

Gene Witt Elementary School

Student & Parent Handbook

2024-2025

060324



Mission Statement: Gene Witt Elementary School will work together to assist all students in reaching their highest potential academically and behaviorally with respect for others while fostering life-long learning.

Vision Statement: Gene Witt Elementary School will be an exemplary school, developing life-long learners, morally driven to serve and make a positive impact in a competitive global society.

Gene Witt Elementary
Where students and staff will always be our 'why' as we live
above the line!

Message from the Principal:

Welcome to Gene Witt Elementary! We look forward to having your family with us for the 2024-2025 school year. We are confident that we are going to have a successful year of learning and making memories together. Please take the time to acquaint yourself and your child with the contents of this handbook. It will serve as a reference for information throughout the year allowing students and parents to have a clear understanding of school policies. In addition, please visit the following link to access the SDMC Student Code of Conduct:

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

Education should be a cooperative effort between home and school. Research supports the notion that optimal school success is achieved through frequent and open communication among teachers, staff, and parents regarding student progress. If you have questions throughout the year, please begin by contacting your child's teacher first. Often, an email or quick phone call can answer any misconceptions or concerns. If your concerns remain unresolved, please contact the school, and ask to speak with a school counselor, student support specialist, or administrator for further assistance. We will be glad to assist you.

There are several ways we communicate with families so you can stay up to date with the many activities at Gene Witt. Our school uses electronic communication in the form of email and phone notifications, PTO and School Facebook sites, our school website, PTO newsletters, informational flyers, Peachjar electronic flyers as well as Class Dojo.

Thank you for supporting your child's success at Gene Witt. We look forward to working with you as partners in education to help every student at Witt Elementary achieve their goals and pursue excellence.

It is going to be a great year!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Connie Dixon, M.Ed.

Principal

dixonc@manateeschools.net

Live Above the Line!



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Ways to Stay Informed!

Witt Elementary School Website

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

Witt Elementary School Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/witteagles>

Witt Elementary School PTO Facebook Page—*must join to view*

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/3430536277234828>

School District of Manatee County

<https://www.manateeschools.net/Page/1>

School Hours

Student Hours: 8:25 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Front Office Hours: 7:45 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

*The first bell rings at 8:20 a.m. indicating students have five minutes to get to class before he/she is marked tardy after the 8:25 a.m. tardy bell.

Important Phone Numbers		
Witt Elementary Main School Number: (941) 316-8245		
Name	Position	Extension
Connie Dixon	Principal	81001
Karen Barrett	Assistant Principal	81002
Amy Lindsey	Student Support Specialist K- 5	81015
Cynthia Deras	School Counselor K- 5	81007
Lisa Blakemore	Senior Secretary	81003
Amie Golden	Registrar	81006
Megan Brown	Attendance Clerk	81000
Beverly Jackson	Guidance Clerk	81008
Lenny Draper	Head Custodian	81069
Carmen Palacios	Cafeteria Manager	81013
Susan Wheeler	School Nurse	81010
Angela Nowakowski, LPN	Clinic Nurse	81011
Witty Kids	After/Before School Care	81014
Colleen Inners	Media	81063

District Phone Numbers
The School District of Manatee County: (941) 708-8770
Elementary Director: Dr. Annette Codelia (941) 708-8770
Bus Transportation: (941) 708-8800
To Report an Absence: (941) 741-3648 and press 8
*Please make every effort to contact the office by 8:25 a.m. if your child will be absent. This request is made for the protection of your child.

Attendance

Florida Compulsory School Law (F.S. 1003.21) states all children must attend school regularly during the entire school term.

Student Absences: Please call the school by 8:25 a.m. if your child will be absent. This request is for your child's safety and informs us that your child is safe at home.

By noon each day, if we have not been notified of your child's absence, a Blackboard Connect phone message will call you with an automated message stating that your child is absent. If your child is absent and the school has not been notified, these absences will be marked unexcused.

