



Family Hand Book

McNeal Elementary School

2020-2021

A Message From Mrs. McGrew, Our Principal

Dear Gilbert W. McNeal Parents and Community,

As principal of McNeal, it is my pleasure to welcome everyone back to school for another amazing year. Our staff is thrilled to greet our returning and new students and families with excitement and a true zeal for learning. It is our mission and vision to provide 21st Century experiences as we prepare our students for the world they live and learn in. Our Vision is: FULL STEAM AHEAD! We will embrace our overarching theme of Respect as we continue our mantra: We will be respectful! We will be responsible! We will be WILD about learning! This is posted on our new parent information folder, agendas, and in every classroom. In addition, we are adding “McNeal Makes A Difference...McNeal Mentors...and Peace Ambassadors” this year. You will see more about these initiatives soon.

Our teachers utilize research-based resources and data to provide the best instruction for our students. Our staff is highly effective, high impact, and student centered. We will work with our students to create individual goals to inspire our students to be the best they can be. We meet periodically to analyze data to ensure the best instructional plan for each student in our school. Best practices are at the forefront of all we aspire to do at McNeal Elementary. We are very proud of our “A+” rating this year!

We hope you find our website helpful and informative. Our school strives to improve in our communication as we want to improve our communication with our partners in education...you our families and community. Many of our staff members use Class DOJO to improve communication. Please add the newest (MySDMC FOCUS) App on your smart phone and tablets. This app provides the latest updates from the district.

We are excited to begin this year and plans are in place to provide a year of engaging, authentic, and rigorous work in our classrooms. Our PTO and SAC members will continue to provide extracurricular activities and events to encourage family involvement and connections to our school. Our SAC (School Advisory Board) will be looking for a new Chair and Vice-Chair to lead our school this year. Our PTO has already provided many tools to continue the already established excellence. We are committed to build upon and refine the traditions both old and new to provide a positive and productive environment. We need...and want your involvement. Please look for the announcements of PTO/SAC meetings and committees in which you can join. Your active participation is vital to the success of your child’s learning experience. Please review all communication from your child’s teacher and our school.

Again, we are looking forward to working with each of you to create the BEST year at McNeal. Please join us in the exciting adventure of 21st Century learning! FULL STEAM AHEAD....Wildcats! We are respectful...We are responsible....and We are Wild About Learning!

Best regards,

Principal McGrew

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Mission Statement:

“Gilbert W. McNeal

Elementary is a school community attuned to inspire minds & celebrate learning.”

Motto:

“Full STEAM Ahead:
Respectful, Responsible, &
WILD About
Learning!”

School Hours



School Hours

Student Hours: 8:25 A.M.—3:15 P.M. Monday-Friday

School Office Hours: 7:45 A.M.—4:00 P.M. Monday-Friday

[District Calendar:](https://www.manateeschools.net) <https://www.manateeschools.net>

Click on Calendar on the home page.

Inspiring minds one at a time. What will your child learn today?

School Website

Please visit our school website where you will find:

- ◆ Our School Calendar
- ◆ Before/After School Care
- ◆ Activities
- ◆ Staff Directory
- ◆ PTO/SAC Information
- ◆ Breakfast and Lunch Menus
- ◆ The most up-to-date information.

Here is how you get there:

<https://www.manateeschools.net/mcneal>



Names and Phone Numbers

Main School Number

751-8165

Cheryl McGrew	Principal	X 2001
Ashley Terry	Assistant Principal	X 2002
David Grant	Student Support Specialist	X 2006
Alex Padgett	School Counselor	X 2011
Cathy Araujo	Senior School Secretary	X 2012
Patty Lee	Registrar	X 2013
Kelli Simpson	Front Desk Clerk	X 2000
Michelle Swenson	School Nurse	X 2004
Diane Bartoszek	Clinic Nurse	X 2016
Kelly Smart	Media Specialist	X 2027
Claudia Villalobos-Leon	Guidance Clerk	X 2008
School Fax		751-8155
School Board Building		708-8770
Bus Transportation		782-1BUS
Office of Student Assignment		708-4971



“At the end of the day, the most overwhelming key to a child's success is the positive involvement of parents.”
- Jane D. Hull

Parent/Teacher Organization

When a child is registered at McNeal Elementary School, his or her family automatically becomes a member of our Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO). There are so many ways for our families to become involved in our school community and our PTO is a great place to start! To find out more about this organization, please visit our PTO website at <http://www.mcnealpto.org/>. For updates and reminders, “LIKE” McNeal Elementary PTO on Facebook!

