

A-Z Merritt Trace Elementary Handbook



Arrival and Dismissal: Classes will begin promptly at **8:25 AM** and end at **2:20 PM**. TK and Kinder families have a unique 2-week early release schedule as our students build their stamina of being in a classroom full time. All minimum days at Trace end at 12:20 PM.

TK and Kinder parents/guardians, please make yourself available to stay for a mini orientation that will end at approximately 9 AM. Kinder students will stay until 12:20 PM, and TK students will be released to parents/guardians upon completing our first-day orientation. This process will help our first-time students be excited about their new learning environment.

Each day, a warning bell will ring at 8:24 AM to let you know that classroom doors will be opening soon. Please ensure that students are lined up and on time each day. All students and families are asked to go straight to the classroom lineup area upon entering the school gates each morning. This will help with the safety of students as we have minimal morning supervision. Remember that everything our students do at school is purposeful, whether it's standing in line and modeling/practicing social skills or cultivating patience during those moments of waiting.

4th and 5th-grade students should remain exclusively in *Quad B*, while *1st to 3rd-grade* students are expected to stay within *Quad A*. *TWBI Kinder* students are designated to the *C wing*, and *Kinder World* students should remain in the *Kinder World* area.

We encourage all students to arrive no earlier than 10 minutes prior to the bell ringing, allowing them to settle in comfortably. However, the gates open at 8 AM, primarily to provide ample time for students who wish to have breakfast. Please note that we are a busy corner; therefore, please anticipate traffic.

The after-school warning bell will ring at 2:19 PM when the gates will open for pick up, and students will prepare to exit their classrooms at 2:20 PM. Please know that we have minimal supervision after school as well. All students should be picked up within 5-10 minutes of our dismissal time. We invite adults to pick up their students in front of their classrooms.

The following is not permitted during drop off or pick up:

- Riding bikes, skateboards, or scooters on campus
- Playing ball games or tag
- Bringing pets to either side of the campus (please do not tie pets to fences or leave them unattended outside of our campus)
- Use of electronic devices by students

Drop-off and pick-up times are busy transitions, and the entire school community is outside at once. We appreciate your regard for the safety of our community members.

There are many options for drop off and pick up. See the directions for each option below:

We encourage drivers in the area to drive 15 MPH and remain distraction-free. Please also be courteous and patient, as we are all one community. Give the right away and follow the laws and rules of the road.

Entrances to our school:

TK and Kinder Families in K4, K5, and K6 classrooms; please use Gate **E** on Dana Ave. Families in K1, K2, and K3, please use Gate **F** inside the Kinder World parking lot.

TWBI Kinder and First Grade Families Use Gate **A** next to the school Garden on Dana Ave.

Second and Third Grade Families Use Gate **B** by the Library on Dana.

Fourth and Fifth Grade Families Use Gate **D** next to the small staff parking lot on Hadley Ave. Please do not use the parking lot as a drop-off or pick-up area.

** For Families with siblings, we recommend using the entrance to the youngest sibling. Find our school's entrance map <https://sjusd.box.com/s/yr6yc25otvf3r9nswdyyc4yd006si7m>

Walk

Students and parents may park and walk or walk from home to get to and from school. Students that are walking should follow the following directions in order to stay safe.

- Always walk with a friend or an adult
- Use sidewalks and crosswalks
- Look both ways before crossing the street
- Make eye contact with the driver before crossing the street
- We encourage you to connect with our Walk n' Roll committee to join or develop a walking bus/group coming from your neighborhood directions

Bike, Scooter, or Skateboard

Students and parents may bike, scooter, or skate to and from school. Students should follow the following directions to stay safe.

