

# Gene Witt Elementary



## Parent/Student Handbook 2023-2024

200 Rye Road Bradenton, FL 34212

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

Phone: 941.741.3628

Fax: 941.741.3630

All information is meant to be reviewed by parents/guardians in addition to the District's 2023-2024 Code of Student Conduct to fully understand the rules and procedures of Gene Witt Elementary School. Link to Code of Student Conduct:

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



## Gene Witt Elementary School

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200 Rye Road Bradenton, Florida 34212

Phone: 941.741.3628

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to a new and exciting school year! We hope that you find our new Parent/Student Handbook to be filled with valuable and important information as you and your student embark on another successful school year.

This handbook reflects information regarding our specific school site. It should be used in cooperation with our District's Student Code of Conduct Handbook, which can be found on our District's website.

This Parent/Student Handbook was developed as a result of frequently requested information, and with input from school faculty and staff members, as well as our School Advisory Committee. This handbook will be reviewed annually for any additions or deletions that may be necessary for clarification, and/or to continue to increase communication and awareness of the many nuances in the Eagle's Nest. If you have any questions regarding the contents of our Parent/Student Handbook, please feel free to contact your student's teacher, our Assistant Principal, or me.

This Parent/Student Handbook is being provided to all parents, guardians, and students through multiple venues. It will be linked to our school website, and, should a family desire a hard copy, will be provided upon request.

Thank you for taking the time to read and discuss this information. This information in the handbook supports the work we do in order to maintain a safe, orderly environment and helps ensure that we are able to focus on providing the best instruction possible. Thank you, in advance, for being an important part of our larger school family and for respecting the incredible work our staff does for children.

We are looking forward to another incredible year with our Eagles!

Sincerely,

Connie Dixon, M.Ed.

Principal

*"Where the answer to our "why" will always be the students!"*



# Gene Witt Elementary School

## Parent/Student Handbook

### 2023-2024

Dear Gene Witt Families,

In order to conserve resources, our school will not be distributing paper copies of our Witt Parent/Student Handbook. You can locate an electronic copy of our Witt Parent/Student Handbook on our school website at <https://www.manateeschools.net/witt>. If you require a paper copy of the Witt Parent/Student Handbook, please check the appropriate box below; sign and return this sheet, and one will be provided to your child to bring home. This page will also exist as a form, which will be sent home with each student at the beginning of the school year, or as students are enrolled at our school.

This Witt Parent/Student Handbook has been developed so our families and students have a clear understanding of behavioral expectations and to communicate our school's important procedures, policies, and practices that support our educational mission and vision. It is expected that parents/guardians are aware of the contents of this handbook so they can help support their student, our staff, and our school from home.

Failure to review the Witt Parent/Student Handbook will not relieve a parent/guardian or student from the responsibility of compliance with the procedures, policies, and practices shared within it.

***Please complete and return this page to your child's teacher by Friday, August 25, 2023.***

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Student Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Parent/Guardian Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

- I have read and reviewed the Witt Parent/Student Handbook with my child.
- I DO NOT need a printed version of the Witt Parent/Student Handbook and understand it can be accessed electronically at the school's website.
- I am requesting a printed copy of the Witt Parent/Student Handbook to be sent home.

## 2023—2024 IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Main Phone— (941) 741-3628

Fax— (941) 741-3630

Connie Dixon - Principal .....81001  
Karen Barrett - Assistant Principal.....81002  
Amy Lindsey - Student Support Specialist.....81015  
Cynthia Deras - School Counselor .....81007  
Amie Golden - Registrar.....81006  
Lisa Blakemore - School Secretary.....81003  
Kayla Kissinger - Attendance Clerk.....81000  
Beverly Jackson - Guidance Clerk .....81008  
Susan Wheeler - School Nurse .....81010  
Angie Meyer - Clinic Nurse, LPN .....81011  
Carmen Palacios – Cafeteria Manager.....81013  
Lenny Draper - Head Custodian.....81069  
Witty Kids – Before/Aftercare.....81014  
Manatee County School Board (941) 708-8770  
Bus Transportation (941) 782-1287  
Office of Student Assignment (941) 708-4971  
Professional Support Center (941) 751-6550



### Reporting Student Absences

Please make every effort to contact the school office by 8:20 a.m. if your child will be absent. This request is made for the protection of your child. The phone number to contact the absence reporting line is (941) 741-3628, press 8.

## **Message from Administration**

Please let us extend a warm welcome to you and your child. We look forward to making your child's experience at Witt Elementary enriching and enjoyable. You are an important part of your child's education. Participating in parent/teacher communication, volunteering, joining PTO, or becoming a member of the School Advisory Council are excellent ways to become involved. We encourage you to read this handbook and keep it as a reference throughout the school year. Please feel free to contact either your child's teacher or the office should you need any additional information.



Connie Dixon, Principal



Karen Barrett, Assistant Principal

## **Gene Witt's Vision Statement**

The vision of Witt Elementary School is to become one of the top 50 Elementary Schools in the state of Florida (currently 109<sup>th</sup>), meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of all students to best prepare them for their future to become a positive, productive, global citizen.

### **Who is Gene Witt?**

Gene Witt was born in Bradenton, Florida in 1929. He attended college at Georgia Military College, as well as the University of South Carolina. Mr. Witt was employed by the Manatee County School Board for 38 years and was involved in education his whole life. He performed as a teacher, a coach, a principal, and later went on to become the Director of Secondary Education for the district. From 1973-1983, he served as Assistant Superintendent for Instruction. In 1983, he became Superintendent of Manatee County Schools, a position that he held until his retirement in 1994. We are proud that our school honors the memory of Mr. Gene Witt. In dedication of him, an eagle statue stands on our school campus.



# A

## **AGENDAS/PLANNERS**

As a tool to support home and school communication, **\*ALL** students in Grades K-5th will be provided a student agenda/planner. Teachers may write notes home to parents/guardians in the planner. There is also a space for parents/guardians to write notes to the teacher. If your note is of a “sensitive” nature, we’d encourage both parents and teachers to send an email rather than use the agenda, as our students are “readers”. Pre-K students will be provided a communication folder that is sent home daily. Parents/guardians are asked to please read and sign the agenda daily and be sure your child has it at school every day. Replacement cost is \$5.00. Agendas are expected to be signed by the parent/guardian daily.

## **ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL**

**Arrival to School: OUR SCHOOL is a NO CELL PHONE PICK UP/DROP OFF ZONE!**

**Car Rider Drop Off**—Car riders **MUST** be dropped off between 7:55 a.m. and 8:20 a.m. and picked up at the car rider area by 3:35 p.m. No child should be dropped off before 7:55 a.m. unless prior arrangements have been made with school administration.

All students, PreK-5th grade must be dropped off in the designated and supervised car rider area on the east side of our school. The front parking lot is for buses only and acts as our bus loop each morning and afternoon.

