

Sycamore Ridge School Family Handbook 2026-2027



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Welcome to the 2026-2027 school year!

Hello Sycamore Ridge Students and Families,

The new school year brings with it all of the excitement of new beginnings, new experiences, and new opportunities to learn and grow. The enthusiasm and wonder of children remind us that each child comes to school with tremendous hope and anticipation for the best year ever. Every teacher, staff member, principal, and parent plays a crucial role in making this year a great one for each child.

The Sycamore Ridge Staff and I feel fortunate to have so many wonderful students and families working alongside us, and we look forward to partnering with you this year. Sycamore Ridge is committed to providing a nurturing and inspiring educational program for all of our students. We are eager to see the limitless possibilities of our efforts in providing your child with an extraordinary school experience. It is our goal that each of our Stallions realizes their potential through our challenging academic program. In addition, we want each child to develop the skills they will need to be successful in the 21st Century – effective communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and character.

We are proud of our collaborative relationship with our dynamic and involved parental community because so many wonderful aspects of our school rely on the continued support of our parents. There is no doubt that our school is thriving due, in part, to these strong relationships. Another year of learning, creativity, curiosity, and fun lies ahead. We are excited to have our students return to campus and look forward to all the gains we will achieve this year.

The purpose of this Family Handbook is to assist our students and families with important information regarding school policies, procedures, and the agreements we need to ensure this is an enjoyable, successful, and safe school year. Your understanding and support of this information helps us establish a learning environment that is respectful, conducive to learning, and ensures the safety and welfare of all students.

It is expected that you read through the Sycamore Ridge Family Handbook with your child(ren) to ensure you are familiar with our school procedures. We appreciate your support and involvement as we work in partnership to provide a nurturing, inspiring, and rigorous educational program for each of our students.

Sincerely,

Jenny Peirson, Principal

Sycamore Ridge SCHOOL HOURS

8:00-2:30

FRONT OFFICE HOURS

7:30-3:30

First Grade - Sixth Grade Schedule

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

8:00 am - 2:30 pm

Wednesday

8:00 am - 12:30 pm

Kindergarten Schedule

August 10th - September 18th

8:00 am - 12:40 pm

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

8:00 am - 12:30 pm

Wednesday

September 21st - May 28th

8:00 am - 2:30 pm

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

8:00 am - 12:30 pm

Wednesday

May 24-28th - Last week of school for all students

8:00 am - 2:30 pm

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

8:00 am - 12:30 pm

Friday, May 28 (Last Day of School)

IMPORTANT DATES FOR THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR

Parent-Teacher Conference Weeks – November 2-6, 2026 and March 1-5, 2027

The District sets aside two weeks each school year for parent-teacher conferences. To provide quality time for parents to meet with teachers, a minimum day schedule is followed every day during these two weeks of the school year (see the Wednesday minimum day schedule above).

Smarter Balanced Assessment Testing Window – Dates to be determined (May 2027)

This year we will participate in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) exams, which are a part of the California Assessment of Student Performance and

Progress (CAASPP) assessment system. Our 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students will participate in these assessments for English Language Arts and Math. In addition, 5th graders will take a Science Test.

2026-2027 School Holidays: There will be no school during the following holidays/breaks.

September 7, 2026	Labor Day
October 12, 2026	Non-School Day
November 11, 2026	Veterans Day
November 24 - 27, 2026	Thanksgiving Break
December 21, 2026 – January 4, 2027	Winter Break
January 18, 2027	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
February 15 - 19, 2027	February Break
March 29 - April 2, 2027	Spring Break

SYCMORE RIDGE'S COMMITMENT

Our commitment is to educate our children for the future and forge a path for tomorrow's innovative, global thinkers. The information contained in this Family Handbook is the glue that binds us together to achieve our comprehensive educational program based on 21st Century learning skills. Your support and participation ensures that each child grows as a:

- **Self-Directed Learner:** the ability to be responsible for one's own learning
- **Community Contributor:** the understanding that it is essential for human beings to work together
- **Complex Thinker:** the ability to demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- **Quality Producer:** the ability to recognize and produce quality performances and products
- **Effective Communicator:** the ability to communicate effectively
- **Effective and Ethical User of Resources,** including technology

ATTENDANCE

Because of the way we teach in today's classroom, it is difficult to replicate the teaching and learning that your child misses when they are absent from school. In an effort for your child to make consistent progress, it is essential that your child come to school and be on time to achieve their learning goals.

