



Pacifica School District  
Sunset Ridge Elementary School  
340 Inverness Drive  
Pacifica, CA 94044  
(650) 738-6687  
[www.pacificasd.org](http://www.pacificasd.org)

STUDENT HANDBOOK  
2009 - 2010

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*PACIFICA SCHOOL DISTRICT*

*375 Reina del Mar Ave.*

*Pacifica, CA 94044*

*(650) 738-6600*

*Susan Vickrey, Superintendent*

*Kitty Mindel, Assistant Superintendent*

*Josephine Peterson, Chief Business Official*

*Ellie Cundiff, Principal*

*Board of Trustees:*

*Karen Ervin*

*Cynthia Kaufman*

*Eileen Manning-Villar*

*Mike O'Neill*

*Joan Weideman*

*You can access all information about the Pacifica School District on our web site,  
[www.pacificasd.org](http://www.pacificasd.org).*



# *Pacifica School District*

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

*The Pacifica School District,  
the community it serves,  
and the children they cherish,  
together prepare each child to meet the  
challenges of the future by providing  
an equitable, rigorous academic program  
which nurtures curiosity and inspires joy,  
confidence and achievement in learning.*

# *Pacifica School District*

## *Strategies*

### *Curriculum*

- ❖ *We will align and articulate curriculum, instruction, staff development and assessment to ensure a strong, innovative instructional program for all students that is reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis.*

### *Libraries*

- ❖ *We will develop and implement a district-wide program involving school libraries/media centers and explore partnerships with city libraries.*

### *Visual & Performing Arts*

- ❖ *We will develop and implement a district-wide program for visual and performing arts.*

### *Technology*

- ❖ *We will expand and enhance the existing technology plan to enhance communications between staff, students and communities and to support the implementation for curriculum.*

### *Marketing*

- ❖ *We will communicate and promote the qualities of Pacifica School District in order to attract and retain families, staff, and partnerships and to expand positive with the greater community.*

### *Facilities*

- ❖ *We will provide well maintained, attractive facilities that are flexible and adaptable to meet both the present and future needs of the students, staff and community.*

### *Student Support*

- ❖ *We will support student learning by developing, enhancing and assessing services that promote the well being of each student.*

*Principal's Welcome  
2009-2010*

*It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2009-2010 school year at Sunset Ridge Elementary School. I am so pleased to be here as your principal. This will be another exciting year filled with many new experiences for all of us.*

*The entire staff is eager to build an active, and cooperative learning environment where literacy continues to be the foundation for all learning. Over the past several years, we have spent a great effort learning about effective strategies for teaching reading and writing using Writers' and Readers' Workshops. We can't wait to implement these strategies in the classrooms. In addition to literacy, we also want to focus on math and have all students master the skills needed to be efficient and effective mathematicians. Our goal is to develop the love of learning in each student.*

*We know that we are not alone in educating the children. It takes all of us – parents, teachers, staff, and administrators – to meet the needs of all of our students and help them reach their potential. Our PTA is growing and we need your help. Stop by and meet the PTA members in their office at the front of the school or email them at [sunsetridgepta@gmail.com](mailto:sunsetridgepta@gmail.com). Be an active member in your child's education. Join the PTA.*

*This handbook is designed to provide you with a better understanding of our school so you'll be informed of the policies and procedures we have in place to ensure a warm and welcoming environment. If you have any questions please feel free to stop by, call or email me.*

*On behalf of the Sunset Ridge staff and myself, I would like to extend an invitation to visit us and to participate in your child's learning experience. I look forward to an exciting year.*

*Sincerely,*

*Ellie Cundiff  
Principal  
Sunset Ridge School  
340 Inverness Dr.  
Pacifica, Ca 94044  
650-738-6687  
ecundiff@pacificasd.org*

## Sunset Ridge Statement of Beliefs

**We believe:**

**That all students can and will learn.**

**That all students will attain the standards we set.**

**That we are dedicated to teaching students how to be independent learners in a community of learners who support each other and foster self-esteem.**

## Sunset Ridge Elementary School

High on the hills east of Pacifica is Sunset Ridge Elementary. This K-5 school is the northernmost school in the district and is one of the best-planned school facilities in the Pacifica School District, and is on the most beautiful spot in the entire district. A rocky outcrop, called Inspiration Point, arouses the poetic nature of our young writers and artists.

To take advantage of the beautiful views, a track has been installed that runs a circuit around the rear of the school for running or walking. Several wings span off a main entrance of Sunset Ridge where the library media center is a delight of architectural design. This jewel in the crown lies at the heart of the school with its location symbolic of the school's goal: Every child a reader and a writer.

Sunset Ridge has a strong curriculum with an emphasis on literacy/language arts and mathematics. Literacy is the foundation for learning and is therefore the key program focus at Sunset Ridge. In 2000, Sunset Ridge received a grant from the Robert Noyce Foundation to provide teacher training for the implementation of the "Every Child a Reader and Writer Initiative." This initiative focuses on the development of a Writing and Reading Workshop in every classroom. Technology enhances the curriculum. Each classroom has computers that are used to support, integrate and strengthen curriculum under the direction of the teacher.

Support specialists work collaboratively with classroom teachers. The English as Second Language (ESL) aide, the Speech/Language teacher, and the Resource Specialist team teach with the classroom teacher as well as provide pullout services. As with all of our district's schools, Sunset Ridge has shown steady improvement in state test results, with an increase of 34 API points from 2001 to 2007 scores.