- Always wear a helmet
- Always follow bike safety rules
- Students **must walk** their wheeled vehicles once on campus
- Bikes, scooters, and skateboards are not allowed on campus the hour before school starts and the hour after school is dismissed to help keep those on campus safe
- We encourage you to connect with our Walk n' Roll committee to meet up and bike together

By Car

Students arriving by car may park off campus or in the Lincoln parking lot (Near Kinder World) and walk. Please reserve the handicapped parking and do not park in parking spaces labeled "Staff." The parking lot on Hadley Avenue is not to be used as a drop-off area; please avoid entering this parking lot unless there is a need to use handicap parking. Please also follow the color-coded curbs and traffic signs. We have a bus lane on Brooklyn Ave. Please avoid parking there during school hours. **ALSO, PLEASE DO NOT ASK CHILDREN TO RUN ACROSS THE STREET TO JUMP INTO OR OUT OF A CAR.**

Absence Reporting and Tardies: All absences must be reported. As a public institution, we only have 5 business days to document absences; therefore, please call before or on the day of the absence to ensure correct documentation. Please call 408.535.6583 and leave a detailed message with the student's name, last name, teacher, and reason for the absence. Please note that not all reasons may be excused and that you must call in each day the student is out. To check student attendance, please log on to the parent portal <https://sanjoseca.infinitecampus.org/campus/portal/sanjose.jsp>

Arriving at school a few minutes early or on time is an excellent habit to develop. Our warning bell rings at 8:24 AM, and instruction begins at 8:25 AM. The gates will close at 8:30 AM as our staff begin working with students. After the gates have closed, students and adults must enter the Trace office to document the reason for the tardy. Trace VPA teachers support with tardies and can be found on the left-hand side of the Trace main office for about 10 minutes after the bell.

If you arrive late, your student needs to have a tardy pass to get to class (Kinder World students, please go to the office in Kinder World). Students arriving 30 minutes after instruction begins will be marked with an unexcused truant tardy. Time is documented once the student receives the tardy pass and not as the student enters the office; anticipate waiting in line as our mornings are our busiest time.

An appointment note is needed if the student arrives late due to an appointment. Notes or documentation are helpful as evidence for school audit purposes. Please also inform your classroom teacher of any absences or tardies so that they can keep track of missing content.

*Not attending school at the beginning of the school year may result in your student being dropped. There is no guarantee that the student may receive re-entry to Trace.

Assessments: All students take the ISIP assessment for English Language Arts at the beginning of every month. Teachers use this data to monitor reading progress and provide students with support for reading. Our TWBI students take the ISIP in Spanish every other month.

Students in grades 3-5 take NWEA math assessments five times a year to measure their progress in mathematics. This assessment is used to support teaching and learning and is one part of determining middle school math placement.

Teachers provide additional assessments for content and standards throughout the year.

3rd-5th grade students take the standardized state test, and English Language Learners take the ELPAC until they reclassify.

Behavior: At Trace, we are Terrific Trace Tigers! Trace families, staff, and community members consistently support and demonstrate being Respectful, Responsible, and safe. Please review our school-wide behavior expectations (provided by your teacher) as a family and the SJUSD handbook. Merritt Trace and San Jose Unified follow a progressive discipline system.

Before and after school care: We partner with Think Together, Katalyst Kids, and YMCA; however, they have their process and procedures and are not part of our school organization. Please find their contact information on our website and contact them directly. Please note that Think Together is our ELOP program for the 2023-2024 school year and will serve qualifying students.

Bicycles, Skateboards & Scooters: Students may ride their bicycles, skateboards, and scooters to and from school. Helmets must be worn while riding any of these items.

Bicycles, scooters, skateboards, roller skates, roller blades, and other wheeled vehicles are not allowed on campus the hour before school starts, after school is dismissed or during any school events.

