rye Road sidewalk. The bike rack will be locked during school hours. We cannot be responsible for bicycles that are stolen from school property.

Walkers

Parents wishing to pick up a child to walk home from school, need to park along Rye Road and meet their child on the Rye Road sidewalk near the fire station, if coming from the north side of campus, or next to the utility pole, if coming from the south side of campus. Due to the loading of bus riders, parents may not park in the front parking lot to pick up walkers. (Please do not have your child meet you in front of the office.) Walkers need to move quickly and follow the sidewalk from the bike racks to Rye Road.

Rainy Days

If it is raining at dismissal and your child is a walker or bike rider, your child will **automatically be sent to the Car Rider Line to await pick-up**. At 3:40, any children still at Car Riders will be walked to the front office and you may pick them up there by car. If you want your child to walk/ride in the rain without an adult (and they in grade 3 -5), you must provide us with a note. Your child will never be allowed to walk if it is thundering or lightning. You will be responsible for having an alternate plan to pick up at car riders.

School Clinic

The School clinic is available for students who become ill or injured during the school day. If the illness or injury is of such a nature that the student should go home, the parent will be notified and be expected to make arrangements for the child to be picked up from school. The telephone for Gene Witt Clinic is 941-741-3628, ext. 81011. Please keep emergency contact numbers updated on a regular basis. If your child is sick, please keep him/her home. We do not have facilities to care for them. Medications, over-the-counter or otherwise, need to be prescribed by a physician and brought to the clinic by an adult. Never send medications with a child; it is against school policy.

Administering Medication

We are reluctant to give children medication; however, we recognize special cases do arise whereby students need to take prescribed medicine. If it is essential for children to receive medication during school hours, the following guidelines will be followed.

1. Each medication needs a Medication Authorization form completed and signed by the prescribing physician and a parent/legal guardian.
2. All medication to be administered in school to an elementary student must be delivered to the school by a parent or other responsible adult. Medication shall be supplied by the parent or guardian in a child-proof container, bearing the name of the medication, the amount to be given, the frequency of administration and any special instructions. Ask your child's doctor or pharmacy for two containers (or inhalers), labeling one for school use.
3. All medication prescribed or over the counter, must be accompanied by a completed Medication Authorization form, and labeled with the child's name.
4. The parent and/or physician should make school personnel aware (in writing) of symptoms or possible reactions relating to the medication or lack of medication.
5. No medicine for acute or contagious illness should be given in schools. Children should be home under these conditions. Clinic guidelines to follow before sending your child to school:
 - Have a healthy breakfast.
 - If your child has frequent accidents, please have a change of clothes in their backpack.
 - Students must be fever free (under 100 degrees) & vomit free for 24 hours before sending or returning to school.
 - You must be able to pick up your child from school within one hour or have an alternate pick up plan.

Lunchroom Behavior Management Program

Gene Witt's lunchroom program enables students to talk softly and use good manners while eating. The supervisory staff in the lunchroom will give tickets to those children breaking a lunchroom rule. As a part of the program, a specific set of rules has been developed for all students. When eating at school, please help your child and others at the table follow the rules listed below:

1. Talk softly at all times.
2. Walk at all times.
3. Stay in your seat.
4. Raise your hand for help.
5. Eat your own food only.

Parents and guests, we are excited to invite you on campus to enjoy having lunch with your child (only) after the first two weeks of school. Visitor lunches will be hosted outside under shade in our outdoor Witt Dining area.

***Student Prices**

**Breakfast: Free this
school year**

Lunch: \$2.75

Paying for your Child's Lunch

- Put all money in an envelope labeled clearly with your child's name, teacher's name, and designated amounts for lunch and snacks.
- You may pay by the day, week, month or year.
- You may pay by check or cash (checks are preferred). Please write student name on check memo line.
- Pay all lunches in advance.

Payments can also be made on the internet using our online payment service
www.MyPaymentsPlus.com.

You will need your student's 10-digit I.D. number.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Your child's progress reports cannot tell you everything you need to know. Our teachers are available to meet with parents upon request to discuss your child. If you would like to arrange a conference please call your child's teacher at (941)741-3628 plus their extension. Teachers will return calls within 24 hours.

Homework Policy

Homework is defined as activities assigned to students by teachers that are meant to be carried out during non-school hours. Homework is given to further develop concepts presented in school. It also provides an excellent opportunity for children to assume responsibility and to establish good work habits. Homework strengthens home/school communication and parent/child communication. Length and complexity of assignments will generally increase as students progress from grade to grade. Students are NOT permitted back into the classrooms once the teacher has left for the day or past 3:25p.m. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure they have all assignments before leaving school. School-wide programs are provided for those students who choose to accept the challenge of working beyond the core curriculum; for example, Accelerated Reader and IXL (depending on grade level). CUSTODIANS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO LET CHILDREN INTO CLASSROOMS AT ANY TIME.