If you would like more information or would just like to talk with a PTO officer, please feel free to call the PTO office on our school campus at 751-8165, x 2020. You can also reach PTO via e-mail at mcnealpto@gmail.com Please leave a message and someone will contact you soon!

Lost and Found

Articles found at the school will be placed on a large cart in the main hallway near 4th and 5th grade. Owners may claim their property there. At the end of each semester, all unclaimed property will be donated to a charity.

Connect-Ed

Our Connect-Ed message system enables our staff to send out messages, via the telephone and e-mail, to all of our families within minutes. It is an excellent way to keep our community informed of current events. We will use this system to send out messages about school events, individual student absences, and emergency situations. It is extremely important that you keep your telephone numbers (home, work and cell) up to date so that you will receive these important messages. Please contact our front office if you need to make changes.



"MySDMC FOCUS" app

Available for FREE Download on iTunes & Google Play

The official School District of Manatee Co app gives you a personalized window into what is happening at the district and schools.
Get the news and information that you care about and get involved.

Anyone can:

- **View Breakfast and Lunch Menus**
- **View District and school news**
- **Use the district tip line**
- **Receive notifications from the district and schools**
- **Access the district directory**
- **Display information personalized to your interests**

Parents and students can:

- **View and add contact information**



Keep up to date and informed of McNeal events and news.

Follow us on Social Media!

Search for

@gilbertwmcnealelementaryschool on

Facebook, @mcnealwildcat on Twitter, and

@mcnealelementaryschool on Twitter.

MySDMC FOCUS App is the gateway to lots of wonderful educational tools and resources that are used in the classroom including *Wonders*, *I-Ready*, *FOCUS*, and even *Microsoft Office 365*.

Toys & Personal Items

Any toys/personal items brought to school are not the school's responsibility. Students are encouraged to leave all toys at home as they are often lost, damaged, or can cause disruptions to learning. Students are prohibited from selling personal items on school property.

BYOD/Technology

McNeal is a "Bring Your Own Device" (BYOD) school. Once the BYOD contract is signed, students may bring their device to school each day. This allows students the opportunity to read their downloaded books, use curriculum sites/apps, and research information. This is not required but is an available option for those that choose to do so.

Water Bottles

Water bottles are encouraged in classrooms. Please only send water to school. No use of drinking fountains at this time.

Checking Out Students

When a student leaves school before our regular dismissal time, his or her education is interrupted, and unfortunately, so are the other students in the classroom. We take our students' education at McNeal seriously. It is our goal to make all of the time our kids spend with us as meaningful as possible. We encourage you to always think twice before requesting to have your child leave his or her classroom early. We trust that you also see the importance of your child's attendance at school and know that you will limit requests for your child to leave early to extreme emergencies.

Under no circumstances will a teacher release a student to any adult without notification from the office. This is for the safety of our students. Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this policy!

Change of Contact Information

A Student Information Change Form **MUST** be completed by the enrolling parent to submit any change of address or telephone number(s) so that our files can contain accurate and current information in case someone needs to be reached quickly in an emergency. All parents should have some telephone number(s) where they can be reached during the school day as well as emergency contact persons and their contact information.

Campus Security **No Visitors in the Building at this time.**

The safety of our students, staff and campus visitors is a significant priority at McNeal Elementary School. Please join us in our vigilance... here is how you can do your part:

- * Any adult who joins us on campus, for any reason during the student day, **MUST** register and have their driver's license scanned at the front desk. No adult is allowed on campus without proper identification. Once your state photo identification has been scanned once, that will be sufficient for the remainder of the school year. The system reviews your status each time you sign in as a visitor or a volunteer.
- * Please use the parking lot on the west side of campus and it is against policy for visitors to be parked in the bus loop.
- * All of our gates and doors will be secured throughout the students day. When you arrive on campus, please go to the front office. At this time push the call button. Someone from our staff will be there to greet you with a welcoming smile!
- * We welcome our families to bring their younger children to school for events such as lunch with your child, PTO functions or programs in the cafeteria. Please know, that it is not appropriate to have younger siblings accompanying a parent while the parent is on campus to work in a classroom, help with P.E. activities, or volunteer with school-aged children.
- * Please be sure to leave all pets at home to during visits to our school. Although we love animals and believe they have a place in all of our children's lives, we do have some individuals on our campus who have allergies that are triggered by certain animals. For their safety, we do prohibit animals on our campus.



