Deretchin Elementary

Student/Parent Handbook Addendum

2026-2027 School Year

Deretchin Elementary
11000 Merit Oaks
The Woodlands, TX 77382

July 28, 2026

Dear Deretchin Families,

On behalf of the entire staff at Deretchin Elementary, I am thrilled to welcome you to the 2026–2027 school year! We are excited to open our doors and begin another incredible year of learning with our Deretchin Dragons.

At Deretchin, we believe that a strong partnership between home and school is essential to helping every child reach their highest potential. We look forward to working alongside you to create a positive and engaging educational experience for your child.

We encourage you to visit our school website regularly at **http://deretchin.conroeisd.net**, where you will find important announcements, upcoming events, and other valuable resources. This handbook addendum will also be available on our Deretchin website for easy reference throughout the year.

To help us ensure the safety and well-being of all students, please provide every available emergency contact number and contact person. If your phone number or other contact information changes during the school year, please notify our registrar, Cory Ognisty, at **cognisty@conroeisd.net** so that we can update our records promptly.

We are looking forward to a fantastic year filled with memorable experiences. Thank you for entrusting us with your child's education. If I can be of assistance in any way, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Tina Oliver
Principal

Deretchin Elementary Contact Information

Tina Oliver, Principal

Jennifer Gonzales, Assistant Principal, Grades: PK, 1st, 3rd, 5th	**Mary Ann Correa**, Counselor, Grades: 5th and 6th
Leah Slaughter, Assistant Principal, Grades: K, 2nd, 4th, 6th	**Jenna Hendon**, Counselor, Grades: PK, K, 1st, and 3rd
Kim Dale, Secretary	**Darcy Kieke**, Counselor, Grades: 2nd and 4th
Allyson Chaplin, Secretary	**Robby Bruner**, Nurse
Sonia Reyna, Receptionist	**Cory Ognisty**, Registration and Attendance

The following is important information to help our families throughout the year:

Prioritizing Safety

Providing a safe learning environment is at the forefront of everyone's mind. All doors are required to be locked at all times. During times when students are entering or exiting the building during arrival and dismissal, changing classes or when large events are scheduled, doors will be actively monitored by staff. All staff and visitors must wear a visible badge at all times. Visitors' badges will include a time and date stamp. ***For this reason, all visitors to our building must check in and check out at the front office and present their photo identification*** (please do not ask us to accept a picture of your ID or a passport). Guests will ring the bell by the front door, and the door will open via a buzzer by a staff member. Once inside the foyer, a staff member will open the second door to the front office area via a buzzer. We will also be addressing additional requirements from the state and monitoring updates to the best practices we already follow. Safety is our ultimate responsibility and takes all of us working together.

Daily Arrival

The start time of the school day and instruction is 7:50 am. ***To help lessen our car rider line, beginning on August 13, the second day of school, we will allow students to enter the building beginning at 7:15 am.*** We will have several staff members who will open the front door of the school and will allow students to sit in their designated grade level line in the cafeteria until 7:30 am. Please note that we will not have staff members available to open car doors in the car rider line, so your child will need to be able to exit the vehicle and walk to the front doors on their own, or you will need to park in the front parking lot, walk your child across the crosswalk, and your child may enter the building after you have crossed. Please note-we do have students who participate in choir, band, and orchestra who may attend sectionals at 7:00 am. These are the only students who will be allowed to enter prior to 7:15 am.

Our staff will begin their morning outside duty **at 7:30 am**. ***Parents may enter and exit through the front doors only*, with *the exception of the first day of school*.** Side doors are for teachers and staff. ***We understand that parents and students may be a little nervous on the first day of school, so you are welcome to walk your child in for the first day if needed***. After the first day, students will begin to learn how to get to their classrooms, and parents will no longer be permitted to walk students to class. Car riders, bikers, or walkers will enter one of the designated entrances along the front of the school. If they are a bus rider, they will enter the doors in the cafeteria. ***We will always have staff members on duty in the hallways to assist your child if needed.***

Announcements will start at 7:45 am and instruction begins at 7:50 am when the tardy bell rings. **Students not in the building by 7:50 am will be counted tardy**. We encourage students to arrive and enter classrooms by 7:50 am so that they don't miss announcements or feel rushed in preparing for their day. The car rider line starts moving at 7:30 am when the building opens. You are encouraged to allow for extra time in the morning. Heavy traffic and/or weather conditions will not excuse a child from being tardy. You should be particularly aware of your surroundings during student drop off as we are unloading buses, walkers, bike riders and cars at the same time. Please have your student ready to exit their vehicle immediately to ensure that we keep traffic moving.

