

Russell Ranch Elementary
Family & Student Handbook

2026-2027



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Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
General Information.....	4
Mission & Vision.....	4
Principal's Message.....	4
Schedules & Attendance.....	5
Bell Schedule.....	5
Arrival Procedures.....	7
Dismissal Procedures.....	7
Early Dismissal.....	8
Drop-Off & Pick-Up Reminders.....	8
Closed Campus.....	9
Student Expectations.....	10
Attendance.....	10
Illnesses & Absences.....	10
Excused Absences:.....	10
Unexcused Absences:.....	10
Independent Study.....	11
Tardy Policy.....	11
SART & SARB.....	11
Dress Code.....	12
Forgotten Items.....	13
Emergency Card Information.....	13
Field Trips.....	13
Lost & Found.....	14
Health Room.....	14
Illness.....	14
Medication.....	14
Campus Visitors.....	16
Visitors & Observations.....	16
Phone Use & Mobile Communication Devices Policy.....	16
Tobacco-Free Campus.....	16
Nutrition & Cafeteria.....	17
Breakfast & Lunch Program.....	17
Snack & Cafeteria Guidelines.....	17
Academics.....	18
Homework Policy.....	18
Academic Integrity.....	19
Student Progress & Communication.....	19
Campus Climate & Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports.....	21
PBIS & HERD Expectations.....	21
Awards & Recognition.....	21
Birthday Acknowledgments.....	21

Behavior & Discipline.....	22
Prohibited Items.....	22
Bullying & Safety.....	23
Discipline Procedures.....	23
Student Conduct & Responsibilities.....	25
Student Expectations.....	25
Parent/Guardian Responsibilities.....	25
Grounds for Suspension or Expulsion.....	26
Parent Involvement.....	28
School Site Council (SSC).....	28
Parent Teacher Association (PTA).....	28
Family Volunteers.....	29
Parents' Right to Know Regarding Teacher Qualifications.....	29
Nondiscrimination/Sexual Harassment/Complaint Process Statement.....	30
Nondiscrimination/Sexual Harassment/Complaint Process.....	30
Uniform Complaint Procedure.....	31

General Information

Mission & Vision

Vision: To inspire lifelong learning and personal growth, ensuring every child becomes a confident, kind, and successful individual.

Mission: We empower students to thrive through a love of learning, confidence-building, and inclusive, engaging instruction.

Principal's Message

It is with great enthusiasm and gratitude that I welcome you to a new school year at Russell Ranch Elementary! I am honored to be the principal of this wonderful learning community, where students are at the heart of every decision we make.

At Russell Ranch, we believe in cultivating a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment that nurtures each child's academic and social-emotional growth. Our dedicated team of educators is committed to inspiring curiosity, building strong relationships, and helping students grow into confident, compassionate, and capable learners.

With over twenty years in education—as a classroom teacher, instructional coach, and school administrator—I am passionate about fostering student voice and agency, and ensuring every learner has the opportunity to thrive. Our work is grounded in collaboration: among staff, with our families, and across the broader community. Together, we strive to maintain high expectations, celebrate progress, and build a strong sense of belonging for all.

As we move through the year, I look forward to partnering with you to support the joy of learning, the excitement of discovery, and the strength of community. Whether it's joining the PTA, attending a family event, or participating in one of our family engagement and learning opportunities, your involvement matters—and it makes all the difference.

Our family handbook contains a wealth of information to help you be informed about how we work as a team here at Russell Ranch. Please use it as a tool, and do not hesitate to reach out to our amazing teachers, to our welcoming front office team, or to me if you have any questions.

Cheers to a wonderful year!

-Meghan Schooler
Principal

Schedules & Attendance

Bell Schedule

Student schedules vary based on grade level and day of the week. It is asked that you reference this schedule when scheduling daytime appointments and early dismissal from school. Whenever possible, please avoid missing core reading and math instruction; this is a critical time of day for students to be present. In addition, we ask that early dismissal is scheduled around recess and lunch. It is more difficult to locate students and allow them to get their belongings for early dismissal when they are not in their classroom. We ask that students are picked up just before lunch/recess or upon their return to class.

The most up to date bell schedules will be found on the [school website](#). Changes to daily schedules will be shared directly with families through teacher or school communication.

**Russell Ranch Bell Schedule
2025 - 2026**

Kindergarten Schedule

Breakfast	7:45 - 8:00 AM
Start of the Day	8:15 AM
AM Recess	9:55 - 10:15 AM
Lunch	11:10 - 11:30 AM
PM Recess	11:30 - 11:50 AM
Dismissal	2:45 PM
Important Instructional Blocks	
WIN Time	9:00 - 9:30 AM
Core Reading	
Core Math	

1st Grade Schedule

Breakfast	7:45 - 8:00 AM
Start of the Day	8:15 AM
AM Recess	10:20 - 10:40 AM
Lunch	11:55 AM - 12:15 PM
PM Recess	12:15 - 12:35 PM
Dismissal	2:45 PM
Important Instructional Blocks	
WIN Time	10:45 - 11:15 AM
Core Reading	
Core Math	

2nd Grade Schedule

Breakfast	7:45 - 8:00 AM
Start of the Day	8:15 AM
AM Recess	10:20 - 10:40 AM
Lunch	11:55 AM - 12:15 PM
PM Recess	12:15 - 12:35 PM
Dismissal	2:45 PM
Important Instructional Blocks	
WIN Time	11:20 - 11:50 AM
Core Reading	
Core Math	

