

Columbia Elementary School

1025 South Trinity

Fresno, California 93706

559-457-2630

Parent Handbook 2014-2015

Welcome to Columbia Elementary School

On behalf of the staff at Columbia Elementary School, we welcome you to our school. Columbia School began serving students in 1889 and we celebrate 125 years of educating Fresno youth! We are committed to providing a quality education and a school where children are proud to attend. Our goal is to provide a safe learning environment where students achieve grade level common core standards. We believe in each child's ability, that all students have the right to learn, and that all students can and will be successful!

This handbook provides information about Columbia School's procedures and policies. Please review it and keep it handy for future use. Working together, we can ensure a successful year for your child.

Principal: Cindy Ferdinandi

Vice Principal/Program Manager: Esperanza (Hopie) Granados

School Hours

Preschool	Morning Session	8:00 am – 11:00 am
Preschool	Afternoon Session	12:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Kindergarten		8:15 am – 1:20 pm
Grades 1-6		8:15 am – 2:20 pm

Arrival/Dismissal Procedures

Arrival

Supervision is provided only during the school day, starting at 7:40 am. Students should not be on campus until that time.

- All students enter the main gate on Stanislaus Avenue. The gate will be unlocked at 7:40 am.
- Breakfast is provided free of charge to all students in grades K-6. The cafeteria is open from 7:40 am – 8:05 am and all students should go directly to the cafeteria upon arrival at school. Students eating breakfast at school may arrive at 7:40 am and proceed directly to the cafeteria.
- Students not eating breakfast should not arrive until 7:55 am.
- Students are dismissed from the cafeteria to their class lines on the blacktop.

Dismissal

- Students exit classrooms, following the teacher to the front main gate on Stanislaus Ave. Parents are asked to wait for their child in front of the school, in order to keep the walkways clear for students and teachers.
- Supervision is not provided for students in Grades 1-6 beyond dismissal at 2:20 pm. Students in Grades 1-6 MUST be met by a parent or walk directly home. Students must use the crosswalks.
- Students enrolled in the After School Program (ASES) must report to the program immediately upon dismissal.
- Students awaiting buses must wait in front of the school.
- Students waiting for a ride home will continue to follow school rules and wait directly in front of the school.
- Kindergarten students MUST be picked up from the cafeteria at 1:20pm.

After School Program (ASES)

Columbia Elementary has an after school program which provides academic, homework, and intervention support following regular school hours. The program operates from 2:20 pm – 6:00 pm Monday through Friday. Students may be removed from the program due to poor attendance or inappropriate behaviors. Mrs. Milagros Macias is the director of this program at Columbia.

Arrival/Dismissal by Automobile

For your child's safety, we ask that your child exits the vehicle directly to the curb and does not exit the car into the street. This is a no parking zone, so we ask that you remain in your car as you drop off or pick up your child. There is parking available on the side streets. To avoid congestion in front of the school, some parents find it best to park on a side street and have their child walk to the car. All students must use the crosswalks when crossing the street.

Walkers

To help ensure student safety, please review the following guidelines with your child:

- When walking to and from school, students may only cross the street at designated crosswalks. They may not run across a street or cross where there is not a stop sign or a traffic signal.

- Once dismissed, students should walk directly home or to the location their parent has directed.

Breakfast, Lunch, and Cafeteria

Free Meal Program

All students at Columbia Elementary School may participate in the free meal program. Breakfast and lunch are served daily.

- Breakfast is served every morning from 7:40 – 8:05 am in the cafeteria for students in grades K-6. All students are expected to wash and dry their hands before entering the cafeteria. Kindergarten students are escorted to their classrooms by Columbia staff. Grades 1-6 are dismissed and exit the cafeteria walking to the blacktop where they line up with their class and await their teacher.
- Lunch periods are assigned for each classroom. Preschool – sixth grade students eat lunch with their class in the cafeteria. The preschool menu may be different from the elementary student menu.
- Parents are asked to notify the office and cafeteria manager if a child has food allergies.
- Food from breakfast and lunch is not allowed to be removed from the cafeteria.