Students should arrive at school between 7:45-8:00 a.m. *Please plan to arrive on campus at no later than 7:50 a.m.* This sets your child up for success to be ready to start their day promptly at 8:00 a.m. If your child arrives after 8:00 a.m., they are required to check in at the office. After checking in at the office, your child will be expected to enter the classroom quickly and quietly to join the learning that is already taking place. Your child may be expected to make up for any missed learning.

If your child is absent from school, report the absence through our website under *Quick Links* and click on *Report an Absence*. Record your child's name, teacher's name, your relationship to the child, and reason for the absence. This is one of the ways we can ensure that your child is safe. **Please note: reporting an absence does not make it an excused absence.**

Please schedule appointments for your child outside of the school day. If a student needs to leave the school campus for an appointment, please try to schedule appointments for as late in the day as possible.

To pick up a student during school hours, an adult must come into the office, bring ID, and sign them out. **We can only release students to adults listed on the Student Emergency Card who have a valid ID with them.**

Student Illness

Each parent/guardian agrees to screen their child(ren) for illness before bringing them to school each day. Specifically, each parent/guardian agrees to do all of the following:

- Parent/Guardian shall screen child(ren) for any of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, fatigue, muscle or body aches, earache, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, or a new rash. Parent/Guardian agrees that if child(ren) presents with any of these symptoms, Parent/Guardian will not send child(ren) to school.
- Parent/Guardian agrees that if child(ren) has a fever of more than 100.4 degrees, without medication, Parent/Guardian will not send child(ren) to school. Children may return to school when fever has resolved overnight and is gone in the morning without fever-reducing medications such as Tylenol or ibuprofen.
- Parent/Guardian also agrees that if child(ren) has vomited twice in the last 24 hours, Parent/Guardian will not send child(ren) to school. The child may return to school when vomiting has resolved overnight, and the child is able to keep fluids and food down.
- Parent/Guardian agrees that if a child has had 3 or more episodes of diarrhea in 24 hours and is not able to make it to the restroom in time, they will not send their child (ren) to school until resolved overnight.
- If antibiotics were prescribed, please make sure the first dose was provided 12 hours before returning to school or, based on physician recommendation, no less than 12 hours.

All students will be monitored throughout the day for signs or symptoms of illness. Any student exhibiting symptoms of illness throughout the day will be sent home.

VACATION/TRAVEL ABSENCES

The Del Mar Union School District recognizes regular school attendance plays a key role in student achievement. Any child enrolled in kindergarten or above is subject to compulsory full-time education. Although exemptions to compulsory attendance may be granted in rare circumstances, as allowed by law, it is the responsibility of the District to ensure that students attend school regularly.

In this effort, the District affirms compliance with compulsory attendance laws by providing this information on accountability practices for student attendance. All schools within the Del Mar Union School District will participate in consistent monitoring of student attendance. The student information system has been programmed to generate attendance letters for individual students at prescribed intervals.

After three (3) unexcused days of absence, unresolved absences, or unexcused tardies of more than 30 minutes, a letter will be added to the child's record and sent home to make families aware of the attendance problem. After six (6) unexcused days of absences, unresolved absences, or unexcused tardies of more than 30 minutes, a second letter will be added to the child's record and sent home asking parents to attend a meeting at the school. After nine (9) unexcused absences, unresolved absences, or unexcused tardies of more than 30 minutes, a third letter will be added to the child's record and sent home asking parents to attend a School Attendance Review Board Hearing (SARB) at the district office.