3rd Grade Schedule

Breakfast	7:45 - 8:00 AM
Start of the Day	8:15 AM
AM Recess	9:55 - 10:15 am
Lunch	11:10 - 11:30 am
PM Recess	11:30 - 11:50 am
Dismissal	2:45 PM
Important Instructional Blocks	
WIN Time	12:40 - 1:10 PM
Core Reading	
Core Math	

4th Grade Schedule

Breakfast	7:45 - 8:00 AM
Start of the Day	8:15 AM
AM Recess	10:45 - 11:05 AM
Lunch	12:20 - 12:40 PM
PM Recess	12:40 - 1:00 PM
Dismissal	2:45 PM
Important Instructional Blocks	
WIN Time	9:35 - 10:05 AM (2a) & 1:30 - 2:00 PM (2b)
Core Reading	
Core Math	

5th Grade Schedule

Breakfast	7:45 - 8:00 AM
Start of the Day	8:15 AM
AM Recess	10:45 - 11:05 AM
Lunch	12:20 - 12:40 PM
PM Recess	12:40 - 1:00 PM
Dismissal	2:45 PM
Important Instructional Blocks	
WIN Time	10:10 - 10:40 AM (2a) & 1:30 - 2:00 PM (2b)
Core Reading	
Core Math	

AM Preschool Schedule

Start of the Day	8:15 AM
Dismissal	10:56 AM

PM Preschool Schedule

Start of the Day	12:06 PM
Dismissal	2:45 PM

AM/PM TK Schedule: Mon/Tues/Wed/Fri

AM Start of the Day	8:00 AM
AM Recess & Snack	9:25 - 9:55 AM
AM Dismissal	11:21 AM
PM Start of the Day	11:24 AM
PM Recess & Snack	12:25 - 12:55 PM
PM Dismissal	2:45 PM

**AM/PM TK Schedule: Slip Schedule
Thursdays & Minimum Days**

AM Start of the Day	8:15 AM
PM Start of the Day	9:54 AM
AM Dismissal	11:21 AM
PM Dismissal	1:15 PM

Arrival Procedures

Student arrival and supervision begins at 8:00 am with students waiting in the quad until 8:12 am when they may walk to class. Classes begin at 8:15 am, so families are asked to plan their arrival so that students are on time to class. Students are to arrive via our designated drop off/pick up zones and are to walk directly to the quad upon arrival at school.

Students may enter the cafeteria as early as 7:45 am if they are eating breakfast. Students eating breakfast are expected to select a balanced meal and to sit and eat breakfast with calm and appropriate behavior. All students who are eating breakfast remain in the cafeteria until 8:00 am. At 8:00 am, the cafeteria closes, and no more meals are served. 1st through 5th grade students are asked to leave the cafeteria by 8:05 am, and kindergarten students are escorted to the kinder playground at that time.

Student arrival is a busy time for our parking lot and neighborhood. We ask all families to prioritize safety first and foremost. Please be patient with others, whether they are in a vehicle, on a bike, or a pedestrian.

Whenever practicable, we encourage families to walk onto campus. The benefits of walking are multiple: Giving your child a chance to move prior to the school day begins is a great help for their success. School drop off and pick up can also be an opportunity for families to connect and interact. Building a community of families committed to healthy, successful students is a priority for all of us. Finally, reducing the number of cars in the parking lot makes drop off safer and calmer for everyone.

For those who are dropping off by car, please note that we ask students to exit the car independently. Before arriving at school, make sure your child is ready to go with their shoes, backpack, lunch, and coat. If an adult needs to exit their vehicle for any reason, please find a parking spot, either in our lot or in the community.

We have school buses dropping off on Owl Meadow via the bus ramp. This is designated for buses only. Do not drive/park in the bus lane at any time. Do not park or leave your car unattended in any of our drop-off zones.

In summary:

- Supervision begins at 8:00 a.m. Students may wait in the quad until 8:12 a.m. and should arrive ready for class to begin at 8:15 a.m.
- Breakfast is served in the cafeteria from 7:45–8:00 a.m. Students eating breakfast must remain seated and behave calmly until dismissed.
- Students must use designated drop-off areas and walk directly to the quad. Walking to school is encouraged when possible to reduce traffic and foster community.

Dismissal Procedures

When school is out, students are to meet their parent/guardians, go directly home, report to Student Care, or to their daycare provider when class is dismissed.

Students walking home from school without an adult remain under the jurisdiction of the school and district's discipline and behavior policies until reaching home. Students waiting for a ride after school will go directly to their grade level's waiting location or an alternative meeting spot, as designated by the adult.

Designated areas for car pick up include:

- 1st through 5th grade: in front of the cafeteria
- Tk & Kindergarten: hand off in front of TK/Kinder classrooms
 - 1st through 5th grade students with a TK/Kinder sibling may wait with their younger sibling
- Special education classrooms: hand off under the trees, by the bus ramp

Students riding the bus will go directly to the bus lane on Owl Meadow. All students must stay in their particular areas to wait for their transportation home.

Families who wish to return to school to use the playground may do so after 4:00p.m.

Early Dismissal

- Students must be signed out through the office by an approved emergency contact with valid ID.
- Students are not called from class until the adult arrives. If possible, advance notification is requested so students are packed and ready to leave.
- In order for students to leave campus with their belongings, we ask that students are picked up before or after recess/lunch time. During recess and lunch, classrooms are closed and locked, and we do not have additional support staff available to escort students to class.
- Keep emergency contact info current, including trusted local adults.