Recognizing the importance of serving the whole child, Sunset Ridge has additional support for its families and students with after-school tutorials, a Reading Recovery teacher, on-site counseling services, and a community outreach worker who helps support families to access needed services and resources. Sunset Ridge provides a breakfast program and boasts two on-site daycare providers to meet the needs of working parents.

Sunset Ridge hosts several community programs such as Judo, Boy Scouts, CYO, CPR training, and Raising A Reader training. Hosting programs like this helps position the school as a pillar of the community. Tours of the school are offered on a regular basis and all are invited to call the school to register for a tour of the facility.

## Sunset Ridge School Wide Rules

**At Sunset Ridge we believe all students and adults should be respectful to each other: be responsible for their actions: and be ready to listen and learn.**

In an effort to abide by these guidelines the following school wide and playground rules were developed by Sunset Ridge students and staff:

1. Show respect towards students and staff.
2. Play appropriately and use playground equipment appropriately.
3. All objects (including tan bark and rocks) are to remain on the ground, not in hands of students.
4. Bathrooms are to be used appropriately, not for play.
5. All school play equipment is to be shared.
6. Only one person on the slides at a time. Running, chasing, and interfering with others around the play structure is not allowed.
7. Stay in designated areas on playground.

The Pacifica School District has adopted two Board/Administrative policies regarding Sexual Harassment (BP5145.7) and Uniform Complaint Procedures (AR1312.3). Parents may view the text of these policies by examining the District Handbook/Annual Parent Notification as well as Pacifica School District web site, [www.pacificasd.org](http://www.pacificasd.org), or at the district office.

### Parental Rights Notification

At the beginning of each school year, the District provides a copy of your parental rights. You are asked to read the brochure and acknowledge receipt of side 2 of the Student Registration/Emergency card.

### District Policies On-Line

The public can view the Pacifica School District's Board Policies and Administrative Regulations from the district web site: [www.pacificasd.org](http://www.pacificasd.org). Choose 'District Information' then 'Board Policies and Administrative Regulations.' Follow on-line directions.

## PACIFICA SCHOOL DISTRICT'S STUDENTS' BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES

Students who become involved in areas of problem behavior will be subject to certain disciplinary actions. Depending upon the problem behavior of the student, one or more of the following actions may be taken, not necessarily in the order listed.

Interpretation of the guidelines by school administrators will take into account frequency, severity, and the age at which problems occur. School administrators may involve the intervention of other community resources. Any action will be in accordance with Administrative policy, Board policy, and State law.

**The following is a list of problem areas and possible interventions and disciplinary actions that may be utilized:**

### Problem Areas

<p>Tardiness Unexcused Absence Defiance of Authority Disorderly Conduct Dress Code - if inappropriate to instructional setting Verbal Abuse Forgery Theft Possession of Tobacco or Products Sexual Harassment Hate Violence</p>	<p>Destruction of Property Fighting Alcohol Physical Assault/Battery Arson Drugs Any Weapon Including any Knife Extortion/Robbery Terroristic Threats Explosive Devices, Firecrackers</p>
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### DEFINITIONS OF POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS and DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

<p>Informal Conference Conference Detention SARB In-School Suspension Suspension Expulsion</p>	<p>A school official (teacher, administrator) may talk to the student and try to reach an agreement regarding how the student should behave. A formal conference held between the student and one or more school officials. A record will be kept of the conference. A disciplinary action in which students are detained in school for a maximum of 1 hour after the close of the school day. A School Attendance Review Board (SARB) established to help students and their parents with school attendance or behavior problems. A student is assigned to an in-school suspension program by the principal or designee for offenses when suspension is permitted. Saturday School may also be utilized in lieu of suspension. Suspension is a disciplinary action, which excludes a pupil from regular classroom instruction for adjustment purposes for a period of time not to exceed five (5) consecutive school days, ten (10) consecutive school days for Special Education students. Expulsion means the removal of a student from enrollment in a school or the District by order of the Board of Trustees when all other means of correction have failed or if the continued presence of the student causes danger to the physical safety of others. State law provides for due process rights in any order of expulsion.</p>
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Community Resource

Police, Youth Service Bureau,  
Pyramid Alternatives,  
Children's Protective Services,  
Community Mental Health,  
Clergy, Department of Health  
Services, etc.

## **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ...**

### **RIGHTS OF PUPILS ...**

To receive appropriate educational programs.

To be informed about school and District rules and regulations pertaining to students.

To attend school in a climate that is safe and secure.

To attend school and classes unless removed under due process as specified in the Education Code and District procedures.

To receive fair and reasonable treatment from those who are responsible for enforcing standards for student behavior.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF PUPILS ...**

To attend school regularly and on time.

To be prepared for class with appropriate materials and work.

To obey school rules and procedures.

To respect the rights and property of others.

To be respectful and cooperative with school employees, volunteer personnel, and other students.

### **RIGHTS OF PARENTS ...**

To be informed of District policy and school rules and procedures related to their children.

To be informed of school action related to their children.

To inspect their child's records with the assistance of a certificated staff member.

To be informed of their child's academic progress.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS ...**

To visit school periodically and to participate in conferences with school staff members on the academic progress and behavioral status of their children.

To provide supportive action by making sure that children have enough sleep, adequate nutrition, appropriate clothing.

To assure that their children will attend school daily and on time, unless they are ill.

To be familiar with District policies and school rules and procedures.

To cooperate with school staff in matters of discipline, attendance, and progress related to their children.

### **RIGHTS OF TEACHERS ...**

To expect students to behave in a manner which does not interfere with their learning or that of other students.