Convenience Absence: Sometimes parents request that a child be allowed to miss school for trips of various sorts. While in many cases there may be value derived from these trips, please understand that such absences are recorded as unexcused. If such an absence does occur, the student is required to make up the work missed. A record of absences is reported to parents at the close of each quarter and those absences will show as unexcused on the child's permanent record. Student attendance is monitored daily through our Student Information System.

Tardies: Being late to school disrupts the instructional program for not only the tardy student, but for the teacher and other students in his/her class. A record of tardies is reported to parents at the close of each quarter and is recorded on the student's permanent record. The first bell rings at 8:20 a.m. giving students a five-minute warning to get to class. The tardy bell rings at 8:25 a.m. Please be sure your child arrives at school in enough time to get to his or her classroom before the tardy bell rings. Students that are not in their classroom by 8:25 a.m. will be considered tardy.

Early Dismissals/Early Student Pick-up: For safety reasons, students will not be dismissed from their classrooms after 2:45 p.m. If a parent comes after 2:45 p.m., we will ask you to wait in the car rider line until the bell rings.

Under no circumstances will a teacher release a student to a parent from the classroom.

Student "Sign-Out" Procedures: Prior to a child's release during the school day, individuals are required to:

1. Be an approved person listed as a pick-up person on the student's bio form.
2. Show proper identification: a valid Florida Driver's License, State of Florida Identification Card, or a valid driver's license or state identification card from any of the other states in the United States of America.
3. Sign the child out in the office.
4. Wait in the front office for the child.

No child is to leave the school area or a classroom with a visitor or parent 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 information form in the office. Students must exit through the office double doors.

Refer to the Manatee Schools Student Code of Conduct for more detailed attendance information.

Communication

Changes in address or phone: It is crucial that you notify the school registrar at ext. 81006 to request a **Student Information Change form** if you move addresses or change your contact information, including a change of email or phone. If you move, you must notify the school within five days of your move. If you have moved out of Witt's attendance zone, in many cases your child may remain at Witt through the rest of the school year, but district transportation may not be provided. If it is discovered that you have moved and not provided notification, your child could be assigned to an alternative school or considered to be "found out of our attendance area". This could mean an immediate change for your child.

Emergency Contact List/Pick Up List: The enrolling parent is strongly encouraged to list all possible adults that may need to pick up your child throughout the school year. **There is no limit to the number of names that you provide to pick up your child and it's best to do this at the beginning of the year.** When you need to add a contact during the year a form must be completed. This form can be requested from the office and then the form will populate in your FOCUS account. It is important for parents to understand that children are easily confused by frequent changes in their routines. By being consistent in the method of transportation for your child, you will ensure a safe arrival home and your child will feel more secure knowing their daily routines. **Please know that this policy is for the safety of your child and that we are not permitted to release your child to anyone that is not on the approved list.**

Withdrawal Procedures: If it becomes necessary for you to withdraw your student from Witt Elementary School, we would appreciate you providing us notification 3 days in advance. This way, the classroom teacher can gather all the things that the student will need upon leaving our school and parents can sign the withdrawal form. Please remember, before you leave, to return all library books, textbooks, school materials and check cafeteria balance. You may contact our school registrar, Amie Golden at 741-3628 x 81006, for more information on withdrawal procedures.

Backpack Tags: The first day of school students will receive a color band to attach to their backpacks indicating how they will go home. Pre-K and Kindergarten will have their names and teacher names written on their backpack tags. Leave these tags on all year.

Morning Arrival/Drop-Off Procedures

Car Riders: Procedures for drop-off include following the signs for the car drop offline. Remain in your vehicle and have your child exit the car from the passenger side. Please remain in the car as you drop your child off in the morning. For your child's safety, please also be sure you only drop your child off at the designated

locations. **For the safety of our students, children must be accompanied by an adult when walking through the parking lot or crossing the car line.**

Parking Lot Reminders: When arriving at school, parents are requested to follow the traffic patterns and not cut across the grass. This will help ensure everyone's safety and respect for school property. Please Park in designated parking spaces only. **Please be sure to have your child use the crosswalks when walking from the parking lot to the school building.** Children may not be dropped off or picked up in the parking lot and left to walk unattended. Parents may not park along Rye Road as the Manatee County Sheriff's Department has informed the school that tickets will be issued if cars are parked along the road.