Under no circumstances, should children be dropped off on the roadside at the front of the school, or in the bus loop. Additionally, parents are not to pull into a parking lot and let their child walk from car to building. There is no parent/student walk up in the mornings. All students should either arrive in the car rider line(s), by bus, by bike/scooter (with helmet), or as a walker.

**Bus Riders**—Registered bus students **MUST** begin their ride to school at their approved bus stop. You may not drop a student off at a bus stop that isn’t theirs for transportation to/from school. (See Bus Rider section)

**Dismissal from School: OUR SCHOOL is a NO CELL PHONE PICK UP/DROP OFF ZONE!**

**Car Rider Pick-Up**—Please be on time. Our car rider line may seem daunting, but moves efficiently and quickly when everyone follows the rules and procedures. Parents/guardians must come through the car rider loop to pick up their children. Please wait for your child to proceed to the safe area to enter your vehicle. Please remember to place your car tag identification sign (provided by the school) on the mirror of your car every day, so that we may identify you. Pay attention to and follow directions from school personnel at the car rider area. Also, remember to stay in your vehicle at all times. If late pick up becomes an issue, for the safety of your child, he/she will be supervised in the aftercare program resulting in all appropriate fees to be paid by the parent/guardian.

**Early Pick-Up**—If a parent/guardian needs to pick up a student early, he/she must go to the office to sign the student out. The person picking the student up **MUST** be on the student’s official pick-up list, which is on the child’s enrollment form. Children will not be released after 2:45pm.

Office staff will then call for the student to come to the office. Again, the parent/guardian will need to provide their driver’s license to be scanned into RAPTOR if not previously scanned. **Students will NOT be released to parents/guardians between 2:45 p.m. and 3:15 p.m. from the office.** Students should only be signed out early for important reasons. If your child has an appointment or there is another valid reason for early dismissal, please make sure they are signed out from the office prior to 2:45 p.m. Please provide the office with a written note from the doctor. Students must have written permission if the student is going home a different way than usual.

## **Changes in Transportation:**

If you are changing your child's transportation, **it is important that you send a note to the teacher.** It is very important that, if your child will be riding with someone else outside of their usual transport at Car Riders, that you provide a note in their agenda detailing who will be picking them up.

## **Guidelines for Parent/Guardian meeting walkers after school:**

Assigned staff will walk students to the North/South sidewalk on Rye Road and supervise students as they are released to a waiting adult (PreK and K) or continue North/South to walk home. Parents/guardians wishing to walk home with their child must meet students on the sidewalk on Rye Road in front of the school.

**PARENTS/GUARDIANS MAY NOT PARK IN FRONT OF THE SCHOOL ALONG RYE ROAD OR IN NON-DESIGNATED PARKING AREAS.** Parking in or in front of neighborhoods is discouraged.

## **ATTENDANCE**

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 same law implies that students are expected to be in school by 8:25 a.m. each school day. Student attendance is monitored daily by the District Student Accounting Department and our School's Attendance Liaison, as well as our Attendance Clerk.

If your child is absent or will be absent, you must notify the school with a written note or phone call stating the date and reason why they were absent or will be absent. Please call the office or the absentee line at 941.741.3628 and then press 8 to report an absence. An excused absence is given for illness or death in the family. Do not call the teacher and leave the message on their voice mail. If you do not notify the office as to why your child is absent, they will be marked unexcused. You will receive an automated call advising you that your child is absent.

Vacations and out-of-town trips are examples of unexcused absences. The administration closely monitors absences.

The School District of Manatee County has a strict attendance policy:

Parent/guardian/student responsibilities are:

Students are expected to be on time and in school for the entire student day each school day.

Attendance officers will check on the status of students who exhibit non-compliance with the compulsory attendance laws, exhibit patterns of tardiness or who are in need of financial help.

Each parent/guardian of a child shall be responsible for such child's school attendance.

Parents/guardians who fail or refuse to cooperate with the school in the matter of regular school attendance by a child may face litigation initiated by the Superintendent.

If there is a concern for your child's attendance you will be notified quarterly via school letter from our Student Support Specialist/Attendance Liaison and our Attendance Clerk.

### **Excused Absences:**

A student's absence for religious instruction or holidays shall be excused.

A student who is absent because of an illness or injury attested to by a written statement of a licensed practicing physician, or whose attendance was impracticable because of some other insurmountable condition as defined by rules of the state board may be excused. If a student is continually sick and repeatedly absent from school, he/she must be under the supervision of a physician in order to receive an excuse from attendance at school.

A student who has been absent shall be permitted to make up the work missed, provided that the student makes arrangements to submit the make-up work within the deadline(s) set by the teacher(s). Typically, one day of "make-up" is allotted for each day of missed school.

### **Unexcused Absences:**

If a student has at least five unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month or 10 unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a 90 calendar day period, the student's primary teacher shall report to the school principal or his or her designee that the student may be exhibiting a pattern of nonattendance. The principal and other designated responsible personnel shall follow the procedures as outlined in the applicable statute. If this occurs for a child who is "choice" to our school, it may put their "choice approval" in jeopardy.

Sometimes parents/guardians request that a child be allowed to miss school for trips of various sorts. While in many cases there may be some value derived from the trip, such absences are recorded as unexcused. If such an absence does occur, the student is required to make up the work missed. It should also be realized that the student's attempt to make up the work missed does not take the place of being present for classroom instruction.

(Also see Tardy/Early Departure Policy).

## **B**

### **BACKPACKS:**

In order to provide for the safety of students and staff, backpacks with wheels will not be allowed on campus unless a medical note is provided.

### **BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM:**

The school nor the District is responsible for the supervision of students 30 minutes prior to the bell at 8:25am. The Before/After School Care Program at Witt is called "Witty Kids" and is available for Pre-Kindergarten (ages 4 and up) through 5th Grade as space allows. The hours for Before Care are 6:30 a.m. to 7:55 a.m. and the hours for After Care are 3:15 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. for a fee. Students are accepted on a first come, first-serve basis. Applications are available in the office or on the school website. Phone number: 941.741.3628 x 81014



## **BIKE RIDERS:**

**HELMETS MUST BE WORN.** It is the law! If a family is having difficulty affording a helmet for their child, please let us know as we may be able to help.

There should be only one rider per bicycle. Obey all traffic signs and signals. You are encouraged to register your student's bike with the Manatee County Sheriff's Department. We cannot be responsible for stolen or damaged bikes while on or off campus and do not keep our bike areas locked. We have a North and South bike rack. Students who come from those directions will use their respective bike rack.

Once on school property, students must walk their bikes at all times on the designated route and follow the designated route to the bike rack.

Any student observed riding to or from school in a dangerous manner will be warned. If the student continues to disregard the safety rules, parents/guardians will be notified and the child may lose the privilege of riding a bike to school.

## **BREAKFAST PROCEDURES:**

Free breakfast is served every morning from 7:55 to 8:20 a.m. in the cafeteria. Breakfast is free for all students. Students wanting to have breakfast should report directly to the cafeteria upon arrival at school.