Drop-Off & Pick-Up Reminders

- There is one main area for car drop off and pick up at Russell Ranch in the front of the school.
- The small lot is for TK and Kinder students. The large lot is for 1st through 5th grade students.

- As you enter the parking lot from Dry Creek Rd, you'll see a drop off lane on the right and a passing lane on the left. Both lanes are ONE WAY traffic only.
- The right hand "Drop Off" lane is for drop off/pick up ONLY. Drivers must remain in the vehicles.
- The left hand "Pass Lane" is for passing/exiting traffic. Do not allow students to drop off from this lane.
- Students must exit vehicles curbside.
- TK/Kinder/SDC families must use hand-to-hand drop-off at designated gates.
- If your child is in a car seat that requires you to stop and exit in order to buckle/unbuckle, please plan to park in a spot or on the street.

Closed Campus

Russell Ranch is a closed campus. Parents may wait in front of the school or along the peripheral sidewalks for students at dismissal. During the school day, all visitors must check in at the front office using the Raptor system. The campus playground is open to the public beginning at 4 pm.

Student Expectations

Attendance

The Governing Board believes that regular attendance plays a key role in student achievement. The Board recognizes its responsibility under the law to ensure that students attend school regularly. Parents/guardians of children 6 to 18 are obligated to send their children to school unless otherwise provided by law. The Board shall abide by all state attendance laws and may use appropriate legal means to correct the problems of excessive absence or truancy. (BP 5113)

Regular attendance supports academic success and builds responsible habits. When a child is absent, please communicate with the school as early as possible. Our preferred method for notification is our new online form located on our [school website](#). You may also call the school by 8:30 a.m. and leave a message including: the child's full name, teacher, date, reason for absence, and your relationship to the student. A message may be left at 916-294-2430 24-hours a day. Remember, you must notify the office of any absences, even if you have already spoken to the teacher. If a child is late and has been seen by a doctor, please bring a note/appointment card from the doctor verifying that your child had an appointment.

Illnesses & Absences

The District allows ten days excused absence for illness without verification from a medical professional. After three days of absence due to illness, the school nurse will contact the family to offer help. Students with chronic conditions will be counseled, and a plan to maximize attendance will be implemented. At ten days of excused absence for illness, a letter requesting doctor's verification for future absences will be requested. If a doctor's verification is not received, the absence will be considered unexcused.

Please note: Once a student has been absent for two or more days, homework can be requested by emailing or leaving a voicemail message to the teacher after the 2nd day. Teachers will leave the homework in the school office for pick-up.

Excused Absences:

- Illness (with medical note after 3 days or 10 absences)
- Court appearance
- Funeral (1 day in-state, 3 out-of-state)
- Religious holidays
- Principal-approved emergencies

Unexcused Absences:

- Family vacations
- Oversleeping or missed transportation
- Other non-qualifying reasons

Independent Study

Students who will miss 3-14 consecutive school days may qualify for an Independent Study Contract. These agreements will be available through the school office and must be requested at least two weeks prior to the absence. Although we ask that you schedule vacations during school holidays, if that is not possible, please notify the office and complete an Independent Study Contract. Completion of an Independent Study Contract will excuse all absences during the contract dates as long as the assigned work has been completed on time.

Please note: The Folsom Cordova Unified School District does not recognize the "vacation" code for students who are absent from school to participate in a family vacation or an out-of-town activity. These students will be considered unexcused and truant.

Tardy Policy

Students are expected to arrive on time. When a student is late, they miss out on the beginning of the day, the initial learning activities and opportunities to connect with their teacher and classmates. This may result in increased levels of anxiety or discomfort as they walk into class late. In addition, late arrivals cause a disruption to the rest of the class and decreases learning time for all students

There is a warning bell at 8:12 a.m. and a tardy bell at 8:15 a.m. for all students in Kinder through 5th grade. AM and PM TK have alternate start times at 8:00 am and 11:24 am, respectively.

A tardy is excused when a student is at a doctor or dental appointment and presents a valid note from the doctor or dentist. All excuses other than doctor/dental appointments are considered an unexcused tardy.

Examples of unexcused tardies/lates are:

- Car broke down
- Overslept
- Parent ill/parent overslept
- Missed the bus
- Not feeling well

SART & SARB

SART, Student Attendance Review Team, is a meeting with student, parent, administrator, and teacher that is held in the school office. The purpose of the meeting is to seek a solution to the tardy, truant or absentee problem.

Any pupil reported as a truant three or more times within the school year is considered a habitual truant; a school official shall hold at least one conference with the pupil's

parent or guardian. Any pupil considered a habitual truant or having irregular school attendance may be referred to a SARB (School Attendance Review Board).

SARB, Student Attendance Review Board, is a meeting with student, parent, principal, community representatives, Folsom Police Department, Sacramento County probation officer, Sacramento County Welfare representative. The meetings are held to seek solutions to the problem concerning attendance.

In the event of excessive absences and late arrivals, attendance letters will be sent as follows:

1. After every five unexcused tardies. After 15 lates, a SART meeting will be scheduled. After 20 lates, a SARB referral will be scheduled; both meetings are mandatory.
2. After 10 absences due to illness.
3. After every three truancies/unexcused absences. After nine truancies, a SART meeting is scheduled and a possible SARB referral.
4. 4. After three unexcused early dismissals.

Dress Code

Over the course of two years (2021-2023), FCUSD educational partners, including parents, students, teachers, and administrators, came together as a Dress Code Advisory Committee to create a district-wide dress code policy. Before they began the work, feedback was gathered from parents, students, and staff through a Thought Exchange survey. This feedback, along with research and data gathered from other Districts was used to create a dress code policy that is fair, racially and gender-neutral, equitable, and enforced consistently throughout our District.