Bike Riders/Walkers: All bicycles will be kept at the north or south bike rack closest to the direction the student rides home. Students will need to bring a lock to secure their bikes since this is not a secured area. Helmets will be kept with your bikes and are required on school premises. Walkers/bike riders will walk along the sidewalk to enter the building closest to the crosswalk and report to breakfast and/or to their designated area. **Only students are allowed** past the crosswalk at arrival and dismissal time to assure the safety of all students. No motorized bikes, scooters or motorcycles are to be ridden by students on school grounds.

Entering the Building: Students should arrive no earlier than 7:55 a.m. Students who need to be dropped off prior to 7:55 a.m. must be enrolled in our **Witty Kids Care** before school program as supervision is not provided prior to 7:55 a.m. Car riders, north walkers and bike riders will enter through our side parking lot gates. South walkers and bike riders will enter through the school front gate closest to the front office.

Breakfast: Once a student enters the building, they may choose to go to the lunchroom for breakfast or to their class holding area outside their classroom. Breakfast is free for all of our students and will be served and eaten in the cafeteria. Students who do not choose to get breakfast are expected to go to the assigned hallway where there is a designated location for them to sit with their classmates. While in the hallways, students will sit quietly and read while they wait for school to begin.

Dismissal/Pick-Up Procedures

Transportation Changes: If it is necessary to change your child's mode of transportation, please send a note with your child in the morning. For safety reasons we never take a child's word that they are changing their transportation home for the day. You must send a note in the planner or attached to the planner that is dated and explains how your child's transportation will be changed for the day. Transportation changes may not be communicated through Class Dojo as the teacher may not see the change prior to dismissal.

Early Pickups: If it is necessary to pick your child up early from school, he/she must be picked up prior to 2:45 p.m. for safety reasons. Students will not be called from class after 2:45 p.m. as we will be preparing for dismissal. If a parent comes after 2:45 p.m., we will ask you to wait in the car rider line until the bell rings.

Emergencies: In the event of a true emergency, please call the main office at extension 81000 or 81008 by 2:30 p.m. and speak to someone directly and we will do our best to work with your situation. **Do not** leave a voice message. We ask that you do this at least thirty minutes before dismissal. Without such notification, your child will be sent home the usual way.

Bike Riders 3:10 p.m.: Students must use sidewalks provided to exit school grounds. Bike riders must **walk bikes** off school property and as required by law, should always wear a helmet. Bike riders are expected to follow bicycle safety rules.

Walkers 3:10 p.m.: Students are expected to go directly home after school. Staff will assist students as they approach the car line from the covered Kinderdome. For safety and security reasons, parents are not allowed to pick up students from the school parking lot. Students are expected to show courtesy to our neighbors by respecting private property, walking along sidewalks, and by speaking courteously to adults. **Students who are designated as walkers have permission from their family to walk home independently.** If a parent chooses to have their child meet them at the lake, fire station or any other destination, it is the parent's sole responsibility to be in that area to meet their child and the school will have no other responsibility in ensuring student pick-up. If you choose this pick-up procedure, please practice with your child what to do if for some unforeseen reason you are not there on time one day. We never want a child to be in a position where he or she is afraid and unsure of how to get home safely. If you are meeting your child at the lake or fire station, do not park in our school parking lot.

Pets on Campus: Please do not bring animals to pick-up areas, as they are not permitted on school grounds.

Car Riders 3:15 p.m.: Students will be sitting in our covered Kinderdome while waiting to be called for pick up in the car rider loop. Please remember to place your car tag identification sign (provided by the school) on the dash of your car every day, so that we may identify you quickly. Please leave it displayed until your child is in your vehicle. We will provide each family with multiple car tags to ensure an authorized person is picking up your child. The left lane is for parking lot access only. Please always stay in your vehicle.