Cafeteria Expectations

The Columbia School Cafeteria is a place where students can eat and converse in a clean, respectful, and orderly setting. To accomplish this, students are taught procedures and cafeteria expectations. These include the following:

- Prior to entering the cafeteria, students will wash their hands or use hand sanitizer.
- Students will enter the cafeteria quietly, using a level 0 voice. Students will stay in line, evenly spaced, as they proceed to pick up their breakfast or lunch.
- After students pick up their food, they will walk to their table as directed by staff.
- Students are asked to focus on eating their lunch. There is no sharing food with others.
- Students are to remain in their seat unless given permission to leave their seat, and are to use the voice level directed by staff.
- After students are finished eating, they are to remain in their seat and use the voice level directed by staff.
- When their table is dismissed, students quietly empty any remaining food in the trash can. No food or utensils may leave the cafeteria.
- Students quietly exit the cafeteria.
- Students are responsible for using the restroom before going to recess/playground.

Dress Code

Students at Columbia Elementary School are expected to be dressed and groomed according to the school's dress code. Parents/guardians of students who do not come to school with proper attire will first be contacted by the classroom teacher. Depending on the nature of the offense, a change of clothes may be requested. Parents will be notified if their child is not following dress code. They may receive a phone call or a Dress Code Violation Form. Frequent dress code violations may result in an office referral and disciplinary action for the student.

The dress code at Columbia Elementary School is based on three principles:

- Safety
- Elimination of Learning Distractions
- Good Grooming

Columbia School follows the FUSD Dress Code (listed below as numbers 1-12):

1. Head wear, other than hats or caps, is not allowed at school. Hats/caps must be removed inside buildings.
2. Sunglasses are not to be worn at school unless prescribed by a physician.
3. Shoes must be worn on campus and at school functions.
4. Underwear-type sleeveless shirts, tube tops, halter tops, spaghetti straps, and sagging or baggy pants, pants that do not fit at the waist or radically altered or frayed clothing are not acceptable.
5. Any see-through clothing, clothing that reveals a bare midriff or chest, or clothes that expose the body in a suggestive manner shall not be worn.
6. Dresses, skirts, and shorts are acceptable as long as they are extended no more than four (4") above the knee. Shorts are to be hemmed and not form fitting. Sports wear type shorts, bike shorts (spandex), gym shorts, and frayed shorts are unacceptable.
7. Attire which may be used as a weapon may not be worn, including but not limited to steel-toed boots, chains, items with spikes or studs, and other items deemed inappropriate by the principal and/or student site council.
8. Fashions that draw undue attention to the wearer detract from the educational learning environment and are not acceptable. This includes exotic clothing, extreme make-up, body piercing, military or camouflage attire, etc.

9. Earrings are acceptable for the ears only. Body piercing (eyebrows, nose, lips, tongue, navel) is not acceptable.
10. Hair styles which draw undue attention detract from the educational environment and are not acceptable; i.e. unusual designs, colors, mohawks, tails, or unusual razor cuts.
11. Gang-related symbols, colors, or insignias are not to be worn or displayed.
12. Clothing with inappropriate words or pictures is prohibited. Examples of prohibited clothing include items advertising alcohol, tobacco, drugs, etc. or items with profanity, vulgar, violent, or offensive pictures and/or language.

Rules and Discipline

Students may be suspended or expelled for the acts listed above. This policy is in effect at any school activity or attendance that occurs at any time including, but not limited to: school buildings, school grounds, buses, or at any school-related or school-sponsored activity away from school.

Prohibited Items

- Students are not allowed to bring food items such as candy, chips, sodas, and gum to school. Confiscated food items will not be returned. It is very important that students eat healthy foods during the school day. Healthy snacks may include fruits, vegetables, crackers, granola bars.
- Toys are not allowed at school. Toys take away from the learning environment. If a toy is brought to school, a teacher or administrator will take it away and may request that the parent pick it up.
- Portable communication devices are not allowed on any elementary campus per FUSD Handbook. Students may leave a communication device with the office prior to school and retrieve it at dismissal. Students in possession of a communication device during the school day will have it confiscated and the parent will be asked to pick it up.

Good Behavior Recognition

Monthly Personal Responsibility (PR) Assembly/Activity

The reward program recognizes students who have followed the school rules and Guidelines for Success (trustworthiness, responsibility, respect, fairness, caring, and citizenship) for the month. In order for a student to be eligible to participate in this assembly/activity, he/she must have fewer than 15 Personal Responsibility (PR) Points. PR points are assigned by the student's classroom teacher. Suspension is an automatic exclusion from the PR assembly/activity. Please speak with your child about good character and encourage them to not accrue any personal responsibility points.

