



**RIVER SCHOOL PARENT
HANDBOOK**

2018 - 2019

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CUSD

ADMINISTRATION

Superintendent	Barb Dill-Varga
Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment	Suzie DePrez
Director of Human Resources	Ken Griest
Chief Business Official	Rick Blanckmeister
Director of Technology	Paul Behan
Director of Special Education, Student Services	Steve Gonzales

BOARD OF EDUCATION

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The Board of Education is responsible for setting district policy and approving the district's annual budget. The board and district staff work to ensure that the CUSD students receive the highest quality education and the district's finances are healthy.

The public is welcome to attend board meetings the second and fourth Wednesday of each month (tentative schedule). The schedule can vary during summer and holidays. Meetings are held in various locations. For more information call the district office at 624-1546.

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

➤ **Purpose**

The PTA at Carmel River School is an active, non-profit, volunteer organization of parents and teachers. Its mission is to support and enhance the educational experience offered to our students.

The PTA plays a vital role at River School. It helps to organize the wonderful volunteers who give time and energy to the school. Volunteers frequently support classroom teachers in various roles or as chaperones on field trips.

The PTA hosts annual events such as the Fall Festival and sponsors the Holiday Program. Monies raised by the PTA fund class field trips, assemblies, performing arts and teacher stipends. These are but a handful of expenditures the PTA makes on the students' behalf. Funds are raised primarily through a fundraiser in the fall.

➤ **Membership**

To become a PTA member for this school year, please fill out a membership form and return it to the school office.

➤ **Meetings**

The best way to learn about school initiatives, events and policies, and get involved in the school is by attending regular PTA Meetings. The PTA calendar is available on-line through the school's web page: www.carmelriver.org

➤ **PTA Executive Board**

The Executive Board meets monthly to prepare for the monthly PTA meeting, approve budget outlays, generate ideas and coordinate planning for PTA activities. It approves the slate of candidates for election each year and proposes the annual budget. All Executive Board actions are presented at the regular monthly meetings for review and approval.

DISTRICT ORGANIZATIONS

➤ **School Site Council (SSC)**

The purpose of the SSC is to develop the Single Plan for Student Achievement. SSC is funded by the state through the School Improvement Program (SIP). Goals of the plan, all of which enhance the River School environment, are:

- Differentiate instruction to meet the needs of at risk students and accelerated learners
- Prepare, educate and empower teachers to fully implement and teach the CCSS at every grade level.
- Educate for resilience by developing researched based best practices to promote social emotional health learning and character education

Each committee is comprised of parents, staff and administration. SSC membership consists of an equal number of parents and staff in order to comply with state requirements and be eligible for funding. SSC meets approximately five times per year.

➤ **Friends of Carmel Unified Schools (FOCUS)**

FOCUS is an independent, nonprofit, tax-exempt foundation organized to obtain tax-deductible donations for the benefit of Carmel schools and students. The goal of FOCUS is to help maintain a high quality educational environment for all Carmel students by providing direct financial assistance for valued programs. FOCUS is staffed by an all-volunteer board whose membership includes parents, alumni, business people and other interested community residents. FOCUS distributes funds on an ongoing basis and has assisted with academic and extracurricular activities.

➤ **River Recreation (Before and After School Programs)**

The Carmel Unified School District offers a fee based before and after school child care program at River School. The morning program is from 7:00 a.m. to 8:40 a.m. Please call 624-8047 or 624-3147 for more information. You may also view the contracts at <http://www.carmelunified.org/childdevelopment> under Info/Forms

SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

In addition to the regular classroom curriculum, several special programs are available to students at River School.

➤ **Spanish**

River School operates a “Spanish” program for all students two to three days a week depending on grade level. Kindergarten students receive instruction once a week within their grade level, first grade students receive instruction for two 20 minute periods, second through fifth grade receive instruction for two 30 minute periods. The certificated teacher visits classrooms for each period and concentrates on developing students’ speaking and listening skills.

➤ **English Language Learners (ELL)**

Students who do not speak English fluently participate in a daily program taught by the school’s technical assistant to develop the students’ English language proficiency skills.

➤ **Advanced Learner Program**

All third through fifth grade students who meet certain performance criteria in the classroom are eligible to participate in the school’s “Advanced Learner Program.” The program is operated one afternoon a week for each set of grade level qualifiers and taught by the school’s ALP and Common Core Coach. Courses include, but are not limited to: Forensics, Robotics, Math Olympiads and Creative Thinking and Problem Solving.

➤ **Library**

Classes visit the library every other week for a library lesson and weekly, depending upon need, to circulate books. The periods are 40 minutes in length, with the exception of kindergarten, which is 35 minutes. The library is staffed by a full-time librarian and an assistant. Appropriate care of books is each student’s responsibility. Students are not allowed to check books out if a book is overdue. If books are not turned in at the end of the year or are damaged, then a book fee will be assessed. Report cards will be withheld until fees are paid.

