

Dr. J. Michael McGrath Elementary School



21501 Deputy Jake Drive
Newhall, California 91321
661-291-4090

Parent/Student Information Guide 2024-2025



Every Student Matters, Every Moment Counts

Welcome to Dr. J. Michael McGrath Elementary School!

We are pleased to welcome you back to school! As part of our community of learners, both parents and students have important roles in ensuring that our school maintains a safe, healthy, and challenging learning environment that prepares all students for success in life. We know that working together as partners, every student has the opportunity to utilize their unique abilities to excel now and in the future.

This guide is designed to supplement the Newhall School District Parent-Student Handbook with information specific to McGrath. We want to ensure that we support you in meeting the high standards of citizenship and scholarship we set for all. If you have any questions at any time, please contact the school administration or your child's teacher.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Curtis
Principal

Mrs. Espinoza-Beltran
Assistant Principal

We look forward to working with you during another productive and positive school year!

Dr. J Michael McGrath Elementary School Mission Statement

The mission of Dr. J. Michael McGrath Elementary School is to create an environment that ensures successful learning for all students. We do this by focusing on state content standards, tailoring instruction to each student's instructional level, and providing comprehensive support to challenge our students to reach their academic potential. Our students become positive contributors to their community, now and in the future.

School Hours

Grade	Monday-Thursday	Friday
UPK and Kindergarten	8:00 AM – 1:55 PM	8:00 AM – 12:05 PM
1 st to 6 th Grades	8:00 AM – 2:45 PM	8:00 AM – 12:05 PM

Attendance

Attendance at school is very important. The law requires that all children under 17 years of age attend school daily. If an absence is unavoidable, please do one of the following:

- Bring a note from home stating the reason for the absence.
- Bring a doctor's note stating the reason for the absence.
- Call the school office with that information (661-291-4090).

Students arriving late to school must have an adult accompany them as they walk to the office for a tardy slip before going to the classroom. Administration closely monitors student attendance. If your child has excessive absences or tardies, excused or unexcused, the case may be reported to the county's student attendance review board for possible violation of compulsory education laws.

Arrival/Drop Off Procedures

Safety Supervisors monitor the front of the school during arrival time as well as the playground and multi-purpose room before school.

For safety reasons, students **may not** arrive on campus before 7:30 AM. **There is no supervision before 7:30 AM.** Starting at 7:30 AM, students may eat breakfast at school, or they may go to the playground. Students may not go to classrooms without a note from the teacher.

If a student routinely arrives before 7:30 AM, parents will be notified and required to correct the situation.

During arrival/drop off times, the parking lot is closed to all parents except those who have a handicapped placard and preschool parents who are dropping off a preschool child. These cars should display the McGrath Preschool Parking Permit on the dashboard of their car. Cars without a handicapped placard or McGrath Preschool Parking Permit will be asked to use the valet system.

Roller skates, rollerblades, roller shoes, or skateboards are not allowed on school campus. Students who violate this policy will have their equipment taken away and returned directly to parents.

Dismissal Procedures

At dismissal time each day students must immediately depart campus via car, bus, or walking. Unless accompanied by an adult, kindergarten students may not remain on campus to wait for upper grade siblings.

If your child does not ride the bus or use the valet system, he/she needs to walk home directly after school.

- Parents of walking students in Grades 1-6: Please wait for your child at the top of the driveway and meet them there as they exit the campus. Please do not wait in the hallways, parking lot, or on the playground.
- Parents of UPK and kindergarten students: Please wait for your child at the rotunda near the front of the school. You may not wait in the parking lot.
- Please obey all posted parking signs. Cars parked in “No Stopping” zones along Deputy Jake Drive will be ticketed by the Sheriff's Department.
- Please use the crosswalk when walking with your child. Failure to do so could result in a ticket from the Sheriff's Department.

The school parking lot is not available to parents for the purpose of dropping off or picking up children. This is for the safety of you and your children.

From:

- **7:30 AM – 8:15 AM** **Daily**
- **1:30 PM – 3:15 PM** **Monday-Thursday**
- **11:30 AM – 12:15 PM** **Fridays**

Only preschool parents who display the McGrath Parking Permit on their dashboard, school and district staff, and parents who have a meeting or appointment with a teacher or administration may enter the parking lot during these times. In addition, people with a handicap placard may enter the parking lot. Parking in the handicap parking spaces without a handicap placard may result in a ticket from the Sheriff's Department as well as revocation of parking lot privileges.