We allow our families to park in the front parking lot until 7:40 am each morning. If you choose this option, please walk your child across the crosswalk. **The parking lot closes for entry promptly at 7:40 am each day.**

Daily Dismissal

The school day officially ends at 3:10 pm and the dismissal process begins at approximately 3:05 pm . *For approximately the first three days, all CISD campuses will begin dismissal about 10-15 minutes early to account for the additional time that may be needed to establish dismissal routines. Please be aware that the release times may fluctuate during the first week and second week of school. By Monday, August 17, routines and bus routes should be established, however, it is possible that an additional few days may be needed. We appreciate your patience.

Afternoon Dismissal

During afternoon dismissal, we will continue to use our tag system to help us account for all car riders, walkers, bikers, day care and bus riders. Each student will have a tag attached to his or her backpack with their own individual barcode. We will continue to use scanners to scan the barcodes each day and then we will upload the information into a computer program. Bus riders will have an additional tag called a SMART tag. You will need a school issued car rider sign to pick up your child in the car rider line. Any parent who does not have a car rider sign will be asked to park their car and wait until the pick-up line has dwindled (usually by 3:25). At that point, parents may enter the building with their photo identification to obtain a new car rider sign. To save you time and ensure the safety of your child, it is imperative that you have the car rider sign with you each time you come through the line. The sign should be prominently displayed through the entire line process and not

removed until your child has loaded your vehicle. **Please do not enter the Front Office between 2:50 pm and 3:15 pm to pick up your child**. Each staff member has a specific duty during this busy dismissal process. Interruption of these duties hampers our ability to dismiss all students correctly and safely. **If you need to change your child's normal mode of transportation, you must send a signed note to his or her teacher that morning, notifying them of the specific details**. Should an emergency occur, requiring transportation to be changed later in the day, you may ***email a signed request with a copy of your driver's license to contactderetchin@conroeisd. net***. To make the change by phone, you must provide the receptionist with the safety code word listed on your child's emergency card. Without this code word, a phone change will not be accepted. **Any changes in transportation must be received by 2:00 pm.** After this time, your child must ride his or her normal mode of transportation. Please know that requests to ride the bus home with friends will not be allowed. Due to our large population, there is not room to allow additional riders on bus routes.

Car Riders/Biker Walkers Important Information

Morning Car Line

- Parents should never get out of their vehicles while in the car line. If your child needs help unbuckling, please reach back to assist while staying in your vehicle. Our staff cannot assist with unbuckling 5-point harnesses, but we can assist with unbuckling seat belts and helping students out of the vehicle if needed.
- Students must exit the vehicle on the passenger side.
- Students will enter their grade level door. Signs will be posted outside.
- The entrances along the front of the school close each day at 7:50 am. Any students arriving after 7:50 am must enter through the main front office entrance.
- Parents should pull all the way up to keep the line moving (do not stop at grade level doors).

Afternoon Car Line

- Blank 2026-2027 car rider signs will be available at the front desk during the school year. Please write your last name, and the name/grade of each student in your family on ONE sign. Names must be written boldly and large enough to be seen from a distance (sharpies/markers recommended).
- In order to dismiss your child to the car line, you must have an official YELLOW Deretchin 2026-2027 car rider sign. Please display this sign prominently in your windshield from the moment you enter the driveway until your child is loaded in your car. This is essential so that our staff is able to ensure that each child is being loaded in the correct car.
- If the staff member calling the car line mispronounces your child's name, PLEASE correct them. Not only do we feel it is important to respect your child by pronouncing their name correctly, but we also want to make sure students clearly recognize their name when we are calling them. 🙂
- Parents should never get out of their vehicle while in the car line. Our staff will never dismiss car rider students to a parent on foot.
- Children must load vehicles on the passenger side. Please rearrange car seats as needed to make loading students on the passenger side possible and efficient.
- If your child needs help getting buckled, please pull into the parking lot after your child is loaded to help them. It is very important that we are able to keep the car line moving.
- If you do not have a YELLOW car rider sign, please park in the front parking lot and walk into the front office with your photo id. The front office staff will be able to give you a car sign if you need a new one. As a reminder, we do not dismiss students from the front office during dismissal until about 3:30 pm, after the car line finishes.