It is important to note that, according to Board Policy 5113, absences due to travel and/or vacation are unexcused unless a short-term independent study contract is in place. Absences due to travel and/or vacation have potential to negatively impact your student's attendance record and could result in your child being identified as truant. While vacations are always unexcused, justifiable personal reasons that necessitate travel should be discussed with the school Principal in order for an appropriate determination to be made.

Short-term independent study is available to students for the purpose of accommodating emergencies or *required* travel between five and fifteen school days. Parents/guardians of students who are interested in independent study should contact the Principal at least five days before the first absence due to travel. All student work related to an independent study contract should be turned in on the day the student returns to school. If the Independent Study assignments are not completed, the absences will be unexcused.

If an independent study contract is not in place, it is the Del Mar Union School Board policy that missed schoolwork and homework will not be provided before an unexcused absence. Upon returning from vacation, the student has a predetermined amount of time to complete the missed work. For example, if a student is absent for 3 days, the student has 3 days to complete and return that work.

TRANSPORTATION

The safety of all our students is our highest priority at Sycamore Ridge. Because of the high traffic that comes in and out of our school twice daily, we have designated procedures to accommodate and promote the smooth flow of traffic. We need all families to help and support the safety of all students and assist our school in being a good neighbor in our residential community.

DROP-OFF AND PICK UP PROCEDURES

Car Lane Procedures

- Drivers may not use a hand-held cell phone at any time while driving in or around the school parking lot.
- Drivers should remain in the car. If drivers plan to get out, cars must be parked in a marked stall or on the street. Do not park along the red curb in front of the school.
- Remain in one lane, single-file at the curb when unloading in the drop-off areas in front of the school, and pull forward as far as possible in the line. Please be respectful and follow the instructions of the staff assisting so that the traffic flows.
- Have your child's backpack next to them so that they can exit the car quickly. Do not place materials in the trunk or wait to pull up to the front of the line if you need more time for your child to exit the car.

Before School: (7:45 a.m- 8:00 am.)

- Parents/Guardians are welcome to enter campus before school begins, but must exit the campus by 8:00 am.
- Breakfast for students will be provided in the morning starting at 7:30 am. Breakfast is for students only, and only students are permitted in the courtyard during breakfast. Supervision will be provided by school staff.

Afternoon Pick-up:

- Students will meet parents/guardians after school in the car drive-through loop or outside the designated gates.
- As many of our students and families walk to and from school, please be mindful of your speed and drive safely in and around our neighborhood.

BICYCLES, SCOOTERS, AND SKATEBOARDS

The Del Mar Union School District encourages students and families to make safe transportation choices when traveling to and from school.

- Independent bicycle and scooter riding is permitted for students in grades 4, 5, and 6. Younger students should ride with a parent or guardian.
- Riders are required by California law to wear a properly fitted safety helmet.
- Bicycles, scooters, skateboards, and Zucas must be walked while on school grounds.
- Motorized scooters may not be operated by students under the age of 16 pursuant to California Vehicle Code section 21235.

E-Bikes

Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, students are not permitted to ride electric bicycles (e-bikes) to or from any Del Mar Union School District school or bring e-bikes onto school campuses.

This districtwide expectation reflects the District's commitment to maintaining compliance with applicable law while prioritizing the safety of our elementary-aged students.

Students who arrive at school with an e-bike will not be permitted to ride it home at the end of the school day. The e-bike will be held in a secure location, and a parent or guardian will be contacted to retrieve it.

Bicycle Parking

- Traditional bicycles may be locked to designated bicycle racks.
- The District is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged bicycles or other personal transportation devices.
- Riding privileges may be restricted if students fail to follow school safety expectations.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

The Sycamore Ridge climate provides a structure to support a calm and safe school environment while helping children develop self-discipline, strong character, and a sense of responsibility.