Bikes/Scooters: Students traveling by bike or scooter must walk their bike/scooter on and off of campus. For your child's safety, a helmet is strongly recommended.

Seatbelt Assistance: If your child needs assistance buckling their seatbelt, please follow these procedures: Continue to pick up your child in the Car Rider line. Once

your child is in the car, please continue to exit pulling up to the closed gate that has access to the front parking lot to buckle your child in properly. This will help us avoid delays in the car line.

Bus Riders 3:15 p.m.: All parents of students requiring bus transportation must complete a registration form at "Register to Ride" every year. Please visit <https://www.manateeschools.net/register toride> to reserve a spot on the bus for your child/children. At dismissal, students that ride a bus will be seated according to their bus number/color in an indoor hallway. Each bus has been assigned a different color. Bus students will have a colored wristband attached to their backpack, which corresponds to the bus they ride. As students board their bus, staff members ensure they are boarding the correct bus by checking the colored band on their backpack. In addition, student ID's will need to be scanned as they enter the bus. Please keep these ID's attached to backpacks. Bus riders will be expected to follow the District's Student Code of Conduct.

School Bus Procedures: Safety on the bus depends on the cooperation of each child. Bus drivers will review safety procedures on the bus during the first week of school. When students fail to cooperate with the bus driver, parents will be notified via a courtesy note and/or a bus referral. The privilege of riding the bus may be suspended. We suggest that parents wait at designated bus stops in the morning and meet students in the afternoon to ensure safe practices are being followed. Please see the District Code of Student Conduct.

Witty Kid 3:15 p.m.: Our extended day program is called Witty Kids. Program hours for morning care are 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and afternoon care is 3:15-6:00 p.m. Students who are designated to go to Witty Kids cannot be picked up during our regular dismissal time. Pick up begins at 4:00 p.m. For more information, please call Kim Hoy at 941-741-3628 ext. 81014.

Heavy Rainy Days and Lightning Dismissal: If there is heavy rain and/or lightning at dismissal, please be patient as the safety of all students is our number one priority. In the event of heavy rain/lightning, we will stop dismissal until conditions improve. If conditions do not improve by 2:55 p.m., all walkers and bike riders will follow car rider procedures. A Blackboard Connect message will be sent to notify parents if there is a change in dismissal. For safety and security reasons, no students will be released to parents that walk up from the parking lot. **Note: If there is only light rain and no lightning, students will be released as walkers.**

Parent Involvement

Visitors: At Witt Elementary School, family involvement is strongly encouraged. We welcome parents/guardians and other relatives at our school. Please understand for the first few weeks of school there will not be visitors for lunch to allow staff to establish routines and safety procedures. When you arrive on campus for lunch,

conferences, and special events during school hours, please report to the front office with a valid Florida driver's license, State I.D., valid driver's license from another state, or valid passport and sign in through our Raptor ID system. A visitor badge will be provided and must be worn on chest the entire time a visitor is on campus. Note that you are expected to be on campus for the purpose indicated on your badge. Please respect the designated planning times provided to teachers for preparing their classroom for learning by making an appointment. We ask that if you require extended conversation with a staff member you request a conference outside the student day so our staff members can remain focused on educating and supervising our students. Before you leave, please return to the office to sign-out and exit the office double doors. Parents who want to visit the classrooms must make arrangements with the teacher at least one day prior to the visit.

Volunteers -Our school needs and welcomes volunteers! If you are interested in volunteering, please email genewittpto@gmail.com. Note that district policy prohibits volunteers from being unsupervised with students unless they have completed a level 2 screening which requires fingerprinting and an extensive background check. Click here to complete the volunteer application required by the district: <https://apps.raptortech.com/Apply/MjQ2Mzplbi1VUw==>

Volunteers should be 100% focused on assisting in the area they are helping; therefore, no younger siblings are allowed to accompany a volunteer. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Lisa Blakemore at extension 81003 to learn more about the volunteer application process.