➤ **P.E.**

The first through fifth grade P.E. program is offered two times a week for 50 minute periods. Kindergarten students have two, weekly P.E. classes for 35 minute periods.

➤ **Music**

The music teacher provides music instruction to all classes for 35 to 40 minutes per week. Instrumental and choral music programs are offered to interested fourth and fifth grade students. Students participating in Instrumental and choral music also participate in district-wide music festivals in the spring. All students participate in the choral and instrumental Holiday Program in December.

➤ **Educational Technology**

Students in kindergarten through second grade receive weekly technological instruction from the computer instructor in the computer lab for 35 to 40 minute periods. In grades three through five, the lab teacher visits classrooms to deliver a standards based technology curriculum that also incorporates and supports content that is taught in the regular classroom, but using technology to capture, enrich and extend the students’ curricular experience to meet 21st century technology skills.

➤ **Science**

Once a week for 40 to 50 minutes, students visit the science laboratory where science is taught by a certificated teacher who provides hands-on experiences and investigations for all classes. Front loaded science lessons/activities are provided in the regular classrooms to introduce the lessons taught in the lab. Kindergarten science instruction is taught through the Children's Garden program, once a week for 35 minutes.

➤ **The Children's Garden / Environmental Education**

The Children's Garden is located on the southeast corner of campus. The curriculum focus combines aspects of nutrition, science and language arts in a hands-on learning environment. The Children's Garden program is primarily a kindergarten through third grade program, with kindergarten students receiving weekly instruction of 35 to 40 minutes and taught by the garden instructor. On a less frequent basis, 1st-5th grade classes participate in "science in the garden." New to school this year is the "Garden to Table" program for 3rd through 5th grade students.

➤ **Counseling / Guidance**

The counseling and guidance program is available to parents, staff and students five days a week. The goals of the program are the following: to provide prevention and early intervention in emotional and social problems, to aid in the development of self-awareness and positive self-image, to assist parents in understanding the process of children's growth and development, to foster helpful peer leadership among children and to help children develop the skills to cope with changes in their families.

➤ **Special Education**

Special classes are available for students who have been identified with a learning disability, require speech and language or occupational therapy, or other service that has been recommended by a team of professionals. River School has two special education teacher who are assisted by two instructional aides. The program provides support to the teachers and students in the regular classroom using a "co-teaching" model. When necessary the special education teachers will also pull students out of class to provide individual academic support. In addition, River School has a site based speech language therapist, an itinerant occupational therapist and psychologist who are available as needed.

➤ **Reading Support**

Classes in reading support target all K-5th grade students. Identified students are recommended by teachers to participate. A "reading support" instructor operates the program five days a week and for approximately 30 minute periods (with the exception of kindergarten students who attend shorter support classes after dismissal. Students who require additional intervention to develop oral fluency attend a reading support class during the p.m. "blue band" period of instruction.

➤ **Math Support**

Before school math tutoring is offered two times weekly for students in second through fifth grade to assist students in conceptual mathematical understanding. Teachers recommend this intervention to students who would benefit from additional math support. The class is taught by a River School instructor. Students who require additional math fact retention support attend an early morning, during school hour "blue band" period to develop their math fact retention skills.

SCHOOL ROUTINES AND PROCEDURES

BELL SCHEDULE

Kindergarten 8:40 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

1st - 5th Gr. 8:40 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

➤ ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Parents should use the car lane on Monte Verde St. to drop off and pick up students. If parents wish to park, they should escort their child(ren) across the street, if there is no parking available in the slots provided on 15th St. The staff parking lot is off limits to parents. Parents delivering and picking up kindergarten students should do so at the classrooms. Parents and students are not allowed on the lower playground before 8:25 a.m.; it is then that supervision is provided. A bell, sounding at 8:25, will signal the moment when students are allowed on the lower playground before school. Afterward, an 8:37 bell will ring to signal students to walk to class with classroom entry occurring at the 8:40 bell. At dismissal, students are to be picked up in front of their classrooms or at a designated location determined by the parent unless they are taking the bus. Students taking the bus home will sit in bus lines before bus arrival inside the fence next to the multipurpose room. If a student has not been picked up by 3:15, teachers may direct the students to the bench in front of the office where students are expected to sit and wait for their parents to arrive. Buses drop off students and pick them up on Monte Verde St. at the lower playground. Students arriving late or being picked up early must register in the school office. The register is maintained in the office for parents to sign students in and out.

➤ RECESS SCHEDULES

Kindergarten
Recess 10:10-10:25
Lunch 11:40-12:25

Grades 1 - 5
Recess 10:30-10:45 a.m.
Lunch 12:30-1:15 p.m.

