WELCOME LETTER

PRINCIPAL'S LETTER

Dear Parents and Students,

On behalf of our faculty and staff, we would like to welcome you to the 2026-2027 school year at Manzanita Elementary School. At Manzanita, our Vision is Together we L.E.A.D. - Learn, Engage, Achieve Goals and Develop Character. Our goal is to teach our students L.E.A.D on campus and within the school community. Our staff invites you to become an active participant in your child's education. Your support is essential in providing your child with a quality education. We believe that it is our responsibility, as educators, to stimulate, challenge and instill confidence, create a desire for lifelong learning, and teach the responsibilities of good citizenship for all students. This handbook is to acquaint you with information about our school's general organization, operation, and policies. You are encouraged to review this information with your child. If you have any questions or concerns, please call 602-347-2200, e-mail Ashanti.Givens@wesdschools.org or come by. I look forward to meeting you and assisting in any way possible.

When families and Manzanita staff work cooperatively, student success is the result. We are delighted to have your share in this educational partnership!

Sincerely,

Ashanti Givens and the Manzanita Staff

GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

8430 N 39th Ave Phoenix, AZ 85051

School Web Site: http://manzanita.wesdschools.org

Important Telephone Numbers:

Office – 602-347-2200

Health Office – 602-347-2210

Attendance – 602-347-2211

KidSpace – 602-347-2272

Manzanita Vision and Mission Statement

Together We L.E.A.D.:

L - Learn

E - Engage

A - Achieve Goals

D - Develop Character

In order to prepare students to L.E.A.D.:

- We will establish high expectations for life-long learners.
- We will welcome and value our diverse families and community.
- We will work together as a collaborative team.
- We will provide a safe learning environment.
- We will empower students to demonstrate respect, integrity, safety, and responsibility.

Manzanita School Improvement Plans

Manzanita administrators, teachers and staff will work together to analyze school-wide data and engage in professional development to develop and modify our instructional practices to best meet each student's needs.

Instructional Practices

Manzanita understands that effective, comprehensive assessment to screen, diagnose, monitor and measure outcomes is essential to evaluate the effectiveness of our programs. We will do this by implementing procedures to collaborate and individually identify instructional improvements related to our identified needs in reading, writing, science, math, and behavior. Teachers will use assessment results to make data-based instructional decisions to provide interventions in reading, math, and social/emotional behavior.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Daily Schedule

Arrival/Dismissal Times for K-6/Leadership Academy

7:55-8:15 a.m.	Students head directly to the classroom. Breakfast in the classroom.
8:15 a.m.	Homeroom
3:15 p.m.	K-6 dismissal (Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri.)
1:45 p.m.	K-6 dismissal (Weds. & Early Release Days)

Arrival/Dismissal Times for Special Needs Preschool (Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri.)

8:15 a.m.	Morning preschool arrival
10:45 a.m.	Morning preschool dismissal
11:30 a.m.	Afternoon preschool arrival
2:00 p.m.	Afternoon preschool dismissal

Office Hours

The office is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., and Wednesdays from 7:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Please do not have your students arrive before 7:55 a.m. To minimize interruptions to the classrooms at the end of the day, students cannot be checked out any later than 3:00 p.m. on a regular school day and 1:30 p.m. on early release days. This is a critical time of day and is reserved for announcements, homework assignments and end-of-the-day instructions. Please keep this in mind when making appointments.

Attendance/Reporting Absences

IF YOU KNOW IN ADVANCE THAT YOUR CHILD IS TO BE ABSENT, PLEASE NOTIFY THE ATTENDANCE OFFICE. EVERY PUPIL IS EXPECTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL EVERY DAY. THE ATTENDANCE NUMBER IS 602-347-2211. PLEASE CONTACT YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER TO MAKE UP ANY MISSING WORK DUE TO ABSENCES.

Parking Lot Safety

Parents delivering/picking up students must do so in the designated **"LOADING-UNLOADING ZONE"** in the front parking lot. It has been designated as a single line of vehicles to ensure safety. Students will be allowed to load and unload **only** in this area.

Morning Drop Off

Parents will **not be** permitted to enter the campus to drop off students before school or to pick them up after school without first signing in at the front office. Please be prepared to sign in and show your ID **on each visit**. Once the bell rings, you are asked to leave the campus, so that instruction can begin.

Truancy

To assure students are successful and meet current state legislation, which requires all students to attend 90% of the school year, WESD has an Attendance Unit (AU). The AU will work with the City Justice Courts to identify students who are chronically absent or truant.

When a student reaches five total absences (excused, unexcused and/or unverified), families will receive an attendance notification letter. When a student reaches 10 **unverified, unexcused, and excused absences**, families will receive an attendance warning letter and a referral to the AU for appropriate actions (see District guidelines). In order to avoid this eventuality, there are several precautions to take: (1) reinforce being on time and good attendance, (2) call the school each time a student will be late or absent, (3) present any medical documentation to the health technician and/or attendance clerk if illness will be a consistent, foreseeable issue.

An attendance letter will be sent by the school to the families of students who are approaching or passing the midway point for unexcused absences, excused absences and tardies. Parent cooperation is of the utmost importance in assuring student success.