COMMUNICATION

Our school is committed to a learning environment that fosters mutual respect among district staff, parents, and students. Communication between parents and staff is encouraged to enhance each child's opportunity to achieve to the highest possible level.

In an effort to be productive partners in educating our students, our schools insist on positive communication and discourage communication that could have a negative impact on the learning environment. (Board Policy 1250.1)

The Sycamore Ridge staff is committed to respond to email, phone calls, and other written communication from parents in a timely manner. During the school day, the priority of our teachers is to instruct students in the classroom; therefore, they are unable to respond to email and phone messages. If there is an emergency, please contact the front office.

Communication is managed through cooperation between our office, teachers, and our PTA. We are fortunate to have several tools to facilitate communication. The following is a description of the tools and how we use them to provide information at our school.

Teacher Emails

Many of our teachers send out classroom-specific information to their families regarding academic areas of focus, special activities, etc.

Website

Our [school website](#) provides important information about various aspects of our school, including timely announcements, events, as well as policies and procedures at our school. Click on the Class Pages or Steam+ tab to find information about team members and classes. There are also links to individual Google Sites for each Teacher, which include a teacher bio, contact information, and links to digital tools your child may need. Click on the PeachJar icon for all community flyers.

Catapult Connect Messages

The Catapult Connect system is an automated system that allows us to send out information to all of our families via telephone and email. This system is how our weekly Principal communication is sent out, which includes important school events, as well as information from our PTA and DMSEF. It is critical that current phone numbers and email addresses are current and accurate in ParentVue. In addition, this system is used periodically to provide timely reminders about upcoming meetings and activities, as well as important information from both our school site and from the District. This is also the system we will use in the event of an emergency, which is another important reason we have updated contact information. To ensure that you receive important updates from the school and district, please check your junk mailbox for emails from the domain @catapult-connect.com.

PTA News

Please visit our [PTA Website](#) which provides information on school-related functions supported by our wonderful parent organization. Sign up to receive their email updates and check out their website for more information.

Room Parent Emails

Our room parents requesting access to parent emails in order to send out important information regarding classroom specific information. Some emails will also include information about specific class requests for school-wide functions or reminders.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

To help students develop a range of skills they need for school and life, we use the research-based curriculum *Second Step*.

Students engage in learning through a comprehensive, research-based social-emotional program called *Second Step*. The *Second Step* program for Kindergarten through Sixth grade is a universal, classroom-based curriculum designed to increase students' school success and decrease behaviors by promoting social-emotional competence and self-regulation. It teaches skills that strengthen students' ability to learn, have empathy, manage emotions, and solve problems. Using *Second Step* skills creates a safer, more respectful learning environment that promotes school success for all.

In grades Kindergarten through Fifth Grade, the *Second Step* program teaches skills in the following four areas:

1. Growth Mindset & Goal Setting
2. Emotion Management
3. Empathy & Kindness
4. Problem Solving

The *Second Step* program in Sixth Grade teaches skills in the following four areas:

1. Mindsets & Goals
2. Developing a Positive Sense of Self
3. Thoughts, Emotions, and Decisions
4. Managing Relationships and Social Conflict

Classroom lessons, assemblies, and presentations allow us to create a positive school community where we have a common language and are a team in helping our students become positive, effective, and collaborative global citizens.

DISCIPLINE PLAN

Our school-wide discipline plan provides a structure to support a safe school environment while helping children develop self-discipline, strong character, and a sense of responsibility.