Blended Learning: SJUSD has provided blended learning programs for our students. These blended learning programs will be used under the teacher's supervision unless the teacher and family agree on an individualized usage plan for each student. Blended Learning Programs include:

- Dreambox: Math
- Istation: Language Arts

Communication: We believe in fostering open and effective communication between the school and parents/guardians/families. Our school website, the parent portal on Infinite Campus, and our new Parent Square App will be valuable resources for important announcements, upcoming events, and academic progress. Here are our forms of communication:

- The admin team will send a weekly communication highlighting procedural and community information
- Our Parent Liaison will email a weekly Trace Resource Bulletin on Wednesdays with upcoming events and resources
- Your classroom teacher will email you about the academic content and classroom activities
- We encourage you to join our PTO as they also send weekly reminders about events, enrichment activities, and volunteer opportunities
- School-wide Flag salute every Friday morning on the main campus on the outdoor stage (weather permitting)

Counseling: Stephanie Benevento is our school Counselor. Our counselor provides social/emotional support, one-on-one counseling, and group counseling. Our counselor can also refer students to outside agencies such as Bill Wilson and Uplift. Her contact information is sbenevento@sjUSD.org or 408.535.6257 x42105.

Deliveries: We will not accept outside food deliveries from strangers or food delivery companies for students. If you are dropping off a lunch for your student, please have it labeled and drop it off on the shelf by the entrance of the main office (or go to Kinder World's office for students on that side of the school). Please ensure that the lunch arrives before the student's lunchtime and that the student and teacher know about the delivery. Should the lunch arrive later than lunchtime, the student will be provided a free lunch from the cafeteria.

Other items delivered, such as backpacks, instruments, books, etc., may also be placed on this delivery shelf at the entrance of the main office. Let the student know before drop off, notify the teacher, and ensure to label the item with the student's name and last name.

Early sign-outs: Students will only be released to people on the emergency contact list, adults (18 years and older). Office staff will request identification (driver's license, passport, etc.) to ensure compliance with legal requirements and the safety of our students. After signing the student out with the office tablet and taking your picture, the office staff will call your student to the office. Office staff will only call students once the person picking up the students is physically in the office checking student out.

There is no need to call the office beforehand; however, you may notify your classroom teacher via email and ensure that the student knows about the early pick-up as much as possible to prepare if

they need to bring their backpack to another class. We discourage picking up during student breaks as teachers are not in their classrooms, and staff members with keys cannot leave the patio unattended. Also, students may not take their backpacks to the patio during breaks.

We discourage signing out students 20 minutes before the bell rings as students are already engaging in reflective closing activities and preparing to exit their classrooms. It is best to just wait for their regular pick-up time.

Electronic devices, toys, trading cards/items, and selling of objects: Students are not to bring any electronic devices to school. This includes but is not limited to personal tablets and handheld video games (Nintendo Switch, GameBoy, etc.) Cell phones and phone/smartwatches may be brought to school, but they must stay turned off and stored in backpacks during the school day. Students are not allowed to use their personal cell phones, including phone watches, for calling or texting during the school day or before and after school transition periods on campus. This adds an extra layer to our student safety protocol. For more information, please check out our Comprehensive Student Safety Plan.

Other items not to be brought to school include perfumes, cologne sprays, makeup, balls, toys, trading cards (Pokemon), pocket knives/weapons, or large amounts of money. Students are not allowed to buy, sell or trade items at school. There are vendors outside of our school grounds, and to prevent students from going off campus, please do not send students to school with money.

The school assumes no responsibility for the loss or damage of personal items. If a student brings an item that is not allowed, the following procedure will be used:

- 1st time: The item is confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the school day to keep at home.
- 2nd Time: The item is confiscated and brought to the main office. Parents/guardians are contacted and must come to the school to retrieve the item.

Kindergarten through 2nd-grade students will receive a classroom iPad, while 3rd through 5th-grade students will be assigned a Chromebook. These devices are intended to stay within the classroom, ensuring students don't forget to charge them and preventing excessive backpack weight. However, if students require access to the device for blended learning at home, they can discuss their needs with their teacher. These devices should not be used before or after school or during breaks. Students must be supervised when using technology at school.

Additionally, students will be provided with assigned headphones during class. If students prefer to bring their own headphones, they must be plug-in only to ensure compatibility and avoid technical difficulties or distractions.