Please report in writing, and confirm with the teacher/office, any changes to a student's regular dismissal route. The classroom teacher must have that information in writing or the child will be sent home based on their regular schedule.

Rules for Arrival/Departure

	Be Safe	Be Responsible	Be Respectful
WALKERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross street at crosswalk only. • Walk with backpack on back. • Walk to the right side and hold the handrail on the hill. • 1st Grade: Wait with a school employee for an adult to escort you to the top of the hill to locate your parent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave your house early enough to arrive on time to school. • Watch for moving vehicles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow all directions from school personnel. • Do not walk across private property, through yards, or over fences, grass, shrubs or flowers.
VALET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exit and enter the vehicle at yellow line from passenger side. • Stay behind the yellow line when walking to or from the car. • Wait for an adult to escort you across the crosswalk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch for your car. • Sit down in the grade level area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a quiet voice. • Follow all directions from school personnel.
*BIKE RIDERS (4th-6th Grades only with parent permission)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep off busy streets. • Use turn and stop signals. • Walk the bicycle across busy streets. • Keep bicycle in good repair. • Look both ways before entering the street. • Wear a Snell or ANSI approved bicycle helmet when riding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obey all traffic laws, signs, and signals. • Ride single-file, one person per bicycle. • Ride on the right side of the street. • No racing, tricks or “showing off.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk the bicycle when entering or exiting school grounds. • Walk the bicycle on sidewalks. • Give the right-of-way to other vehicles and pedestrians. • Be courteous at all times.
*BUS RIDERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No eating or chewing gum. • Hands and arms inside the bus at all times. • No animals, insects, glass, or breakable containers on the bus. • Sit at all times unless entering or exiting the bus. • Keep aisles clear when the bus is moving. • Cross in front of the bus only. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive at the bus stop five minutes before departure. • No shouting, loud talking, throwing objects, scuffling, playing, or fighting on the bus or at the bus stop. • Permission to leave or board a bus, other than the normal stop, must be received in writing, and approved by the school office. • Open/close windows or emergency doors with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the bus driver’s directions immediately. • Be silent when lights are flashed on inside the bus. • Do not shout or make remarks to pedestrians or motorists. • Form a single file line and calmly enter or exit the bus. • Do not play in the streets, in the bus line, or on private property.

		bus drivers permission.	
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*Students who abuse bicycle or bus rules may lose their riding privileges.

The McGrath Valet Program

The valet program is an efficient way to drop off or pick up children without having to exit your vehicle. We encourage all parents who drive to McGrath to use this program.

Valet During Arrival:

Safety Supervisors monitor the valet program. There are two driveway lanes in the front of the school. Students may be dropped off in either lane. A Safety Supervisor will assist students in crossing to the main building. Once students in 1st through 6th grades exit their cars, they go directly through the main building to the playground or cafeteria. UPK/kindergarten students go directly to the cafeteria for breakfast or to the UPK/kindergarten playground after exiting their vehicles. A Safety Supervisor stands at the UPK/kindergarten gate to make sure all UPK/kindergartners arrive safely. A Safety Supervisor will escort UPK/kindergarten students from the cafeteria to the UPK/kindergarten playground.

Valet During Dismissal:

When you arrive for dismissal, please join the single valet line on the west side of Deputy Jake Drive. A member of the school staff will signal the first car in the line when it is time to start the valet. If you arrive after the line has started moving, please join the end of the line.

Please do not make a left hand turn into the parking lot in front of the moving valet line. If you attempt to do so, or cut in front of the line, school staff will provide your license plate information to the Sheriff's Deputy assigned to the school. Failure to follow directions from school personnel may result in your vehicle being restricted from campus.

UPK/kindergarten students are picked up by the kindergarten gate.

Friday Dismissal:

On Fridays, all students dismiss at the same time. The Express Lane will be designated for upper grade students only (3rd to 6th grade). If an upper grade student has siblings in UPK, kindergarten, first, or second grade, then the family will need to use the regular valet lane.

Express Lane:

The Express Lane is for students in grades 3rd to 6th. Students in the Express Lane have demonstrated their ability to follow directions and wait patiently. At the end of the first week of school, teachers will send home invitation letters to students they feel meet the criteria. Once parent permission for the Express Lane has been received, the child will be allowed to begin using the Express Lane.

Express Lane cars must wait in the regular valet line until the entire line begins moving. Please DO NOT double park on Deputy Jake Drive or on the school driveway. Fire regulations require us to leave the driveway and neighborhood streets unblocked at all times. Express Lane privileges may be revoked if students or adults fail to follow directions from school staff.



