



There Is Always Something I Can Do

PORTOLA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
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Principal Message

Dear Portola Students and Families,

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year at Portola Elementary School! I am so happy that you are a member of our school community. We will continue so much good work this year!

“There Is Always Something I Can Do!” is our philosophy and way of life at Portola Elementary. “There Is Always Something I Can Do” applies to our students’ academic, social and emotional needs. Our mission is to empower children to be: good decision makers, effective problem solvers, emotionally intelligent and in healthy relationships. Through the day-to-day practice of the strategies we teach, our students know they have options to choose from when confronted with any circumstance.

Our dedicated and accomplished teachers work collaboratively to meet the varied needs of our students, implementing research-based programs to accelerate and enrich the curriculum. Portola will continuously evolve to meet the needs of our diverse learners to prepare them for success, to be lifelong learners and to be responsible members of society.

Here are just a few things that make Portola stand out from other schools!

- National Blue Ribbon School & Title 1 Academic Achievement Award
- High Academic Standards, Rigor & Success
- Social, Emotional & Collaborative Learning
- Academic Intervention Programs
- Dynamic Mindfulness
- Student Enrichment Programs
- Leadership & Technology

Please refer to this handbook for critical information about the school so that we can all work together!

With gratitude,
Elena Garcia-Yoshitomi, Ed.D.
Principal

Bell Schedule

Regular Day

7:20-7:50	Breakfast
7:55	Warning Bell (students walk to class)
8:00	Instruction Begins
9:15-9:45	Kinder Recess
9:45-10:05	Primary Recess Grades 1-3
10:15-10:35	Intermediate Recess Grades 4-5
11:20	Kindergarten Dismissal (8/23/23-11/3/23)
11:00-11:45	Kindergarten Lunch (beginning 11/6/23)
11:20-12:05	Grade 1 Lunch
11:35-12:20	Grade 2 Lunch
11:50-12:35	Grade 3 Lunch
12:05-12:50	Grade 4 Lunch
12:20-1:05	Grade 5 Lunch
1:10-1:25	Primary Recess Grades 1-2
1:25-1:40	Primary Recess Grade 3
1:30	Kindergarten Dismissal (beginning 11/6/23)
2:25	Dismissal Grades 1-3
2:30	Dismissal Grades 4-5

Banking Day (Wednesday)

7:20-7:50	Breakfast
7:55	Warning Bell (students walk to class)
8:00	Instruction Begins
9:15-9:45	Kinder Recess
9:45-10:05	Primary Recess Grades 1-3
10:15-10:35	Intermediate Recess Grades 4-5
11:20	Kindergarten Dismissal (8/23/23 - 11/3/23)
11:00-11:20	Kindergarten Lunch (beginning 11/6/23)
11:20-11:40	Grade 1 Lunch
11:40-12:00	Grade 2 Lunch
12:00-12:20	Grade 3 Lunch (dismissed from lunch)
12:15	Grade 4 and 5 Lunch
12:20	Dismissal Kindergarten (beginning 11/6/23)
12:20	Dismissal Grades 1-3
12:25	Dismissal Grades 4-5

Minimum Day

(Fall & Spring Conferences and last day of school)

7:20-7:50	Breakfast
7:55	Warning Bell (students walk to class)
8:00	Instruction Begins
9:15-9:45	Kinder Recess
9:45-10:05	Primary Recess Grades 1-3
10:15-10:25	Intermediate Recess Grades 4-5
11:00-11:20	Kindergarten Lunch
11:35	Dismissal Gr K-3: Conf & Last Day
11:40	Dismissal Gr 4-5: Fall Conf & Last Day
11:45	Dismissal Gr 4-5: Spring Conf

District Calendar

August 23 - First Day of School
September 4 - Labor Day
September 25 - NO SCHOOL
October 23-27 - Fall Break
November 10 - Veterans Day
November 15-21 - Conference Week (minimum day)
November 22-24 - Thanksgiving Break
December 25-January 5 - Winter Break
January 15 - Martin Luther King Junior Day
January 29 - NO SCHOOL
February 16 and 19 - Presidents Day Weekend
March 14-19 - Spring Conferences (minimum day)
April 1-5 - Spring Break
May 27 - Memorial Day
June 13 - Last Day of School (minimum day)

Morning Procedures

We have morning supervision before school starts at 7:30AM in the cafeteria and at the school's front gate. Breakfast is served at 7:20AM and closes at 7:50AM. All students should be on campus by 7:55AM to ensure that they are in their classrooms by 8:00AM. Students meet their teachers at their classrooms.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Portola Panthers are expected to walk independently to the classroom and cafeteria! We can provide additional support if needed!