To have parental support related to the academic and social progress of students.

To expect students to put forth effort and participate in class activities.

To suspend a student from class within the limits of the law.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS ...**

To inform parents about the academic progress, school citizenship, and general behavior of their children.

To conduct a well-planned and effective instructional program to meet the needs of all students.

To initiate and enforce a set of classroom regulations consistent with school and District policies, rules, and procedures.

To be a positive role model for student.

### **RIGHTS OF ADMINISTRATORS ...**

To expect students to behave in an orderly manner in school and on their way to and from school.

To take appropriate action in dealing with students guilty of misconduct.

To detain, suspend, exempt, or exclude students within the limits of the law. To recommend expulsion when the situation demands.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF ADMINISTRATORS ...**

To provide leadership that will establish, encourage, and promote good teaching and effective learning.

To establish, publicize, and enforce school rules that facilitate effective learning and promote attitudes and habits of good citizenship among the students.

To provide assistance in matters concerning serious instructional, behavioral, emotional, health, or attendance problems.

To grant access to pupil records by parent/guardian or others with proper authorization.

To provide prompt and equitable handling of grievances and insure due process for all parties.

<b>Sunset Ridge Elementary School Staff</b>
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Ellie Cundiff	Principal
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**Office Staff**

Toni Slattery	..... Secretary
Donna Bartholomew	School Asst.
Cathy Herrold	School Asst.
Jennifer Nicosia	School Asst.

**Teachers**

May Ryan - K1	..... Primary
Maureen Duncan/Joan Helgeson- K2	Primary
Lily Escobedo - K3	Primary
Josephine Marinas - K4	Primary
Sydney Tyler Parker -K5	Primary
Patrick Chang - C2	Primary
Daina Lujan (Flores) - C3	Primary
Kate Buensuceso - C4	Primary
Sean Nunan - A1	Primary
Joanne Frediani - A2	Primary
Darlene Easterby - A3	Primary
John Collins - A4	Primary
Alyssa Freedman - A5	Primary
Cynthia Skinner - B2	Primary
Ann Tsai - B3	Primary
Missy Zywojko - B5	Primary
Meredith Shaffer - D4	SDC
Karen Stevenson – D1	Intermediate
Joy Dardenelle - D3	Intermediate
Debby Lyttle - E2	Intermediate
Eileen Crouse - E3	Intermediate
Benjamin Sibrack - E4	Intermediate

Angela Boland	..... School Psychologist
Erin Brazil	RSP Specialist

Lynn Gallo	Speech and Language Conflict Resolution & Community Outreach Coordinator
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**Classified Staff**

Lauren Reynolds	..... Librarian
Elizabeth Murtaugh	Kitchen Asst.
Julie Gallagher	Kitchen Asst.
Brenda Raawe	Kitchen Asst.
Maria O’Campo	Custodian - Day Custodian - Night

<b>Sunset Ridge Elementary School Holidays 2009 - 2010</b>
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School Holidays

Labor Day  
September 07, 2009

Veteran's Day  
November 11, 2009

Thanksgiving Recess  
November 25-27, 2009

Winter Recess  
Dec 21 – Jan 01, 2010

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
January 18, 2010

Presidents' Week  
February 15 - 19, 2010

Spring Break  
April 05 -13, 2010

Memorial Day  
May 31, 2010

**SIP Days – No School**

October 12, 2009  
May 28, 2010

Important Dates

First Student Day  
Aug. 31, 2009 – Monday-Minimum Day

Last Student Day  
June 17, 2010 – Thursday - Minimum Day

Back-to-School Conferences  
September 28 – Oct. 02, 2009

School Pictures  
Oct. 09, 2009 (Retake 11/17/09)

Report Card - Fall  
Dec. 04, 2009

Fall Parent Conferences  
Dec. 02 - 04, 2009

Spring Pictures  
April 15, 2010 – No Retakes

Spring Parent Conferences  
March 22 – 26, 2010

Report Card - Spring  
March 26, 2010

Outdoor Education – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade  
March 29 – April 2<sup>nd</sup>

Open House  
Thursday March 18, 2010

STAR Testing  
April 26 – May 14, 2010

**Sunset Ridge Minimum Days**

August 31, 2009  
September 28 – Oct 2, 2009 - Conferences  
December 2 – 4, 2009 – At Risk Conferences  
December 18, 2009

March 22-26 – Spring Conferences  
April 02, 2010  
June 17, 2010

## Sunset Ridge Elementary School Bell Schedules

**2009/2010**

### REGULAR DAY

Kindergarten	8:25 am – 2:25 pm
1 <sup>st</sup> through 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8:25 am – 2:40 pm

### EVERY WEDNESDAY – EARLY RELEASE DAY

WEDNESDAY – All Grades	8:25 am – 1:30 pm
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### MINIMUM DAYS

Kindergarten through Grade 5	8:25 am – 1:30 pm
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### LUNCH

Kindergarten and 1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	11:40 am – 12:20 pm
2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grades	12:05 pm – 12:45 pm
4 <sup>th</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> Grades	12:30 pm – 1:10 pm

### AM RECESS

Kindergarten and 1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	10:10 am – 10:24 am
2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grades	10:25 am – 10:39 am
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10:30 am – 10:44 am
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10:50am – 11:04am

## CALENDAR

## General School Information

### ATTENDANCE

- **ABSENCES**

If your child is absent from school, you must phone the school office (738-6687). You may leave a message on voice mail any time, day or night. In addition, the student is to bring a note on the day he/she returns to school. The note should contain the date(s) of absence, reason for absence, name of student, and signature of parent or guardian. **Please be aware that the school receives no Average Daily Attendance Allocation (ADA or State Funding) for student absences regardless of the type of absence.**

- **TARDINESS**

Students are expected to arrive at school on time. If a student is late to school, he/she must report to the office for a pass. If the child is going to be 30 minutes late or more, you must call the office. Habitual tardiness disrupts the classroom instruction and **significantly** impacts your child's education. Excessive tardies may result in a SARB (Student Attendance Review Board) meeting.