Ways to Volunteer!

- Volunteers can assist teachers in providing more individualized instruction
- Strengthen school-community relations through positive contributions
- Assist with monitoring the cafeteria
- Volunteer for classroom projects, school events and PTO events
- Assist the media specialist in the library

Get involved on PTO or SAC!

Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO): When a child is registered at Witt Elementary School, his or her family automatically becomes a member of our Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO). There are many ways for our families to become involved in our school community. For more information about Witt's PTO, the by-laws, etc. please check out <http://www.genewittpto.com/>.

School Advisory Council (SAC) : As required by Florida Statute every school must have a School Advisory Council (SAC). The SAC is a governmental body formed for the purpose of advising the principal on policies and procedures at the school, which help ensure that every student is meeting with success. As such, the SAC must abide by all Florida Sunshine laws. This group is also responsible for approval of the School Improvement Plan and the expenditure of school improvement funds budgeted to every school, which must be spent on school improvement. In addition, the SAC approves the spending plan for any A+ Recognition dollars awarded by the state for school grades. The makeup of the SAC is defined in statute and must be representative of the school demographics. It is to be comprised of the principal, teachers, parents, support employees, and other business and community members. According to statute, the majority of the members of the SAC at any school may not be employees of the school district. All positions are elected positions except for the principal and community representative, which is assigned by the school principal.

Wellness and Safety

School Clinic: The school clinic is available for students who become ill or are injured during the school day. If the illness or injury is of such a nature that the student needs to go home, the parent will be notified and be expected to plan for the child to be picked up in a timely manner from school. The telephone number for the Witt's clinic is 741-3628 extension 81011. Please do not send a sick child to school so as not to spread illness through classrooms. Additionally, we do not have facilities to care for sick children. Note: Per state requirements, we must receive approval to treat your child. Information will be sent home with directions on opting out.

For children to receive medication during school hours, the following guidelines must be followed:

1. Only prescription medicine will be given. Over the counter medicine is not permitted without a prescription from a physician.
2. The medication shall be supplied by the parent or guardian in person in a childproof container, bearing the prescription, child's name, attending physician, the name of the medication, the amount to be given, the frequency of administration, and any special instructions.
3. All medications to be administered in school to an elementary student must be delivered to the school by a parent or guardian. When presented in the school office, parents or guardians must fill out the "Authorization for Medication Form" before the medication is given. *Sample bottles of medication must be accompanied by a written prescription and labeled with the child's name.

4. The parent and/or physician should make school personnel aware, in writing, of symptoms or possible reactions relating to the medication or lack of medication.
5. No medicine for acute or contagious illness should be given in schools. Children should be home under these conditions.

Emergency Drills-Safety: The safety of our students and staff is a top priority. The first two weeks of school our school participated in a school-wide safety unit introducing students to all the drills through conversation, literature, and practice. Throughout the school year, we will conduct a series of emergency drills that will include fire, tornado, school bus, shelter in place, and intruder drills (also known as lockdown drills). We want our students to know how to respond if a situation arises and will handle these drills calmly and with sensitivity. Classroom teachers and administration will talk students through our safety procedures while considering their age and needs. Our goal is to lessen anxiety for our students and staff should a situation occur, and have safe practices become routine. Better to be prepared than scared!

Fortify: All Manatee County schools utilize FortifyFL. <https://getfortifyfl.com/> Fortify is a suspicious activity reporting tool that allows families and students to instantly relay information to appropriate law enforcement agencies and school officials.

Student Identification Badges: First badge of the year is issued free of charge. Per District Policy, student identification badges must be worn at school for safety reasons. They are also used for bus transportation. The charge is \$3 for replacement badges should a student lose or misplace theirs.

Cafeteria

Payment Options: 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. Breakfast is still free this year for all students. Student lunch costs \$2.75. You may wish to send money for your child to purchase additional snacks, entrees or beverages.