Our School Office

Office hours are from 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Messages may be left for school personnel after office hours (telephone number 661-291-4090).

Students may ask permission from a teacher or playground supervisor to come to the office for health-related issues. The office telephone may be used by students in emergencies. We ask that parents make all after-school arrangements before students arrive at school. Encourage your student to take playground issues to the playground supervisors first. The supervisors will then determine if an office visit is necessary.

Lost and Found articles are kept in the hallway by the cafeteria. Please check there for backpacks, jackets, lunchboxes, etc. Lost money or valuable items will be held in the office.

Our Cafeteria

Breakfast and lunch is served daily to all students at no cost. Breakfast is served from 7:30 AM to 7:55 AM. Lunch is served during their lunch period. All food is to be consumed in the cafeteria before going to the classroom or playground.

Our Library/Resource Center

Students may visit the library with their classes or during recess and lunch if they have a pass from their teacher. Students misplacing or damaging library materials will be responsible for the cost to replace the materials.

Our Playground

Recess is a wonderful opportunity for physical activity. Students may participate in an organized game either on the blacktop or on the field. Playground equipment stays in those areas (no bouncing balls on buildings or in hallways). In order to assure the safety of all students, students may not climb trees, fences, or backstops, or participate in any activity involving physical contact between students (such as wrestling or tag). Snacks are eaten in the cafeteria, and chewing gum is not allowed on the school campus. Students who create an unsafe environment for themselves or others may be removed from the playground for a period of time.

Campus Expectations

ALWAYS be “McGrath Proud” by Following Directions the first time given.
To be followed in ALL areas at ALL times:

- Be Respectful
- Be Responsible.
- Be Safe - Keep hands and feet to yourself

Teachers, administration, and school staff will be fair and consistent when enforcing school expectations. Please refer to the NSD Parent Student Handbook for information on our district-wide progressive discipline plan.

Area	Be Safe & Outstanding	Be Responsible	Be Respectful & Polite
Station 1:	Use sidewalks and crosswalks.	Watch for moving vehicles.	Follow all directions and be respectful to all staff members.
Parking Lot, Arrival, Dismissal	Students must be escorted to and from the parking lot by an adult.	Arrive before 8:00 AM.	
	Cross street ONLY with crossing guard.	Walk home promptly after school.	
	Walk bike up and down sidewalk (4th – 6th only).		
	Enter and exit vehicle from the sidewalk.		
	All students wait at gate for yard supervisor until 7:30 AM.		
	Walk, backpacks on back, with teacher at all times.		
	Sit in designated area, by grade level, for valet pick up, quietly.		
	Stay behind yellow line.		
	Enter stopped vehicle on passenger side.		
Station 2:	Walk all the way to side at all times.	Stay on the sidewalks.	Use quiet voice
Breezeways, Hallways, Sidewalks, Stairs	Allow adults to pass.	Walk quietly, eyes facing forward, on a line (on the ground).	Walk slowly
	Always stay close to the rail.	K-2: hands on hips, 3-6: hands at sides.	
	Keep one hand on railing.	Take one stair at a time.	
	Walk at all times in single file lines.		
Station 3:	Sit quietly on your bottom.	Focus on your role (whether it's as an audience member or eating).	Applaud respectfully when appropriate.
Assemblies &	Wait for a teacher to dismiss you.	Clean up after yourself.	Keep your eyes on the

Cafeteria			speaker & face forward.
	Keep all food to self.	Enter and exit in quiet lines.	Do not save seats.
			Use quiet voices.
Station 4:	Keep bathroom clean and dry.	Use bathroom pass.	Knock on a stall before entering.
Bathroom & Drinking Fountain (playground/recess)	Wash hands with soap.	Two or fewer students in the restroom at a time.	Give others privacy.
	Only use necessary amounts of toilet paper.	Return to class promptly.	Use quiet voices.
	Keep feet on the floor.	Use bathroom for bathroom purposes only.	
		Throw all trash in garbage.	
Drinking Fountains	When outside, wait your turn at the end of the blacktop.	Take a 5 second drink.	Wait patiently.
	Keep your hands and feet to yourself.	Be finished before the line-up whistle.	
Station 5: Office/Library	Keep hands and feet to yourself.	Use office pass (office referral slip) at all times.	Use quiet voices.
	Walk at all times.	Use shelf markers when browsing for books.	Wait your turn.
	Use chairs and tables appropriately.	Use computers, books, and other materials appropriately.	Use kind words and actions.
		Obtain permission to use any equipment in the library or the office.	Respect property-yours and others.
		No food, drinks, or gum.	Be a good listener.
Playground	Walk to and from the playground.	Follow the established rules for all games.	Include everyone.
	Use proper language on the playground.	Be involved in an acceptable game or in the quiet area.	Play fairly.
	Stay within designated play areas.	Play in your designated grade level area.	Use good sportsmanship and appropriate language
	ONLY 1st-3rd graders may use the play structure before school.	Use playground equipment appropriately.	Address safety supervisors by Mr. or Ms.