Parking During Arrival and Dismissal

- Please note that parking and walking your student across the crosswalk is not the preferred method of arrival. We have many staff members and students outside to help with the flow of the morning car line and to assist students into the building safely.
- During arrival, parents are allowed to park in the front parking lot and walk their child across the crosswalk to their designated entry door from 7:15 am-7:40 am. Parents may not park in the back parking lot during arrival.
- The front parking lot will be closed between 7:40-8:00 am. At the Merit Oaks Deretchin entrance, a staff member will place cones across the driveway blocking cars from entering at 7:40 am.
- During dismissal, parents are not allowed to park in the front or back parking lot to pick up their child as a car rider or biker/walker.
- Montfair Area: Please be aware that you may not park, pick up, or drop off on Montfair Park Circle, Planchard Circle, Honor Oaks Court, Planchard Court, Bonwick Court, Caelin Court, Colewood Court, and Montfair Boulevard between the hours of 7:15-8:30 am and 2:45-3:45 am. This is a safety hazard and there are signs posted indicating that this is not allowed.
- Innerwoods Area: Please be aware that you may not park, pick up, or drop off on Innerwoods Pl, Leith Mills Pl, Umbria Ln, Rosalinda Ln between the hours of 7:00-9:00 am and 2:00-4:30 pm. Signs are posted in the neighborhood with these times.
- Please do not park along Merit Oaks during arrival or dismissal to drop-off or pick up your child.

Biker/Walker Dismissal Reminders

- Biker Walker A students will be picked up at the bike rack by the dragon playground.
- Biker Walker B students will be picked up at the bike rack by the bus ramp.

School Zone Safety Tips

The speed limit in the Deretchin school zone is 20 mph. This is to ensure the safety of all of our community members during very busy times in the morning and afternoon. As families enter and exit the car line, please take care to drive slowly and carefully. In addition, cell phone use in a school zone is prohibited. As you enter areas around the school, please end your calls and put your phone away.

Severe Weather Dismissal:

We will continue to call for "Severe Weather Dismissal" on days when there is steady, heavy rain, thunder, and/or lightning in the area. If there is light rain falling, all bikers/walkers will be dismissed as usual. It would be a good idea for students who walk or ride their bike to have a raincoat to wear on these days as well as an umbrella. All bikers/walkers will have a predetermined alternate mode of transportation for "Severe Weather Dismissal" days ***noted on their dismissal tag.*** We will do our best to call for a "Severe Weather Dismissal" as soon as possible. Our goal is to make the decision by 2:50 pm. Please know that we will do our very best to make the appropriate decision, but that sometimes the weather can change right before dismissal or as soon as it begins. When we have severe weather dismissal, we will send out a school-wide message. All biker/walker students will have a "Severe Weather Dismissal" ***transportation form on file that will be provided by teachers during Meet the Teacher night.*** If your child is a biker/walker and you choose to meet them at the typical dismissal doors, please be sure to complete the form provided to you at Meet the Teacher and return to your child's teacher, as soon as possible, so that we will have this form on file.

Drop-Off Procedures for Forgotten Items

Please help your student be fully prepared for their day by ensuring that they have all needed materials (backpack, lunch, water bottles, etc.) before leaving for school in the morning.

To minimize interruptions to classrooms, please limit drop-offs to the following items:

- Water bottles and lunches may be placed on the Drop-Off Table before 10:00 am in the front entrance. These items should be labeled with your child's name and homeroom classroom to ensure proper delivery.
- If you need eye glasses delivered to your child, please do not put them on the drop-off table. Please bring them to the office staff for immediate delivery to your child.
- Any class work or homework that is dropped off will be placed in the teacher's mailbox to be picked up during the day.
- Helium balloons are not allowed inside the building.

Attendance Information

Please notify the attendance office within 24 hours of the student's absence. Reporting an absence:

- Use this Google Form: 26-27 Absence Form (Preferred method of notification)
- Report an absence by email: Please email the attendance office at cognisty@conroeisd.net to report an absence. Please include the student's name, student ID, and reason for the absence along with the parent or guardian's name.

State law requires that students be in attendance at least 90% of the days a class is offered (excused and unexcused absences combined) in order to receive credit or a final grade for that class. Please refer to the CISD Elementary and Intermediate Student Handbook for more complete information about the policies listed here.

With the exception of absences due to serious or life-threatening illnesses or related treatment, all absences, whether excused or unexcused, may be held against a student's attendance requirement.