➤ BEFORE SCHOOL SUPERVISION

Staff members supervise the playground beginning at 8:25 a.m. Students are not to arrive before then.

➤ AFTER SCHOOL SUPERVISION

After school supervision is provided in the bus lines until students are picked up and in the pick-up lane to facilitate traffic flow and safety. No supervision is provided on the playground. When students are dismissed at 3:00 they must: 1) go sit in the bus lanes until the busses arrive 2) be picked up at the classroom or in the pick-up lane 3) walk or ride their bike home with their parent's permission 4) remain on campus with parent/adult supervision. All other students must wait on the bench in front of the office until they are picked up. Children are not allowed to play on the campus unattended.

➤ ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES

Regular attendance is essential to a student's success in school. If a child is absent because of illness or other "excused" reason, parents are required to call the school office at 624- 4609 or send a note to the school explaining the reason for the absence within 48 hours of the absence. If a student has three or more unexcused absences (30 minutes or longer of instruction), he/she will be referred to the Monterey County, District Attorney Truancy Abatement Program.

For justifiable personal reasons, an absence may be excused by the principal (or designee) after receiving a written request from the parent or guardian justifying the request and length of the student's absence.

** If your child has a doctor/dentist appointment in the morning, please remember to bring a note from the doctor's office so the absence can be recorded as "medically excused".

➤ **TARDY POLICY**

If a student has an unexcused tardy four or more times in a trimester, a recess privilege will be revoked with each late arrival. The school begins a new tardy period with each new trimester (trimester dates are recorded on the district calendar). At the latest, students are expected to arrive at their classroom doors at 8:40 at which time classroom teachers close their doors after the arrival bell has rung. Any student who arrives after a classroom door has been closed is to go to the school office to check in where a "tardy" will be registered. Late students may then be admitted to class with a "late slip."

➤ **CONFERENCES**

Parent /Teacher Conferences are held in November and March. Teachers contact parents to arrange an appointment at a mutually convenient time. During conference weeks students attend school from 8:40 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. If parents wish to have an additional appointment with a teacher, the teacher should be contacted via phone or email.

➤ **SNACKS**

Students should be provided with a nutritious snack daily. Students eat their snacks midmorning. Snack may also be purchased in the Multi Purpose room at recess for \$2.00.

➤ **LUNCH**

Parents may purchase lunches at school; however, parents are encouraged to make deposits to students' lunch accounts on-line at the carmelunified.org website. If a child is allergic to a particular food, a form should be completed with the district's food service program requesting a substituted meal. Any food that a student is allergic to should be recorded on the student's emergency card.

➤ **SCHOOL BUS POLICY AND RULES OF CONDUCT**

There is an annual fee for school bus use. Fees are \$200 for one student, \$400 for two and \$500 for three or more. Single, one-way trips cost \$3.00. Fees can be waived under certain conditions due to financial constraints. "Back to School Packets" provide the full information.

A complete list of bus rules is included in the Back to School Packet and is contained in District regulation E 3540 A. A partial list of unacceptable conduct includes: abusive body contact, fighting on bus or at stops, using profane language or obscene gestures, unauthorized exiting or opening or closing or tampering with doors or windows, creating excessive noise, throwing objects within or out of the bus, transporting glass items or animals, eating or drinking on the bus, not sitting properly in seats, occupying the aisle, and failure to obey the driver or disrespect to the driver.

Drivers have been instructed to issue misconduct citations to violators. Violations will be dealt with at the school administrative level.

To exit the bus at a location other than the normal stop, the student must provide a note to the driver, written by the parent or guardian, specifying the designated location. Kindergarten and first grade students will not be dropped off at a stop where an adult/guardian is not present to receive the child.

➤ **VISITORS**

All visitors are required to register in the school office upon entering the campus. Visitors and volunteers are required to wear stickers/badges which identify them. Parents are welcome and are encouraged to visit the school.

➤ **CLOTHING**

Children should be clothed appropriately and respectfully for school. The school's clothing policy is stated in the discipline plan.

➤ **LOST AND FOUND**

All clothing found on the campus is placed in the lost and found bin, which is located in the main hallway next to the office. Jackets and sweaters should be marked with each student's name and classroom number. Other articles of value are turned into the office where they may be claimed by the student or parent. Clothing will be removed on the first Monday of each month, washed and given to local charities/non-profit organizations if not picked up beforehand.

➤ **MESSAGES**

The school telephone number is 624-4609. All classrooms are equipped with telephones and voice mail. If it is necessary to relay an important message to a child or child's teacher, please leave a message on the teacher's voice mail or with the school office. Please provide daytime and evening telephone numbers to ensure a timely response. Classroom instruction will not be interrupted for teachers to receive messages that are not urgent. Teachers are required to return parent phone calls within a 24 hour period and emails within a 48 hour period.

