

McKinley Elementary
Morning Drop Off Procedures
Question and Answer Info Page

What are the new Morning Drop Off Procedures?

(see attached)

What are the benefits of the morning drop off procedures?

Students and staff know who, when, why, and where every adult is on campus at all times.
Students and staff can more easily identify safe adults, and who is supposed to be there and who is not.
Instruction can begin more quickly without interruptions.
Pedestrian pathways for students are not blocked.

Which gates are student-only entrances?

Students may enter campus at the Arizona, Courtyard, and TK/K gates, where a McKinley staff member is present as a Gate Monitor (8:10-8:30am). These gates are student-only access, so adults say farewell to their child at the gate and students enter campus on their own. Students may also enter campus via the front office beginning at 7:45am; the cafeteria opens for breakfast at 7:45am. Adults may also utilize the Car Drop-Off system.

What if an adult wants to be on campus in the morning?

Adults may come onto campus in the morning (7:45-8:30am) for any of the following reasons: volunteering, school agreement, or a pre-arranged parent/teacher conference. See below for more specific details about these.

What gate do adults use when entering campus?

Adults coming onto campus in the morning enter through the front office, sign-in, get a visitor sticker, and sign-out in the main office.

If I enter through the main office after signing in, can I exit out the Arizona or TK/K Gate?

No. Adults should always exit through the main office and sign-out when leaving. This helps us to know who is on campus at all times, and is especially important information during an emergency.

Was law enforcement involved in the design of the drop off procedures?

Yes. The secure campus procedures were originally recommended and developed in collaboration with local law enforcement. Officers came to McKinley and walked the campus with Administration, and are in full support of the plan.

Did parents get to give input?

Yes. Following the initial announcement of the morning drop off procedures parents expressed a desire to have input. Administration then postponed the implementation of the plan to collect parent input. Parents had the opportunity to provide input at a PTA Meeting, both verbally and via a written anonymous parent input form. Parents also had the opportunity to provide input at an evening School Safety Forum with Dr. Drati. Parents also shared their feedback individually via email, letter, and in-person to Administration. Parents were also offered the opportunity to join the Parent Safety Committee. This committee went on a field trip to Franklin to view the drop off procedures, and then met to provide input to Administration. Parent input was considered when designing the current Morning Procedures policy. The parent input directly led to the additions of parent volunteer opportunities on the yards, as well as the accommodation option for parents to be on campus with their child if there is a need.

Whose other input was considered?

The input of parents, teachers and staff, local law enforcement, local fire department, SMMUSD Risk Management, District leadership, and Principals were all considered when designing the current Morning Drop Off Procedures.

Are the other local elementary schools implementing such morning procedures?

Yes. All elementary schools have implemented, or are in the process of implementing, updated procedures that help to improve campus safety. Franklin Elementary implemented procedures over a year ago, and Roosevelt Elementary began in December 2018. Rogers and Edison implemented last month, and Grant, Smash/Muir are in process. All are striving to limit the number of gate entrances, and determine ways to help schools know who, when, where why, and why everyone is on campus. Secondary schools have policies that have already been in place. The Lincoln Pathway has similar morning procedures to us. The feedback from the schools with updated procedures has been overwhelmingly positive from families and staff.

How do I tell my child about the change in drop off procedures?

You may tell your child as little or as much as you feel is appropriate. The students who are dropped off at the Car Drop-off, students who walk to school on their own, and those who already enter school on their own, will not experience any changes so you may not find it necessary to address the change with them. However, this is an opportunity to talk to your child about school safety. Teachers talk to students regularly about school safety, and students participate in monthly emergency drills. Possible ways you can talk to your child about the change are:

TK-2- “Now that you know the school, you are a big boy/girl and you can walk into school on your own, so I’m going to say goodbye at the gate. Remember if you need anything you can always ask an adult with a vest and badge on the yard for help, just like you do during the school day. I will see you after school, and I can’t wait to hear what fun things you learned today.”

3rd-5th- “Parents are now going to be dropping off students at the gate. This way it will be students, staff, and approved volunteers on the yard. Remember what your teachers have told you, that you can always go to a person with a vest, badge, or volunteer sticker if you need help. If you ever see something you are concerned about, remember to tell a safe adult so they can help.”

Will there be enough supervision on the yards?

Yes. Beginning in September we increased the amount of supervision on the yards in the morning and assigned a staff member at each gate. There is ample supervision, equivalent to the supervision we provide during the school day. Parent volunteers are also encouraged and welcome to assist with morning supervision.

Who does the supervision?

Current McKinley staff. This includes Instructional Assistants, Paraeducators, Campus Supervisors, Teachers, and Administration. They can be identified via their orange vests and SMMUSD employee badges. These are the same staff members who work on campus during the school day. The majority of the time, it is the same staff every morning doing supervision. Please see our “Meet our Morning Supervisors” photo collage. There may be some adjustments to staffing as needed.

Do morning supervisors receive training?