Emergency Contact List

Please be sure to list all possible adults that may need to pick up your child throughout this school year. There is no limit to the number of names that can be on the approved pickup list.

It is important for parents to understand that children are easily confused by frequent changes in their routines. By being consistent in the method of transportation provided for your child, you will ensure a safe arrival home, and more importantly, your child will be more secure without the worry of how he or she will get home that day.

Please know that we are vigilant about this policy...

If an adult is not on the approved list, the student will not be permitted to leave with that individual... **NO EXCEPTIONS!**

Appearance Guidelines

At McNeal Elementary School, we know that cleanliness, personal appearance, and proper dress are important in setting the pattern of proper school and social conduct. We believe that there is a correlation between student appearance and student performance. It is expected that students will practice proper hygiene by being clean and well groomed every day. We discourage our students from wearing make-up in elementary school. Please consider the following guidelines when choosing proper clothing for your child to wear to school:

Footwear

⇒ Sneakers or sandals with heel straps are required. No flip-flops or platform shoes will be permitted.

Shirts/Blouses/Tops

⇒ Print or logos on T-shirts should be appropriate for school

- No drug or alcohol references
- No pictures of people inappropriately clothed
- No pictures, designs or slogans depicting violence
- No pictures, designs or slogans that are sexually suggestive
- No text that is derogatory or inclusive or foul language

⇒ All shirts, blouses or tops must fit properly and not allow exposure of undergarments, chest or midriff.

⇒ Tank tops with wide straps may be worn. No spaghetti straps on bare skin. These may be worn under another garment.

⇒ No backless tops or tops that leave the shoulders bare.

Pants and Shorts

⇒ All shorts should be at least mid thigh in length and longer than the shirt being worn.

⇒ Pants cannot drag the ground and should not be so baggy as to cause a safety hazard, nor so tight as to be too suggestive.

⇒ Material for pants or shorts should not be too clingy or revealing of undergarments when sitting or standing.

⇒ All pants and shorts should fit well enough so that the tops of underwear do not show.

Dresses and Skirts

⇒ We suggest that shorts be worn under dresses and skirts for P.E. and recess.

⇒ Skirts and dresses should be appropriate in length (as defined as 2/3 of the length from waist to middle of the knee).

Additional information can be found in the Manatee County Code of Student Conduct.



Student Arrival

Students may arrive on campus between 7:55 and 8:25. At 8:25 the bell will ring indicating that it is time to enter classrooms. A student will be considered tardy if he or she is not in the classroom by 8:25.

Bikers and walkers will enter through the glass doors at the biker walker area. Bus riders will enter through the north doors near the bus loop. No parents walking or biking up to the building.

Once a student enters the building, they may choose to go to the cafeteria for breakfast. Breakfast is free for all of our students. Students who do not choose to get breakfast are expected to go to the assigned hallway where there is a designated location for them to sit with their classmates. While in the hallways, students will sit quietly and read while they wait for school to begin. Face coverings are worn while in building.

*If you change your child's transportation home, you **MUST** send a note to school.*

Change of Transportation Home

We understand that sometimes events arise that cause you to have to change your regular routine. As much as we care for and trust our children, we will NEVER take a child's word that they are changing their transportation home for a day. You **MUST** send a note to school that is dated and explains how your child's transportation will be changed. You may put this note in your child's planner if you choose.

- ◇ No changes will be made by phone!
- ◇ No teacher will allow any student to change their way home unless there is a note from a parent or guardian.

If you have a true emergency, please call the front office and we will do our best to work with your situation.