Students are expected to dress appropriately for working and learning at school. Long pants, shorts, skirts, shirts, blouses, and dresses are encouraged.

Students must wear:

- Clothing that covers private body parts
- A top and bottom that covers the buttocks
- Secure footwear (no flip-flops or shoes without heel straps)

Not permitted:

- Clothing with profanity, hate speech, or drug/alcohol messages
- See-through clothing

- Hats/masks that cover the face (except for religious/medical reasons)
- Unsafe footwear (e.g., Heelys, sandals without heel straps)

Forgotten Items

At Russell Ranch, we believe that elementary school is the perfect time for students to build responsibility in a safe and supportive environment. Learning to remember important items like lunches, homework, and instruments is a valuable life skill—and forgetting something once in a while is a natural part of that learning process.

To support this growth, we will no longer interrupt classroom instruction for forgotten items, nor will we hold them at the front office. This helps minimize classroom disruptions and discourages students from checking phones or smartwatches during the day, in line with our school's cell phone policy. Plus, we had many items take up semi-permanent residence in the main office in the past and we do not want a forgotten item to become a lost item.

Rest assured, we have systems in place to support students when these situations arise. Homework can be turned in late, instruments can be skipped for the day, and thanks to our free lunch program, even a forgotten lunch is just a temporary inconvenience—not a crisis. Our teachers and staff are committed to using forgetful moments as teachable moments, building resilience and problem-solving when something is forgotten.

We appreciate your partnership as we help students develop independence, accountability, and confidence in managing their responsibilities.

Emergency Card Information

Parents or guardians are required by law to complete the emergency card information at the time of registration. In case of emergency, the school must have a person to contact by telephone if the parent is not available. Only people listed as emergency contacts on the card will be notified; this is for the student's protection. If you should change your address, phone number, employment, or childcare provider, please notify the office so the card can be updated. Please keep the school informed of any pending custody case, or similar cases, in which the right of guardianship is in question. The emergency card needs to be kept current with this vital information.

Field Trips

Students must have a Field Trip Permission slip on file with the school before being allowed to attend a field trip. Teachers will send the permission slip home prior to the trip and must have them returned promptly. Permission to attend will not be accepted by phone, fax, or handwritten note. Field trip permission slips must be returned 24 hours before the field trip. NO EXCEPTIONS. If your information has changed on your emergency card, please notify the office immediately to update.

Should a teacher have a concern about student behavior or safety, those concerns will be discussed with the parent and student prior to the trip. Under special circumstances, the parent may be requested to accompany the student to ensure that standards of behavior and safety are met.

Parents attending field trips must meet volunteer requirements: completed application, TB clearance, background check and wear a visitor sticker. (Please see the Parent Volunteer section of this handbook.) Parents attending field trips are requested to leave other siblings at home or in school to ensure they provide uninterrupted attention to their supervisory responsibilities.

Lost & Found

Our Lost and Found is located near the back of our school cafeteria. Students should check the Lost and Found regularly to retrieve lost items. To prevent clothing from being lost or claimed by someone else, we encourage marking sweaters, coats, lunch boxes, water bottles, and backpacks with your student's first and last name. Several times during the year lost and found items are given to charity. Please encourage children to be responsible for their property.

Health Room

Illness

- Students with fever or vomiting must stay home until symptom-free for 24 hours without medication.

Medication

Medication can be given to a student during the school day only if it is absolutely necessary to maintain that student in school. The school nurse, health assistant, or other designated school personnel will administer the medication to a student provided that the school office has received the following:

- A district medication consent form signed by the doctor (physician) for prescription and the parent/guardian for nonprescription medication.
- Medication brought to the office by the parent, guardian, or designated adult in the original "over-the-counter" or pharmacy prescription container.

In addition, please note:

- Refills of medication are the responsibility of the parent/guardian.
- All medications shall be held in the school office in a secure location in the original container labeled with the student's name. This includes chapstick and cough drops.

- Parents/guardians are responsible to pick up any remaining medication at the end of the school year or the left over medication will be discarded.

Parents/guardians need to be in communication with the office when their child is on daily medication or at any time they are concerned, even if the medication is not given during school hours. Please inform the school if your child is taking medication that may affect his/her behavior.

Campus Visitors

Visitors & Observations

- All visitors must check in at the front office and wear a visitor sticker.
- Classroom observations are rare, limited to 30 minutes, and must be approved 48 hours in advance by the principal and teacher.

Phone Use & Mobile Communication Devices Policy

Students in grades TK-5 may not use cell phones, smartphones, smart watches or other mobile communication devices while on campus. Devices must be turned off and placed out of sight during the school day. Students who need to call parents may use phones located in the administrative office. [CLICK HERE](#) for the full extent of the board policy (Board Policy 5131.8).

- Students may not use personal devices (phones, smartwatches, etc.) during the school day.
- Devices must remain off and out of sight.
- We ask that families do not send messages to children during school hours. If a student is feeling ill or needs to speak with a family member, they will be directed to the health office/main office for support. When students know that their family will not send messages during school hours, it makes it easier for them to follow school rules and keep phones and devices off and in their backpacks.
- Office phones are available for emergencies only. We ask that all necessary arrangements be made before school in regard to where he/she is to go after school, who will pick him/her up, if he/she is to ride the bus, etc. Students will not be allowed to use the phone to make after-school plans with another student.
- Messages of a non-emergency nature will not be relayed to students during the school day. In order to keep interruptions to a minimum, phone messages will be communicated only to a teacher via email, and may not be delivered to a student the same day. We realize emergencies arise and exceptions may be made in unique circumstances.