The primary goals are to:

- Establish a calm, safe, and fun learning environment
- Foster our students' development of empathy
- Teach children to think and act in socially responsible ways
- Promote respectful, kind, and healthy interactions
- Have students recognize themselves as part of a team
- Help children develop self-control and self-discipline

Our approach is to help children become aware of how their actions affect themselves and others. We do our best to ensure students receive positive reinforcement throughout each day. We know and recognize that everyone makes mistakes from time to time. Our expectation is that students' responses to mistakes positively impact their behavioral growth over time. At Sycamore Ridge we utilize four types of logical consequences:

- **Reminder or redirection** - If a child makes a poor choice, staff will give a verbal or nonverbal reminder or redirection.
- **Take a break** - If a child is having a difficult time managing their emotions, they will be given an opportunity to take a break. A staff member will ask the child to take a break, or the child may voluntarily take a break. If appropriate, students will be asked to reflect on their behaviors.
- **Loss of privilege** - If a child continues to not abide by school agreements, they may lose a privilege. Loss of privilege could include removal from class and/or special events. Depending on the severity of the behavior, the staff and administration may determine an alternative yet appropriate and logical consequence.
- **Make it right** - If a child makes a choice that does not abide by school agreements or damages school or personal property, they will be expected to reflect, apologize, and repair the damage.

The purpose of any discipline plan is to assist students in learning to make better choices and thereby changing their behaviors. The following is our progressive plan to provide students with multiple opportunities to make good choices.

- **Warning/Redirection** – Students are counseled and coached by staff members

and given an opportunity to demonstrate appropriate behavior.

- **Student Reflection Form** – Students are issued a reflection form so that they reflect on their choice and discuss with a staff member to learn from this moment.
- **Principal Referral** – Principal will make personal contact with parents. At this discipline level, consequences may involve loss of privileges, apologizing and making it right, or suspension (depending on the circumstance).

While we hope all problems can be resolved using the logical consequences and progressive discipline, there are some behaviors that may require immediate referral to administration. Examples include:

- Harassment and bullying
- Physical/ Verbal aggression
- Dangerous defiance
- Possession of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, products containing nicotine, or weapons

Our ultimate goal is to provide a safe, nurturing environment where students learn and grow from their choices and are contributing and supportive members of the Sycamore Ridge Community.

ANTI-BULLYING

The District will not tolerate bullying as defined in Board Policy 5131.2, or any behavior that infringes on the safety or well-being of students, staff, or any other persons within the District's jurisdiction, whether directed at an individual or group. This includes, but is not limited to, discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying based on disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.

Reports of bullying should be reported to the classroom teacher, or principal as soon as possible.

Bullying means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act of conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, and including one or more acts committed by a pupil or group of pupils as directed toward one or more pupils that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- (a) Placing a reasonable pupil or pupils in fear of harm to that pupil's or those pupils' person or property.
- (b) Causing a reasonable pupil to experience a substantially detrimental effect on his or her physical or mental health.

- (c) Causing a reasonable pupil to experience substantial interference with his or her academic performance.
- (d) Causing a reasonable pupil to experience substantial interference with his or her ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

EXPECTED BEHAVIORS

LUNCH/STUDENT PLAYGROUND EXPECTATIONS

The purpose of the playground expectations is to create an environment that encourages students to interact in a respectful and positive manner. The parameters of all activities chosen by students must support this positive environment. These standards will provide the guidelines for students to support one another, resolve their own conflicts, and assist in creating their own physically and emotionally safe environment.

- I will participate in all activities in a respectful and safe manner.
- I will use playground equipment in a safe and respectful manner.
- I will use respectful language and speak honestly and kindly.
- When the bell rings, I will stop playing, return all equipment, and walk back to class.

DRESS CODE

The purpose of a school-wide dress code is to establish a school environment that supports a productive work atmosphere, which supports students' learning and reflects the values of our greater school community. Please take time to review our school's Dress Code with your children. The following items of clothing/accessories are considered inappropriate and/or disruptive to the educational process, and are therefore **NOT** allowed:

- Clothing advertising alcohol or containing disrespectful words, signs, or symbols
- Clothing that exposes the midriff or undergarments

In order to participate in sports and recess activities, footwear that provides adequate protection is to be worn at all times. Tennis shoes or sneakers are recommended. Sandals must have heel straps. Flip-flops or shoes with wheels are not acceptable footwear for school.