Caught Being a Cougar

Each Friday, five students will be recognized for following school rules and good citizenship.

Peer Mediators

Students in grades 4-6 may apply to be a Peer Mediator. Identified students will participate in training and serve Columbia at least two times a month. Peer Mediators will be present at recess to assist students who may have disagreements or need assistance in communicating concerns.

Report Card Policy and Awards

Kindergarten and Grade 1

Students are given progress indicators based on growth in academic areas and social skills.

Grades 2-6

Grades will be determined through a variety of assessments based on grade level expectations and requirements. Students are graded on achievement and effort. Both of these criteria scales are ways to help parents see and understand their child's academic progress.

Achievement:

90 – 100% = A

80 – 89% = B

70 – 79% = C

60 – 69% = D

Below 60% = F

Effort:

O = Outstanding

S = Satisfactory

U = Unsatisfactory

P = Poor

Promotion/Retention

Students will be identified at the end of the first quarter if they are "At Risk of Retention." Parents will be informed of this status at the Parent-Teacher Conference held in October. At the conference, an intervention plan will be developed to help the student meet grade level requirements. A final determination whether to promote or retain a student will be made during the third or fourth quarter of school.

Homework

Among the primary purposes of homework are the encouragement of independent study habits and the facilitation of learning. It is assigned by teachers in order to give students the opportunity to practice skills, prepare for a new topic, or extend upon introduced material. You can help your child be successful with the following:

- Provide a place that is well-lit, quiet, organized, and comfortable.

- Set a schedule. Completion of homework should be a priority over games and other activities.
- Encourage your child to work on homework independently. Make yourself available for guidance and assistance. When you notice a reoccurring lack of understanding, notify your child's teacher.

If your child is absent from school and you wish to obtain his/her homework, please notify the school before 10:00 am. This will give the teacher time to gather materials and send homework to the office for pick-up after 3:00 pm.

Awards

The educational development of every student is very important to us. It is our intent to honor each child who achieves academic excellence, attends school regularly, and follows school rules. Quarterly Grade Level Assemblies will be held to honor these students.

Cougar Citizenship Award (Grades 1-6)

- No office referrals or notifications during the quarter
- No suspensions during the quarter
- At least 90% attendance
- "O" only on the Social Skills portion of quarterly report card
- Teacher Recommendation based on the Six Pillars of Character

Perfect Attendance Awards (Grades 1-6)

A student must have perfect attendance during the reporting period, with no tardies.

Principal's Award (Grades 1-3)

- Award based on improvement, academics, or other positive character traits
- Teacher Recommendation for award

Merit List and Honor Roll (Grades 3-6)

Students in grades 3 – 6 are eligible to earn Merit List and Honor Roll. Students in second grade are eligible in the third and fourth quarters.

Honor Roll

- Honor Roll is earned when a student has at least a 3.6 grade average in all subject areas. The report card may not contain a "D", "F", "U" or "P".

Merit List

- Students who earn 3.0 – 3.59 grade point average on their quarter report card will be on the Merit List. The report card may not contain a "D", "F", "U" or "P".

Student of the Month (Grades K-6)

Every month, each teacher will select a student for the Student of the Month Award. The student will receive a Student of the Month Pin and will have his/her photograph taken.

Character Counts Monthly "Kid of Character" (Grades K-6)

Every month, each teacher will select a student for the Kid of Character Award. The student will receive a Character Counts wristband and will have his/her photograph taken.

School Procedures, Parent Involvement

Emergency Cards

Yellow emergency cards are sent home on the first day of school or upon registration. It is very important that the information on these cards be current. If you move, change phone numbers, etc. please notify the office at once. This record is kept in case of emergency or need for parent contact. Only the people you list on the card will be allowed to remove a child from school. You may update the card at any time.

Visitors and Volunteers

For the safety of our students and staff, all visitors must report to the school office to sign in and receive a visitor's badge to be worn while on campus. Volunteers are required by FUSD policy to complete a District Volunteer Form to be kept on file in the school office. This form includes a requirement to disclose any prior criminal convictions and must be completed annually.

Permit to Leave School

Any student leaving school for a doctor/dentist appointment must be signed out in the school office by the parent or other person listed on the emergency card. No student may leave the school grounds during school hours without authorization from the school office.