### CAFETERIA

Students may bring or purchase their lunch. Students wishing to purchase multiple or single day meal tickets can do so **before** class begins in the morning and at recess time in the cafeteria. Multiple day tickets can be used at any time during the school year and are sold in increments of 5, 10, and 20 days. A 20-day lunch ticket will cost \$50 (\$2.50 per day); a 10-day ticket will cost \$26 (\$2.60 per day); a 5-day ticket will cost \$13 (\$2.60 per day). Single day tickets will cost \$2.60. Breakfast tickets are also available in multiple or single day tickets. A 20-day will be \$30, 10-day is \$16, 5-day is \$8, and a single day is \$1.60. Checks are accepted for multiple day tickets. You can also purchase your child's meal tickets on line. Just go to EZSchool Pay.com to prepay your child's meal ticket using your Visa or MasterCard (credit or debit). A parent/guardian can also monitor the child's meal account balance online. You will need to know your child's student ID number. If you do not know your child's number, call the school office or ask the person working in the cafeteria. When you visit EZSchool,Pay.com, simply click under the "Parents Sign Up Now." After you complete a simple web form, you'll receive a confirmation e-mail. Follow the directions in the e-mail and you will be logged in and ready to manage your child's account. If you have any questions, please call the Child Nutrition at 650-738-6622. **(Prices are subject to change without notice)** Students are not allowed to leave the school grounds for lunch.

### CHEWING GUM

Gum chewing is not allowed.

### DRESS GUIDELINES

Clothing is to be appropriate and NOT INTERFERE with the instructional program. We suggest that parents assist children in using proper discretion in selecting neat and comfortable clothing and shoes. Inappropriate logos on clothing, spaghetti straps, bare midriff, head coverings, sagging pants, pajamas, and wheely shoes are not permitted. PLEASE LABEL ALL CLOTHING AND PERSONAL ITEMS.

### EARTHQUAKE PROCEDURES/DISASTER DRILLS

In the event of a severe earthquake during the school day, students will be kept on the school site with the faculty until such time as it is declared safe by the principal to dismiss the students. The principal will be in close contact with other agencies and make decisions based upon her judgment for the welfare of the students. Each student has an emergency kit, which includes a blanket, as well as food and water for five days. These kits last for five years and are provided through the courtesy of the PTA, supplemented by parent donations.

- **DRILLS**

Once each month, a drill is held at school. Fire, earthquake and dangerous intruder drills are held throughout the school year. These drills are carried out for the safety of the students in case of an emergency. It is vital that your student has an updated Emergency Form on file in the school office so you or your designated representative can be notified.

### EMERGENCY FORMS

Each student attending school must have a completed emergency form on file in the school office. Parents are requested to keep data current by notifying the office of changes in home and/or work telephone numbers as soon as they are made. We are also requesting to have your email address so that we can share important information regarding school and district events/activities.

## **INDEPENDENT STUDY**

Although there is no substitute for a child being in class every day, we recognize that family obligations may not always coincide with the school calendar. Therefore, if your child needs to miss school for reasons other than illness, we strongly encourage parents to contact the classroom teacher or the school office a week prior to the absence. Upon notification, we will design an Independent Study packet, which will assist your child in keeping up with class assignments while away from school. An Independent Study provides a voluntary educational alternative for a student on a temporary basis and allows for State of California Average Daily Attendance funding for your student. Independent studies will only be issued for 5 days of absence or more.

## **LEAVING SCHOOL GROUNDS**

We have a "closed campus" which means students may not leave school during school hours without a parent signing the student out at the school office.

## **LIBRARY**

The teachers will arrange for student use of the school library. Most of the books may be checked out for one week only. A student who has lost or damaged a library book will not be allowed to borrow any additional books until he/she pays for the lost or damaged book.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Sunset Ridge maintains a lost and found cupboard in the cafeteria for clothing and other personal items. Students and/or parents may check the cupboard during lunch or after school. **It is imperative that all items be labeled with your child's name.** Items not claimed by the end of the school year are boxed and given to a non-profit, non-denominational agency.

## **MEDICAL**

School personnel cannot diagnose or treat illnesses or previous injuries. **ONLY** First Aid can be administered at school. When a sick or injured student is brought into the office, the school secretary will administer First Aid and notify parents for more serious problems. If a child is too ill to be in class, he/she is too ill to remain in school.

If it is necessary to take medication during school hours, a **Prescription Drug Form**, signed by the parents, must be on file in the office. Provisions for storage of medication must be made with the school secretary.

- **LICE**

In order to prevent the spread of lice, Sunset Ridge has a "No Nits" policy. We routinely do head lice checks and will inform you that your child needs to be picked up if lice are found. Children may return to school after treatment but will need to be checked again before they are allowed to come back to school. After two weeks a follow up head check will take place. If nits are found the child will be sent home again. If lice are found while your child is at home, please inform the school as soon as possible.