Fast and convenient online payments can be made with a credit card or debit card at www.schoolcafe.com Cash or check may be sent to school in an envelope labeled as "Cafeteria Money". Your child's name, grade, and your child's teacher's name should also be clearly written on the front of the envelope. Checks should be made out to Witt Elementary School.

Please be sure the check includes Student(s) name and ID number in memo line of your check. All checks must include name, address, and phone number.

These envelopes should be turned into the classroom teacher. All money sent

will be applied to the student's account, as we cannot return change. If you have any questions about your child's account, please call the Cafeteria Manager, Carmen Palacios at extension 81013.

FREE Daily Breakfast: Breakfast is served every morning from 7:55 – 8:20 a.m. in the cafeteria. All Manatee County School District students may receive free breakfast daily at no charge if they choose to eat in the cafeteria. All students wanting to have breakfast should report directly to the cafeteria upon arriving at school and should arrive to school prior to 8:15 a.m. in order to have enough time to eat before students are expected to enter their classrooms. After eating their breakfast, students report to their class holding area in our school hallways with adult supervision.

Parents/Guardians Eating Lunch at School: We welcome dining guests from the Tuesday after Labor Day until the last day in April. *We recommend arriving 5 – 10 minutes prior to your child's lunch time so you can be checked in and waiting for when your child's line passes you.* When parents come for lunch, you may only sit with your child at the designated outside visitor tables—Eagle Dining. Parents/Guardians visiting for lunch must meet their child outside the lunchroom and may only visit with their child. Parents may not accompany their child to recess or back to the classroom. Parents will sign in at the front office to receive a visitor pass and sign out as leaving. Eagle Dining automatically closes during inclement weather.

Cafeteria Rules:

- C-** Conversations should occur at an indoor voice level.
- H-** Help keep your area clean before, during and after you eat.
- A-** Ask for help by raising your hand.
- M-** Manage yourself by keeping your hands feet and objects to yourself.
- P-** Be polite and speak with good purpose.
- S-** Stay in your seat.

To keep parents informed, if a child consistently breaks a cafeteria rule, a behavior reminder slip will be sent home with your child. Please review the expectations with your child if they receive a Reminder Slip and sign and return this slip.

Classroom Celebration Policy: If you wish to send in treats for your child's class, it must be arranged with your child's teacher in advance and meet the criteria outlined in the School District of Manatee County's Wellness Policy. This policy states: "Only food prepared by and purchased from licensed food service establishments may be served to students, except food brought by the parent for their child. All food must be purchased from a licensed food service establishment and ingredient labels must be available for all food brought to the classroom." This

policy lessens issues with food allergies or sensitivities.

Student Birthdays: Student birthdays are celebrated in each class on the **FIRST FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH**. This time has been set aside to minimize the loss of instructional time and to limit the number of sweets that children are offered. These parties are held from 2:30pm – 3:15pm. The teacher will communicate with families to share the day each month that the celebration will occur. However, students are limited to sharing their celebration with their classmates only. Invitations to home parties may only be handed out in class if the entire class or all boys or all girls are invited, otherwise invitations may not be distributed at school.

Deliveries to Students: The delivery of flowers, balloons, valentines, or birthday presents, and food via UBER eats and other food delivery services to classrooms will not be permitted, as such deliveries are distracting and time-consuming for the learning environment and office staff. We know you love your children. We do too! However, we do not have the capabilities to accommodate these situations.

Academic Progress Communication Tools

Student Agenda/Planners: As a tool to support home and school communication, as well as helping students manage their workload, each student will be provided with a student agenda/planner free of charge from the school. Teachers may write notes home to parents in the planner. There is also a space for parents to write notes to the teacher. Please read and sign your child's agenda daily and be sure your child has it at school every day. Your child's agenda/planner may contain important pages, flyers, and information from the school. Please make it your child's responsibility to bring you the agenda/planner to check daily. For notes of a sensitive nature, the teacher will either email you or call you and we'd kindly ask that you do the same.

Progress Reports/Report Cards: Progress reports and report cards are posted to the Focus Parent Portal. Progress reports will be posted to the Focus Parent Portal four times a year (halfway through each of the four quarters). Please ask your teacher for the 24 – 25 dates of release.