Character Strong Awards Program

Every quarter, each teacher of grades 3 through 5 will choose several students from their classroom who have displayed one or more of the Character Strong Traits. Those students will then be recognized at school. If your child has earned an award, you will be notified by your classroom teacher. Character Strong is the Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Program implemented at Gene Witt Elementary.

<p style="text-align: center;">School Advisory Council (SAC)</p> <p>SAC meetings are held the first Thursday of each month. Everyone is invited to come to these meetings, although membership is required to vote. The council is made of students, parents, administrators and teachers. They discuss important issues dealing with curriculum, safety, A+recognition, school improvement goals and much more.</p> <p>We welcome you to join us at SAC at 6:00p.m. on the first Thursday of each month.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PTO</p> <p>Meetings are held the first Thursday of each month, following the SAC meeting. Everyone is invited to come. It is a great place to find out what is happening at Gene Witt Elementary.</p> <p>Your opinions and ideas are welcomed.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Volunteers</u></p> <p>Volunteers who can work one, two, or more hours per week are needed by the school to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Assist teachers in providing more individualization and enrichment of instruction (b) Relieve teachers of non-teaching duties and tasks or in the media center (c) Strengthen school-community relations through positive participation. <p>Those interested should fill out a *volunteer application and contact your child’s teacher or sign up at Open House. If you have expressed an interest and have not been contacted, please call the school office.</p> <p>*A new volunteer application must be completed each school year.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Gene Witt PTO Officers</u></p> <p>President: Carla Santoro Vice President: Sherry Pineno Treasurer: Shannon Cooley Recording Secretary: Cara Misiewicz Corresponding Secretary: Laura Anastasia</p> <p>Visit PTO on Facebook: Gene Witt PTO</p> <p>or on their website: www.genewittpto.com</p>

Communication with Witt Parents

The agenda is required for all 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th graders. The PTO provides these agendas for our students at no cost. In the agenda, students will write their homework assignments. Each day the parents are required to sign-off on their child's work. If you have a concern, want to schedule a conference, or write a note to the teacher, you can do it in the agenda. When the teacher signs-off the next day, they will respond accordingly.

ALL TRANSPORTATION CHANGES are to be made in this same manner. You can also keep up with current information by visiting our website: www.manateeschools.net/witt or the official Gene Witt Elementary School Facebook page.

Visitors

When visiting our school, you should always have your state-issued photo I.D. with you upon arrival. Parking is available in the front parking lot. During the hours of 7:55-8:30a.m. and 2:50-3:35p.m., parking will be a problem due to buses. Please refrain from coming to the office during those hours. Parking is not allowed along the curb or fire lane, doing so is against the law. For security of all the children, visitors must report to the front office immediately upon arriving on campus. Don't forget to sign-out when you leave our campus, as it is important to know who is on the school grounds in an emergency.

Lost & Found

Articles found in and around the school are placed on a table in the Cafeteria. Items not claimed will be donated periodically throughout the year. If possible, **please label all items brought to school.**

Birthday Celebrations

Parents, we welcome you to celebrate your child's birthday, should you choose to do so by sending in PRE-CUT snacks or a snack alternative. Balloons and or homemade foods may not be accepted due to safety concerns.

Manatee County Schools Emergency Codes

Lockdown - Shooting, stabbing, or hostage situation or armed person on campus

Shelter-in-Place – off-site chemical release, abduction/safety & security of students

Evacuate - Bomb threat, fire/explosion, toxic spill, gas leak, odors, building damage

Medical Emergency - First aid/CPR is requested on campus

Dress Code

It is generally recognized at Gene Witt Elementary that cleanliness, personal appearance, and proper dress are important in setting the standard for school and social conduct. There is a correlation between student appearance, attitude, and behavior. Students should practice proper hygiene by being clean and well-groomed every day. Makeup should be avoided.

Refer to the Manatee County Code of Student Conduct for complete dress code information.

Students should wear clothing appropriate for learning that is not a distraction to themselves, or to others. Loose fitting pants must have a belt. Revealing clothing, bare midriff clothing, etc. are prohibited. Tank tops and spaghetti strap shirts may only be worn with a cover shirt. Clothing that promotes drugs, alcohol, or has language and/or illustrations of an inappropriate nature or include derogatory sayings/images are prohibited. Thong type shoes (including flip flops), roller skate shoes, and shoes with cleats are also prohibited. Hats may be worn to and from school and at recess, but not inside the buildings. Face masks covering the mouth and nose are permitted as desired. Please label all jackets and sweaters.