Most Common Types of Absences:

1. Unexcused Parent contact absence (UPC) – the student does not attend school on a day or days and the parent calls or emails and notifies the school that they will not be in attendance within 48 hours from the absence. After 48 hours from the day of the absence, the code will not be changed. The absence still counts in the total number of absences as it relates to credit for a course and state law.
2. Unexcused absence (U) – the student does not attend school for a day or days and the parent does not notify the school that the student will not be in attendance. After 48 hours from the day of the absence, the code will not be changed. The absence still counts in the total number of absences as it relates to credit for a course and state law.
3. Doctor (DOC) – the student is absent, and the parent notifies the school and presents the school within 48 hours with a note from the doctor regarding the day or days the student will be absent from school for the specific immediate illness. After 48 hours from the day of the absence, the code will not be changed. Doctor's notes for multiple dates for chronic illnesses will not be accepted. Each doctor's note must correspond with an office visit. The absence still counts in the total number of absences as it relates to credit for a course and state attendance law.
4. Health Care Professional (HCP) – the student is absent for part of the school day to go to an appointment with a health care provider. The parent or student supplies a note from the doctor to the attendance office documenting the appointment time and date. The student is in attendance for part or parts of the school day. The student is then coded HCP and the absence does not count toward the number of absences as it relates to credit for a course and the state attendance law.
5. Other Excused Absence (E) - the student does not attend school on a day or days and the parent notifies the school that they will not be in attendance due to a reason not listed above that meets the exemptions to compulsory attendance criteria outlined in the CISD Elementary and Intermediate Student Handbook. The absence still counts in the total number of absences as it relates to credit for a course and state law.

Outlined below is the policy Deretchin Elementary will follow when handling absences:

- Three or more absences will result in a system generated warning email.
- Five unexcused absences will result in an attendance warning letter.
- Between five and ten unexcused absences will result in additional warning letters and phone calls from the assistant principal, principal, and/or counselor.
- If corrections are not made to improve attendance after the above measures, a court warning will notify the parent of the potential to be filed in a justice or municipal court. Parents may be criminally charged, or fined, if their child has additional unexcused absences.

Dress Code at Deretchin Elementary

We follow the CISD dress code as outlined in the CISD Elementary/Intermediate Student Handbook. The following guidelines are consistent with the CISD K-12 policy:

● Types of shorts not permitted: bicycle shorts, boxer shorts, and shorts that fit too tightly or do not provide **adequate** coverage.

● Since our students have PE daily, students are allowed to wear athletic shorts as long as they are long enough to provide **adequate** coverage during activities.

● No student may wear articles of clothing, including face masks, which display obscenities, advertise alcoholic beverages, narcotics or other prohibited substances. Clothing that depicts violence, weapons, and/or death, are prohibited.

● Clothing that exposes the midriff in any way is not allowed.

● Tank tops or basketball jerseys with large arm holes must be layered with a t-shirt underneath.

● Athletic-type tennis shoes are required for physical education class.

● Jeans, shorts, or long pants with holes above the mid-thigh are not allowed.

● Undergarments must be covered at all times.

● Off-the-shoulder or shirts with “spaghetti straps” are not permitted.

● Make-up is not allowed for any grade level.

● Hats or head coverings are not permitted unless for religious or medical reasons, designated school incentive days or as approved by the principal.

In short, our Deretchin dress code emphasizes comfort and modesty, acknowledging respect for the educational environment.

Student Electronic Devices

If a student brings an electronic device (cell phone, e-reader, smartwatches, etc.), they bring them at their own risk. The school is not responsible for any damaged, lost or stolen electronic devices.

CISD Electronic Device Guidelines:

- Cell phones and smartwatches may be used respectfully and responsibly before school and after school.
- Cell phones and smartwatches should not be used to capture video, audio, or images at school or on the bus.

- Cell phones and smartwatches should be set on silent mode and kept in backpacks, lockers, or other designated storage areas and should not be visible during school hours including instructional time, reward time, free time, lunch, and in the hallways.
- Use of cell phones and smartwatches may be permitted in extenuating circumstances with permission from a staff member. (ex. to notify parent/ guardian of a late bus)

Lunch Information

In order to establish routines in the cafeteria, parents will be able to join their child for lunch beginning **Monday, August 24.** We have designated "guest lunch tables" for you to have lunch with your child. We hope you will enjoy this special dining opportunity!

Lunch Schedule:

PK/K- 12:05	3rd- 11:15
1st- 12:25	4th-11:50
2nd- 12:40	5th-11:15
	6th-11:40

Cafeteria Behavior Expectations

We will continue to incorporate our school-wide cafeteria behavior expectations each day. If you are joining us for lunch, please encourage your child to follow these expectations while at the guest tables as well.

Celebrating Birthdays

Parents may bring a store bought treat to be shared at the end of the lunchtime. Please drop off birthday treats at the table in the front office. They will be delivered to your child.