Emergencies and Emergency contact information: During an emergency, our school personnel will be focused on the physical and mental well-being of our students and staff. We may need to close the office to attend to the emergency. You will find a sign on the office door should there be an emergency. We also have monthly drills, and we close our office for about 20 minutes while conducting our fire and evacuation drills. Talk to your student about the importance of following school directions to ensure safety. Remind them that during our practice drill, they can remain calm, vigilant, and quiet to ensure that we mobilize quickly. Practicing helps our entire school community prepare for real situations. Should you be on campus during our drills, please also participate and do not leave the school grounds until the end of the drill. All activities, including student pick-up, will be paused during a school drill.

Extracurricular Activities: Trace's PTO offers various extracurricular activities and clubs for students to explore their interests and talents. Details regarding the available clubs and activities, including sign-up procedures, will be shared through our PTO communication and weekly Resources Bulletin.

Lost and Found: Please ensure to label sweaters, jackets, lunch boxes, water bottles, and backpacks. The labels will help us ensure that we reunite students with their items. We also have a lost and found cart/box that gets emptied in December and June. The carts may be found outside the Kinder World office and room B10.

Meals: All students will have access to free brunch and lunch this school year. If students chose to have breakfast at school, we have 2 eating sections: in Kinder World (for Kinder World students only) picnic section and our Main campus Quad B picnic tables. 1st - 5th grade and TWBI Kinder students may enjoy food in our Picnic area on the B quad. These are the picnic tables directly in front of the cafeteria. We ask that students only eat in assigned eating areas to ensure their safety and avoid choking hazards. Please kindly remind students that we do not play with our food, to be mindful and not wasteful, and to throw away all trash.

At Trace Elementary, we discourage the sharing of food. It has been observed that once a student begins sharing food, their peers will help themselves to their friend's lunch on other occasions. Therefore, please remind your student not to share or give away food. We have plenty of cafeteria food should students be hungry after finishing their first meal.

**Only breakfast on the main campus will be provided if it rains, and the cafeteria will be open to keep our students dry. Kinder World families are welcome to bring students across the street to enjoy a dry breakfast. Keeping our students dry in the morning ensures they are not uncomfortable with wet socks, shoes, and clothes during the school day.

Snacks and lunch will be provided to every student, or snacks and lunch can be brought from home. Please be aware that we may have students who have allergies to peanut products. We make every effort to prevent using peanut products in our school lunches, classroom parties, and student treats. Please read the Health and Wellness policy stated on the district website. We ask parents and families not to provide outside food for our classrooms due to the high number of allergies unless it aligns with the District Wellness Policy. If you are wondering what to bring to classes for celebrations, some suggestions are pencils, books, erasers, small gift bags, etc. For more information on the Cafeteria Services, please visit our Food Services web page.

<https://www.sjUSD.org/your-resources/student-nutrition-services/>

Please also see the Greenlight food items

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1N4APxT6aR76ZK1GeppePdZkd8OLS8-aJ/view?usp=drive_link

Parent Liaison: Every parent/caregiver is their child's first teacher. Building a relationship between home, school, and the community creates a network of caring adults that ensures academic success. Carolina Lopez is Trace's Parent Liaison. She can be reached at carlopez@sjUSD.org or 408.535.6257 x42412

Parent Participation: We believe parental involvement is crucial to a child's educational journey. Opportunities for parent involvement, such as volunteer programs and parent-teacher meetings, will be shared with you throughout the school year.

We are committed to providing a safe, welcoming, and engaging environment where your child can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Our experienced faculty and staff are dedicated to

supporting your child's smooth transition into our school system and helping them develop a love for learning.

Programs

SEI

Structured English Immersion program. The instruction is all in English.

TWBI

Two-Way Bilingual Immersion 80/20 Program

VPA

Our visual and performing arts program provides every student with classes in art, music, and drama. This program also allows our classroom teachers to provide interventions through a push-in model.