FRIDAY IS GENE WITT T-SHIRT DAY!

Items from Home

There are very few occasions when it is necessary (or desirable) for students to bring items from home to school. WEAPONS OR WEAPON-STYLE TOYS OF ANY KIND, INCLUDING TOY GUNS AND KNIVES ARE NOT PERMITTED ON SCHOOL PROPERTY AT ANY TIME. STUDENTS WHO VIOLATE THIS RULE WILL BE SUSPENDED. Listed below are examples of when items from home would be appropriate:

Primary (grades K-3) students, at the teacher's discretion, are occasionally allowed to bring items to school for "sharing" time. Appropriate articles include educational books, pictures, vacation souvenirs, puppets, and small toys. These things should be brought in a paper bag and only on the day designated by the teacher. Children are not allowed to play with the items at school, but only to use them as a means of developing communication skills (telling other students about the toy, etc.). Any child playing with items from home or bringing inappropriate articles (Pokemon Cards, Gameboys, etc.) may have them confiscated.

Students in grades 2-5 are not allowed to bring athletic equipment (soccer balls, basketballs, etc.) to school.

The school cannot be responsible for the loss or damage of anything that a child brings from home.

Student Responsibilities

I SHOULD BE WHERE I'M SUPPOSED TO BE AND ON TIME.

- a) Stay in your seat during instruction time.
- b) Stay at the correct station at center time.
- c) If you need to go to the clinic for medication, go straight there and back.
- d) Use the bathroom facilities only when needed.
- e) Stay with a supervised class.

I SHOULD SHOW RESPECT FOR OTHERS.

- a) Use correct language when speaking to others (cursing, teasing, name calling, tattling are not allowed).
- b) Avoid physical contact (pushing, hitting, kicking, tripping, biting, spitting, pinching).
- c) Wait to speak until you have the teacher's permission (do not interrupt while someone else is speaking).
- d) Show appreciation to those trying to help you by saying please and thank you, smiling, cooperating, and doing your best at all times.
- e) Be honest at all times.
- f) Sit quietly and at attention for assembly and group performances.

I WILL SHOW RESPECT FOR PROPERTY.

- a) Carefully handle anything purchased by someone other than you.
- b) NO STEALING
- c) Only homework and supplies requested by the teacher should be brought to school.

I WILL DO MY BEST.

- a) Be on task and do what you are supposed to be doing.
- b) Have a positive attitude.
- c) Set goals for improvement

<p>Minor Offenses The staff member who witnesses the offense will make the determination whether there should be a verbal warning, or a written notice referral. The student's age will be taken into consideration when an offense has taken place. Possible consequences include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Loss of privileges 2. Team time out 3. Loss of special activities (field trip) 4. Changing the seating arrangement 5. Study hall <p>Parental contact will be made by phone, agenda, or note.</p>	<p>Major Offenses (Major offenses include a referral to the office.) The student's age will be taken into consideration when an offense has taken place. Examples of Major Offenses include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Violence/intimidation: Physical or verbal threats or actions that endanger the safety of others 2. Vandalism: Destruction or damage to school board property 3. Stealing 4. Defiance of authority: Refusal to cooperate with staff members. This includes any gestures or gross disrespect towards others. <p>Consequences include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In school suspension: In the front office for suspension 2. Out of school suspension: Suspension off campus
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Student Behavior Program

Gene Witt's discipline plan helps children face the challenges of today and accept responsibility for their actions. The skills learned at Gene Elementary School may be applied in the future to make good decisions about issues that may affect the rest of their lives. Effective discipline is achieved with strong parent-teacher communication. The philosophy of Gene Witt's behavior plan is based on the following two statements:

- 1. Under no circumstances should a student's behavior interfere with the teacher's ability to teach.**
- 2. The safety of all students is always a priority.**

Playground Rules

1. Keep hands to yourself.
2. Wall ball and contact sports, such as tackle football, are not permitted.
3. Soccer, basketball, and touch football are permitted ONLY when supervised.
4. Sport or athletic equipment from home is not permitted.
5. Keep all sporting equipment still while walking or standing in line.
6. Play in covered area only when you have permission from the P.E. coach.
7. Stay where you can be seen by a teacher at all times.
8. Play with the assigned equipment for your grade. Coach's equipment is for P.E. classes only.
9. Swings are for swinging forward and backwards. Hanging, standing or jumping off swings is not permitted.
10. The top of the monkey bars is for holding onto; sitting, standing, or hanging upside down is not permitted.