Students wearing clothing that violates our school dress code may be asked to go to the office, call their parents, and have alternate clothing brought from home.

TECHNOLOGY AGREEMENT

Our schools are state-of-the-art facilities with many opportunities for students to use computers and technology equipment. All students must follow district guidelines and demonstrate expected digital citizenship while using technology. Violations may result in a loss of privileges.

The District provides students with access to instructional technology and learning tools to support learning at school and at home, including both high-tech devices (such as District-owned tablets, Chromebooks, hotspots and related accessories) and low-tech or print-based options. When a District-owned device is issued for home use, families share responsibility for reasonable care, safe storage, and timely return of the device and any assigned accessories. Families must promptly report any loss, theft, or damage to the school.

If a District-owned device provided for home use is lost, broken, or damaged more than once during the same school year, the District may require the family to replace the device and/or accessories or reimburse the District's replacement cost in order for the student to continue using District-owned equipment at home. If a family chooses not to replace the equipment, the District will provide alternative low-tech supports for home use, and high-tech equipment will remain available for the student to use at school.

CELL PHONE/MOBILE COMMUNICATION DEVICE GUIDELINES

To support student learning, engagement, and positive social interaction, students are expected to keep all mobile communication devices, including cell phones, smart watches, and similar devices, turned off and stored in their backpacks throughout the school day.

Students may not use or wear mobile communication devices to call, text, message, take photos, record video or audio, access the internet, or communicate with others while on campus during the school day. Students who use a mobile communication device in an unauthorized manner may have the device confiscated and returned according to school procedures.

The District and school are not responsible for personal electronic devices that are brought to school and are lost, stolen, or damaged. Students and families assume all responsibility for devices brought onto campus.

If a student needs to contact a parent/guardian during the school day, the student may use a school office phone at an appropriate time. Likewise, parents/guardians who need to contact their child during the school day should call the school office, and school staff will

assist in relaying messages or arranging communication as appropriate.

Please refer to Board Policy 5131.8, Mobile Communication Devices, for additional information.

DROPPING OFF ITEMS FOR YOUR STUDENT

If you need to drop off a lunch, snack, eyeglasses, clothing, books, etc. for your student, please come into the school office and leave it on the shelf in the office. Please label the item with your child's name and teacher. Please remind your child to go check the office for their item. The school office will do their best to make sure students get their items.

For health and safety reasons, food delivery services (such as Grubhub, Doordash, or Uber Eats, etc) are prohibited from delivering student lunches during the school day.

LOST AND FOUND

If something is found, it will be placed in the lost and found. Small or valuable items may be turned into the office. Sometimes it takes a few days for items to reach the lost and found bin from various areas of campus. If items are not claimed after they have been displayed for a few days, they will be donated to charity.

SCHOOL SAFETY

DISTRICT VISITATION POLICY

The safety of all children is of paramount importance. All volunteers to campus must check in and out at the front office. Parents should bring their legal ID the first time they check in.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Your child's safety is of the utmost importance at Sycamore Ridge. Because student safety is our number one concern, the Del Mar Union School District works closely with the San Diego County Office of Education, the San Diego Office of Emergency Services, and the San Diego Sheriff's Department to develop, strengthen, and align school safety plans with the latest recommendations. Throughout the year, we will be practicing different drills so in case of emergency all students, staff, and volunteers have clear expectations of what to do in different situations.

GATES

In order to maintain a safe and secure school site environment and to address related

concerns of the community, all gates at the Del Mar Union School District schools will be locked throughout the school day. All visitors must use the main office as your point of entry and exit when school is in session.