Parking Lot Expectations

Both parking lots in the front and the back of the school are our drop off and pick up locations. Please follow all traffic laws when dropping off your students and picking them up from school. Please watch the speed limit, do not park in red curb zones, and pedestrians have the right of way in crosswalks. Cars cannot enter the crosswalk until pedestrians are completely out of the crosswalk. Vehicles should also not be unattended. Double parking is not allowed. This causes a backup for vehicles and increases the likelihood of accidents.

TK and Kindergarten Families Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

There will be a separate table for TK and K students that need extra help for walking to their classrooms in the cafeteria. TK and K parents may walk their students to the back gate and get direction from their teacher on how to walk their students to their classrooms.

1st Grade Families Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Families may walk their students up to the stairs by the main building and/or the picnic tables near the back gate to see their students walk to class. 1st grade families can enter the front gate if they prefer to meet their child at dismissal. The back gate will be open for students to exit and for licensed daycare providers to enter and exit for pick up. Families may wait at the grassy area at the back gate so that our students can exit. 1st grade parents can also enter the

campus through the front gate and be escorted by a staff member to their child's classroom teacher. Older siblings may pick up their younger siblings. Please communicate your after school routine with your child's teacher!

2nd and 3rd Grade Families Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Families may walk their students up to the stars by the main building and/or the picnic tables near the back gate to see their students walk to class. 2nd and 3rd grade students are expected to have breakfast and walk to class independently. 2/3 Grade Parents will then wait for their students at the stars in front of the main office. 2/3 students can walk independently to the back gate if they made that arrangement with their parents. The back gate will only be for students meeting their families at the back parking lot and for licensed daycare providers to pick up first grade families. Families may wait at the grassy area at the back gate so that our students can exit. 2/3 students can wait for their siblings outside of their siblings' classrooms. Please communicate your after school routine with your child's teacher!

4th and 5th Grade Families

4th and 5th grade students are expected to have breakfast and walk to class independently. Families may walk their students up to the stars by the main building and/or the picnic tables near the back gate to see their students walk to class. 4th and 5th grade families will wait for their students outside the front and back gates of the school. 4th and 5th grade students are expected to walk peacefully from their classrooms at 2:30PM.

Wednesday Dismissal Procedures

Students in grades TK,K,1 can be picked up from their classrooms. Students in grades 2-5 may walk independently to meet their parents at the stars in front of the office or in the grassy area at the back gate. Grades 2 and 3 are dismissed at 12:20. Grades 4 and 5 are dismissed at 12:25. Grade 3 students are dismissed from the picnic tables. Grades 4 and 5 students are dismissed from the cafeteria.

Visitors

All visitors are required to check in at the front office before visiting any classrooms or personnel. This procedure is necessary to reduce classroom interruptions, ensure the safety of students and personnel, and ensure the security on our campus at all times. Visitors are required to sign in the front office and obtain a visitor pass to show they checked into the front office. All visitors must have an approved purpose prior to entering campus.

Volunteers

Volunteers make invaluable contributions to Portola Elementary School. All volunteers are required to submit a district application, seek principal approval before volunteering, and follow Ventura Unified's code of conduct and cooperation with investigation procedures. Volunteer application forms are found in the front office. Please consult with the school principal to see what volunteer opportunities are available and next steps.

Parent Leadership

Not only do our volunteers make a significant contribution, but so do the parent leaders that serve on our parent organizations that help drive the success of our school!

Portola Friends and Faculty Organization (PFFO).

The PFFO organizes community building events and fundraisers for the school. Community events and fundraisers include but are not limited to:

Monthly Family Dinner Nights
Portola Ninja Warrior
See's Candy Fundraiser
BooGrams and Valentine's Day Grams
Trunk or Treat
Winter Wonderland
Open House
Back to School Night
Kindergarten Orientation

English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC)

The English Language Advisory Committee advises the school on how to best support students that are Multilingual Learners.