## **PARENTAL RIGHTS**

At the beginning of each school year, the District provides a copy of your parental rights. You are asked to read the brochure and acknowledge receipt on Side 2 of the Student Registration/Emergency Card.

## **PERSONAL ITEMS AND MONEY**

We encourage students at Sunset Ridge to utilize equipment available at school. Toys, balls, electronic devices, cell phones, trading cards, scooters, skateboards, and large sums of money should not be brought to school unless the child is given permission to do so by the teacher or principal. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

## **POLICE INVOLVEMENT ON SCHOOL CAMPUS**

- School staff will cooperate with law enforcement officers as needed to maintain a safe and orderly environment. Police investigations are conducted independently from the school district and school officials cannot interfere in police investigations. School officials shall provide support and privacy for the student to the extent possible.
- By law, parents/guardians do not need to be informed or to give consent before the law enforcement officer interviews a student on school premises (PC 830.1). However, the school official will ensure that the students parent are notified that the interview took place unless instructed otherwise by the police.

## **PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER**

The Sunset Ridge Newsletter is sent home every other Friday. The newsletter is designed to keep you informed about what is going on at school. Please encourage your child to promptly bring home this and all other bulletins received at school. Every attempt will be made to attach any forms or items, which need to be returned to school. However, sometimes this will not be possible.

## **PTA Organization / VOLUNTEERS**

The Sunset Ridge PTA is a very active group and is open to all members of this school community. Our PTA works very hard to provide opportunities that build a strong community and parent network and financial support to our schools programs. If you have questions, please stop by the PTA office, located in the front of the school or you can email them at [SunsetridgePTA@gmail.com](mailto:SunsetridgePTA@gmail.com). Also the children at Sunset Ridge reap the benefits of community volunteerism in the classroom through the efforts of the Pacifica School Volunteers. All parent and/or community volunteers should sign in at the office upon arrival and sign out when leaving. All volunteers are required to wear yellow I.D. stickers when they are either in a class or on campus

## **RAINY DAY PROCEDURE**

During inclement weather, students arriving at school for breakfast will be permitted into the cafeteria at 8:00 a.m. Those students not having breakfast are to report to the cafeteria no earlier than 8:10 a.m.

## **SUPERVISION**

There is no supervision on the playground prior to 8:10 a.m. in the morning. **Please make sure your child is not dropped off too early in the morning.** Day Care is provided on-site by Temporary Tot Tending (355-7377), which opens at 6:30am, or the City of Pacifica's Day Care Center (738-7465), that opens at 7am. By the same token, there is **no supervision** at dismissal time. **Students need to be picked up promptly.** Thank you for your cooperation in this important matter as it concerns **your child's safety and well being**. Students are reminded to go directly to the yard by way of the covered walkway, not through the building and halls.

## **TELEPHONE**

Students are allowed to use the school telephone in case of an emergency. Forgetting something for class or going to someone's house after school is not considered an emergency. Telephone messages to students cannot be delivered unless it is an emergency. **Students carrying cell phones at school must keep them turned off and secured in their backpacks during school hours.**

## **TEXTBOOKS**

Students are responsible for the textbooks assigned to them. There will be a charge for lost or damaged books. If a book is misplaced, please report it to the teacher.

## **VISITORS**

Parents are always welcome at Sunset Ridge. Please make arrangements in advance with your child's teacher. **According to State law, all visitors are required to check in at the school office.** All visitors are required to wear a name badge. Friends or relatives who attend other schools are not allowed to visit during school hours or while they are on vacation from their own school.

## **WELLNESS POLICY**

Classroom birthday parties are not allowed due to the constraints on instructional time. The PTA provides special treats on Halloween and Valentine's Day. Only healthy treats should be brought for any other classroom celebrations. Only nutritious snacks should be brought to school. Snacks like raisins, cheese, trailmix, carrots, etc are appropriate for school. We strongly discourage junk food items, such as chips and candy. No soda should be brought to school.

## Instructional Program

In a brief handbook, it is difficult to explain the entire instructional program at our school. Back-to-School conferences, Open House, Spring Parent Conferences, coupled with frequent articles in the Sunset Ridge Newsletter and presentations at both PTA and School Site Council meetings, will afford you additional opportunities to hear more thorough explanations. The following is a synopsis, by content area, of the instructional program your child will receive during his/her tenure at Sunset Ridge School. If you have any questions or need more information, please feel free to contact your child's teacher or the principal.

### **English and Language Arts**

All teachers at Sunset Ridge have been trained to provide targeted instruction based on individual needs. Sunset Ridge has a strong curriculum with an emphasis on literacy, language arts, and mathematics. Literacy is the foundation for learning and is therefore the key program focus at Sunset Ridge. Funded by a large grant from the Robert Noyce Foundations, the school received additional literacy training for its teachers, materials and additional staff to coach teachers. Technology enhances the curriculum. Each classroom has computers, which are used to support, integrate and strengthen curriculum under the direction of the teacher.

The Sunset Ridge staff shares the philosophy that listening, speaking, reading and writing are crucial interdependent skills, which cannot be taught in isolation. Therefore, our school focuses on teaching these skills in an integrated and meaning-centered fashion so that students will perceive reading as a joyful experience. Our key responsibilities lie in teaching primary students how to read and write and in teaching intermediate students how to gain fluency and confidence in reading and writing so that they may become independent learners.