All staff receive regular trainings on school safety. All school employees and students participate in monthly emergency drills. Our Comprehensive School Safety Plan is reviewed and updated annually, and approved annually by Site Governance. It is available on our school and district websites.

Can Parents Volunteer in the morning before school?

Parent volunteers are encouraged to volunteer in the morning. Volunteer options include from 8:10-8:30am helping at the car drop off, supervising on the big yard and TK/K yard, and supervising a quiet activity on either yard, or from 7:45-8:30am supervising in the cafeteria. A sign-up genius is available online and in the office for parents to sign-up to volunteer. Parent volunteers will check in at the main office to sign-in and get a visitor's sticker and vest. All volunteers must have attended a volunteer training at the start of the school year, completed a volunteer application, and be an approved volunteer. Siblings are not permitted while volunteering.

Do volunteers receive training and are they screened?

All volunteers must have attended a volunteer training at the start of the school year. At this training adults learn about our school Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) plan (Pillars of Character, School Rules etc.) so they can support positive student behavior, and learn about procedures for different types of volunteering. At this training volunteers receive a McKinley Volunteer Handbook, which is also available on the school website. If you missed this training, please contact the Assistant Principal to receive an individual training. In order to volunteer adults must complete a volunteer application. This application includes a TB screening, and one's name is run through the Megan's Law website.

When volunteering can I bring younger children or siblings not enrolled at McKinley?

Siblings/other children may not accompany you during volunteer time. This is consistent with our volunteer policy throughout the school day.

What if I feel strongly that my child needs me as a parent to be with him/her in the morning?

Adults may be with a student on campus in the morning via a School Agreement. Any parent who feels that their child needs an adult present with him/her in the morning may contact the Principal to make arrangements. This way staff can be informed, and the school may be able to offer additional resources during the school day. Children who need this accommodation may need it for a variety of reasons including but not limited to IEP/504 needs, counseling needs, or other personal needs. Reasons will be kept confidential. Adults on campus will enter through the front office to sign-in and get a Visitor Sticker.

To request that you be able to be with your child in the morning, follow the following procedures:

1. Email the Principal at abenjamin@smmud.org or write a note and drop it off in the office
2. Subject line/title: Parent Request for Morning Accommodation
3. Write the child's name, grade, teacher, and adult(s)(or older sibling) who may be with the student in the morning
4. Note the reason why the adult(s) need to be with the child in the morning.
6. If you do not receive a reply from the Principal within 2 business days, contact the front office.
7. Once you receive a written reply from the Principal, you are approved to be present with your child on campus, and staff will be informed. If there are on-campus resources to support your child, the Principal will provide you with additional information.
8. When you come to campus with your child, enter through the main office. Sign-in and get a visitor's sticker. When the 8:30 bell rings promptly exit through the front office and sign out.

If I am going to be with my child in the morning (see above), can I bring younger children or siblings not enrolled at McKinley?

Siblings are not permitted unless there is a reason or need. Some reasons may include but are not limited to, not having childcare, sibling has a 504 or IEP, or a personal need.

What if my child has special needs and needs support in the morning?

If your child has special needs and requires specific support and/or accommodations in the morning, please contact your IEP team or the Principal.

What if my child has separation anxiety?

If your child has difficulty with morning transitions support can be provided. Please contact our school Counselor, the child's teacher, or the Principal for information.

Is there extra support for our TK/K students?

Parent volunteers facilitate a quiet activity of coloring, the "Coloring Crew," for students who want to draw in the morning. This is a nice option for the young students who may prefer a quieter activity. In addition, all staff are trained in how to work with students of all ages, and how to support students with different social, emotional, and behavioral needs. So our morning staff is ready and able to assist students with whatever they may need.

What if I want to spend the morning with my child, but not come on campus or volunteer?

You are not required to drop your child off early. The warning bell is at 8:28am, and instruction begins at 8:30am. You may drop your child off at 8:28am and he/she may walk directly to the lineup or class. Parents can also utilize our Car Drop-Off system for fast and easy drop off in the morning. Please drive carefully and be aware of traffic signs and pedestrian cross walks.

Can I still volunteer during the day?

Absolutely! We greatly appreciate our parent volunteers. Nothing has changed about parent involvement, and all parent volunteer opportunities continue to be in place. Parents continue to follow the Visitor Policy already in place, sign-in, get a sticker, and go to your pre-approved and arranged volunteer location.

What if I have a teacher/parent conference?

There are no changes. Just follow our Visitor Policy that has already been in place; sign-in, get a sticker, and head to your child's classroom for your pre-arranged meeting.

What if I have something I need to talk to my child's teacher about but don't have an appointment?

As has been described in our School Handbook, if you have a question or concern you may email your child's teacher, or schedule a meeting with him/her. By making an appointment it helps the teacher to be better prepared to answer your questions, and ensures they have ample time to speak with you. Having an appointment also helps ensure that confidential or sensitive matters are not discussed in front of other students or parents. Drop-in or surprise visits are not permitted.