**Breakfast will not be served after 8:20 a.m. except to late bus arrival students.**

## **BULLYING:**

Bullying is the mistreatment of an individual or group due to a perceived advantage in power and a willful intent to cause harm and usually occurs over time. These acts can be socially, emotionally, or physically damaging in nature. We have a zero tolerance for bullying. For more information:

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

<http://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/k-12-scholarship-programs/hope/>

## **BUSINESS PARTNERS:**

If you or someone you know owns or works for a business, we encourage you to help support our school by becoming a business partner. ePie is our Partners in Education online program. Please visit <https://www.manateeschools.net/epie>, click on ePie "How Do I Partner?" and become a partner with Gene Witt Elementary. For additional information, you may contact the office at 941.741.3628.

## **BUS RIDERS :**

A school bus driver has the responsibility of transporting 50 to 70+ students to and from school each day. In order to assure each child's safety, parents/guardians are asked to instruct and have children learn the following School Bus Regulations:

A student may only ride the bus to which he/she has been REGISTERED. He/she may not ride another bus for any reason. If it is necessary for a student to change a bus stop or bus, the parent/guardian MUST process the request through the bus transportation office at (941) 782-1287 and then the parent/guardian must notify the school office in writing of the change through the student's agenda or folder.

Students are expected to be waiting at the bus stop ten minutes prior to bus arrival time. The bus cannot wait for those who are tardy.

Students are to stand off the roadway in the area designated by the bus driver while awaiting the bus.

Students must conduct themselves in an orderly manner at bus stops.

Running, pushing, or throwing any object is not allowed because of possible injury.

# C

## CALENDAR:

We will be using our website to post events for the school community. Also, follow us on Facebook for updated events noted in our Gene Witt Weekly, which is shared on Facebook, email and via phone each week.

## CELL PHONES:

If you need to reach your child in an emergency during the school day, contact the front office. Because cell phones and all other forms of electronic communication are to be turned off and put away out of sight once students are at school, parents should not text message or phone their children during the school day. Grades 4 and 5 will have a dedicated "Cell Phone Parking Lot" wall pocket in their classroom where cell phones will be stored for the day. The phones will still be accessible for emergencies; however, it will also reduce the opportunity for incidental use during the instructional school day.

## CHOICE:

Manatee County has a School Choice Plan. Should you qualify, your child may be able to choose to another school. If you would like information about this program, please call the Office of Student Assignment at 941.708.4971.

## CLASSROOM PARENT COORDINATOR—AKA ROOM PARENT:

A parent coordinator will be identified in each class. Their job is to act as a liaison between the teacher and other parents/guardians in the class and PTO, as needed. They will contact other parents/guardians in the class to seek volunteers for PTO events and to solicit donations for class projects. The parent coordinator will also be responsible for coordinating birthday parties so they are only held one day per month (the last Friday). Coordinators must have taken the volunteer training/packet prior to being on campus in the classroom.

## CLINIC:

The clinic is available for students who become ill or injured during the school day only as a temporary placement while the nurse contacts the parent/guardian. As the facilities are limited, students who are vomiting, running a temperature and/or too sick to remain in school must be picked up immediately within our 30 minute policy. The telephone number for the clinic is 941.741.3628, press 2. It is essential that we have current telephone numbers so we may contact you.

Please do not send a sick child to school as we do not have the facilities to care for him/her. **Students who are running a fever, vomiting, have diarrhea, a severe loose cough, or a nose running with thick or green mucous should NOT be at school.** STUDENTS SHOULD BE FEVER FREE WITHOUT MEDICINE FOR 24 HOURS BEFORE THEY CAN RETURN TO SCHOOL. If any child exhibits any of these symptoms, the parent/guardian will be called to pick up the child immediately. **\*A child with a fever of 100.0 will need to be picked up immediately.** A child with a fever of 103 degrees or greater is considered to have a medical emergency. If parents are not immediately available by phone, 911 will be called.

Any child with a contagious disease such as chicken pox, pink eye, impetigo, roseola, covid, flu, etc. should not attend school until symptoms are no longer present or has a physician's note to return to school. This policy is for the safety and health of all our students and their families.

Our clinic can always use donations of gently used, clean clothing (dress code approved). We need all sizes and prefer elastic waist clothing.

## **COMMUNICATION:**

Communication and cooperation between home and school is vital to a learning environment. At Gene Witt Elementary, a variety of methods are used both school wide and by individual teachers to encourage strong communication between the home and the school. Some of these modes of communication utilized are the student planner, class newsletter, email, weekly ConnectEd, weekly email, weekly Facebook postings, SAC/PTO meetings, midterm progress reports, conferences and our school website. Please know the responsibility of communication is a shared one. If you have any questions or concerns about your child's schooling, please reach out to the teacher and arrange a conference.

(If you would like to receive communications via email, please provide your email address on your child's enrollment form.)

## **CONFERENCES:**

You may request a conference with your child's teacher at any time and we encourage parents to do so. Do not wait. Teachers may also request a conference with parents.

Other Conferences:

You may be scheduled for other types of conferences such as MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support)/RtI (Response to Interventions/Instruction) or other meetings to plan your child's education. These meetings are held to inform you about special services for which your child may qualify. We hold these conferences with your child's best interest in mind and we appreciate your attendance.

## **CONNECT-ED AKA BLACKBOARD CONNECT:**

ConnectEd are automated voice messages that go out regularly/weekly from the Principal/Assistant Principal to parents/guardians regarding important information or events at Gene Witt. It is critical for parents/guardians to give us updated phone numbers as necessary so that this important information can be received.

## **CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE PLAN:**

The School District of Manatee County and Gene Witt Elementary have a Critical Incident Response Plan. This Critical Incident Response Plan is designed to establish procedures and actions to take when there is a serious threat or imminent danger to the safety of students, staff or the general public. In the event of a serious situation, please follow normal procedures and guidelines for picking up students. You will be informed at that time if there are any changes. If you have questions regarding the plan, please contact the school. \*Please note, we may not be able to discuss the specifics of our plan as this must remain confidential.

# D

## DISMISSAL:

If it is necessary to change your child's mode of transportation please send a note with your child in the morning. In the case of emergency, please call the office. The office will work with you on a case-by-case basis.

## DRESS CODE:

Witt staff will monitor the Student Code of Conduct as well as additional Witt SAC approved dress code requirements very closely. If a child is in violation of the dress code policy, the parent/guardian will be contacted to come to the school with the appropriate clothing etc.

The Principal and/or Assistant Principal will be the final judge about whether a student's clothing is appropriate for school, creates a climate that is distracting to learning or is a potential safety hazard.

Please remember these important points:

Shorts/dresses must be at an appropriate length. Rule of thumb is that shorts and dresses are longer than an extended arm.

No spaghetti straps.