DOG POLICY ON CAMPUS

Dogs are not allowed on school grounds. The only dogs allowed on campus are designated service dogs. This includes during drop-off, during the school day, and during pickup. This is a district-wide policy for the safety of students, parents, and other campus visitors. Therefore, if families are including a dog walk at the same time they are picking up or dropping off their child, we request that you meet or say goodbye to your child on the sidewalk, not bringing the dog on campus.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

The DMUSD's educational program is a child-centered program based on the unique needs of each student. To ensure that the needs of our students are met, a goal of the DMUSD program is to provide meaningful, rigorous learning opportunities commensurate with the qualities and potential of each student. The DMUSD educational program incorporates practices for all learners with these identified outcomes:

- Determine the potential of each student.
- Provide learning opportunities commensurate with the qualities of advanced students.
- Offer rigorous, stimulating learning environments.
- Assist in cultivating self-generating problem-solving abilities.
- Foster healthy self-concepts.
- Develop communication skills.
- Develop the skills involved in productive interpersonal relationships and positive leadership.

We know that students need an experience that challenges them and takes into consideration individual learning styles and special abilities. Multiple measures are used to determine students' aptitude, including district assessments and performance tasks, standardized test results, formative classroom assessments, and daily classroom work. We are committed to providing differentiated learning experiences that correspond with the student's particular abilities and talents.

The ongoing professional development provided for our district's teachers on the use of effective instructional skills is a top priority as DMUSD pursues the highest quality of instructional practices.

STEAM+

Our STEAM+ education program is taught by credentialed teachers who specialize in specific areas, including Art, P.E, Music, Science, and Innovation Technology. Our STEAM+ specialists work together with classroom teachers to enhance the core curriculum and provide students with opportunities to learn through exploration, experimentation, and creativity. Through STEAM+, students develop problem-solving skills, teamwork, and gain exposure to the fine arts above and beyond the classroom experience.

STANDARDS-BASED REPORT CARD

The Del Mar Union School District standards-based report card is designed to provide detailed feedback to parents and students about progress towards specific content indicators at each grade level. With this understanding, parents are able to guide and support their child, helping him/her to be successful in our rigorous academic program. Teachers use both quantitative and qualitative measures to inform student progress. Report cards are distributed at the close of each trimester via parent-teacher conferences or ParentVUE.

HOMEWORK

Our District recognizes current research showing that the benefits of homework are age-dependent. The Board further recognizes that for elementary-aged students, research suggests that, in contrast to homework consisting of worksheets and activities loosely related to student learning, reading at home has significant benefits, including promoting a love of school and an interest in learning. The Board recognizes the importance of after-school time for developing positive attitudes toward school, participating in extracurricular activities, and fostering healthy personal and family relationships.

Homework assignments shall be meaningful and focused on current student learning, reasonable in length, and appropriate to the grade level and course. Teachers shall assign homework only as necessary to fulfill academic goals and reinforce current instruction. Age-appropriate instruction may be given to help students allocate their time wisely, meet their deadlines, and develop good personal study habits.

Although it is the student's responsibility to undertake assignments independently, parents/guardians may serve as a resource and are encouraged to ensure that their child's homework assignments are completed.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

We are particularly proud of our productive relationship with our dynamic and involved community. So many great aspects of our school rely on the continued support of our parents and families. There is no doubt that our school is thriving because of community commitment and involvement. A school is as strong as the partnerships between its community of families, staff, and students. Please pursue whatever level of involvement that you can. Opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- School Site Council (SSC)
- Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
- Del Mar Schools Education Foundation (DMSEF)
- Del Mar English Language Advisory Committee (DELAC or ELAC)

Our school staff look forward to working with parents/guardians to develop meaningful opportunities for students and to be involved in district and school activities; advisory, decision-making, and advocacy roles; and activities to support learning at home.

MEDICATIONS AND HEALTH INFORMATION

Students may not bring any medication of any kind to school. This includes over-the-counter medications (i.e., cough drops, Tylenol, Motrin, etc.). All medications must be turned into the school office. Any medication to be given to students during school hours must be accompanied by a Physician's Statement form along with directions for the administration of the medication. These forms are available in the Health Office.