School Meal Program

2026 – 2027 Meal Prices

Breakfast Meal Prices

• Student Breakfast $2.00

Lunch Meal Prices

• Student Lunch $3.20

Parents can pre-pay online for meal accounts at www.myschoolbucks.com.

Parents must complete an application for students to be eligible for free or reduced meals. The online and reduced application is available at www.myschoolapps.com.

Parties/Special Events

CISD has established guidelines for parties and special events. All items brought to school must be restaurant or store bought, not homemade. This is due to student allergies and safety guidelines.

Water Bottles

Children are encouraged to bring water bottles each day. Please clearly write your child's name on the bottle with a permanent marker. Students may refill their bottles during the day at one of our water bottle filling stations.

CISD Bus Transportation:

Conroe ISD provides bus service for students who live more than one mile from the school. If you would like more information on the bus system, please visit https://www.conroeisd.net/transportation/ for bus registration and routes. At the beginning of the school year, the scheduled pick-up and drop-off times may vary until the bus driver is able to establish a consistent routine.

Parent Portal:

CISD provides a system for parents to have online access to all of their child's class assignments, grades, attendance, discipline, schedules, progress reports, and report cards. Please visit https://www.conroeisd.net/parents/ to sign up. Furthering the educational partnership between parents and the District and in compliance with SB 3, parents can login to their student's learning management system (Canvas) and access electronic instructional materials through the SSO. To obtain your student's login information, log in to the Parent Portal and view your student's credentials in the section Student Username/Password.

Changes to Parent Information

If you have a change of address or phone number, please contact cognisty@conroeisd.net as soon as possible. It is important that the correct information is on file so that teachers can effectively communicate with you.

Deretchin School Clinic

We have a registered nurse and nurse's aide assigned to our campus. If your child needs to take any medications during the school day, you are required to bring the medication to the clinic. Children are not allowed to bring medication to school. If you have any questions, please email Mr. Bruner at jrbruner@conroeisd.net.

Picture Permission

If you do NOT wish for your child's name/picture to be included in the yearbook, newspaper articles, newsletter, or website, you will need to request this in writing within the first 10 days of school to our registrar, Cory Ognisty at cognisty@conroeisd.net.

Parent Information Night

Please mark your calendar for August 25 for PK-3rd/Life Skills/RISE and August 27 for 4th-6th from 5:00-6:00 pm for our Parent Information Night, where you will be provided with valuable information about Deretchin procedures and your child's specific classroom. Your attendance is very important. To ensure you get the most out of this meeting, we encourage this to be a parent-only event.

Parent Involvement

We LOVE parent support and encourage you to be involved here at Deretchin! Your homeroom teacher and Deretchin PTO will be sharing a variety of opportunities with you! In the meantime, please take a few minutes to complete the CISD Volunteer Application at https://apps.conroeisd.net/volunteer/. Without this completed application, you will not be allowed to volunteer in the school building. This includes being a guest reader, attending field trips, assisting with classroom activities, etc. ***This application must be completed at the beginning of each school year.***

Communication

"*The Deretchin Digest*" is the monthly newsletter for parents. It will be delivered to the email address on file on the first school day of each month. Please take time to read it as it will contain important school information. We will send updates as they come up during the school year.

Character Counts at Deretchin Elementary

As Deretchin Dragons, we strive to teach and enrich the "whole" child, not only through academics, but also through character education, social/emotional skills, and opportunities for developing habits of leadership. We believe strongly that "Academics + Character = SUCCESS", and our counseling program is designed to support this goal. Each month we will focus on one of our "Pillars of Character". The 8 pillars are Respect, Responsibility, Giving, Grit, Preparation, Gratitude, and Celebration. Each pillar is represented by a specific color (i.e. Respect pillar is yellow). Within each pillar are embedded specific "Habits" that teach students what that character trait "sounds like", "looks like", and "feels like".

The entire school community builds upon these traits and habits through modeling and reinforcing positive behaviors using "Yellow Tickets." Teachers will have drawings of tickets which are tied to rewards. Each month one student per homeroom will be chosen by their teacher to be honored at our "Spotlight" ceremony, which parents are invited to attend.

Our class meetings are a huge part of the character program, and set the tone for each day. These brief meetings are held in homeroom classes each morning after announcements, and focus on building relationships, trust, and a positive culture.

There are many opportunities for Deretchin students to grow in leadership skills including the Ambassador program, 3rd and 4th grade Character Club, 5th-6th grade Student Council and committees, just to name a few.

We all share a common language to teach and model good character. Everyone at Deretchin is a stakeholder in our character program!