Footwear must be safe and appropriate (must be secured at heel, soles no higher than 2" thick). No flip-flops. Sneakers are recommended. Athletic shoes/sneakers are the footwear of choice; all shoes must have a strap across the heel. Heel no larger than 1 inch tall. Tennis shoes/sneakers are required for all PE classes.

No hats or sunglasses inside the building.

No jewelry that is distracting or unsafe (earring loops must be very small and tight to the ear).

No hairstyles or hair color that is distracting. Hair color **should not be distracting to the educational process of the class**. Students wearing pastel shades of colors, which are popular today, will be expected to have their hair up in a pony tail. Neat, **short** mohawks are okay as long as they do not distract from the educational process. The Principal or Assistant Principal will be the final judge as to the appropriateness and classroom impact of a student's hairstyle.

No messages or symbols on shirts that suggest drugs, alcohol, weapons, aggression, sarcasm, etc. Parents/guardians please help us monitor this as we promote kindness with our students. T-shirts with messages that may be deemed cute outside of school may not send an appropriate message in school. \*Following are some examples that aren't appropriate for a positive atmosphere:

It's My Sister's Fault!

I've Stopped Listening Why Haven't You Stopped Talking?

Didn't Care Yesterday, Don't Care Today and Probably Won't Care Tomorrow.

For fun, we will be having monthly special spirit days that allow students to participate that may not be our daily dress code, such as crazy hair day, mismatched day, etc. Families will be notified in advance of such dates.

## D

### **DRILLS:**

We will continue to follow a drill schedule; fire, tornado, lock down, shelter in place, active intruder. Additionally, we host an all-school safety unit the first two weeks of the new school year with our students to re-view/teach what the drills are and what to do during a drill. Our goal is to prepare our students, not scare our students.

## E

**EARLY RELEASE:** Please check the Manatee Instructional Calendar for these dates. Time to be announced. To view the School District of Manatee Calendar for the 23-24 school year, please visit this link: <https://www.manateeschools.net/page/2#calendar1/20230123/month>

### **ENROLLING PARENT:**

Understanding the role of the Enrolling parent by both parents of a student is vital. Please go to:

<https://www.manateeschools.net/policy> . Once there, please go to: <https://go.boarddocs.com/fl/mancofl/Board.nsf/Public> . Once there, please use the magnifying glass to search “Enrolling Parent”. Next, click on the box titled, “Policy Item po 5111.04 STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS”.

## F

### **FACEBOOK AND SOCIAL MEDIA:**

Our school’s Facebook page is located at: <https://www.facebook.com/witteagles/>

Any reported derogatory comments or posting about another student, adult or our school will result in an administrator notifying parents/guardians. If you have questions or concerns it is better to communicate with the school about your concern rather than promote a problem or cause a distraction. We welcome solution-oriented, kind comments.

**FIELD TRIPS:** Every grade, K—5, has at least one field trip a year. If volunteers or parent chaperones are required, the teacher will let parents know and then, if there are more interested than needed, the teacher will put names in a hat to have students draw who the chaperones will be. Grade levels do often go on trips where no chaperones are required. Students who have difficulty managing their behavior may require a parent to attend with them to supervise them. We do have one administrator attend field trips that are out of District for safety reasons.

## **FOCUS:**

FOCUS is a comprehensive, web-based student information system that allows the Manatee County School District to merge all student record keeping, grades, scheduling, attendance and other student-data functions into one system.

FOCUS includes an easy-to-use Parent Portal so that parents can view their children's grades, attendance, and any discipline referrals electronically.

FOCUS is available at all schooling levels, including elementary. The FOCUS Parent Portal will allow parents/guardians to monitor school grades, attendance, and receive their child's progress report and report card on line. No paper copies will be sent home.

Please complete a "Parent Portal Access Authorization" form, which must be completed prior to being able to access this tool online. This form is also located on the district website and in the school's office. Once you have set up your account, you must complete and submit the Authorization Form to the school.

<https://www.manateeschools.net/domain/2822>

Please contact Mrs. Jackson in the front office at 941.741.3628 x 81008, so we can verify the account and you can access the Portal.

## **FUNDRAISING EVENTS:**

Our school participates in two major scheduled fundraisers which provide funds for many of our special projects. Our Fall fundraiser is product-based, where you are welcome to purchase items from a company we partner with, and the other is an experience based fundraiser, which involves a fun day for kids. This day is in the Spring. Only allow your child to solicit from people they know and under direct parent/guardian supervision. We appreciate all of the support you give us and we know that it may not be possible to participate in every fundraiser, as our PTO also offers fundraisers. For more information please contact the PTO by email at: [genewittpto@gmail.com](mailto:genewittpto@gmail.com)

# G

## **GOAL SETTING:**

Students at Gene Witt Elementary will articulate personal goals, create plans to achieve those goals, and exhibit progress toward their attainment.

## **GRADES:**

Each grade level decides how/when the standards are assessed and whether or not that assessment becomes a grade in their gradebook. This grading plan is reviewed annually and will be shared with you. Additionally, you may want to review the District's Student Progression Plan for additional information about grades. \*District and State Assessments are not used for grades.

## **GUIDANCE COUNSELOR:**

Witt has a guidance counselor, Mrs. Cynthia Deras. If you have questions or wish to speak with our guidance counselor, please call 941.741.3628 ext. 81007 to make an appointment. Additionally, if you would like your child seen by the counselor, we must have written permission to do so.

## **H**

### **HOMEWORK:**

If your child should be absent from school you will need to request missed work from the teacher. Please email and give the teacher 24 hours to get work together. Please DO NOT leave requests for homework on the attendance voice mail.

Be aware that homework is assigned so children can practice what they have learned in class and to grow your student's responsibility. For the most part, children should be able to do their homework independently with little help.

Also, in terms of time for homework nightly, a general rule of thumb is that homework should be about 10 minutes for Kindergarten and grade one, 20 minutes for grade two, 30 minutes for grade three and so on. If your child is struggling with homework or spending too much time nightly with homework, please contact the teacher to discuss.

Parents/guardians can help by establishing a nightly routine for homework. Provide a quiet place, free from distraction, for your child to work.

### **HOURS (SCHOOL):**

Student Arrival: 7:55 a.m. to 8:20 a.m.

Student Schedule: 8:25 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Cafeteria Breakfast: 7:55 a.m. to 8:20 a.m.

Lunch: 10:15 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (Check with teacher for individual classroom lunch times.)

Teacher Hours: 7:40 a.m. to 3:25 p.m.

Clinic Hours: 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Office Hours: 7:55 a.m. to 3:15 p.m reopening at 3:40 p.m to 4:00 p.m.