Tardy/Late to School

Students who arrive after 8:15 a.m. will be required to be signed in by a parent/guardian in the front office each day the student is late to school. After three tardies, students will receive a consequence, including warnings, lunch detention or after-school detention. Students in afterschool detention must be picked up by a parent/guardian at 3:15 p.m.

Signing Out Students

Anyone signing students out during the school day must be listed on the student's emergency card and show valid identification every time – NO EXCEPTIONS! We have found that calling students out of school early takes at least 15 minutes. Due to transitioning and dismissal procedures, students will not be called out of class 20 minutes prior to dismissal.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE/BEHAVIOR

Dress Code

Please see the District portion of the handbook for Dress Code information.

Dress Code and Spirit Wear

Please refer to the District section of the student handbook for complete dress code information.

Manzanita Spirit T-shirts and **Homeroom Spirit T-shirts** will be available for purchase through our PTO. Throughout the school year, we will celebrate designated **Manzanita Spirit Days**, during which students are encouraged to wear their Manzanita Spirit T-shirts. Homeroom Spirit T-shirts will be designated for specific spirit days and may also be worn on field trips to help promote school pride and ensure student visibility and safety.
We encourage all students to participate in these opportunities to build school spirit and strengthen our Manzanita community.

Backpacks and Personal Handbags

To support a safe and organized learning environment, the Manzanita campus is a no-backpack school for students in **fourth through sixth grade**. Students in **kindergarten through third grade** may bring and carry a backpack to school. Students in fourth through sixth grade are departmentalized and transition between classes throughout the school day. To carry school supplies and personal items, students may bring:

- A large, zippered binder
- A lunch box

Binders will be stored outside classrooms on designated binder hooks during instructional time.
Thank you for your cooperation in helping us maintain a safe and orderly campus. If you have any questions, please contact the school office.

Manzanita Follows Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS)

PBIS stands for Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports. This is a system of tools and strategies for defining, teaching, positively acknowledging appropriate behavior, and correcting inappropriate behavior through reteaching. It is a framework for creating customized school systems that support students in all areas of school and life. School-wide PBIS is used for the whole school, it is designated to prevent negative behaviors as much as possible, and changes focus from negative behaviors and exchanges to positive intentions and interactions between all staff, students, parents, and stakeholders among Manzanita.
Through our school-wide behavior system, Manzanita School teaches all students how to **Be Responsible, Be Respectful and Be Safe.** Teachers, support staff and administration implement PBIS as our school-wide approach to teaching students' appropriate behavior. Our philosophy about school-wide expectations for student behavior is to teach appropriate behavior just as explicitly as we teach academic subjects. We teach students what it looks like, and sounds like to be safe, respectful, and responsible in different areas of the school and various times of the day. All students follow the same set of expectations throughout school. Teachers and support staff teach students with positive statements that reinforce appropriate behavior and when students follow the rules and expectations, they are recognized. When students do not follow

the rules, there are planned consequences to get them back on track.

Should your child have significant struggles, you will be contacted by your child and his or her teacher. Minor issues are dealt with in the classroom and are considered part of the normal growth and learning process for all children. Slight modifications are allowed at each grade level to meet the needs of the students at that level. Your teacher will provide you with a copy of his or her grade-level plan in the first weeks of school. Our goal is to share with you all the wonderful things your child is doing each day.

Mustang Bucks and Tokens

Any time a student performs an act of kindness, shows responsibility, or displays pride in our school, he or she can earn a Mustang Token. On Fridays, students are recognized using these Mustang Tokens. Mustang Bucks can be awarded to homeroom classes during their Specials and lunch/recess time by exhibiting respectful, responsible, and safe behaviors. When a class earns 20 Mustang Bucks, they get to spin the wheel! **Mustang Tokens can also be used in the Mustang Market Student Store to purchase incentives.**

Cafeteria CUPS

In the cafeteria, the CUP System recognizes students demonstrating Respectful, Responsible and Safe behaviors. A Red cup identifies that the class table group has not followed the expectations in the cafeteria. A Yellow cup indicates that the class has received some warnings for not following cafeteria expectations. A Green Cup indicates that they have followed cafeteria expectations. When a class earns 20 Green Cups, they get to spin the wheel for a class incentive

Items Prohibited at School

- Electronic games/tablets, electronic watches
- Skates/Heelys
- Squirt guns
- Laser lights/pen
- Shock pens
- Noise makers
- Toys of any kind
- Administration reserves the right to confiscate any item that is a safety concern or interferes with the learning environment.

Student Telephone Usage

Students may not use the office phone except with a teacher's or office staff's permission. We discourage the use of the phone except for emergencies. Parents are urged to limit calls and messages to students. Except emergencies, all calls during instructional time will be sent to voicemail. Cell phones and other electronic devices (including tablets, iPads, iPods, handheld games, etc.) that are visible to the teacher during the school day are considered a distraction. During school hours, cell phones must be turned off and kept in the student's backpack. If cell phones are visible, or in use during school, they are subject to confiscation. First offense: confiscated by teacher and returned at end of the day. Second offense: confiscated by teacher and turned into the office; returned at the end of the day. Third offense: confiscated by teacher and returned to parents only during a conference.