Tobacco-Free Campus

As of July 1, 1995, the use of any tobacco product on district property at any time is prohibited. This prohibition applies to all employees, students, parents, and visitors while they are on the school campus for any activity or meeting at any time of the day.

Nutrition & Cafeteria

Breakfast & Lunch Program

Russell Ranch Elementary offers FREE school meals for all students! With one in six children in the United States facing hunger issues, this program will remove an important barrier to learning. Breakfast and lunch will continue to be served, free of charge to all students, for the 2025-2026 school year thanks to funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Students must be enrolled in Folsom Cordova Unified School District schools, but there is no need to fill out an application.

- Breakfast is served in the multi from 7:45am-8:00 am.
- Lunch is served based on each grade level's scheduled lunch and recess break.

Breakfast and lunch menus are available on the front page of the Russell Ranch website. Click on the [school menus icon](#) at the bottom of the website landing page to link to the district menus for each month.

Snack & Cafeteria Guidelines

Nutritional snack time is provided during the morning recess for students. Students shall eat the snack in the designated area on the playground and must put trash in the proper receptacle. Please provide a nutritional snack that students can eat independently.

- Healthy snacks examples include fruit, veggies, cheese, pretzels
- No candy or soda are allowed for snack, and only individual serving size snacks should be sent with students

Lunch behavior expectations include sitting at assigned tables, using quiet voices, no food sharing, and cleaning up. Please do not send items for students to share as it is not permitted in the elementary setting.

Academics

Homework Policy

The Governing Board recognizes that homework contributes toward building responsibility, self-discipline, and life-long learning habits, and that time spent on homework directly influences students' ability to meet the District's academic standards. The Board expects students, parents/guardians, and staff to view homework as a routine and important part of students' daily lives. (Board Policy 6154)

Homework is defined as assignments that are an extension of subject matter that has been carefully explained prior to being sent home. Unfinished classroom work or work due as a result of absence, although completed outside of the school day, is not considered part of the definition.

Purpose of Homework

Homework is assigned for the purpose of strengthening academic skills, reinforcing concepts taught by the teacher, developing student responsibility and accountability, and promoting parent awareness.

Amount of Homework

The amount of homework shall be in direct relationship to the maturational and achievement levels of students in each class. It is anticipated that students will receive between 30 and 60 minutes per night including 20 minutes of reading on Monday through Thursday. There may be an occasion where a special or long term project would be assigned that would require completion on a weekend or vacation.

Teacher Responsibility

Teachers are responsible for assigning homework and for providing the necessary explanation and directions for students to complete the work with reasonable success. Teachers at all grade levels will stress the quality of homework and outline the expectation that homework is to be turned in on time. Homework assignments will be routinely monitored and assessed. The teacher will communicate the results to students and parents. Teachers may use homework assignments to help determine a student's grade.

Each teacher will discuss the homework policy in their classroom with the students. Parents/guardians will receive information from the teacher regarding homework at "Back to School Night."

Student Responsibility

Students will be responsible to note the assignments, follow the directions, and return completed homework to the teacher on the assigned day.

Students, when developmentally appropriate, are encouraged to write all homework assignments in a school agenda. Students should share their agenda and homework assignments with their parents/guardians directly.

It is the student's responsibility to be able to describe and understand the purpose of each homework assignment and be able to explain that assignment to the parents/guardians.

Parent/Guardian Responsibility

Parental/guardian involvement with the actual homework assignments should be kept to a minimum; however, parents/guardians are required to review and monitor homework activity and to maintain an active interest in the academic progress of their child.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to support and facilitate the Homework Policy by providing a quiet, well-lit environment for study and to encourage the development of regular and consistent patterns of study habits.

Parents/guardians may provide instructional help to students when necessary. Instructional help is assistance that enables students to do their own work on the homework assignments.

Parents/guardians are responsible for checking that their child has completed their homework each night to the best of his or her ability. Parents/guardians are responsible for signing the school agenda as requested by the teacher only after assignments have been reviewed and checked for completeness.

It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to monitor homework activities, including the time spent, and bring any issues of concern or suggestions directly to the teacher.

Please note: Once a student has been absent for two or more days, homework can be requested by emailing or leaving a voicemail message to the teacher after the 2nd day. Teachers will leave the homework in the school office for pick-up.

Academic Integrity

At Russell Ranch, we believe in the importance of honesty and doing your own best work. Academic integrity means taking pride in your learning, completing assignments on your own (unless help is part of the directions), and always giving credit when using someone else's ideas or words. Students are taught that learning is a process and mistakes are part of growing. Cheating, copying, or turning in work that isn't your own prevents real learning and is not allowed. We encourage students to ask for help, try their best, and take responsibility for their work with honesty and pride.

When students make a mistake and copy or cheat, the disciplinary follow up is based on each unique situation. Our approach with all student behavior is restorative and based on learning and growth.

Student Progress & Communication

Student progress is communicated regularly through report cards, parent-teacher conferences, and ongoing classroom updates. Teachers may also use digital tools, folders, or planners to share weekly or monthly academic progress. Families are

encouraged to reach out with questions or concerns and work collaboratively with teachers to support each child's learning.