Supervision for students arriving prior to 7:55 a.m. or being picked up later than 3:35 will not be available and may be subject to before or after care fees.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER PLANS FOR DISMISSAL:**

Parents/guardians of **walkers and bicycle riders**, please discuss alternatives for rainy days in **advance with your student**. Our main concern is that your child's trip home is safe. Students **WILL NOT** be released to walk or bicycle if there is hard rain or lightning in the area. **In this case, walkers or bike riders will need to become CAR RIDERS. As soon as we determine a rainy day dismissal is imminent, we will contact all families with a Connect ED to inform you.** Please understand when we make this decision it is made. We cannot unmake it. Unfortunately, Florida weather is unpredictable. It could be storming one moment, causing the decision for "rainy day dismissal" to be activated, and then beautiful and sunny the next moment. We do the very best we can to monitor the weather station radar.

### **Rainy Day Dismissal Plan :**

#### *Car Riders:*

All normal car riders will be dismissed as usual. Parents/guardians, please remain in your vehicle and in the car rider line to pick up your child. Make sure that you have your car rider tag visible for school staff. Staff will call for your child to exit the building.

Please **do not park and walk up to the front of the school to pick up your child**. For safety reasons, no students will be dismissed to a parent/guardian from the front office.

Dismissal could be further delayed if conditions are too dangerous for staff and students to be outdoors. Students will not be dismissed if there is lightning in the area or other dangerous weather. Dismissal will need to stop.

In inclement weather, the number of students that will be car riders typically doubles. Please understand there will be delays and it will take you a few extra minutes to have your child get to you safely. Please follow our car rider procedures to assist us in getting everyone home safely.

#### *Walkers/Bikers:*

During a **light rain, with NO thunder or lightning**, these students will be dismissed as normal. If the weather is severe but predicted to be brief, students will be held inside until it is deemed safe to dismiss them. If the weather is severe and predicted to be long lasting, these students will notify parents/guardians to come and pick them up from school as CAR RIDERS. Parents/guardians will pick up their child through the car rider line.

#### *Severe Weather Procedures:*

Please be assured Gene Witt Elementary has safety procedures in place and your children will be as safe as possible during severe weather conditions.

## **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 WEAPONSTYLE TOYS OF ANY KIND, INCLUDING TOY GUNS AND KNIVES ARE NOT PERMITTED ON SCHOOL PROPERTY AT ANY TIME. STUDENTS WHO VIOLATE THIS RULE WILL FACE SIGNIFICANT CONSEQUENCES THAT MAY RANGE FROM SUSPENSION TO EX-PULSION.**

Examples of appropriate items: Items for "sharing time" at the teacher's discretion

Examples of inappropriate items: Gum, candy, video games, Pokémon/trading cards, cell phones (must be turned off), other electronic items and/or classroom distractions. These items will be confiscated if brought to school. The school will not be responsible for their loss or damage.

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



## INTERNET ACCESS :

Our students will have restricted, supervised internet access. Permission forms will not be sent home. Any parent/guardian requesting that their child be restricted from the internet access must notify administration in writing.

## J

### JOIN:

We welcome you and your family to join in the many activities, volunteering and supporting PTO/SAC throughout the school year.

## K

### KINDNESS:

This is just one of the Life Skills staff strives to model and teach to each other and our students. The others include: Cooperation, Responsibility, Respect, Patriotism, Gratitude, Empathy, Perseverance, Honesty, Courage and Creativity.

## L

### LOST AND FOUND:

The lost and found area is located in the cafeteria. Students are reminded to check lost and found every now and then during their lunch time. **To avoid problems, please mark all jackets, sweaters, lunch boxes and other personal items with your child's name.** All unclaimed items will be donated quarterly to a civic organization in need.

### LUNCHES:

The Witt Cafeteria is run on a computerized point of sale system, which enables us to have money held in an account for each student. Your child may purchase lunch, milk or juice as long as there is money in their account and spending has not been restricted by the parent/guardian. If you wish to restrict what your child is able to purchase, please contact the Cafeteria Manager, Mrs. Palacios at 941.741.3628 x 81013.

The prices for school meals are as follows:

- Breakfast is FREE for students. Monday-Friday
- Lunch is \$2.75 per day
- Reduced lunch is \$0.40 per day



**Payment:**

The easiest way for your child to pay for lunches is to do so on a weekly basis. All money should be brought to school in a sealed envelope. On the envelope, please write your child’s name, grade, teacher’s name, and dollar amount enclosed in the envelope. All checks should be made payable to Gene Witt Elementary School and given to the classroom teacher. You may also pay for meals via the website at <https://www.schoolcafe.com/ManateeCountySchools> . Applications for free and reduced lunches are available in the office as well as online.

**Lunch with Parent/Guardian:**

We invite parents to occasionally join their student to share lunch. You may enjoy lunch with your child only. Lunch will be outside in our covered Eagle’s Nest dining area. Nest Dining will be hosted between the months of September-April.

**Charges:**

From time to time, your child may forget or lose lunch money and every effort will be made to notify the parent/guardian when this happens. In the event the parent/guardian cannot be reached, children will be permitted to charge lunch. This charge must be paid the next day.

Procedures have been established for students who have excessive charges. Students will receive an alternate lunch of grilled cheese, fruit cup and milk until excessive charges have been paid.

**Menu:**

A cafeteria lunch menu can be viewed at <https://www.schoolcafe.com/ManateeCountySchools> . School lunches are also announced in the newspapers. Hopefully, it will be of help when planning your child’s meal at school. Reminder: the menu is subject to change.

Specific Lunchroom behavior is defined for students as follows:

<b><u>Expectation :</u></b>	<b><u>Specific Behaviors:</u></b>
Be Honest.....	Always tell the truth.
Be Responsible.....	Keep hands, feet, and food to yourself. Carefully clean your area and empty your tray.
Be Respectful.....	Use quiet voices and follow adult directions.
Be Kind.....	Talk quietly to your neighbors at your table.
Be Safe.....	Stay seated with feet under table; always walk.

**M**

**MASCOT AND SCHOOL COLORS:**

Our mascot is the Eagle. Our On-Campus colors are royal blue, white and yellow.

Mascot is “Witty” the Eagle. Our school



## **MEDIA CENTER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:**

The media center will be available for students and teachers to use at specified times of the day. Overdue book notices are sent home on a regular basis for parents to review. A lost library book will generate a fine. The fine can be seen in FOCUS and will stay on your child's account until paid.

## **MEDICATION PROCEDURES:**

The School Board has adopted a policy to provide as much safety as possible when underlying health problems make it absolutely necessary for students to receive medication at school. If students must receive medication at school, in order for School Board employees to administer it, the parent/guardian must:

Bring the medication to the school clinic in the prescription bottle, or original over the counter bottle with prescription from the doctor.

Complete an authorization form, provided by the school, with your information, then submit to the physician giving details as to time, amount of medication, etc.

Sign to authorize the Principal or his/her designee to give the medication.

Please note that cough drops, throat lozenges, Tylenol, Motrin, and any other over-the-counter medicines are not allowed with the students. Please do not ask your children to carry any medicine to school.