All K-5 students at Sunset Ridge are engaged in the implementation of "Every Child a Reader and Writer" Initiative. Through the Writers and Readers Workshop formats, children are immersed in a two and one-half hour literacy block each day, which focuses on predictable rituals, routines, and artifacts. Through mini-lessons, teachers instruct students on issues related to writers' craft, skills, grammar, as well as author and genre studies. The workshop format allows maximum time for students to work while teachers provide targeted instruction based on individual needs. Two important components of the "Every Child a Reader and Writer" Initiative include Books of the Month and the use of authors as mentors. Each month a book selected by the Principal is used to teach a core lesson or value. This helps develop common understanding and a common culture at the school. In addition, each classroom teacher uses a selection of core books, which are used to exemplify good literary writing. Children are encouraged to use these authors as models and writing mentors.

Along with the district adoption of Houghton-Mifflin as a literature based reading program, the students at Sunset Ridge School are engaged in Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), weekly school library visits where they self-select recreational titles, literature circles, and guided reading specifically targeted at the student's reading level. Teachers model an interest in good literature by reading orally to the class each day. Homework assignments include a minimum of twenty minutes of reading for pleasure each evening.

K-2 students are involved in the Overnighter Book Program in which each student takes home a grade-level appropriate book each night, four days a week. This book is read by, or read to, the student by the parent and returned to school the next day. These students may also be involved in project VISAH which

is a grant funding the expansion of the Overnighter Book Program into video with extension activities, thereby carrying the literature program into the home and involving the family unit. We see this as a plus to students designated English Language Learners and GATE. (Gifted and Talented)

All students at Sunset Ridge maintain a Writing/Language Arts portfolio. Students self-select and evaluate (based on a rubric) writing samples to be included in their portfolio. This process helps students develop into critical readers, writers and thinkers.

### **Mathematics**

The goal of our mathematics program is to produce mathematically powerful thinkers and problem solvers who are confident and feel comfortable using mathematics in their daily lives. Rather than simple rote memorization of computational skills and math facts, Sunset Ridge students are exposed to all of the strands in our State Mathematics Framework – number, measurement, geometry, patterns and functions, logic, algebra, and statistics and probability on a regular basis.

This year the district has adopted the Envision Math series for K-5 grades. This math series provides a balanced math curriculum that focuses on conceptual understanding and problem solving. Students will be actively engaged in math lessons and will be encouraged to explain the mathematical reasoning they used to solve problems.

As a community of learners, we will continue to do school wide problems of the month. This provides students the opportunity to practice their math skills, to work on problem solving skills, and to share with their peers how they attempted the problem.

### **History and Social Sciences**

A variety of materials, resources, primary sources, strategies, and technologies are used to engage students. Much of the literature used to enhance history-social science in kindergarten through fifth grade emphasizes heroes, adventure, moral challenges, faraway places, and distant times so that students' imaginations are captivated. The elementary program encompasses numerous opportunities for interdisciplinary studies, enriched with primary documents and varied genres of literature, culminating in role-playing and simulations utilizing the visual and performing arts. We augment the history-social science program at all levels with field trips, assemblies, docent visits, projects, artifacts, children's literature, and community projects. Last year a new adoption was selected at the intermediate grades, published by McGraw Hill. Primary social science is heavily integrated into the Language Arts program and recently the district adopted the Houghton Mifflin series.

### **Science**

In our science program, students discover and learn about the natural world by using methods of science as extensions of their own curiosity and wonder. Students acquire scientific knowledge and understanding from a balanced science curriculum which incorporates a study of physical, biological and earth sciences as well as an understanding technology and the environment. Building on their understanding of science concepts, students learn the techniques of the science laboratory and the applications of science process skills which are the "critical thinking skills" of science: Observing, communicating, comparing, organizing, inferring, relating and applying. The six major themes of science, (1) energy, (2) evolution, (3) patterns of change, (4) scale and structure, (5) stability, and (6) systems and interactions are interwoven throughout the program and serve to link the various areas of science.

Since California's Science Framework recommends that 40% of the total time spent on learning science should be in activity-based lessons, the Pacifica School District recently adopted a new Kindergarten through fifth grade curriculum for science. We have hands on program called FOSS (Full Option Science System) kits, which support a fully coordinated science curriculum. Each year we see student's enthusiasm for science increase with the hands-on approach. We have seen an increase in science scores because students are engaged in the hands-on scientific method.

### **Visual and Performing Arts**

Children express themselves in their own unique way through a variety of art media. Many children can draw or paint thoughts and ideas which they cannot express in words; as they produce works in arts, students have the opportunity to communicate in nonverbal ways. Art experiences are drawn from other curriculum areas such as language arts, history-social science, science, and music with many occasions for the development of skills in handling tools and materials. The focus is on creative endeavor and satisfying experiences rather than on artistic perfection. Furthermore, both Sunset Ridge's PTA and School Site Council provide funding for school assemblies presented throughout the year by musicians, actors, storytellers, and poets. Anyone who enters our school sees, hears, and feels the presence of the arts through exhibits, projects, and performances.

In 2003-2004, Sunset Ridge began a partnership with "Music for Minors" where volunteers teach singing, rhythm, and music theory once a week to all 2nd grade students. Future plans include extending the program from kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades receive choral music one day a week from Rhythm and Moves. Sunset Ridge also nurtures partnership with the Pacifica Spindrift School of the Performing Arts, which bring artists in residence to our school site providing after school dance and drama workshops.