Campus Climate & Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports

PBIS & HERD Expectations

Russell Ranch uses a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework to create a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment for all students. Through PBIS, we teach, model, and reinforce clear behavioral expectations across all school settings. At the heart of our schoolwide expectations is our HERD motto: Hardworking, Engaged, Respectful, and Doing the Right Thing. These shared values guide student behavior, build a positive school culture, and help all Mustangs grow socially, emotionally, and academically.

Awards & Recognition

Students have many ways of receiving acknowledgement for positive behaviors, academic achievement, and growth at Russell Ranch Elementary School. These are aligned to our HERD values and individual growth, not perfection.

- Silver Horseshoes
 - Students have the opportunity to earn Silver Horseshoe tickets from any staff member. This can be done by demonstrating HERD behaviors anywhere on campus. All school personnel may issue Silver Horseshoes. Drawings are done daily for the Silver Horseshoe winners of the day!
- SEL Spotlight Awards
 - Students may be nominated by their teachers, support staff, or family for a Russell Ranch SEL Spotlight Award. Students are nominated for behaviors aligned to our monthly SEL themes (e.g. growth mindset or goal setting) and are celebrated in our weekly newsletter and/or via our morning announcements.
- Positive Principal Referrals
 - Students may also be nominated by their teachers or support staff for a Positive Principal Referral. If a student receives a Positive Referral, the principal calls home to congratulate them and tell them what they were selected for and why. They also receive a Positive Referral certificate.
- HERD Celebrations
 - Grade level teams will celebrate positive HERD behaviors twice annually. These award ceremonies are completed as a grade level and students are recognized with a certificate of HERD achievement.

Birthday Acknowledgments

At Russell Ranch, we love to celebrate our Mustangs on their special day! Each student is recognized on their birthday (or half-birthday for summer birthdays) with a birthday shout-out on the morning announcements, a birthday pencil, and a card from the front office. In the classroom, teachers may celebrate students with a fun, student-selected birthday spirit day, a small gift from the teacher, or other special acknowledgments that make the birthday student feel seen and celebrated.

To promote student safety and inclusivity, families are no longer permitted to bring food items to celebrate birthdays. In the past, we've seen an increase in large, sugary treats, and with the growing number of food allergies and dietary limitations, this change helps ensure all students can participate in a safe and healthy way.

Room parents may choose to organize a monthly classroom birthday celebration for all students with birthdays in that month. These celebrations are planned in coordination with the teacher and may include simple, non-food treats or activities.

If a student wishes to bring a small item to share with classmates on their birthday, we permit small, non-food options such as colorful pencils, erasers, stickers, or bookmarks.

These birthday moments are just one of many ways we celebrate and uplift our students. Through daily recognitions like Silver Horseshoes, SEL Spotlight Awards, Positive Principal Referrals, and HERD Celebrations, every student has opportunities to be acknowledged for their effort, growth, and positive contributions to our school community.

Behavior & Discipline

Russell Ranch Elementary is committed to fostering a positive, respectful, and safe environment for all students. We follow the guidelines set forth by the State of California and Folsom Cordova Unified School District to ensure student safety and support positive behavior through proactive teaching, consistent expectations, and meaningful consequences.

Behavior expectations are taught, modeled, practiced, and reinforced across all areas of the campus. Students will:

- Help create an environment where everyone can learn.
- Treat themselves, others, and property with care and kindness.
- Avoid disrupting the learning of others or the teaching environment.

When behavior expectations are not met, students are re-taught and redirected. Ongoing or serious behavior concerns may result in consequences.

Prohibited Items

Safety is a top priority. Any student who brings a dangerous item to school may be suspended for up to five days. Prohibited items include, but are not limited to:

- Weapons or weapon replicas
- Pocket knives
- Darts or bullets
- Fireworks or explosives (including caps and unspent shells)

Please help us keep our school safe by ensuring these items are kept at home and by reinforcing this expectation with your child.

Bullying & Safety

Russell Ranch is a safe and caring place for all students. We define bullying as unfair and one-sided behavior that happens when someone repeatedly hurts, frightens, threatens, or excludes another person on purpose. We do not tolerate bullying in any form, and respond in alignment with our progressive discipline when bullying occurs. All students are expected to treat one another with kindness and respect.

Discipline Procedures

Behavior is part of the instructional program. Teachers establish and teach classroom expectations and maintain a safe, productive learning environment through:

- Clearly posted rules
- Ongoing instruction, practice, and monitoring
- Prompt redirection and positive feedback
- Collaboration with families

Teachers:

- Handle most behavior concerns using classroom strategies.
- Communicate with families as needed via phone, email, or student referral forms.
- Refer students to the office for ongoing or serious behaviors.

Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs)

A student may receive an Office Discipline Referral when a rule is broken or behavior is repeatedly disruptive.

When a referral is issued:

- A copy is sent home for parent review.
- Parents should discuss the referral with their child.
- Parents sign and return the referral the next day.
- After three referrals, the teacher may consult with the principal.

Principal's Role in Discipline

The principal supports staff and students by:

- Addressing serious or repeated behavior incidents
- Collaborating with families and teachers
- Enforcing consequences in accordance with district policy
 - Suspension is reserved for severe or ongoing violations.

Discipline Consequences

Consequences may include:

- Time out in the office or buddy classroom
- Restorative conversation with staff
- Parent communication (email or phone)
- Student-parent-teacher conference
- Behavior contract
- Suspension (per district policy)

- Other logical consequences appropriate to the situation

Please note: For major infractions, suspension may occur without prior warning. Students on intra- or inter-district agreements may have their transfer status affected by disciplinary issues. Citizenship grades are also impacted by referrals.