## **MEDIA RELEASE:**

In the Student Code of Conduct you will find a notification of rights concerning student records. These rights include the right to have access to all student records, the right to have them explained, the right to challenge the accuracy of the content of the records and the right to privacy with respect to those records. One exception to the right of privacy is "directory information." Directory information is information that a parent/guardian would not normally object to being released to the public.

### **Directory information includes:**

- Full legal name;
- The image or likeness in pictures, videotapes, film or other medium;
- Dates of attendance;
- Major field of study;
- Participation in officially recognized sports and activities;
- Height and weight of athletic team members;
- Degrees and awards received; and
- The most recent previous educational institution attended, academic work intended for publication or display.

Directory information does not include the address and telephone number of the students, so addresses and telephone numbers will not be released to the public.

This information can be released to the public without the prior permission of the parents/guardians unless the parents/guardians notify the Principal in writing that they do not wish such information to be released. This notification must be received by the Principal no later than *September 15th* of each school year. Parents/guardians should carefully consider the impact of objecting to the release of directory information. If a parent/guardian objects to the release of directory information concerning his/her child, that means the child will be excluded from:

- The yearbook;
  - Any sports programs that identify team members;
  - Any publications that identify students who receive honors and awards; and
- displaying any artwork done in class, etc.

## N

### **NEW STUDENT ENROLLMENT:**

There are specific requirements for student enrollment. Registration occurs online at <https://www.manateeschools.net/registration>. On this page you will find a registration checklist to assist you in registering your child for school.

### **For students enrolling at Gene Witt, parents/ guardians must bring:**

Proof of identification (Driver's License)

Mortgage / Lease / Tax Bill or Deed and 2 additional proofs of residency such as a water or electric bill or letter of approval from the Office of Student Assignment.

Name, address and phone number of previous school attended.

Legal custody/guardian information if applicable.

Birth Certificate

Social Security card (optional)

Immunization Records (FL 680)

Current Head-to-Toe Physical (within 12 months)

**\*\*Important\*\*** only the enrolling parent/guardian may make updates to the enrollment form. This policy 5.7.1. may be located on the website [www.manateeschools.net](http://www.manateeschools.net). Any changes to the enrollment form such as telephone numbers, address, and emergency contact persons must be made by the enrolling parent. The enrolling parent must call the office and make the change in the Parent Portal on Focus. Staff cannot make changes verbally over the phone. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Online enrollment @ [manateeschools.net](http://manateeschools.net).

# O

## OPEN DOOR POLICY:

Administration has an open door policy. We hope that all parents/guardians are encouraged to communicate with us about the needs of their children. We all have the same goal and that is the academic, social, and emotional success of our children.

# P

## PARTY POLICY:

Student birthdays may be celebrated in the child's classroom on the **last Friday** of each month for those students having a birthday in that month, *if the teacher chooses to do so*. The Manatee County Public Health Department regulations prohibit "homemade" food items from being distributed to students. Therefore, only store bought items are permitted. Please limit the snacks to cookies, fruit or raw vegetables, other healthy snack alternatives and water. It is also important to be aware of other students' food allergies. Because we have some students who are allergic to nuts, it is critical that no nuts or peanut products be shared in the classroom.

Since Witt Elementary is focusing on nutrition and healthy eating, we want to give you some ideas for birthday treats that will provide an alternative to gooey, high-fat sweets. Please consider these options when preparing to bring in birthday treats for your child's classroom party:

Idea #1 – A scoop of low-fat frozen yogurt. In a dish or a cone, this is always a popular treat... and sprinkles are fat free! Or top with delicious strawberries, blueberries or sliced banana.

Idea #2 – Frozen ice cream bars- individually wrapped and lower in fat such as "Skinny Cow" treats or frozen fruit bars. Sugar free is also a good idea.

Idea #3 – Low –fat brownies or cookies.

Idea #4 – Angel food cake with strawberries and cool whip or 1 scoop low –fat vanilla ice cream. Including fruit is always a good idea for healthy treats. (Note: If angel food cake is not your child's preference, try light golden pound cake. Both Sara Lee and Entenmann's make a great light version of pound cake; serve with cool whip or ice cream and berries.)

Idea # 5 – Cupcakes from the bakery with no icing. (The frosting they use is loaded with sugar and food dye.) Instead, bring in cool whip or Redi- Whip then top with fruit, chocolate chips or sprinkles.

1. Pepperidge Farm has the big soft cookies that are very tasty. Both sugar cookies and the snickerdoodles are 5g of fat per serving.

2. Publix's Greenwise line has a "Back to Nature" cookie with no artificial preservatives and they are also low in fat– only 5g of fat for chocolate chip.

3. Entenmann's makes prepackaged "Little Bites" soft baked brownie squares (not the fudge brownies) are only 4g fat and 100 calories per serving.

A few things to consider:

- If you are bringing anything frozen, be sure to make arrangements with your child's teacher in advance so freezer space can be made available.
- If you bring in juice boxes, please bring those that are all juice (Welch's, Mott's, Juicy Juice, etc.) and not the kind that are sugary kool-aid type drinks.
- If you bring fruit, do not prepare ahead of time. Bring items like strawberries or blueberries in original containers and bananas unpeeled. The preparation of the fruit should be completed on campus.
- If you want to provide goody bags, please include things like chewy fruit snacks, granola bars, etc. and small non-edible treats such as pencils, stickers and other fun things rather than candy.
- Please remember that all edible treats must be store-bought, not homemade.
- Finally, if you have any questions about the treats you want to bring for your child's birthday celebration, contact his or her teacher.

We hope you find this list of ideas to be helpful and we thank you for your support in keeping our school nutritiously-conscious!

The Classroom Parent Coordinator will coordinate the monthly birthday parties and "seasonal" parties for the classroom with the approval and assistance of the classroom teacher. As required by school board policy, all parties will be scheduled at least one hour after your child's scheduled lunch time. Our class parties are scheduled for the last hour of the school day, unless that is a student's fine arts time and then it will be the hour prior to that. In some cases, teachers may request an exception to the party time for administration to consider. Whether there is a need for parent volunteers for parties or not is completely up to the discretion of the teacher.

As a reminder, balloons are **NOT** allowed on campus, as they cause a distraction in the classrooms.

### **PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION:**

Gene Witt Elementary has an outstanding PTO. Your support by joining PTO makes for a continued quality organization that provides our students with activities and raises money to support special purchases for the school. We encourage families to join during the registration drive. To reach PTO, you may call or leave a note in the front office. For more information please see the PTO website:

Carla Santoro – President

Sherry Pineno– Vice President

Shannon Cooley - Treasurer

Cara Misiewicz - Corresponding Secretary

Laura Anastasia - Recording Secretary

### **PEANUT FREE ZONE(S):**

We do have students in our school who are allergic to peanuts. Therefore, we are asking your cooperation in assisting our teachers and staff by not bringing in food items that contain peanuts if at all possible. Classrooms in which a student has a peanut allergy will be taking extra precautions in assuring the health and safety of the students such as hand washing, and allowing no peanut products.