Kindergarten – Second Grade Report Cards: Students in Kindergarten, First, and Second Grade have standards-based report cards. They are shared quarterly. They do not have progress reports.

Requests for a Conference-If you have any concerns regarding your child and would like to speak with the teacher, please call or email your child's teacher or leave a message on the teacher's voice mail system. The teacher will contact you within 24 hours and schedule a conference. Conferences are typically scheduled before or after school when the teacher is free from student responsibilities and

able to devote their full attention to your concerns. Please understand, your child's teacher will only be able to meet with you if prior arrangements have been made.

Additional Conferences-During the year, if student concerns are brought up by the teacher and more intensive interventions are needed, you may be asked to participate in additional conferences as part of the team to discuss your child's individual learning needs. These meetings are held to inform you of special services for which your child may qualify. We hold these conferences in the best interest of your child, and we appreciate your attendance and input.

Life Skills and Student Discipline

Student Code of Conduct: At Witt Elementary, we believe everyone has the right and responsibility to achieve his or her educational best. It is our priority to provide a safe and amiable learning environment. Likewise, we believe that no one has the right to disrupt another student's learning. With these beliefs, we will show respect for all members of the Witt Community, clearly define our expectations across all settings, and hold each other accountable for appropriate behavior. All students are also expected to follow the Manatee County Student Code of Conduct that is located online at <https://www.manateeschools.net/policy>

Xello: Monthly guidance lessons are available for students using Xello. Xello helps students gain critical self-knowledge to fuel their confidence. In Xello for Elementary, students record and reflect on their interests and skills to uncover their own abilities so they can confidently achieve their goals.

Expectations: Classroom rules are posted and carefully explained to the students by the teacher. Classroom procedures are explained and practiced. Children receive positive reinforcement when rules are followed, and redirection and appropriate consequences are given when they are needed. While classroom rules are unique to each classroom, all rules are linked to the school-wide expectations across all settings. Therefore, compliance and non-compliance of the rules will be identified as matching one of the following school-wide expectations:

8 Keys of Excellence Character Education Program

The 8 Keys are:

- Integrity
- Commitment
- Failure Leads to Success
- Ownership
- Speak with Good Purpose
- Flexibility
- This is it!
- Balance

[Get definitions and descriptions for the 8 Keys](#)

Beginning with the 24 – 25 school year, Witt Staff will be trained in Quantum Learning. Quantum Learning is known for its 8 Keys of Excellence. We do more than promote them in our school—we embody them in our school culture and the way we interact with our students and families. Learn more about Quantum Learning by visiting <https://quantumlearning.com/about-us/>.

Golden Key Awards will be given out weekly to students who go above and beyond in demonstrating any of the 8 Keys of Excellence. Any staff can nominate any student for this award.

Behavior: When a student experiences a problem at school, his or her classroom teacher may counsel the student individually or contact the parent to discuss the concern. In some instances, teachers may refer students to the student support specialist, school counselor, or administrator. If the student exhibits a lack of cooperation, or the behaviors are deemed dangerous or interfering with the learning opportunities of others, further interventions may be taken. In such a case, the parent may be notified in the form of a referral. If a referral is written, the parent will be contacted by phone. The referral will be accessed in the Parent Portal System.

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 weapon-like 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 consequences that may range from suspension to expulsion. When in doubt, please contact the teacher.

SOAR-ing Eagle Quarterly Awards Assembly: The staff believes positive reinforcement is effective in promoting behaviors that lead to life success, and students are recognized for their achievements at quarterly assemblies. Parents of children who are going to be recognized are invited to attend the assembly and

join the staff in celebrating their child's success. The criteria to earn an award are all S's in "Responsibilities of the Learner" and students who go above and beyond demonstrating any of SOAR attributes: S – Self-discipline, O – Ownership of Actions, A – Attitude/academics, and R – Respect/ Responsibility.