There is a first aid kit in each classroom. Students may use it under adult supervision to take care of small cuts and scrapes. Students may also receive care at the Health Office if he or she is hurt or sick during class or on the playground. Students must get permission from an adult to go to the Health Office.

If the use of crutches is required, or limited activity is recommended during the school day, a physician's note is needed. The note must indicate the period for which crutches are to be used as well as any other requirements pertaining to the school setting.

NUTRITION AND WELLNESS

The Del Mar Union School District is required by state law to have in place a Student Wellness Policy (Board Policy 3550 and 5030 and AR 5030). The state law was passed to

address Californians' concerns about childhood obesity, which is linked to poor food choices and lack of exercise. Recognizing the link between student health and learning:

- Students will be provided time for eating lunch as recommended by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations.
- Students will be discouraged from sharing outside food/beverages.
- All food made available by the district will follow all nutritional guidelines.
- School fundraising activities either will not involve food or will use only foods that meet the nutrition and portion size.
- Snacks served during the school day will emphasize fruits, vegetables, and water.
- Celebrations that involve food (including student birthdays) during the school day are limited to no more than one per class per month. Each occasion may include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards.
- Food served as part of instructional activities (science, cooking class, math activities) will offer healthy choices.

Please be reminded that the District's Wellness Policy also includes the following requirements for food brought on campus for students:

- All food brought on campus by parents, teachers, or staff for students should be store-bought, prepared, and individually wrapped, including a listing of the ingredients. No home-cooked foods should be served on campus to students in order to minimize the risk of allergic reactions and foodborne illness. This does not include individual student lunches.

LICE

Any time children come together, head lice can occur. Head lice do not spread disease and are not a serious medical condition, but they are a nuisance. Please contact the office in the event lice are found so we can follow up appropriately at school. If a student is found to have head lice during the school day, parents/guardians will be required to pick up the child, and school health staff will provide you with a treatment plan and details about when the child can return to school.

PEANUT/NUT AWARE DISTRICT

The Del Mar Union School District is a peanut/nut aware district, so we do not restrict students from bringing foods that include peanuts or nuts. Students are also not allowed to share food at lunch. In addition, classrooms with students with severe nut allergies are labeled Peanut-Free Classrooms. Thank you for supporting and respecting the health and

well-being of all students!

SCHOOL BREAKFAST & LUNCH PROGRAM

The Del Mar Union School District's Child Nutrition Services Department is proud to provide students with nutritious, high-quality meals that support learning, health, and academic success. Through California's Universal Meals Program (AB 130), all students are eligible to receive a breakfast and a lunch each school day at no cost, regardless of family income.

Breakfast is served from 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m., and lunch is served following regular school lunch times. For student safety, parents and visitors are not permitted in the meal service or eating areas.

A vegetarian option is available daily. While the Central Kitchen is not nut-free or gluten-free, menu items will not contain peanuts, and procedures are in place to help minimize the risk of cross-contact. In accordance with USDA meal requirements, students selecting a school meal must choose at least one fruit with breakfast and at least one fruit and/or vegetable with lunch. Students are also encouraged to bring a refillable water bottle to use at the water-filling stations located throughout each campus.

Students with food allergies or other medically necessary dietary needs who plan to participate in school meals should submit a [Medical Statement to Request Special Meals and/or Accommodations](#) to the Child Nutrition Services Office. This form must be signed by a state-licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian before meal accommodations can be provided.

Although school meals are provided at no cost to all students, families are encouraged to complete the Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application at <https://www.schoolcafe.com/DMUSD> (form opens in early August). Completing this form may be useful when requesting other income-based services.

Thank you for taking the time to review our Sycamore Ridge Family Handbook.

Let's make this a wonderful 2026-2027 school year!