## **Positive Behavior Support (PBS) :**

At Gene Witt Elementary we emphasize positive behavior. Students have five expectations when at school:

1. Be Honest
2. Be Responsible
3. Be Respectful
4. Be Kind
5. Be Safe

These expectations are followed all over campus and behaviors are defined to meet these expectations in every area of campus, including the playground, cafeteria, hallway, and arrival/dismissal areas. Students have opportunities to earn “Talon Tickets” for exhibiting these behaviors. “Talon Tickets” may be redeemed for awards in the classroom, the office, and admission to quarterly assemblies and events.

They can be given out by classroom teachers, special area teachers, paraeducators, custodians, food service workers, and bus drivers. The entire staff is trained to look for students following the expectations.

There are consequences for students who fail to meet behavior expectations as outlined in our District’s Student Code of Conduct, which is reviewed annually. These consequences can include, but are not limited to:

- Conference with student
- Parent/Guardian Contact
- Timeout in another classroom or designated area
- Follow Up Agreement / Action Plan
- Restitution
- Time in Office
- Loss of Privilege(s)
- Conference with SSS (Student Support Specialist) or administration
- In-School Suspension
- Out-of-School Suspension



Certain behavior violations are considered to be “Zero Tolerance” and will result in an automatic Office Discipline Referral with serious consequences. These violations include the following:

- Weapons (pocket knives, nail clippers, throwing stars, toy weapons, etc.)
- Drugs (this includes cigarettes, vaping pens, any illegal substances, or prescription drugs not registered with the nurse or clinic aide).
- Any gang-related activities
- Willful disobedience
- Bullying (Substantiated physical, verbal, emotional, psychological, or sexual)
- Fighting
- Defacing school property
- Inappropriate, vulgar language, actions, or materials
- Lewd or lascivious behavior
- Theft
- Vandalism
- Inappropriate hallway behavior

Office referrals are in FOCUS, parents/guardians will be contacted.

### **PROGRESS REPORTS:**

Parents of students in grades 2-5 have the ability to view and print their child’s progress reports on FOCUS. They are published four times a year. Please see district school calendar for dates. Remember, it is important to review the citizenship portion of the progress report.

## **R**

### **RAPTOR:**

**The District requires that ALL visitors on campus must register through the Raptor V-Soft identification system.** On your first visit, you will be asked to present your driver’s license so we can scan it into the V-Soft system. The Raptor is linked to the Sexual Predator/Offender Data Base. After your identification is scanned and you are cleared, you will be issued a visitor’s badge. You may need to have your identification scanned every year as our Raptor system updates. You will need to sign in and receive a visitor’s badge on each visit. However, a staff member is expected to ask you for identification if you are not familiar to them. Upon leaving campus, please stop by the office and leave your badge at the front desk so you can be logged out.





**REPORT CARDS:**

Report cards can be found quarterly on FOCUS. Report cards are only one way of reporting pupil progress. Other ways include samples of children’s work sent home, progress reports and conferences with the parent/guardian. Please see district calendar for dates.

**Restroom Expectations:**

Clear expectations and behaviors are defined for students using the restrooms as follows:

<u>Expectation :</u>	<u>Specific Behaviors:</u>
Be Honest.....	Always tell the truth.
Be Responsible.....	Use one paper towel and place trash in the trash can.
Be Respectful.....	Always flush the toilet. Clean up any mess you make.
Be Kind.....	Take turns.
Be Safe.....	Wash hands with soap.

**S**

**SAFETY:**

The safety of your children is our first priority at Gene Witt Elementary. Therefore, our Safety Committee has developed and implemented the following procedures:

All visitors must sign in at the office first and get a visitor’s badge. This visitor’s badge is to be worn while on campus. **Visitor badges must be worn on the left or right hand of the blouse/shirt for easy identification.**

All students and staff must wear their identification lanyard every day. There will be a replacement cost of \$3 for students who lose or damage their lanyards, as we do expect children to be responsible for their items.

Students must not be on campus prior to 7:55 a.m. or after 3:30 p.m. because there is no staff available to supervise them, unless they have been instructed to do so by their teacher in cases of before-school tutoring, etc.

All students K-5 will walk with a buddy as they move about campus without the teacher. For example, a student needing to go to the Clinic would be sent with another student.

A hall pass system is in place. Any student moving about campus without a teacher must carry a hall pass. This alerts staff to the fact that the student has permission to be out of the classroom.

**SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL(SAC) :**

All schools have a School Advisory Council as required by Florida law. This is a group of representatives who meet to discuss school issues and participate in the school improvement process. There will be representation from staff and parents/guardians with at least 51% of the composition being parents/guardians.

CHAIR: Shannon Cooley                      VICE CHAIR: Kaylinka Holt                      SECRETARY: Sharon Dean

SAC Meetings are held monthly the same evenings as our PTO. This group will serve in many important ways in providing direction for our school and approve our School Improvement Plan. If you are interested in working with this group, please contact the school office staff or administration.

## **SIGN OUT PROCEDURES:**

Prior to a child's release during the school day, individuals are required to:

Show proper identification. If you do not have identification, your child WILL NOT be released.

Sign the child out of the office prior to 2:45 p.m.

Wait in the front office for the child unless other arrangements have been made with the office.

No child is to leave the school area or a classroom with a visitor or parent/guardian unless permission has been received from the office.

Children will only be released to those adults for whom the school has written authorization on the enrollment form in the office.

## **SMART WATCHES:**

We recognize that some parents want their child to wear a Smart Watch for safety reasons to track the whereabouts of their child before/after school. We can accommodate this request. Please visit our school website, go to "Parents" and then see the "Smart Watch" tab to follow directions for your student to have permission to wear this device. Without permission, watches will be removed and must be picked up by the parent.

## **SNACKS:**

It is up to individual teachers whether or not they choose to allow a working snack time for their classroom. Fresh fruit/vegetables, pretzels, popcorn, trail mix, cereal bars and yogurt are examples of healthy snacks. Please remember that it is up to the parent to provide utensils.

## **SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS:**

"1008.386 Social security numbers used as student identification numbers. — Each district school board shall request that each student enrolled in a public school in this state provide his or her social security number. Each school district shall use social security numbers as student identification numbers in the management information system maintained by the school district. However, a student is not required to provide his or her social security number as a condition for enrollment or graduation. A student satisfies this requirement by presenting to school enrollment officials his or her social security card or a copy of the card. The school district shall include the social security number in the student's permanent records and shall indicate if the student identification number is not a social security number. The Commissioner of Education shall provide assistance to school districts to assure that the assignment of student identification numbers other than social security numbers is kept to a minimum and to avoid duplication of any student identification number."

## **STUDENT IDENTIFICATION BADGES:**

Each student will receive a Student ID and lanyard. Student ID's are to be worn while at school. If a School ID is lost, the student can receive a new one in the media center. A new ID will cost \$3.