Rainy Day Dismissal

In the event of inclement weather, such as heavy rain or lightning, we will implement our "rainy day" dismissal procedures. Here are the procedures that we will follow:

- ⇒ Car Riders-These procedures will remain the same for picking up your child.
- ⇒ Bike Riders-All bikers will be dismissed to the car rider area and will follow the car rider procedures.
- ⇒ Walkers-All walkers will be dismissed to the car rider area and will follow the car rider procedures.

Please know that on occasion we have extremely severe weather that would force us to keep everyone inside. If this should happen during dismissal, we will do our best to keep you updated on the dismissal situation. Remember... keeping everyone safe is our very first priority.

Imagine
With all
your mind.
Believe
With all
your heart.
Achieve
With all
your might.

Student Dismissal

On the first day of school, all McNeal students will be given a colored plastic bracelet that will be attached to the top of their backpack. The bracelet is color-coded to coincide with each student's method of dismissal. When the bell rings at 3:15, all students will be escorted in groups by a staff member to their dismissal area.

Walkers - Our students who walk home will be dismissed through the gate between both playgrounds. If a parent chooses to have their child meet them off campus, it is the parent's responsibility to be in that area everyday. If you choose this procedure, please practice with your child what to do if for some unforeseen reason you are not there one day. Because we only supervise students to the gate or across the crosswalk, we have no way of knowing that a supervising adult is missing. We never want a student to be in a position where he or she is afraid and unsure of how to get home safely. Kindergarten students must have a parent or sibling pick them up from the crosswalk near Nolan or at the gate near Greenbrook Park.

Bike and Scooter Riders - Bike and scooter riders will be dismissed through the doors leading to the PE area. Only students with bike helmets will be allowed to enter the bike rack area. Students are expected to walk their bike or scooter while on school property and through each crosswalk. If a parent chooses to have their child meet them off campus, it is the parent's responsibility to be in that area everyday. If you choose this procedure, please practice with your child what to do if for some unforeseen reason you are not there one day. Because we only supervise students to the gate or across the crosswalk, we have no way of knowing that a supervising adult is missing. We never want a student to be in a position where he or she is afraid and unsure of how to get home safely. Remember, Florida Law requires bike riders to wear a helmet at all times. Bike riding is a privilege which may be revoked by the principal if necessary.

Car Riders - All car riders will be picked up in the car rider loop each day. Our school will provide each family with multiple placards with your child's name to be displayed in the front window of the passenger side. This assures us that an authorized individual is picking up your child... and it helps make the line move faster! If you do not have a placard, we will politely ask you to pull up and park, and then we will check your ID with records. We request that you remain in your car and as you pull up to our secured curbside, an adult will place your child in your car. In order to help traffic move as quickly as possible, please pull all the way up to the car in front of you to allow us more loading space. Please understand that we are dismissing 700 students all at the same time. We will make every attempt to move the line as quickly as possible, however, safety is our priority. We are vigilant about ensuring every student is placed in the correct vehicle! During this time our dismissal will be staggered by way home and grade level to ensure safety.

Wildcat Care

At McNeal Elementary School we provide before and after school care for our students. Information and the registration paperwork may be found on our school website.

The hours are from 7:00-8:00 each morning and from 3:15-6:00 each evening.

If your family only needs child-care on our early dismissal days, we do have a plan to pay for a single day. However, that plan is only available on early dismissal days.

This program has a limit and fills up extremely quickly. For more information you may call school and leave a message for Larue Ashman, our program director.

Student Information and Photo Release

As per district policy, if a parent chooses to have his or her child's name or picture withheld from a school-related publication, the parent MUST provide this request to the school principal in writing.

Attendance and Tardiness

State Law 232.01 states that children attending school must be in attendance daily unless the individual is sick or there is an emergency in the family. This law implies that pupils are expected to be in school from 8:25 until 3:15 each day.