School Site Council (SSC)

School Site Council is comprised of elected parent representatives, teacher representatives, and classified representatives. Five times a year, the School Site Council Committee meets to review the goals of the school and approve budgetary expenditures that reflect Portola Elementary School's goals.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a framework that helps educators provide academic and behavioral strategies for students with various needs. Educators first provide students with whole class instruction and communicating behavior expectations. When students demonstrate a need for more support, teachers and staff collaborate to help students maximize their potential in the areas of academics and social emotional development.

Academic Instruction

Portola Elementary School prides itself on having high expectations and rigorous teaching practices. The California Common Core Standards drive all instruction for all grade levels. Educational standards describe what students should know and be able to do in each subject in each grade. In California, the State Board of Education decides on the standards for all students, from kindergarten through high school. Our teachers use multiple sources of information to track student progress so that they are meeting all of their learning needs. Learning support programs are available to help students meet their learning goals.

Academic Intervention

Portola Elementary School has a strong intervention program so that all students can be at grade level standards in math and reading. We use phonics-based and research-based strategies so that students make the most gains in small periods of time.

English Language Development

Students that speak more than one language at home are provided support with English language development at Portola Elementary School. The California English Language Development Standards (CA ELD Standards) amplify the California State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (ELA/Literacy). The CA ELD Standards, when used in tandem with state content standards, assist English learner students to build English proficiency, refine the academic use of English, and provide students access to subject area content

GATE - Gifted and Talented Education

Portola Elementary School provides academic programming for students identified as Gifted and Talented. Unless parents/guardians sign the OPT-OUT form, all 3rd graders will take the CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test) in the spring at their school sites. Testing will take place during regular school hours. There will be make-up testing for students who were absent. You can also speak with your child's teacher if you are interested in GATE programming and are interested in seeing if your student qualifies for any GATE programming.

Student Enrichment Programs

Peer Mediators

Portola's Peer Mediation Program began in 1999. The purpose of Peer Mediators is to help our campus be safe, orderly and respected by all. This volunteer program of seventy students provides the opportunity to serve the school and develop leadership skills. It is open to all third, fourth, and fifth grade students. Students who wish to become part of this program must be responsible, keep up with their schoolwork, have a good attitude towards others, and set a good example of how to act. Students who enter this program go through six hours of conflict resolution training. Training is conducted by several staff members during the regular school day. Upon successful completion of their training, Peer Mediators are assigned to one duty a week. These duties consist of helping out before school, at recess, and after school. Additional volunteer jobs also occur throughout the school year. Throughout their time as a Peer Mediator, they also periodically receive leadership training from staff and community members.

Cross Country

Portola's Cross Country team was founded on the idea of teamwork, dedication to self, hard work, and a willingness to persevere, which will result in great things. Portola's cross country kids often begin the season timid and unsure about trying a new experience. By the time of their last competition, most runners are ready for more. Our hope is that the stamina, strength, friendships and confidence built during these few months together transfer over to the classroom, their daily lives and beyond.

Library Society and Panther Press

The Portola Library Society offers 4th and 5th grade students with a passion for literature and in good academic and behavior standing, the opportunity to have a special part in the care and nurturing of our library. While assisting in sorting, shelving and displaying books, members develop organizational and critical thinking skills. Additionally, members of the Library Society

produce the Portola Panther Press newspaper. Student editors, writers, researchers, cartoonists, and photographers meet weekly to develop a newspaper reflecting student interests and concerns as related to their school, neighborhood, and the world at large. Other regular features such as book, video game and movie reviews, puzzles and cartoons offer students and families fun and appropriate free time activities. In all they do, Portola Library Society is dedicated to creating and maintaining an environment of responsibility, teamwork and creativity.

Portola Library Teaching Garden

The Portola Library provides a new set of learning experiences for students at its teaching garden. This outdoor classroom puts the natural world at students' fingertips through an environmentally responsible space where they can study such things as life cycles of plants and caterpillars, native plants and their uses by the Chumash, and our need for water conservation. Not only is our garden a place where students sharpen their academic skills, it nurtures their innate curiosity, creativity and kindness.

*The Portola Library Teaching Garden is a National Wildlife Federation Certified Habitat.

Health and Nutrition

Portola Elementary School provides breakfast and lunch to all students everyday. We strongly encourage you to provide your students with a healthy snack. Please avoid hot cheetos, takis, soda, candy, and large bags of chips to share. Colored drinks including Prime are also not permitted on campus. Our salad bar provides plenty of healthy options for our students everyday. For more information on student breakfast and lunch, please visit ventura.healtheliving.net.