District Policy: Student Conduct (BP 5131)

The FCUSD Board of Education:

- Establishes conduct and discipline policies to support student success and safety.
- Provides procedures to inform families of behavior expectations annually.
- Supports teachers in enforcing classroom and schoolwide rules.

Teachers are responsible for:

- Maintaining safe, respectful learning environments
- Collaborating with staff and families
- Helping students understand the value of respectful behavior and personal accountability

Student Conduct & Responsibilities

Student Expectations

The Folsom Cordova Unified School District (FCUSD) Board believes students must understand that they are responsible for their choices and actions. Appropriate behavior supports the learning environment and benefits both the student and the wider school community.

Students are encouraged to express their individuality, as long as this expression:

- Respects the rights of others
- Does not disrupt the instructional program

Appropriate behavior includes:

- Diligence in academic efforts
- Clean and neat personal habits
- Careful use of school property
- Respect for teachers, staff, volunteers, and peers
- Punctuality and regular attendance
- Staying on campus per school rules
- Refraining from profane, vulgar, or abusive language

Students receive regular instruction on school rules and expected conduct. Violations may result in disciplinary action including:

- Restorative practices
- Suspension
- Expulsion
- Transfer to alternative programs

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Parents/guardians are expected to (BP 5131):

- Comply with laws regarding the behavior and education of their children
- Cooperate with school staff to address behavior concerns

Under California Education Code 48904, parents/guardians are financially liable for:

- Willful misconduct by their child resulting in injury to another student, employee, or volunteer
- Damage to, or theft of, school property or property belonging to a school employee

Grounds for Suspension or Expulsion

Grounds for Suspension or Expulsion (AR 5144.1; EC 48900–48915)

A student, including one with disabilities, may be suspended or expelled for reasons outlined in the California Education Code. These acts must be related to school activity or attendance, and may occur:

- On school grounds
- Going to or coming from school
- During lunch (on or off campus)
- At, or while going to/from, a school-sponsored activity

Student Conduct Code

The District maintains a Student Conduct Code listing specific behaviors and possible consequences. This code is reviewed annually and distributed to students and families at the start of each school year.

Examples of Suspendable or Expellable Offenses

(As defined in Education Code Sections 48900–48915)

Students may be suspended or expelled for the following acts:

- Physical Harm or Threat
- Causing or threatening physical injury
- Aiding or abetting physical violence (EC 48900(a), (t))
- Weapons and Dangerous Objects
- Possession, sale, or furnishing of a firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object without written permission (EC 48900(b))
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Possession, use, sale, or being under the influence of controlled substances, alcohol, or intoxicants (EC 48900(c))
- Offering or selling look-alike substances (EC 48900(d))
- Possession or sale of prescription drug Soma (EC 48900(p))
- Possession of drug paraphernalia (EC 48900(j))
- Theft and Property Damage
- Robbery or extortion (EC 48900(e))
- Damaging or attempting to damage school/private property (EC 48900(f))
- Theft or attempted theft (EC 48900(g))
- Receiving stolen property (EC 48900(l))
- Tobacco and Controlled Substances
- Possession or use of tobacco/nicotine products (EC 48900(h))
- Obscene or Inappropriate Behavior
- Obscene acts, habitual profanity/vulgarity (EC 48900(i))
- Imitation Firearms
- Possession of an imitation firearm (EC 48900(m))
- Sexual Misconduct
- Sexual assault or battery (EC 48900(n))
- Harassment or Intimidation
- Harassing or intimidating a witness in a school investigation (EC 48900(o))

- Hazing
- Engaging in initiation activities causing harm or disgrace (EC 48900(q))
- Bullying (Including Cyberbullying)
- Severe or repeated physical, verbal, or digital harassment (EC 48900(r))
- Includes sexual harassment, hate violence, and threats/intimidation (EC 48900.2, 48900.3, 48900.4)
- Includes cyber sexual bullying, such as sending/sharing sexually explicit images of a minor electronically

Definitions:

- **Electronic act:** Includes texts, posts, images, or videos shared digitally (phones, computers, social media, etc.)
- **Reasonable student:** A student who exercises average judgment for their age and developmental ability
- **Terrorist Threats:** Written or oral threats of death, serious injury, or major property damage (\$1,000+) (EC 48900.7)

Important Notes

- Disciplinary action is not limited to the school campus if the behavior affects school safety.
- Certain violations require mandatory police reporting.
- Some suspension/expulsion provisions do not apply to grades K-3 unless specified.

Parent Involvement

School Site Council (SSC)

The Russell Ranch School Site Council (SSC) oversees the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) which determines how our school allocates funds to enhance school performance. The 2025-2026 budget will be determined by enrollment in October. State guidelines and procedures must be followed to receive these funds. The council is composed of an equal number of parents and staff members who are elected during the first month of school. The council will evaluate school data and progress to address the needs for improvement in instruction and school culture.

- The SSC is the vehicle for Site Based Decision Making, a district plan allowing schools more freedom in planning their own program
- Parents are elected for a one-year term. Those interested in running for the council are encouraged to contact the school office for details at 916-294-2430
- Parents may contact members of the council with comments, suggestions or concerns
- Meetings are held 4-5 times per year and are open to the public. The first meeting is August 26th.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

Russell Ranch has an active and supportive Parent Teacher Association. General PTA meetings are held at least four times per year in the months of August, November, January and April. Dates and times of meetings are published on the website and listed on the marquee. Special activities are planned throughout the year. The event chairperson will call upon parents to assist with these activities.

