

John S. Armstrong Elementary School
New Family Handbook
2018-2019



John S. Armstrong Elementary School
3600 Cornell Avenue
Dallas, Texas 75205
214.780.3100
<http://armstrong.hpisd.org>
on Facebook @ Armstrong Eagles PTA

Principal:	Ms. Betsy Cummins
Administrative Assistants:	Heather Turner Jamie Condon
Guidance Counselor:	Dave Ray 214.780.3140
School Nurse:	Kim Oliver and Melissa Turner 214.780.3120
Mascot:	Eagle in Flight (Goldie the Eagle)
School Colors:	Green and Gold
HPISD Administration:	7105 Westchester Drive 214.780.3000
School Hours:	8:00 am-3:15 pm*

*First bell rings at 7:50 am.;
Tardy bell rings at 8:00 am

Welcome to Armstrong!

On behalf of the PTA New Families Committee, we would like to welcome you to Armstrong Elementary. We are so glad you're here! A new school can be a challenging experience not only for the student, but also for the entire family. It is our hope that this handbook will provide you with helpful information and answers to many questions not addressed in other publications.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to our committee members or to your Room Parents for answers to any questions not provided herein. We are happy to do anything we can to help make Armstrong a great experience for your family!

Warmly,

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CONTENTS

The ABCs of Armstrong.....5-10

Groups and Associations at Armstrong.....11-12

Events at Armstrong.....13-16

Parent Volunteer Opportunities.....17-18

THE ABCs OF ARMSTRONG

ARMSTRONG DIRECTORY

The PTA publishes the Armstrong Directory with class rosters, lists of families, a school calendar, lists of faculty and staff, volunteer worker schedules, and policies and procedures specific to Armstrong. **The directories are distributed in the early Fall to each family that purchases one or more during Back to School Sign-Up (BSSU).** Copies are \$10 each and may later be purchased from the Eagle Store. The directory app called DirectorySpot is also available to all those who purchased Armstrong directories.

ARMSTRONG'S EAGLE NEWS (eBLAST)

The front office electronically publishes a weekly newsletter called The Eagle News which is sent to parents each Monday via email. The eBlast contains information relating to school events as well as extracurricular activities, reminders of volunteer opportunities, and news about Armstrong families. Take time to read the Eagle News so that you will stay informed on what is happening at Armstrong and in the community!

ATHLETICS

Moody Family YMCA

The Moody Family YMCA in the Park Cities located at 6000 Preston Road offers sports and social programs to the youth of our community. Many students participate in YMCA sports during their school years. Soccer, basketball, flag football, volleyball and baseball are some of the sports offered (sport may vary by grade). Other programs include track, swimming, gymnastics, karate, and ballet. Y-Guides and Y-Princess groups are offered for kindergarten, first, and second grade boys and girls and their fathers. Armstrong physical education teachers also have information on sports programs offered through the YMCA. In addition, the YMCA has a full-scale fitness facility and offers fitness classes for adults. Please contact the Moody Family YMCA for additional information at 214.526.7293. You may also visit them at www.ymcadallas.org.

Lacrosse

Lacrosse is available during the Fall and Spring seasons for both 2nd-4th grade girls and boys through two independent organizations. The teams are comprised of students from all four elementary schools in the Park Cities with practices held at Highland Park Middle School. Games and tournaments are scheduled against other neighboring leagues in the Dallas area. Please visit www.hpgirlslax.com for information regarding girl's lacrosse and www.highlandparklacrosse.org for information regarding boy's lacrosse.

ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES

For general health and wellness policies, please refer to the Class Schedules/Attendance section of the Student Handbook at <http://armstrong.hpisd.org> or contact the school office at 214.780.3100.

BACK TO SCHOOL SIGN-UP (BSSU)

Armstrong parents must complete Back to School Sign-Up (BSSU). BSSU will include enrollment information and invoices for school supplies, joining the PTA, purchasing a school directory and birthday book, as well as opportunities for charitable contributions related to the school and district. Parents will also have the opportunity to volunteer for service in various capacities at Armstrong. Registration is held in August prior to the start of school. The help desk (214.780.4040) will be available from 9 am-4 pm every weekday during BSSU. Check your mail for a bright pink envelope containing your individual online password to be used during BSSU. The website for Highland Park ISD is www.hpisd.org.