What if there is a PTA Meeting, AASG, ELAC, Special Ed Resource Group, SBC, PTA Exec Board, Event Committee, or other parent meeting?

Meetings will continue as normal. Be sure to check the Mini-Messenger for meeting locations. Adults will continue to follow the Visitor Policy procedures already in place.

Are parents still welcome on campus?

Yes! There are no changes to any of parent involvement opportunities. You may join a committee, attend a parent meeting, attend a parent workshop or training, volunteer in the classroom or on a field trip, be a Room Parent, come to a Friday eat-lunch-with-your child day, or attend one of our 50+ family events. Check out the School Handbook, Mini-Messenger, and School Website, and join the PTA, for ideas of the many ways you can get involved.

What about when there are big events like Jog-a-thon, monthly school-wide assemblies, Sing-a-long etc.?

During these times when there is a very large number of adults on campus, the campus is more open. Also, parking is often available on the yard for large schoolwide events. Please help us to stay vigilant during these times and be sure to notify school staff if you see anything concerning. For the majority of events adults will still come through the main office and sign-in and get a visitor sticker.

Will there be a location for sign-ups for events or tables with information?

The front office vestibule was originally designed to serve such a purpose and can be used as a gathering space. We have determined it can accommodate about 50 adults, and has enough space for 2 tables and a rolling board. There are currently two benches for families to utilize as seating.

I like to socialize with parents in the morning, are there still opportunities for parent interactions?

There are many opportunities for parents to socialize with other McKinley families. Parents can join a committee, attend one of our Friday parent group meetings, attend a Restaurant Night, or attend one of our 50+ family events. Check our weekly Mini-messenger for upcoming events, and be sure to register with PTA in order to receive PTA eblasts. Also in the front office vestibule area there may be tables for event sign-ups, info, spiritwear sales and more.

Will the children play nicely and get along in the morning?

Yes. McKinley has wonderful children. The students will uphold the same rules and expectations just as they do during the school day. The children will be supervised just as they are during the school day. If an incident does occur, or you have a concern about your child's interaction with another child, please contact your child's teacher just as you normally would, and the appropriate staff will investigate and intervene to resolve the issue.

What if it rains?

There are no changes for students and the morning drop off procedures are unaffected. Like now, when it rains the teachers open their classroom and students go directly to the classroom.

Parking in the neighborhood is limited, how can I make sure my child gets to school on time?

McKinley continues to offer a Car Drop Off through the staff parking lot. Enter through the entrance off Chelsea Ave. and pull all the way up to the front of the school. Staff and volunteers in orange vests will open your car door, help your child out of the car, close the door, and walk your child to the gate. Please have your child's backpack and supplies ready. This is a quick and easy service McKinley provides for our families. Please drive carefully and follow all traffic signs, and be aware of pedestrian crosswalks.

Will this procedure occur at the beginning of each school year?

The first day of school remains the same where the campus is open, and families locate their new lineup area, teacher, and classroom. For 1st-5th the procedures would begin the second week of school, once students are familiar with the routine. For TK/K the procedures would begin the third week of school, to allow students time to learn the routines, staff, and school layout. Students walk from the Caf to the playground daily for lunch recess, and quickly become familiar with the path and campus.

What if over time there is an issue with the drop off procedures?

Adjustments to the Morning Drop Off Procedures can be made as needed. The goal is to try the plan and overtime determine what is working and what might need to be updated.

Will my child be able to lock their bike and carry their things on their own?

Yes. McKinley students are smart and capable. This is a chance for students to learn independence and responsibility so they can be successful. They are able to walk around campus and play on the yards during the school day, and the morning playtime is like an extension of the school day. There is time before the procedures go into effect when you can teach your child how to lock their bike. School staff is always available to assist students when needed. Big items can always be dropped off in the office and picked up by your child and a friend later.

How can I help as a parent regarding school safety?

Immediately notify staff of any suspicious or concerning activity. Be aware of and follow all school and district policies. Model appropriate behavior for our students. Volunteer. Be kind and supportive to the gate monitors, yard supervisors, and volunteers who are trying their best to help keep our campus safe.

How can we provide feedback on these new procedures?

A survey will go out to families approximately 2 weeks into the pilot weeks of the updated Morning Procedures. In this survey parents can provide specific ideas and suggestions that administration will take into consideration. Staff, the Parent Safety Committee, police, and the school district will also be able to provide suggestions, if any. Then any necessary adjustments will be determined, and the finalized policies will be blasted to parents. If a parent ever has a personal concern, he/she is encouraged to contact the teacher and/or an admin so they can assist him/her.

Are after school pick up procedures going to be discussed?

Yes. We wanted to start with just the Morning Procedures so that all the details could be thoughtfully planned and implemented. Next steps include working on updated Pick Up procedures. Over the course of the year we will also be looking at various other ways to improve school safety such as considering different identity authentication methods such as the Raptor Technologies badge system. We will also be working with the District and DSA to consider options for additional and/or updated congregation and socialization space for parents and families. So school safety and student learning will continue to be at the forefront of our minds.