We encourage you to become an active member of our PTA.

Some of the recent items purchased by PTA have included recess equipment, assemblies for students, books for our library, and classroom enrichment supplies.

To learn more, visit the PTA section of our [website](#).

2025-2026 Officers:

- President: Leslie Huerta
- VP, Communications: Tiara Dominguez
- Secretary: OPEN
- Treasurer: Erin Folk
- Auditor: OPEN
- Parliamentarian: Kim Harter

Family Volunteers

The principal and teachers encourage parent, grandparent, and community participation in the educational programs of the school. Those interested in volunteering their time should contact the school office. The volunteer will complete the appropriate volunteer application. They will be notified as to how to obtain a TB test and fingerprints, (Administrative Regulation 4315.2). Once cleared through the school district, volunteers will be scheduled according to the needs of teachers. Typically a person will work in the classroom on a weekly basis for a certain period of time. All volunteers are required to sign in at the office via our Raptor system and wear a visitor sticker/badge. For more information on how to start the volunteer process please visit the [FCUSD Volunteer website](#).

Adults wishing to participate with their child's class on a field trip may do so if volunteer requirements have been met, and if selected to be a chaperone by the classroom teacher. Please refer to the Field Trip section of this handbook. Younger siblings are not permitted to attend with their parents. The parent must be able to give full attention to the children in the class they are supervising; that is difficult if there is a younger child present. We also cannot allow other school age students to attend a sibling's field trip. We appreciate your understanding of this policy.

Parents' Right to Know Regarding Teacher Qualifications

Your child is attending a school receiving Title I federal funds through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). At the beginning of each school year, local educational agencies receiving Title I funds are required to notify parents whose student(s) attend a Title I school that they may request, and the agency will provide the parents on request (and in a timely manner), information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers, including at a minimum:

Whether the student's teacher:

- Has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction
- Is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
- Is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher
- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

If you would like this information, please contact Becky Marquez at 916.294.2430.

Nondiscrimination/Sexual Harassment/Complaint Process Statement

Nondiscrimination/Sexual Harassment/Complaint Process

The Governing Board is committed to maintaining a safe school environment that is free from harassment and discrimination. The Board prohibits sexual harassment of students at school-sponsored or school-related activities. The Board also prohibits retaliatory behavior or action against any person who reports, files a complaint or testifies about, or otherwise supports a complainant in alleging sexual harassment. (BP 5145.7)

The Folsom Cordova Unified School District prohibits discrimination, intimidation, harassment (including sexual harassment) or bullying based on a person's actual or perceived ancestry, color, disability, rRRE or ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity or gender expression, immigration status, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics. For concerns/questions or complaints, contact the Title IX Coordinator(s), Equity Compliance Officer(s) and Section 504 Coordinator(s):

Shannon Diaz, Director of Compliance, Title IX Coordinator & Equity Compliance Officer
sdiaz@fcusd.org
916-294-9000 ext 104415

Jim Huber Ed. D., Assistant Superintendent – Section 504 Coordinator
jhuber@fcusd.org
916-294-9000Ext 104625

Folsom Cordova Unified School District
1965 Birkmont Drive
Rancho Cordova, CA 95742

A complaint concerning unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying may be filed only by a person who alleges that he/she personally suffered unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying or by a person who believes that an individual or any specific class of individuals has been subjected to it. The complaint shall be initiated no later than six months from the date when the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying occurred, or six months from the date when the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying. However, upon written request by the complainant, the Superintendent or designee may extend the filing period for up to 90 days. (5 CCR 4630)

Non-discrimination (Title IX)

It is the policy of the Folsom Cordova USD not to discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs, activities, or employment policies as required by Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments.

Inquiries should be directed to the Deputy Superintendent, Folsom Cordova USD Title IX Compliance Officer, 125 East Bidwell Street, Folsom, CA 95630; Telephone: 355-1100, or to the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, Department of Education, Washington, DC.

Uniform Complaint Procedure

The Board of Education recognizes that parents, guardians, students, employees, advisory committee members, or other members of the community may have questions, seek information, desire to make requests, and express complaints regarding district policies and procedures of state and federal programs. A complaint in this sense is a request for action to resolve a conflict. The complainant is the person affected or represents the person affected.

A parent complaint about a student should first be discussed with the teacher and then with the principal. If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved, the next step is to file an official complaint with the District Compliance Officer through the Uniform Complaint Procedure. Direct the complaint to 1965 Birkmont Drive, Rancho Cordova CA 95742.

A discrimination complaint must be written and filed within six months of the occurrence or when first acknowledged. District staff will resolve the complaint through mediation or will investigate and provide a written report to the complainant. If resolution is not reached at the staff level, the matter may be taken to the District Board of Education.

The time period for the district staff and/or Board response may not exceed 60 days. If the written report still does not resolve the complaint, the complainant may appeal to the California Department of Education within 15 days of the district report's issuance. If the Department of Education is unable to resolve the complaint, complainants may seek local civil law remedies.

Uniform Complaint Procedures have been established (Board Policy 1312.3) and may be obtained from the Personnel Office.

Programs and services covered by Uniform Complaint procedures include Adult Education, general and basic education, preschool, state and federal programs, Special Education, ROP, nondiscrimination, gender equity requirements, and civil rights guarantees.

This notice is provided annually to parents and students, school and district advisory committee members, all district employees and other interested parties. This notice has

been provided in English and is also available in Spanish, Russian and Armenian on our district website. www.fcusd.org