BIRTHDAY BOOK CLUB

This program is designed to enable the school to add books to the Armstrong Library. A check for \$20 will purchase a new book for the library as a gift from your child that he/she selects during his/her birthday month. Children with summer birthdays have the opportunity to gift their birthday books to the library during the Spring. Sign-up forms for Birthday Books are included in Back to School Sign-Up (BSSU) and throughout the year by contacting the school librarian.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

We celebrate every child's birthday with special recognition on the morning announcements and in the classroom. Because of food allergies and nutritional guidelines, parents are asked to not bring birthday treats to distribute to other students in the class (either in the classroom or in the cafeteria).

CAFETERIA

Schools are in a powerful position to influence children's lifelong dietary habits, and we, in partnership with parents, should work hard to convey the importance of good nutrition and the development of good eating habits and healthy lifestyles. In addition, nutritious meals and foods can improve students' concentration, academic success, and overall health.

Armstrong will follow as a guideline the FMNV policy set forth by the USDA and Texas Department of Agriculture which does not allow the following foods of minimal nutritional value to be sold or given away on school premises by the school, teachers, or any other person or group during the school day:

- Any carbonated beverages
- Water ices – any frozen, sweetened water such as “...sicles” and flavored ice, with the exception of products that contain fruit or fruit juice
- Chewing gum
- Candy

Exceptions to the above are special education classrooms, nurses, and school holiday celebrations, or special events determined by the teachers and approved by the principal.

Students in kindergarten and first grades have a choice of set menus for hot or cold lunch to choose from each day; students in second, third, and fourth grades have greater autonomy in making their lunch selections.

Classes are allotted 30 minutes for lunchtime. Your teacher can provide you with your student’s designated lunchtime, or you can find that information in the school directory. Parents are welcome to eat lunch with their child any day.

The Armstrong PTA operates and staffs the cafeteria with volunteer cashiers and servers each day. The success of our cafeteria depends upon our volunteers—our wonderful Armstrong parents and even some grandparents! Volunteering in the cafeteria is a wonderful way to get to know other parents as well as the students in your child’s class. For information on volunteering, please refer to page 16 under Parent Volunteer Opportunities/Cafeteria.

A daily menu and price list can be found on the Armstrong website at <http://armstrong.hpsid.org>.

CARPOOL GUIDELINES/DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Carpool locations and specific procedures for student drop-off and pick-up are of the utmost importance. Please refer to the Armstrong Student Handbook’s section addressing Daily Schedule/Carpool for detailed guidelines at <http://armstrong.hpsid.org>.

DRESS CODE

Please refer to the Student Behavior Expectations/Dress Code section of the Student Handbook at <http://armstrong.hpsid.org>.

EAGLE STORE

The PTA sells Armstrong spirit items such as t-shirts, shorts, and hats which feature the Armstrong logo. These items are available in the Eagle Store. The Eagle Store is open on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 7:50-8:10 am. Your child will enjoy wearing his/her Armstrong spirit items on designated Armstrong Spirit Days!

GIFTED STUDENTS (TAG PROGRAM)

The TAG program serves gifted students in accordance with state mandates. Students meeting district-developed criteria, including standardized test results, are invited to participate in this program. Students participating in the program spend some time out of their regular classroom with the TAG teacher and class. Information about the TAG program is distributed in the Fall. Testing occurs in the Spring semester. Parents must submit an application for their child(ren) to be tested by the December deadline. The Fall information session is the best place to learn more information about TAG. Please contact the TAG coordinator for any additional questions.

JUMPSTART

The JumpStart program is a regular education program offered for students who need extra support and practice in literacy skills. Participation begins with teacher referral based on educational need. Students must meet eligibility criteria and receive parental permission prior to placement. Services will be provided after all requirements for participation are met.

LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER

The Armstrong Library/Media Center is available to students through classroom visits, as well as before and after school, from 7:50 am to 3:45 pm. The Library/Media Center serves as both a traditional library and technology center. Kindergarten students may check out one book at a time. First through fourth grade students may check out two books at a time. Books are due after one week. Parents may also check out books for their children (or themselves). Students are reminded through written notice if they have overdue books. The library is not open for visits from parents and siblings until the end of the instructional day.

NEWSPAPERS/ELECTRONIC NEWS

The following local newspapers often carry news about Armstrong activities: Park Cities People, the Park Cities News, the “NeighborsGo” section of The Dallas Morning News, and Park Cities Bubble Life at www.parkcities.bubblelife.com.