### **Physical Education and Health Education**

A psychomotor volunteer works with students in grades K-2. Motor skills, fitness, and sportsmanship are emphasized in concert with a perceptual motor program. This program gives young children additional experience with balance, hand-eye coordination, games, and dance, which results in enhanced skills and self-confidence. All students take part in scheduled activities in addition to recess time. Activities de-emphasize winning and losing and stress the importance of self-improvement and active participation. Since the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs adversely affect a student's ability to achieve academic success, along with being physically harmful and illegal, the Pacifica School District has initiated a policy of drug free schools. A comprehensive prevention program has been developed which emphasizes early prevention, education, and wise decision-making skills. It is a program, which begins in the elementary school and enlists the cooperative efforts of parents, staff, and the local community. Fourth and fifth grades participate weekly in a PE program taught by a credentialed teacher that emphasizes the development of strength, flexibility, and stamina (areas assessed by the State Physical Fitness test).

## Homework / Home Study Guide

### **Philosophy**

The staff at Sunset Ridge believes that homework and home study are an important extension of classroom learning.

Homework assignments and home study encourage responsibility by providing activities the child can successfully perform independently or with the family, outside of the school setting.

We view homework as a positive learning experience and feel that it completes the circle of communication between the child, parent and teacher.

### **Purpose**

Homework should supplement, complement, extend and reinforce classroom teaching and learning. Daily at-home reading is to increase the motivation and value of reading. Twenty minutes per day is strongly encouraged.

Homework/home study assignments will be based on one or more of the following purposes:

**Practice:** Assignments involving practice help students master specific skills.

These practice assignments strengthen skills introduced in the classroom.

**Preparation:** Helps students gain maximum benefit from future lessons.

Participation in research activities locating facts and data prior to class discussion provides a greater challenge and offers much more stimulation.

**Extension:** Determines whether students can transfer specific skills or concepts to new situations. Extension assignments attempt to encourage individualized and often creative and imaginative pursuit of various subject areas.

**Enrichment:** Enrichment activities may be short-term or long-term projects as well as reading for pleasure and enjoyment.

### **Feedback**

Students will be given regular and specific feedback on their homework assignments. Each teacher will establish procedures in a manner that is appropriate for their individual classrooms.

### **Homework for Absent Students**

Homework will be provided when students are to be absent more than two days. When homework is requested, parents should call the office early in the day and let us know how long the anticipated absence will be. Homework will then be available to pick up from the office after 2:40pm of the second day of absence. Students are encouraged to check with classmates about assignments.

Note: This is only a sample. You and your child will be asked to sign this contract at Back to School Conference.

**SUNSET RIDGE SCHOOL  
THREE-WAY PLEDGE**

**Staff Section**

We understand the importance of the school experience to every student and our role as educators and models. Therefore, we agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of our ability:

- provide motivating and interesting learning experiences in my classroom
- strive to address the individual needs of your child
- communicate with you regarding your child’s progress toward grade level standards
- provide a safe, positive and healthy learning environment for your child
- communicate homework and class work expectations

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher’s Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal’s Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Child Section**

I realize that my education is important. I know I am the one responsible for my own success. Therefore, I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

- get to class on time every day
- return completed homework on time
- be responsible for my own behavior and self discipline
- be a cooperative learner
- ask for help when needed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child’s Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Parent Section**

I understand that my participation in my student’s education will help his/her achievement and attitude. Therefore, I will continue to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability.

- Support the disciplinary actions taken by school personnel
- Monitor the completion of my child’s homework
- Attend Back to School Conferences, Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences, and Open House
- Encourage my child to read for at least 20 minutes every day
- Provide a quiet place and time for my student to do homework
- Make sure my student has a healthy diet, adequate sleep and arrives and is picked up at school on time
- Support the school homework, discipline and attendance policies

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**This is only a sample. You and your child will be asked to sign this on the first day of school.**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Sunset Ridge School Anti-Bullying Pledge 2009-2010</b></p>
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## Anti-Bullying Pledge – Students / Parents

We the students/parents of Sunset Ridge School agree to join together to stamp out bullying at our school.

We believe that everybody should enjoy our school equally, and feel safe, secure and accepted regardless of color, race gender, popularity, athletic ability, intelligence, religion and nationality.

Bullying can be pushing, shoving, hitting, and spitting, as well as name calling, picking on, making fun of, laughing at, and excluding someone. Bullying causes pain and stress to victims and is never justified or excusable as “kids being kids, “just teasing” or any other rationalization. The victim is never responsible for being a target of bullying.

### Student Pledge

By signing this pledge, I agree to:

1. Value student differences and treat others with respect
2. Not become involved in bullying incidents or be a bully.
3. Be aware of the school policies and support systems with regard to bullying.
4. Report honestly and immediately all incidents of bullying to a faculty member.
5. Be alert in places around the school where there is less adult supervision such as bathrooms and corridors.
6. Support students who have been or are subjected to bullying.
7. Talk to teachers and parents about concerns and issues regarding bullying.
8. Work with other students and faculty, to help the school deal with bullying effectively.
9. Encourage teachers to discuss bullying in the classroom.
10. Provide a good role model for younger students and support them if bullying occurs.
11. Participate fully and contribute to assemblies dealing with bullying.

I acknowledge that whether I am being a bully or see someone being bullied, if I don't report or stop the bullying, I am just as guilty.

Date _____	_____
Student Signature	Printed Name of Student

### Parents Pledge

*By signing this pledge, we the parents agree to:*

1. Keep themselves and their children informed and aware of school bullying policies
2. Work in partnership with the school to encourage positive behavior, valuing differences and promoting sensitivity to others.
3. Discuss regularly with their children their feelings about schoolwork, friendships and relationships.
4. Inform faculty of change in their children's behavior or circumstances at home that may change a child's behavior at school.
5. Alert faculty if any bullying has occurred.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Reporting and Grading

### **Report Cards and Parent Conferences**

Sunset Ridge uses a Standards-based Report Card that will be distributed three times a year. Back to School Conferences will be held with all families in September. Additional conferences will be held with parents after the first and second grading periods.