	Use stairs to enter and exit field.	Check in/out equipment from ball cart.	Use quiet voices when near classrooms.
	Walk around activities and games.		BE KIND and FAIR.
	No play fighting or tag games.		
	Freeze at the bell, walk to your line at the whistle.		
	Children with casts, or ACE bandages need to go to the MPR.		
Disaster Drills	For earthquake, duck under table, cover neck, and hold table leg.	Stay silent.	Follow directions from all adults.
	At signal, walk silently, facing forward in a single line to designated area	Wait to be dismissed.	
	Keep hands and feet to yourself.		
	When a teacher calls your name, say "here."		

School-Wide Safety

McGrath Elementary is a closed campus. Parents and visitors must check in at the school office and present a picture identification. Parents will be given a Raptor System visitor badge before entering the campus. All school personnel at McGrath Elementary wear and can be easily identified by their school identification badges.

If a student needs to leave the campus before regular dismissal time, an adult listed on the student's emergency card may sign the student out in the office. Students are not permitted to leave campus early without an adult.

Students requiring medication during the school day will take the medication in the health office. Medication may be dispensed only with a written request from the student's doctor. Students may not bring any other type of medicine onto the school campus.

In case of accidents, students requiring medical attention will be sent to the office, and parents will be notified. If serious injury has occurred, the school may also call for an ambulance. Please leave pets at home, unless special permission has been obtained from the office.

Every month, the whole school participates in an emergency drill. During a drill, everyone is required to exit the school building and walk to assigned areas on the recess yard. Silence is required during the entire drill so that teacher instructions are easily heard.

Due to safety concerns, rolling backpacks are not allowed on campus.

Students threatening the safety of other students through verbal or physical harassment can be suspended for these activities. Students can also be suspended for bringing chemicals, tobacco products, matches or lighters onto the school campus. Vandalizing school equipment or property can also result in suspension as well as paying to replace the damaged items. Additionally, **guns or knives will not be tolerated at school, even if they are toys. Students bringing any type of gun or knife to school will be suspended.**

Dress Code

Please refer to the NSD Parent Student Handbook for information on our District dress code. Please remember that closed-toe shoes must be worn at all times, except for medical necessity.

Cell Phone Policy

Students may bring cell phones onto campus as long as the phones are turned off and stay in student backpacks. Students may use cell phones to make calls when they are off school grounds. Students whose cell phones ring in class or who use their cell phones on campus will have their phones confiscated. Parents will need to come to the office to pick up confiscated phones. Cell phones can be prohibited from campus if a child repeatedly disregards the school policy.

Home/School Communication

Parents may e-mail their children's teachers or contact them by phone before or after school hours. Please check student backpacks daily for information—this is the most common way teachers send information home. Report cards will be given out three times during the year, and parents will have two opportunities for formal parent/teacher/students meetings. Back-to-School Night, Open House, and other evening meetings provide additional opportunities for parents to become informed about student progress. McGrath is proud to have an updated website. The website provides parents another way to contact teachers through email, view upcoming events and obtain information throughout the year. In addition, there will be regular messages sent home via telephone, text, and email. Parents are also encouraged to join the Parent Teacher Association, School Site Council, and/or the English Learner Advisory Committee.

Electric Scooters

For the safety and well-being of all our students, electric scooters are not allowed on campus. It's important to note that California state laws impose specific regulations on the use of electric scooters:

Helmet Requirement: Riders under 18 years old must wear a helmet.

Age Restriction: Riders must be at least 16 years old and have a valid driver's license.

Sidewalk Prohibition: Riding on sidewalks is not allowed.

Given these regulations and the potential hazards, we ask all parents and guardians to ensure that their children use alternative, safer methods of transportation such as walking, biking (with proper safety gear), or riding in a car.