PARENT'S NIGHT OUT (PNO)

On select Friday nights during the school year, Armstrong teachers offer a Parent's Night Out held in the school gymnasium. The price is \$40 for the first child and \$30 for each additional child. Hours are 5:30 pm to 11:00 pm. Students may arrive late, but parents must pick up no later than 11 pm. Drop-off is at the outside gym door (St. John's door) and pick up is at the auditorium (Cornell door). Pizza, either cheese or pepperoni, is served with a drink; a snack is served before a movie around 9 pm. PNO is always popular, so it is necessary to act quickly to reserve your spot!

SCHOOL CALENDARS

To access the Armstrong School Year Calendar, please refer to the website at <http://armstrong.hpisd.org>.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

School supplies will be available for online purchase during BSSU. If you arrive after the start of the school year, supplies will be provided for your child for a fee.

SCOUTS

Daisies, Brownies, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, and Boy Scouts all have active troops at our school. For more information, please contact the school's main office for the scouting coordinator contacts.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special education and related services are specifically designed instructional services mandated by the state to support students with disabilities within the general curriculum. The intent of the support services is to enable all students with disabilities to make progress in the general curriculum, to participate in extracurricular and nonacademic activities, and to be educated and participate with peers in the public school system. See <http://armstrongspecialeducation.weebly.com> for more information.

STUDENT HANDBOOK

A newly revised and updated Student Handbook for Armstrong Elementary is available at both <http://armstrong.hpsid.org> and in the front office. The Student Handbook provides a comprehensive guide to policies and procedures for the parents and students of Armstrong Elementary.

WEATHER ADVISORY/SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Please refer to the Armstrong Student Handbook which can be found online at <http://armstrong.hpsid.org>. Also be on the lookout for the opportunity to sign up for important weather/emergency-related text messaging alerts from the school district via the District Newsletter which is emailed district-wide each Friday afternoon throughout the school year.

YEARBOOK

The Yearbook is a book of special Armstrong memories containing all of the student class pictures as well as candid shots taken throughout the year. The book is published at the end of each school year. You may purchase a Yearbook during BSSU or order forms are available in the school office.

GROUPS AND ASSOCIATIONS AT ARMSTRONG

THE PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

The Armstrong PTA meets several times during the school year. Please check the school calendar for dates and times. Meetings are held in the Armstrong Auditorium, beginning at 8:15 am. All parents are invited to attend these meetings. PTA involvement is a great way to meet other parents and to learn more about Armstrong.

We urge you to join the PTA. Membership will be offered during Back to School Sign-Up (BSSU). It is \$35.00 for the year.

Armstrong's PTA operates both the Cafeteria and the Eagle Store in cooperation with Highland Park Independent School District (HPISD). The PTA also supplies volunteers to Alice's Garden, the Bike Rodeo, Field Day, the Spring Carnival, and the annual Armstrong Auction. This unique involvement is evidence of the strong tradition of parent participation at Armstrong and throughout the entire school district. PTA information is distributed through the weekly Armstrong eBLAST and on the PTA Facebook page.

ARMSTRONG-BRADFIELD PRESCHOOL ASSOCIATION (ABPA)

The Armstrong-Bradfield Preschool Association (ABPA) welcomes into its membership all parents living in the Armstrong and Bradfield school districts who have children kindergarten age and younger. This group focuses on presenting programs that promote training in parenthood and family living and on the healthy development of preschool-aged children. They accomplish their mission by providing quality speakers at general meetings, children's parties in the Fall and Spring, playgroups, social functions for parents, community service projects, and a December fundraiser "Homes for the Holidays" that benefits both the Armstrong and Bradfield schools.

This group provides many opportunities for parents of preschoolers to get to know other parents and their families. Nursery care is available for meetings. For more information on membership, please see www.armstrongbradfield.com.

ASIAN-AMERICAN FAMILIES CLUB

Many Armstrong families participate in the Asian-American Families club. The mission of this group is to make our growing population of Asian-American students feel welcome to our school, as well as to demonstrate to our non-Asian students the rich traditions of Asian-Americans. For more information on membership, join the AAPG Yahoo Group at pcaaf@yahoo.com.

DADS CLUB

The Armstrong Dads Club holds scheduled meetings during the school year, hosts activities for both students and their fathers, handles special projects and school events, helps with fundraising, and works with our principal, Ms. Cummins, and the PTA to support instructional and school-wide enhancements.