Birthdays

Portola Elementary School discourages bringing snacks, pizza, cupcakes, candy bags for children's birthdays. Rather than bringing food that could potentially cause harmful allergic reactions, please consider healthy nutritional choices or bringing goodie bags with small gifts for all students in the classroom. Unhealthy food and snacks are strongly discouraged. Please make arrangements with your child's teacher before dropping off items to the office. Any items that do not have teacher confirmation will not be delivered to the classroom.

Health Services

A Health Tech is on duty to assist your child in case of an illness or injury at school. If your child becomes ill or is injured in school, Portola's Health Tech will administer first aid for minor injuries (cuts, bruises, etc.). The Health Tech is not qualified to make medical judgments. PLEASE DO NOT ASK FOR HER TO DIAGNOSE YOUR CHILD. The Health Tech will notify parents/guardians of the condition, and advise release of students to go home or see a doctor. If you are unable to pick up your child, inform the school as to which designated adult will come so the safety of your child is assured. The Health Tech will also monitor Department of Public Health standards regarding communicable diseases such as head lice, impetigo, rashes and other open sores that can easily be transmitted to others. Please consider your child's health and other's health by taking care of all health problems at home.

Counseling Services

Your on-site counselor is a wealth of information and help guide you towards needed resources and supports. Don't hesitate to reach out to our Portola School Counselor about services such as small groups, classroom lessons, and individualized support! Student Assistance Program (SAP) School Counselors from Ventura Unified School District work in conjunction with on-site school counselors, staff, and families, to provide increased support for VUSD Students. SAP School Counselors work both on-site and at the Student and Family Empowerment (S.A.F.E.) Center located at the Education Service Center to support VUSD students in navigating the educational system safely and successfully.

Medication

We cannot give your child medication without a doctor's note. We cannot keep medicine at school without a prescription and doctor's release. Please note: Medication must be in its original pharmaceutical container. Medication will be kept in the Health Room in a locked cabinet.

Cell Phones/Smart Watches

Portola Elementary School permits students to be in possession of cell phones/smart phones/smart watches; however, students are required to turn them off and put them away upon entering the campus. We encourage students to leave all phones and electronic devices at home. Portola staff are not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged personal property. The only time a cell phone/smartphone may be used is when it is specifically directed by a teacher for a classroom educational activity. Students may not turn on their phones until the end of the school day. In the rare situation that a student needs to use their phone, that student is required to do so in the office in the presence of an adult. Failure to comply with this rule will result in the phone being confiscated and taken to the office, whereupon it will be returned to the student or the student's parent or guardian depending on severity of infraction and frequency.

(E.C. 48901.5, Board Policy #5131 6d) Teachers or administrators may also give additional consequences for using a phone on campus. Students are expected to communicate with their parents through the office.

Attendance

Good attendance is essential to school success. Attending school regularly directly impacts children's learning; consistency in school attendance is conducive to academic and personal success.

Absences: Call in your child's absence within 72 hours of their absence (it cannot be excused by law after that).

Medical Appointments: Try to schedule doctor appointments outside of the school day.

Vacations taken when school is in session are unexcused absences.

Vacations should be planned to occur during regularly scheduled school breaks – summer break, fall break, winter break, and spring break.

The only excused absences per the Education Code 5113:

1. Illness
2. Bereavement in immediate family
3. Medical appointment
4. Religious observance
5. Subpoena to court

Three or more unexcused absences (other than for the reasons above) or three lates more than 30 minutes in one school year, or any combination of the two, will result in a student classified as a truant. Any further lates or unexcused absences will cause the student to be classified as a habitual truant (Education code Section 48260 and/or Education code Section 68262).

Social Emotional Learning, Behavior, and Discipline

Social Emotional Learning

Portola Elementary School uses a number of behavior and social emotional strategies so that our students can be creative problem solvers. Our teachers and school counselor collaborate with each other to support students with Dynamic Mindfulness. The goals of dynamic mindfulness are to support students develop skills with stress resilience, self awareness, emotional regulation and healthy relationships. Through our dynamic mindfulness programming, teachers and staff also help students identify big deals versus little deals. Strategies for addressing big deals or little deals include using words in a gentle way, ignoring, walking away, saying “oh well, it’s not a deal!”, and “I’m in charge of me!” Portola Elementary School also uses the social emotional curriculum that is a K-5 VUSD-approved series of lessons. It includes:

- Skills for Learning
- Empathy
- Emotional Management
- Problem Solving

Behavior

Portola Elementary School frequently holds behavior assemblies for all students throughout the school year. We review behavior expectations, kindness, and potential outcomes when students need to be reminded/refocused on behavior expectations throughout the school year. Students may receive disciplinary action in the event if any of these expectations are not met.