- * Student Absences - Please call the school by 9:15 A.M., if your child is going to be absent. This phone call tells us that you know that your child is safe at home. By 12:00 noon each day, our Connect-Ed system will call you with an automated message stating that your child is absent. If you have called school to report the absence, you will not receive this automated message. If your child is absent and we do not receive a phone call, then the absence is considered unexcused and you will receive the automated call. If you call and do not let us know the reason for the absence it will be unexcused and you will receive the automated message.
- * Convenience Absences - Sometimes parents request that a child be allowed to miss school for trips or other family events. We understand that many times there is great value in these trips or events, however, please understand that the absences will still be marked as unexcused. Please know that if such an absence does occur, our children will be missing valuable instruction. They will be expected to make up the work... however, it can never equal the classroom instruction that was missed.
- * Tardies and Early Dismissals - Being in school from 8:25-3:15 is contributing factor to our students' success. Arriving in a classroom late or leaving early not only disrupts your student's learning, but the learning of all of the other students in the classroom. A record of tardies, as well as absences, is reported to parents at the close of each quarter and is recorded on the student's permanent record. Please keep in mind that three tardies and/or three early dismissals are equal to one unexcused absence.
- * Please reference the Manatee School Student Code of Conduct for more detailed attendance information. The Code of Conduct for the 2020-2021 School Year will be posted on the school website when it is available.



School success starts
with attendance

Withdrawal Procedures

If it becomes necessary for you to withdraw your student from McNeal Elementary School, we would appreciate you providing us notification at least one day in advance. This way, the classroom teacher can gather all of the things that the student will need upon leaving our school. Please remember, before you leave, to turn in all library books, textbooks, school materials and check cafeteria balance. You may contact our school registrar, Patty Lee at 751-8165, x2013, for more information on withdrawal procedures.

Breakfast and Lunch Procedures

Our school provides breakfast and lunch for any student who chooses to participate. We are excited to announce that breakfast is free again this year for ALL students. Lunch is \$2.25 per day. Breakfast and lunch menus for elementary students are available on our district website. Here is the link: <https://manatee.nutrislice.com/menu/mcneal>

Students may choose to bring their lunch from home. If that is your family's choice, please follow these guidelines:

- Please send the needed utensils.
- Please pack only cardboard or plastic containers (no glass).
- Please do not pack carbonated beverages, candy, or gum.

No Visitors at this time.

Free & Reduced Lunch

Applications for free and reduced lunches will be sent through the U.S. Mail to your home in August, before school begins. Empty forms are also available in the school office. Eligibility for free and reduced lunch is determined by state and federal guidelines. You may submit a request for free or reduced lunch anytime during the school year.

Birthday Celebrations

No Outside food to share at this time.

Lunchroom Expectations

We have provided dividers to support safety in the cafeteria. We also decreased the number of students at one time. We know that lunchtime is an opportunity for our children to interact with each other and develop appropriate social skills. At the same time, it is important that our lunchroom re-main a safe place for everyone. In order to accomplish both of these goals, we have established the following guidelines:

Respect

- ◆ Appropriate behavior & conversation
- ◆ Kind words & actions
- ◆ Listen and respond

Safe Choices

- ◆ Hands & feet to yourself
- ◆ Eat only your own food
- ◆ Whisper voices

Procedure

- ◆ Stay seated
- ◆ Raise your hand for help
- ◆ Always walk
- ◆ Playing with food is unacceptable





Standardized

Testing

The current state testing in elementary school includes the following:

- ⇒ 3rd Grade FSA ELA Reading

- ⇒ 3rd Grade FSA Math Test

- ⇒ 4th & 5th Grade FSA Writing Test

 - ⇒ 4th Grade ELA FSA Reading Test

- ⇒ 5th Grade FSA Reading Test

- ⇒ 5th Grade FSA Math Test

- ⇒ 5th Grade SSA Science Test

FSA = Florida State Assessment

SSA=Statewide Science Assessment

Because of test security, during the testing windows, visitors on our campus will be extremely limited.

As test dates are confirmed by the state they will be posted on our website.

Manatee County Student Progression Plan

The Manatee County Student Progression Plan is an explicit document that describes the requirements for students to be promoted from one grade to the next at the end of each school year. It also delineates “Good Cause” exemptions for students who do not meet promotion criteria.

It is the philosophy of our school district, which is based on solid research, that retaining students more often leads to drop out than to a student catching up. Therefore, other than students not meeting state promotion requirements, students who do not meet promotion criteria are often placed in the next grade. Please remember that in elementary school, third grade is the only grade level that has state promotion criteria.