The Armstrong Dads Club is an important part of your child's Armstrong experience and provides an avenue for dads to become more involved in their child's development. Some of the past projects and events the Dads Club have supported include: the new playground fundraiser; the redevelopment of the Armstrong athletic fields and common area; the lunch commons and eating area design, funding, and development; special classroom projects and technology applications for teachers; sno-cones for the children on the first and last days of school; Dads Club greeter program for the morning car pool lane; special grounds and outdoors projects; Carnival set-up and break-down; special guests and speakers; the Armstrong Auction; Bike Rodeo; Cafeteria Duty; and Dr. Seuss Reading Week.

The Dads Club plays a vital role within our school. Its primary focus is to provide Armstrong fathers with an opportunity to become involved. If you did not become a member during BSSU, you may sign up in the school office or directly contact the Dads Club President whose contact information is located on the website at <http://armstrong.hpisd.org>.

EVENTS AT ARMSTRONG

Dates for all of the following events can be found online at armstrong.hpisd.org

ARMSTRONG FAMILY DAY OF SERVICE

The Armstrong PTA is committed to engaging our children in caring for the greater community in which they live. The Armstrong Family Day of Service takes place in the Spring.

ARMSTRONG OUTREACH

Armstrong participates in a Fall and Spring outreach project. In November, Armstrong provides Thanksgiving meals to Brother Bill's Helping Hand. In February, students collect change for the Change for Children's philanthropy benefitting the pet therapy program at Children's Health. Look for more information and specific dates on the weekly eBLAST.

ARMSTRONG READS

Armstrong Reads is a Spring fundraiser where students commit to reading a certain number of hours over two weeks and ask family and friends to sponsor their efforts. Students will be rewarded with prizes, generally redeemable at the Carnival, and 100% of donations earned by students go back to Armstrong.

AUCTION / PREVIEW PARTY

Two of the most talked about and highly anticipated events of every Armstrong school year are the annual Auction Preview Party and Armstrong Auction. The Auction, Armstrong's largest fundraiser of the year, is a themed, adults-only gala that provides parents with the opportunity to give back to the school and to get to know other Armstrong families in a social setting. The Auction is kicked-off by an Auction Preview Party which takes places several weeks prior to the Auction. Items to bid on include: luxurious trips, sports items and tickets, gift certificates to fabulous Dallas restaurants and shopping venues, and most importantly, the coveted Teacher's Gifts of Time. All proceeds from these events off-set the Texas State Legislature's Robin Hood Bill in order to help our school maintain its level of excellence. ***These are two events you will not want to miss!***

BIKE RODEO

The Bike Rodeo takes place in the Fall. Children in all grades participate by riding their bikes or scooters to school. Students learn and practice safety techniques in a hands-on environment

with their classes. The rodeo is geared toward building students' confidence and teaching them to make good decisions while riding through the neighborhood streets. The Bike Rodeo is one of our students' most fun and favorite Armstrong traditions and is highly anticipated by both students and parents each year!

BOOK FAIR

Sales from the annual Fall Book Fair benefit the Armstrong Library. Books are for sale before and during school, and children also have the opportunity to attend the Book Fair with their classes. The Book Fair provides a great opportunity for students to purchase and "gift" books in their name to their classroom teachers. You are also encouraged to visit the Book Fair with your child on family night!

CARNIVAL

The Armstrong Carnival is another major and FUN fundraising project for the school. It takes place in the Spring on the school grounds. The Carnival features games, prizes, concessions, entertainment, and raffles. Carnival Admission Tickets are sold in advance and also on the day of the Carnival. Raffle tickets can also be purchased in advance. The Carnival is always an exciting, kid-friendly, family event.

CLASS PARTIES

Winter Holiday and Valentine's Day class parties are held before winter vacation and on or near Valentine's Day. Room Parents and other class volunteers help with these events. To volunteer, contact your Room Parent or ask your child's teacher for additional information.

FIELD DAY

Field Day is traditionally held on the last day of school. Classrooms within each grade compete in games and relays all of the students are involved. Many parents come to assist and cheer on their children. Contact the PTA Field Day Coordinators to sign up to help or let your Room Parent know you are interested.