➤ **TELEPHONE**

The office telephone is a business phone and is not to be used by students without the permission of a staff member. Students are not allowed to use the phone to make personal arrangements (e.g. requesting permission to go to another child's home after school).

➤ **FRIDAY EMAIL / NEWSLETTER**

Every Friday during the school year the school principal sends weekly school news and events via email to parents who have provided email addresses. This communiqué is exceptionally informative, keeping all email registered parents updated about important school functions, programs and dates.

➤ **STUDENT COUNCIL or "PAL" (peer assistance leadership) program**

River School has an active Student Council. The purpose of the council is to provide a forum for discussing student and school issues. Representatives from fifth grade meet with the counselor and one teacher to discuss school spirit opportunities, programs, and general school improvement.

➤ **TOYS**

Students' toys are not to be brought to school.

➤ **CELL PHONES AND IPODS**

Students may have cell phones in their possession, however, cell phones are to be turned off and may not be used during the regular school day as defined by the bell schedule. Students must keep cell phones in their backpacks/carrying bags and the cell phones may not be visible during the regular day. Students may also have IPODS (and similar music headwear) in their possession, however, they also may not be used or visible during regular school hours. If students violate this rule, parents would be notified to pick the electronic item up in the office.

➤ **BICYCLES/SKATE BOARDS**

Bicycles are to be walked when on school campus. Bicycles must be parked and locked in the bike racks provided by the school. Students are not to ride skateboards on campus before school commences and until 4:00 p.m. (1:30 p.m. on minimum days).

➤ **BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS**

Carmel Unified School District has a "nutrition and wellness policy." The policy encourages parents to provide students with nutritionally balanced snacks and meals and to work with the school to provide nutritious alternatives at class and school parties and events. School fundraisers do not include the sale of foods of minimal nutritious value.

EMERGENCIES AND MEDICAL ISSUES

➤ **Emergency Information on File**

Each student is required to have emergency contact information on file at the school office. If any of the data changes during the year, the parent is required to visit the school office in person to record the change. This information is used to notify parents in case of school or district emergencies. Students will not be released to persons who are not listed on the emergency contact information. Parents must be present to make such changes to the emergency contact listing.

➤ **Student Release**

If a student needs to be picked up during school hours by somebody that is not listed on the emergency contact information, the parent / guardian is required to notify the school in advance.

➤ **Illness or Injury**

In case of illness or injury, a child will be cared for temporarily by school personnel. First aid treatment, only, will be rendered. If emergency medical treatment is necessary, parents will be contacted. If unable to contact parents, school personnel will follow the information on the emergency card.

➤ **Immunizations**

Students are required by law to have immunizations for DTP, polio, varicella (chicken pox), MMR and hepatitis B prior to entering a California school. Parents must submit a California School Immunizations Record during registration. Kindergarten and newly registered first grade students to the school must submit a physician completed health examination. Kindergarten and newly registered first grade students are also required to have an oral health assessment (dental exam) completed by the end of their first year in public school.

➤ **Medication**

If a physician has prescribed medication for a child and it is to be taken during the school day, a form must be completed by the parent or guardian, signed by a physician and turned into the office.

➤ **Parent Reporting Requirements for Student Injuries and Illnesses**

Parents shall notify the office staff or school nurse regarding any student injury or illness. Parents shall inform school staff of any concerns, potential limitations and/or prohibited activities that may require accommodations. Of note, a physician's note may be required. The school nurse will communicate any accommodation plan to the site administrator and relevant staff.

➤ **Health Policy**

Students must remain home if he/she has: fever (100 +), vomit or diarrhea within the last 24 hours, red, inflamed eyes, body rash unless determined non-infectious by a doctor, severe or persistent cough, less than 24 hours on an antibiotic. If student is found to have live lice they must be treated and checked by the school nurse prior to returning to school. If student has been diagnosed with a contagious disease please keep your child home and notify the school nurse.

HOMework POLICY

River School's homework policy reflects different student and family responsibilities at primary and intermediate grades. Primary students, K-2, are required to read 15-20 minutes per night. They are not to perform any other homework duties.

Intermediate students, 3-5, engage in homework that has the following elements represented: differentiation, student choice, real life application. Intermediate grade levels distribute the same packet and expectations weekly at their respective grade levels.

Homework per school board policy and by grade level:

- Kindergarten** - an average of 15 minutes, up to four nights a week.
- Grades one, two and three** - an average of 20 minutes, up to four nights a week.
- Grades four and five** - an average of 30-45 minutes, up to four nights a week.

The assigning of homework is prohibited on weekends and vacations unless the assignment is a long term project, which allows for ample time to complete during the regular homework week. If a student is on vacation during regular school days, teachers may, at their discretion, provide school work in the student's absence. Teachers are not obligated to provide work in the event of an unexcused absence such as a vacation.