### **Telephone Conferences and Email**

If at any time during the school year, you wish to speak with your child's teacher, please call the secretary at (650) 738-6687, leave a message on our automated system and your call will be returned within 24 hours. It is important that we work together in order to provide your child with a positive learning experience. All staff members have email access and can also be contacted by using their first initial plus their last name and then pacificasd.org. (example: ecundiff@pacificasd.org)

### **Grading**

Standards-based Report Cards use a four-level Assessment Rubric. These rubrics indicate whether a student is *Making minimal progress toward the Standard*; *Making progress toward the Standard*; *Meeting the Standard*; or is *Consistently above the Standard* in each of the subject areas. A *Not applicable* indicator will be used for subjects taught at a different time. Explanations of each of the Standards are available at the Back to School Conference.

### **Standardized Testing/Minimum Proficiency/Alternative Assessment**

State mandated standardized testing occurs each spring in grades 2-8. Students are given the STAR (State Testing and Reporting), in areas of reading, language, math, and spelling. The individual student's scores are given to parents, inserted in the cumulative file, used for program analysis, and to monitor student progress. Moreover, a State writing sample is used in grades 4 and 7 to determine writing proficiency.

At Sunset Ridge, we use a variety of assessment measures in addition to those mentioned above. Portfolios of student work and classroom assessment measurements, observations, anecdotal records, report card grades, teacher-made assessments, and running records, assist the staff in evaluating our instructional program, as well as the individual strengths and weaknesses of each student. We believe that utilizing multiple assessment measures gives parents, students, and staff a more balanced prospective of each student's success.

### **Promotion / Retention**

The Pacifica School District has adopted a policy (BP 5123) for student promotion/acceleration and retention that states that students must demonstrate growth in learning and meet grade level standards of expected student achievement. These standards go hand and hand with high school graduation requirements and the exit exam established by the state. The text of Board Policy (#5123) can be viewed online through the district web site, [www.pacificasd.org](http://www.pacificasd.org). A copy is also available at our district office located at 375 Reina Del Mar Ave., Pacifica, CA 940447.

## **School Services and Special Programs**

### **School Improvement Plan (SIP), and English Language Development (ELD)**

Sunset Ridge receives special State funding for improvement of our school program and to assist students to meet education standards. These funds for Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students provide your child with additional materials and experiences, as well as the services of an Instructional Aide. E.L.D. funds are earmarked only for those students who qualify, while S.I.P. funds serve all of our students.

A major feature of these programs is the involvement of parents within the school. The School Site Council (S.S.C.), the English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC), and the Bilingual Advisory Committee are comprised of both parents and staff members. The committees review our school program, decide what areas will receive additional emphasis, and then allocate the funding necessary to support these programs.

### **District Psychologist**

A qualified psychologist is available for the evaluation of a pupil's learning or behavior.

### **Resource Specialist Program**

A resource specialist teacher is assigned to our school. In this program, the child remains in his regular class and is scheduled for individual or small group instruction with a special teacher. A child in this program has an individual learning plan (IEP) and is scheduled for specialized instruction. In order to qualify for this program, a child must be assessed and found eligible.

### **Speech**

Students referred by classroom teachers will be tested by the speech teacher. Should any speech difficulty be found, the parents will be notified and an individual learning plan (IEP) will be made for special instruction.

### **Outdoor Education**

Fifth grade students in the Pacifica School District attend the San Mateo County Outdoor Education Program which is a five-day residential nature study program held at the San Francisco YMCA Camp at Jones Gulch near San Mateo County's Memorial Park.

Outdoor Education develops the students:

- ❖ Knowledge about the environment
- ❖ Appreciation of nature
- ❖ Involvement as citizens in an increasingly interdependent world

Students learn first hand from experiences that develop their understanding and skills. Camperships and fundraising help defray the cost of the program.

### **Conflict Resolution Program**

In the fall of 2000, the "Talk It Out" program was created in response to the students and staff requiring a common language and process to resolve conflicts. Students K-5 at Sunset Ridge use a simple framework to build community where conflicts are expected, differences are appreciated and disagreements are handled. "Talk It Out" is a preventative program designed to involve students, teachers and parents in providing a safe school environment. Annually, students are trained to use the "Talk It Out" strategies during classroom presentations. Teachers, along with students, are trained to provide consistency and follow-through.

Beginning at 4<sup>th</sup> grade, our older students look forward to participating as conflict managers on the playground supporting and assisting our primary children to deal with conflicts. Students serving as conflict managers are expected to maintain high academic and behavior standards. The “Talk It Out” program is coordinated by our on-site counselor/case manager. Sunset Ridge’s Talk It Out Program won the prestigious Russell J. Kent Award in 2004.

The following steps help our students to THINK of ways to solve conflicts.

- Stop. Cool off.
- Talk and listen to each other
- Find out what you both need
- Brainstorm solutions
- Choose the idea you both like best.
- Make a plan. Go for it.

### **Sunset Ridge “Family Day”**

Recently we implemented a cross grade level monthly activity program to foster positive student interactions. Students K through 5 are assigned to a school family composed of one student at each grade level. Students get together each month to do an organized activity to build positive relationships with each other.