FOUNDER'S PICNIC

Armstrong's annual Founder's Picnic takes place in the Fall. Parents are invited to lunch with their students on the school grounds. Detailed information will be available through the weekly

eBLAST prior to the event. Armstrong families and friends never miss an opportunity to celebrate just how thankful we are for our wonderful school!

GRANDFRIEND'S DAY

One of Armstrong's most valued traditions is Grandfriend's Day. Grandparents and/or special guests of our students are invited to enjoy a morning at Armstrong in their student's classroom. Valet parking is provided. Additional information will be provided in the Armstrong eBLAST.

INVENTION CONVENTION

Invention Convention is a great opportunity for students to show their creativity. Held in the Fall, Invention Convention is open to all grades and is optional.

OPEN HOUSE NIGHTS

I. CURRICULUM NIGHT

Curriculum Night is a night no parent will want to miss. This **parent-only** night allows you to meet your child's teacher, receive valuable information on curriculum, classroom, and grade level expectations as well as upcoming class events. This is the first opportunity parents will have to sign-up for important classroom and school-wide events. More information will arrive in your inbox via the weekly eBlast.

II. SPRING OPEN HOUSE

This event is a **family** event! At the Spring Open House, your child will have the opportunity to show you the special work that they have done during the school year. Look for more information in your inbox via the weekly eBlast.

SCIENCE FAIR

Armstrong 3rd and 4th grade students can participate in our school's Science Fair, which is typically held in early winter. Students can partner with a classmate or submit an individual project. Informational packets will be distributed to all 3rd and 4th grade students several weeks prior to the event.

SPIRIT DAYS

Armstrong Spirit Days are every Friday all school year long! Your student will love wearing Armstrong attire and/or school colors to show school spirit!

PARENT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Parent volunteers are essential to Armstrong and help maintain our level of excellence. There are many ways to become involved for the benefit of our school and children. If you have a special interest or talent and are able to help, please contact any PTA Board member. We always welcome new ideas and value our parents' input and involvement! To volunteer or to obtain additional information on any of the following opportunities for service, please visit the volunteer website at <http://armstrongpta.org>.

CAFETERIA

Servers—Servers staff the cafeteria from 10:45 to 12:45. The servers do not prepare the food, but serve portions from stations along the serving line or snack bar. Servers volunteer for a set day/days of the month for cafeteria serving positions (1st Monday or 3rd Friday, for example).

Cashiers—Cashiers total the cost of a student's meal and take payment at the end of the line. This job is very simple with our automated system. Cashiers are also responsible for preparing the daily deposit at the end of their shift. Like servers, cashiers volunteer for a set day/days of the month for cafeteria cashier positions.

CARNIVAL

There is a large committee for this event. Jobs range from set-up and take-down, to decorating, working the booths, selling tickets, and cleaning up at the end of the day. In addition, there are committees for t-shirts, publicity, games, and prizes. The Carnival is a fun way to get to know other parents and to enjoy family time with your children. Carnival shifts will be posted on the PTA website in early Spring.

EAGLE STORE

Eagle Store volunteers are responsible for selling Spirit Items to students at designated times and dates both prior to the start of the school day at the Armstrong Eagle Store and at special Armstrong events. This year's Eagle Store hours will be on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 7:50 am-8:10 am.

FIELD DAY

Volunteers are needed to work field games, lead teams, and monitor events. The Field Day Chairpersons recruit these volunteers in the Spring. The event lasts either throughout the morning or throughout the afternoon, depending on the grade level. Field Day is held on the last day of school.

NEW FAMILIES

This committee is responsible for welcoming new families to our school throughout the year. A Fall coffee is held shortly after school begins to welcome all new families. Ms. Cummins and the PTA President attend these gatherings to welcome and to share important information about Armstrong with our new parents.

ROOM PARENTS

Room Parents organize class parties and distribute important PTA and classroom information throughout the year via email. Serving as a Room Parent is a great opportunity to get to know your child's classmates, their parents, and your child's teacher. Sign-up to be a Room Parent online during BSSU or at the Eagle's Nest!

TEACHER APPRECIATION

This committee plans monthly treats and luncheons throughout the school year to express our gratitude to and show our appreciation for our teachers. This volunteer position offers an avenue to become acquainted with the teachers and staff at Armstrong.

YEARBOOK

The Yearbook Chair will compile the yearbook, which is distributed during the last week of school. If you snap any great pictures of Armstrong students at different events, please submit them to the Yearbook Chair.