The current Manatee County Student Progression plan will be posted to our school website once it is available.

At McNeal Elementary School, kids are our business!

Homework Policy

The School Board of Manatee County has adopted a plan for the amount of homework that should be assigned at each age level.

Homework is defined as activities assigned to students by teachers that is meant to be carried out during non-school hours. The rule of thumb for the amount of homework given is the grade x 10 minutes. Example: GR2= 2x10 = 20 minutes of homework.

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. It strengthens home/school communication and parent/child communication.

Types of activities that might be assigned include: Preparation-reading in advance, observation of events, information gathering, and simple thought questions; Practice-vocabulary skills basic math facts, test review, memorization; and Extension/Creative-book reports, research, family projects, science projects, preparation for oral presentations.

Complexity of assignments will generally increase as students progress from grade to grade.

School-wide programs are provided for those students who choose to accept the challenge of working beyond the core curriculum. An example of this is the Sunshine Math Problem-Solving Program.

A parent may request homework from the teacher if a child has been absent more than three days. For absences of only 1, 2, or 3 days the child may make up the work missed when they return to school. Students have the same number of days to make up work as was absent.

School Clinic We will follow the Manatee County Health and School Dept. flow chart for COVID.



Our school clinic is available for students who become ill or who get injured during the school day. When a student visits the clinic one of our school nurses will assess the situation and then determine whether the student needs to go home. If that is the case, a family member will be contacted and be expected to make arrangements to pick up the student from school. Under some circumstances, a student may be treated by one of our nurses and then returned to class.

Every time a student visits the clinic a “clinic pass” is filled out by the sending adult and then completed by the staff member working in the clinic. A copy of this “clinic pass” is sent home that day with the student. In many cases, our clinic nurse will call the parent to report an incident.

The telephone number for the McNeal Elementary School clinic is 751-8165, extension 2016.

Please remember that our clinic is for our kids who become sick “at school.” If your child is sick before school begins, please do not send him or her to school. We do not have the space or the staff to take care of sick children for an extended period of time...and, we certainly don't want to spread any germs!

Administration of Medication We recognize that in some cases, students will need to take prescribed medications at school. It is essential for a student to take a prescribed medication at school, the following guidelines must be followed:

- * All medications administered at school must have a prescription.
- * The medication will be supplied by the parent or guardian in a child-proof container, bearing the prescription, child's name, attending physician's name, the name of the medication, the dosage and frequency of administration.
- * Parents or guardians will fill out the authorization for medication form before any medication is administered.
- * The parent and/or physician should make school personnel aware, in writing, of symptoms or possible reactions relating to the medication.
- * No medicine for acute or contagious illness should be administered at school. Under these circumstances, a student should not be at school

School Volunteers

No Volunteers at this time.



School Safety Patrols

On hold for now.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

All Virtual

As you know, the importance of communication between home and school cannot be overemphasized. There are many ways that our teachers communicate with families. In order to keep parents informed about their child's progress at school, a parent/teacher conference is held as needed.

These meet-ings may be initiated by either a par-ent, a teacher, or possibly another staff member. Any parent who would like to meet with a teacher should contact the teacher by telephone or by email to request a conference.

Please remember that school personnel may ONLY communicate with the enrolling parent. We certainly welcome other family members to attend a conference. . . However, that parent must be present.

Field Trips

On hold for now.

Chaperone Guidelines

Chaperones will:

- ◇ Recognize that the classroom teacher is ultimately responsible for all students. Both the students and chaperones must follow teacher's directions.
- ◇ Understand that students must be kept under close adult supervision at all times.
- ◇ Report issues or concerns immediately to the supervising teacher.
- ◇ Assist the teacher in ensuring that all students are accounted for during the entire trip.
- ◇ Agree that smoking or the use of alcoholic beverages are not permitted for any reason.
- ◇ Understand that younger siblings are not permitted to accompany chaperones.



encourages students to go

**"FULL STEAM
AHEAD!"**

EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL WILDCATS:

- 1. BE RESPECTFUL.**
- 2. BE RESPONSIBLE.**
- 3. BE **WILD** ABOUT LEARNING!**

**POWER OF
STEAM**