This award is for students K – 5th Grade. Students being recognized for a quarterly award will receive a certificate and incentives. On the day of the assembly, all visitors should arrive early to check in at the front office. We also ask that you RSVP to your child's teacher so we can print badges ahead of time. Before being permitted on campus, all guests will be required to present proper identification. For young children, research shows that positive feedback registers more strongly in the brain areas responsible for cognitive control and increases the likelihood positive behaviors will be repeated.

Honor Rolls: For **grades 3 – 5**, students can earn one of two Honor Rolls—A/B Honor Roll (A's and B's and all S's) and Principal's Honor Roll (All A's and S's). Each quarter we will celebrate these students by honoring them with a brag tag where they can wear their accomplishments. These students will be honored during the quarterly awards assemblies.

Life Skills: Life Skills and character education are part of Florida's required instruction mandates. These monthly lessons provide explicit instruction to address character education standards and the life skills to equip our students with the requisite skills to navigate the world around them and be prepared for a successful future. Our life skills are driven by the 8 Keys of Excellence. They include Integrity, Failure Leads to Success, Commitment, Ownership, Speak with Good Purpose, Ownership, Flexibility, Balance, This is it!. To learn more about Quantum Learning please visit <https://quantumlearning.com/about-us/>.

Textbooks/Library Books: Instructional materials issued or checked out to students are the property of the school board and must be returned at the end of the school year. Students must return books they have checked out to be able to get new ones. According to school board policy, students must pay for lost or damaged library books, and/or textbooks and workbooks.

Dress Code

Witt Elementary does NOT have a mandatory uniform policy. *Students are not required to wear a Uniform to school each day.* However, we expect students to be dressed neatly and in accordance with our District's Student Code of Conduct Dress Code Expectations. Students should wear closed toe shoes on the day of PE, shorts and skirts that fall below the fingertips, and shirts/blouses with no spaghetti straps. Jeans with holes must have tights worn underneath any holes above the knee. Students are invited to wear their Gene Witt Spirit shirts every Friday.

Spirit Wear: Every Friday all students may wear Witt Spirit Wear shirts. These include Witt Spirit Wear shirts available for purchase from PTO or t-shirts from school activities such as runners club, fun run, patrols, 5th grade t-shirts, Family Fun Run, etc.

Shoes: As a health and safety precaution, student shoes must have a closed heel and closed toe. Sandals, thong-type shoes, shoes with cleats, shoes with thick platform soles, high heels, shoes with wheels, and Crocs™ are allowed as long as the back strap is used. Sneakers with socks must be worn for P.E.

Hair and Accessories: Hair must always be neat and **must be a natural hair color or not a disruption to the learning environment (ex. Bright dye hair colors, mohawks, etc.)** Barrettes and ponytail scrunchies, etc. are acceptable. Students, however, may be asked to remove any items in the hair that are costume like or distracting (**For example, headbands with animal ears**). Jewelry should be simple, safe, and appropriate for elementary school. **Make-up** is not allowed.

If a student comes to school in violation of the dress code, the following actions may take place:

- A verbal warning may be given from a staff member to the student and/or a note may be sent home.
- Parent/guardian may be contacted and required to bring appropriate attire to school for the child. A conference may then be scheduled with the principal.
- The student may be sent to the clinic to see if they have appropriate spare clothing in the student's size.
- A letter or referral from the principal may be sent home requiring a reply from the parent/guardian.

Please contact Mrs. Deras, the school guidance counselor, at extension 81007 should you and your family need resources or support. Witt Elementary School maintains a supply of gently used clothing should a student have the need. If you have elementary aged clothing, you no longer need that are in good condition and would like to donate these to the school, please drop them off to the staff in the front office.

Technology: All students are expected to follow the District Student Code of Conduct regarding technology. Cell phones, currently, are allowed on campus; however, **they must be turned off** and kept in the students' backpacks. Smart Watches are allowed with certain requirements and a completed permission slip form. Please contact Mrs. Lindsey at x81015 for the Smart Watch permission slip.