Bullying Prevention Program

Manzanita students and staff will continue to follow a strict "No Bullying" policy, which creates a physically and emotionally safe learning environment for all students.

Stop, Walk, and Talk is directly aligned to our PBIS philosophy that focuses on changing social norms regarding conflict-resolution and the prevention of bullying behaviors. This bullying prevention model uses the entire school, staff and students, to prevent bullying and intimidation. Students and teachers participate in regular classroom meetings to educate students on the different forms bullying can take, to understand what they can do when they see bullying occur, and to share their own thoughts and feelings about the school environment in relation to bullying issues. If you feel your child is the victim of bullying, please discuss it with his or her teacher or the administration. Stop, Walk ,and Talk Procedures 1. Ask the person to STOP. Tell the person that you do not like the problem behavior and to please stop. 2. If the behavior does not stop, WALK away. Walk away from the person to avoid further conflict. 3. If the problem continues, TALK to an adult.

Bicycle Rules

Children who walk or ride bicycles to and from school must cross at the safe walks in front of the school. Although children have the privilege of riding their bikes to school, Manzanita School is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged bicycles.

Bicycle riders must use a lock for the bicycle, one that will secure the bicycle to the bicycle rack. All bicycles must be placed in racks in the areas north and south of the school. Bicycles are not to be ridden on sidewalks or in the parking lot. They should walk from the street area to the rack area.

School Parties/Birthdays

There will be designated holiday or seasonal party times during the school year. Teachers in grades Pre-K-6 will determine which parties they will host. To maximize instructional time, birthday celebrations will take place during breaks in the instructional schedule. Therefore, parents will not be able to participate in the birthday celebration.

Parents may arrange with their child's teacher to send in prepackaged, store-bought birthday treats from the WESD Food Guidelines list. We recommend that cupcakes not be brought in as a treat. **Please do not send flowers, balloon bouquets, lunches or select invitations to parties. These items may create interruptions and/or hurt feelings. Flowers and balloons are not allowed on campus.**

Visitors

All visitors must sign in at the front office. To visit any area on campus, a valid photo identification must be presented and left at the front office. IDs will be returned as visitors sign-out. Due to current health concerns, the principal may restrict access to visitors at any point in the school year to keep our students and staff safe by physically distancing and/or meeting health department requirements. Parents are welcome to visit campus to eat lunch with their student(s). To visit outside of your student's lunch time, the District Volunteer paperwork must be completed and approved, and a time must be scheduled with the Manzanita front office or administration.

Field Trips

Parents and legal guardians are the only adults allowed to accompany students as chaperones on field trips. No grandparents or adults who do not have proper legal custody of the student will be permitted to chaperone. Parents who wish to chaperone must have WESD Volunteer Paperwork completed and approved prior to the field trip. Only one adult per child can go on the field trip and chaperones cannot take other children on the trip. Additional adults are not able to join the field trip at the location.

COMMUNICATION

Parent Communication

- Conferencing is a positive way to develop two-way communications between home and school on how students are performing in academic and social development skills.
- Two formal parent-teacher conference times are scheduled during the year. We encourage parents to hold conferences with the teacher whenever necessary. Please call the teacher for an appointment to set up additional conferences. "Drop-in" conferences are discouraged.
- Each month our school newsletter and calendar are sent home to provide information about school, community, and special event activities. Newsletters and fliers will be posted digitally through ParentSquare, via email, or a physical copy will be sent home with students. Manzanita 101 is an academic newsletter sent home quarterly to share Academic and Social and Emotional content being covered in all classrooms.
- Midterms or report cards will be sent home to all grades every nine weeks.
- Parents may request homework after a child has been out one complete day. Teachers need 24 hours to honor the request. A student has one day for each day absent to make up missed assignments.
- If you need to meet with a teacher, please make an appointment either before or after school. Parents will not be permitted to speak with the teachers during instructional time.
- The school marquee, Instagram, the school Facebook page are updated frequently to inform our community of current school events.

Student Records

- Parents must communicate with the school office about withdrawals, emergency phone numbers/contact information and any change of address.
- Student records for current students are maintained in the Manzanita school office. Access to records is available to parents with educational rights. Sometimes our records are audited, and our office staff may ask you to update the information. It is essential that contact information, including address, phone numbers, and emergency contacts remain current at all times for the safety of your student.
- Records for former students are maintained by the WESD.

PTO

The PTO is a support service organization that functions to assist the school. Any parent or community member is eligible and encouraged to join. The PTO plans and conducts fundraising projects for programs that Manzanita Elementary School 2026-2027 enhance the curriculum. The PTO monthly meeting dates will be published in the school newsletters.

Site Council/District Councils

Our school Site Council is involved in school improvement planning, short-term problem solving, and staff selection. It is composed of administrators, certified personnel, classified personnel, parents/guardians, and community members. If a parent is interested in becoming a member of Site Council, applications are available in the office. Elections are held in October of each year. We also have opportunities for teachers, classified staff, and parents to participate on committees at the district level.