Medication

No medication may be taken at school unless prescribed by a doctor. A signed consent form, signed by the parent and the doctor, must be on file. Medications must be delivered to the Nurse's Office in the original bottle and will be kept in a locked cabinet.

Illness

Notify the school office if your child has a health condition that may affect his/her participation in school activities. If your child becomes sick during the school day, we will contact the parent to pick up the child. If the parent cannot be reached, the school will contact persons listed on the emergency card. Students cannot be released to walk home, picked up by anyone under the age of 18, or released to anyone not listed on the emergency card.

Lost and Found

Lost and found items will be kept in the cafeteria. Please remember to write your child's name inside outerwear and jackets since these are common lost items.

Study Trips/Student Participation Policy

Study trips may be scheduled to enhance the educational experience. Participation will require a signed permission slip. No permission by telephone is permitted. In some cases, a parent may be requested to accompany a student on a study trip due to the student's behavior and/or safety concerns. Any student who has had repeated contacts regarding behavior or has received suspension from school may be excluded from any trip away from the school site. The exclusion will be the option of the teacher and/or school administrator and is based upon supervision concerns for the safety of student.

Parent Communication and Involvement

Monthly Newsletters

Communication between school and parents is essential for student success. A school wide monthly newsletter is sent home with your student at the beginning of each month. Please read the newsletter for information and announcements. In addition to the school wide newsletter, monthly grade level newsletters may be sent home with your student. The grade level newsletter will provide specific ideas for ways that you can help your child to be successful in school.

Title I Parent Involvement Policy

Columbia Elementary School is designated as a school-wide Title I school, which means that all students and parents may participate in any Title I supported function. The school and parents are equal partners in helping students succeed academically. The school's policy is based on information from the annual meeting and the FUSD Board approved Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA).

- A Title I annual needs assessment will be distributed to guide the development of the school's SPSA. The Program Manager and SSC are responsible for this assessment.
- There will be various opportunities for parent education and parent participation throughout the school year. Examples include Back-to-School Night, parent-teacher conferences, School Site Council, English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC), Title I Parent Meeting, Coffee and Tea with the Principal, classroom visitations, awards assemblies, and Open House.
- The Title I funding reserved for parent involvement will be used to co-fund supplies for parent participation activities, materials for parent communication, and trainings.
- Title I parents will review the site level policy at the annual Title I Parent Meeting.

School Site Council (SSC) and English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC)

Parents are encouraged to participate and attend regularly scheduled meetings for these advisory groups. Meeting dates will be listed in the monthly newsletter. For additional information, please contact the Program Manager.

Columbia Cougars Strive to Be...TRRFCC

Trustworthy individuals

Responsible for oneself

Fair in our decisions

Citizens of positive character who are

Caring for others

Fresno Unified School District Civility Policy

Civility Policy (Board Policy 1265)

Maintaining an environment supportive of learning and free of disruptive conduct is important to the success of our children's education. To further this goal, it is the intent of the district to promote, through this policy, mutual respect, civility and orderly conduct among district employees, parents/guardians, and other members of the public. It is also the intent of this policy to encourage positive communication and discourage disruptive, volatile, hostile or aggressive communication or actions. Furthermore, this policy is intended to maintain, to the extent possible, a safe, harassment-free workplace for teachers, students, administrators, other staff, parents/guardians and the public. It is not the district's intent to deprive any person of his/her right to freedom of expression. The district encourages the public's cooperation with and adherence to this policy.

Expected Level of Behavior

1. District employees and representatives should treat parents/guardians and other members of the public with civility, courtesy and respect.
2. Parents/guardians and other members of the public should treat staff and students and each other, while on school grounds and/or participating in school-related activities, with civility, courtesy and respect.

Unacceptable/Disruptive Behavior

Any conduct that disrupts or interferes with the discipline, good order, lawful conduct or administration of any school, class or activity of the school or district, constitutes unacceptable conduct behavior. Unacceptable conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. Disruption of or threats to disrupt school classrooms, activities, and/or operations;
2. Threats to the health and safety of students or district employees;
3. Battery or assault upon students, district employees or other persons;
4. Using obscenities or speaking in a demanding, loud, insulting and/or demeaning manner; and/or
5. Unauthorized entry onto district premises and school grounds.