School Meetings / Parent Participation

SSC

The primary function of the School Site Council (SSC) is to plan, monitor, and evaluate the activities and expenditures of the school program. The SSC is responsible for developing, revising, and monitoring the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) and the overall school site budget, including any state and federal categorical funds. SSC meetings are open to the public. Our meetings take place on the third Monday of every month at 2:45 PM in room B-10.

SELAC

School English Learners Advisory Council (SELAC) is a school-based committee whose purpose is to advise the Principal and staff regarding programs and services for English Learners and provide parents with information. Our meetings occur on the third Tuesday of every month at 8:30 AM in room B-10.

Workshops

Evening and after-school workshops will be available throughout the year based on need and feedback.

Principal's Coffee

Principal's coffee will take place in person on the last Thursday of every month at 8:30 AM. Additionally, there is a Principal's Corner time embedded in our PTO morning and evening meetings, where you will hear about what is happening at Trace Elementary for the month.

PTO

Our dedicated Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is here to support our students' education through fundraising and community efforts. This forum discusses ideas and suggestions that benefit all students and their families. The PTO collaborates with our community and works hard to raise funds for three important areas: educational programs, our performing arts program, teacher/staff support, and school community events. Please join our PTO

<https://www.tracepto.com/>

Student Orientation: Our students will receive their student orientation and a campus tour on their first week of school. This orientation familiarizes new students with the school's facilities, policies, and procedures. If your student is new to our campus during the school year, your classroom teacher will engage classroom peers to support our new student to ensure that your student feels welcomed into our school community.

Our PTO will be hosting an Ice Cream Social for our school; if you are new to our campus, you can tour the school and meet our school community and many of our school staff on Aug. 8 from 4-6 PM. You may also connect with our Parent Liaison for additional school information and resources.

School Supplies: Our students all have access to essential materials in the classroom. We ask that students bring a backpack to store their jackets, homework, and reading books. Please also ensure that if students bring lunch from home, it is in a lunch box labeled with their name. Paper bags and plastic bags may be mistaken as non-student items, and they cause confusion. If you need resources such as a school backpack or a lunch bag, please contact our Parent Liaison, Carolina Lopez, or visit our Parent Resource room B10.

Uniform Policy: Trace Elementary has a uniform policy that promotes a sense of unity and equality among our students. Please review the uniform guidelines on our school website or contact the school office for more information. Our classroom teachers will send students not in uniform to the office for a change of clothes or to call home should we not have the correct size for the student. Please note that it is essential that students wear closed-toe shoes to allow for fast movement and avoid injuries.

Here is our uniform policy <https://sjusd.box.com/s/5r6m99999v5esnfz4jf4jvye4xhtk0s3>

We have spirit days on the last Friday of every month. If your student does not participate in spirit days, please ensure they are uniform.

Visitors: Visitors are welcome on campus before school starts. As soon as the bell rings, we ask that every visitor begin to walk off campus as we lock the gates at 8:30 AM for the safety of our students and to ensure that all school staff maximize their time working with students. If you wish to volunteer, or attend more than one field trip please register <https://www.sjusd.org/your-resources/parent-resources/volunteer/377/>

If you are helping or volunteering, please check in with the office and ensure you have a volunteer sticker.

Our office is a resource space, and we ask you to avoid using it to get through to our main campus. Please use the gates to enter or exit our school unless a student is tardy or is picked up late, as these instances need to be documented. We also ask adults not to use the student restrooms during school hours. We have an adult restroom in our main office. Please also do not use the restrooms in the classrooms.

VPA: Trace Elementary is a specialized Visual Performing Arts (VPA) School, setting itself apart as one of the few public schools that offer comprehensive drama, art, and music programs to every student throughout the school day. Every student at Trace actively participates in on-stage performances or video productions at least once per academic year. Additionally, Trace provides extracurricular VPA programs, including Drama, Choir, Band, and Strings, which are available before and/or after regular school hours. Performances have a morning show at 9 AM and an evening show at 7 PM.