Behavior expectations include but are not limited to:

- Treating others with respect and kindness
- Aware that your words and actions affect others
- Keeping your hands to yourself
- Refrain from harassment, bullying, intimidation
- Follow all playground, classroom expectations and directions from staff members.

Outcomes for not following behavior expectations include but are not limited to:

- Recess restriction
- Parent Phone Call
- Parent Conference
- Parent visiting the classroom for the day

- Community Service
- Restorative Justice
- Counseling Referral
- Loss of Privileges - school field trips, school activities, school assemblies, etc.
- Suspension

Restorative Justice

Portola Elementary School uses restorative justice strategies as an integral component when handling discipline issues. Restorative Justice is a process that seeks to address and remedy the concerns of the target of harm and create empathy, and greater understanding among the parties involved. By using the restorative process, we hope to further greater understanding among students, assist students in developing strategies or plans so that the harm will not happen again, and allow students to move forward with the feeling that situations have been dealt with in a fair manner. Students who participate in Restorative Justice may still receive additional consequences for their behavior; however, staff members may waive traditional means of discipline in favor of completing the restorative process.

Non-Discrimination/Harassment/Bullying

District programs and activities shall be free from discrimination, harassment, intimidation and bullying, with respect to ethnic group, religion, gender, actual or perceived sexual orientation, color, race, national origin and physical or mental disability. The district shall ensure equal opportunities for all students in admission and access to the educational program, guidance and counseling programs, athletic programs, testing procedures, and other activities. If students feel they are being discriminated against, harassed, intimidated or bullied they should immediately contact their teacher or principal. Students who violate Ventura Unified School District's policies on bullying may be subject to discipline, including suspension and/or expulsion.

Dress Code Policy

- Each school shall allow students to wear sun-protective clothing, including but not limited to hats, for outdoor use during the school day (Ed. Code 35183.5).
- Shoes must be worn at all times. Sandals must have heel straps for safety reasons. Flip flops, backless shoes, and slippers are not acceptable.
- Clothing, jewelry and personal items (backpacks, fanny packs, gym bags, water bottles, etc.) shall be free of writing, pictures which are inappropriate
- Hats, hoods and other head coverings shall not be worn indoors. When a cap is worn outdoors, the bill is to face forward.
- Clothing that is not allowed includes: pajama bottoms, pajama tops, see-through fabrics, halter tops, off-the-shoulder tops, low-cut tops, skirts shorter than mid-thigh, shorts with less than two inches of in-seam and pants with rips above the knee.

Parent Communication

Two-way communication between the school, parents and community is vital in helping children learn and in developing a relationship of shared decision-making. Involvement from parents and

community members is an important ingredient in making our school a better place for the children and community. Our school website has our school calendar, staff information, plus so much more. Important information from the district, schools, and teachers will come from ParentSquare. It is an app you can download to get notifications. If you do not have the app on your phone, don't worry; an email is sent to families (the email address you submitted to the school). The school telephone is for business calls only. Necessary plans and alternative arrangements should be made with children before they report to school in the morning. Please minimize phone calls to only urgent or emergency messages. Should you need to get a message to your child, call the front office and the office staff will relay the message to your child. All teachers and staff have ParentSquare. Please feel free to direct message the staff via ParentSquare. ParentSquare messages are a quick and effective way to keep in touch and most teachers are happy to communicate in this manner. You may receive messages via text or email.

Complaint and Response Procedures

Problems may potentially arise at Portola and we, the school and families, must work together to solve them. Please know that we all work together to address family, parent, and student concerns. If a family member, student, or community member has a concern please contact the appropriate school staff. If your concern is in regards to classroom instruction or your child having a problem with a peer or peers, please contact the teacher, share with him/her what is happening, and give him/her the opportunity to get to the bottom of it and help support your child. If it requires more assistance, the teacher will refer to the school counselor. If your concern is still unresolved after meeting with the teacher and/or counselor, please contact the office. We will ask you to fill out a statement form which gives us all the information we need to address the concern and have the appropriate person handle it.