## **STUDENT PROGRESSION PLAN:**

Manatee County's Student Progression Plan spells out specifically what students in grades K-12 must achieve in order to be promoted. This is a very important document, which reveals the changes that are now in effect for all Manatee County students. This document may be accessed online at: <https://www.manateeschools.net/Domain/5817>

# T

## **TARDY/EARLY DEPARTURE:**

Your child must be in his/her designated waiting area by 8:20 a.m. ***If your child arrives past 8:25 a.m., he/she must report to the office accompanied by a parent/guardian to obtain a tardy pass before going to class.*** Under no circumstances should a child come late to school and be sent to the office unaccompanied by an adult. This is a safety issue. We must have direct contact with the parent/guardian for an excused tardy. Habitual tardies are unacceptable and unfair to the classroom teacher who must begin instruction again every time a late student arrives. Being late to school disrupts the educational process for not only the tardy student, but for the teacher and other students of his/her class as well. Being on time is a vital ingredient for success as children develop. A record of tardies is reported to parents/guardians at the close of each quarter and is recorded on the student's permanent record. Students who have unexcused tardies or who are habitually tardy will meet with the Principal, Assistant Principal, or Student Support Specialist. A parent/guardian conference will be arranged.

## **TECHNOLOGY ON CAMPUS:**

**Use of cell phones is not allowed during school hours or on campus before or after school.** However, we understand that there are some situations in which it is necessary for a student to bring a cell phone to school for use after school. In such a case, the technology must be turned off and kept in the backpack. Students who do not follow cell phone, tablet and smart watch guidelines may receive a referral and subsequent consequences. If your child needs to contact you on campus during the day, it must be on a school phone. They are not allowed to text and call on a cell phone during the day.

## **TEXTBOOKS:**

Textbooks will be provided to your child as they are needed. Parents/guardians are responsible for all textbooks loaned to students. The cost of replacing lost or damaged textbooks is determined by school board policies.

Florida Statute 1006.42 Responsibility of students and parents for instructional materials -

All instructional materials purchased under the provisions of this part are the property of the district school board. When distributed to the students, these instructional materials are on loan to the students while they are pursuing their courses of study and are to be returned at the direction of the school principal or the teacher in charge.

Each parent of a student to whom or for whom instructional materials have been issued, is liable for any loss, destruction of or unnecessary damage to, the instructional materials or for failure of the student to return the instructional materials when directed by the school principal or the teacher in charge, and shall pay the amount for such loss, destruction, or unnecessary damage as provided by law.

## **TRANSPORTATION:**

If there is a change in the method of transportation your child will use to go home (for example, your child rides the bus to school but will be a car rider in the afternoon), send a note to your child's teacher in the morning to indicate this change. In an emergency, you may call the office directly before 2:25 p.m., or as early as possible, to indicate a change in method of transportation. The time period between 2:25 p.m. and 3:15 p.m. is a very busy time for teachers and students and we cannot guarantee that the message will be received in the classroom if the call comes after 2:25 pm. Therefore, only emergencies with approval from Administration will have the method of the student's transportation changed after 2:25 pm. It is very important that you do not leave this message on the teacher's voice mail as he/she may not hear his/her messages prior to dismissal.

## **T-SHIRTS:**

A variety of school T-Shirts and other school spirit items will be available for purchase from PTO.

## U

### **UPDATING INFORMATION:**

Your current phone number and the numbers of emergency contacts are very important to us. Please contact the office for edit access in Focus to make additions or changes. This will facilitate immediate communication with the family in the event of an emergency.

**\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*** Only the enrolling parent/guardian may make updates to the enrollment information. This policy 5.7.1. can be located on the website <https://www.manateeschools.net/> . **MOST IMPORTANT:** Telephone numbers can be updated on the parent portal. You must call the office first to get edit access. For any other changes such as address, please call our registrar at 941-741-3628 x 81006. Staff cannot make changes verbally over the phone. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

## V

### **VISITORS ON CAMPUS DURING SCHOOL HOURS:**

At Gene Witt Elementary, parent/guardian involvement is strongly encouraged. We welcome parents/guardians and other visitors at our school. During school hours, all parents/guardians and other visitors must sign in at the office and receive and wear a visitor badge, no exceptions. Badges should be worn on the front of the left or right chest for ease of viewing. Prior to leaving campus, please return to the office to sign out. Parents/guardians who want to visit the classrooms are asked to make arrangements with the teacher at least one day in advance.

### **VOLUNTEERS:**

School volunteers are a very important asset to the staff and students. Volunteers are needed in the Clinic, Cafeteria, waiting areas, Media Center, reading, occupational therapy, speech/language and the classrooms. If you would like additional information or would like to volunteer, please call the school office. We appreciate any help you may be able to provide.

All volunteers must complete the School District Volunteer Packet and attend a yearly training found online at our school website. Completion of this packet is required of all people who work with our students in a volunteer capacity. The packet must be completed by the volunteer and processed by the office staff before anyone will be allowed to volunteer. Office staff must check the references and Sexual Predator website, which are the required security checks for all volunteers. Please go online to [manateeschools.net](https://www.manateeschools.net) and click on volunteers for more information. You can also go to this website to complete the application:

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

Children not enrolled at Gene Witt Elementary may not accompany volunteers while on campus.

## W

### **WALKERS:**

Students must go directly from school to their homes.

Students must cross the street where there are crossing guards, if provided.

Students are expected to show courtesy to our neighbors by respecting private property, walking along sidewalks and by speaking courteously to adults.



### **WEBSITE:**

Our website is: <https://www.manateeschools.net/witt>

### **WITHDRAWING YOUR CHILD FROM SCHOOL:**

Should your family find it necessary to move, please have the enrolling parents/guardians follow the steps below to make for an easier withdrawal for both you and your child:

Notify the Registrar **AND come into the school and sign the withdraw form** at least two days prior to your child's last day at school. .

Return all library and textbooks and pay any fines or accounts.

All lunchroom charges must be paid in full.

Pick up all medication from the clinic.

If applicable, all Before/After care charges must be paid in full.

**WITTY KIDS:**

See Before/After School Care Program.

**WOW MOMENTS AND MEMORIES:**

We plan activities throughout the year that are just for fun. There will be activities in the classrooms and assemblies, music programs and other events planned throughout the year. We not only work to provide our students with an outstanding education, but fun childhood memories, too.

**X**

**eXtra Activities:**

We try to provide a lot of activities for our students. PTO sponsors many family activities and events. You will be notified of these throughout the school year.

**Y**

**YEARBOOK:**

Students will have the opportunity to buy a school yearbook in the Spring. The arrival of the yearbooks is in May. Our staff works very hard to provide the yearbook as a wonderful way to save school memories.

**Z**

**ZEALOUS:**

Defines the attitude of our staff as we work together to make Gene Witt Elementary the best school for our students!