ORTEGA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HANDBOOK

A community full of lifelong learners!

Jason F. Koenigsberg, Principal

2026 - 2027

ORTEGA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1283 Terra Nova Blvd.

Pacifica, CA 94044

650.738.6670 - Telephone

Pacifica School District

Mission Statement

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

We believe that:

- ❖ Everyone has responsibility for his or her actions.
- ❖ Trust and integrity are essential for successful relationships.
- ❖ Every person has inherent value.
- ❖ One person's actions can have an effect in the life of another.
- ❖ Learning is essential for personal growth.
- ❖ Working together we can build a strong community

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ELIZABETH BREDALL
KAI DOGGETT
BRIDGET HARDT
LAVERNE VILLALOBOS

ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Carisa J. Bowman	Superintendent
Chuck Neidhoefer	Associate Superintendent of Business/CBO
Thomas Stafford	Interim Director of Special Education/Student Services
Katherine Prescenzi	Director of Educational Support Services
Rachel Romo	Director of Human Resources/Communications

Ortega School Mission Statement

Our mission at Ortega Elementary School is to prepare all of our students to lead meaningful lives as knowledgeable, creative, and compassionate participants in our community and beyond. We endeavor to support students with a foundation of incredibly dedicated teachers, staff, and volunteer community, with support from families and caregivers, as we aim to nurture a safe, inclusive learning environment where every child is empowered to grow academically, socially, and emotionally. We strive to offer a well-rounded and enhanced curriculum that fosters and supports the academic, social, and emotional development whether in the classroom or at home.

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PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the 2026 - 2027 school year! At Ortega we believe in developing and maintaining a strong partnership between school and community. This partnership is what drives instruction for our students and helps to maintain the standard of education our students deserve. At Ortega, we are dedicated to fostering a communication-based environment that is supportive and nurturing for our students, families, and staff. We believe in equitable outcomes for all students, and strive to help them become independent, confident learners with the skills necessary to meet the challenges in their future. To address the needs of our students, Ortega offers a well-rounded, differentiated curriculum that supports the academic, social, and emotional development of all students.

I can't wait to see each and every Ortega family back at school! Our Otters will experience the traditions and culture of Ortega and prepare themselves for the future during this exciting school year. I look forward to a productive and incredible school year for all our Otters!

Sincerely,

Jason F. Koenigsberg
Principal
jkoenigsberg@pacificasd.org

ORTEGA BELL SCHEDULE, 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR

FIRST BELL RINGS AT 8:28 TO ALERT STUDENTS LINE UP

TK/Kindergarten 8/12-10/9

M/T/W/Th/F	8:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Morning Break	10:00 a.m. – 10:20 a.m.
Lunch/Recess	11:15 a.m. – 11:35 p.m.

TK/Kindergarten 10/13-6/3

Regular Schedule (M/T/W/Th/F)	8:30 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.
Morning Break	10:00 a.m. – 10:20 a.m.
Lunch & Recess	11:15 a.m. – 11:35 a.m.

Grade 1

Regular Schedule (M/T/Th/F)	8:30 a.m. – 2:35 p.m.
Morning Break	10:20 a.m. – 10:40 a.m.
Lunch & Recess	11:40 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.
Grade 1 PE (M/T/Th/F)	1:20 p.m. – 1:40 p.m.
Every Wednesday	***8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.***

Grade 2

Regular Schedule (M/T/Th/F)	8:30 a.m. – 2:35 p.m.
Morning Break	10:20 a.m. – 10:40 a.m.
Lunch & Recess	11:40 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.
Every Wednesday	***8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.***

Grade 3

Regular Schedule (M/T/Th/F)	8:30 a.m. – 2:35 p.m.
Morning Break	10:20 a.m. – 10:40 a.m.
Lunch & Recess	11:40 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.
Every Wednesday	***8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.***

Grades 4 and 5

Regular schedule (M/T/Th/F)	8:30 a.m. – 2:55 p.m.
Morning Break	10:40 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Lunch & Recess	12:25 p.m. – 1:05 p.m.
Every Wednesday	***8:30 a.m. – 1:40 p.m.***

Ortega Elementary School Staff

Faculty:

TK: Sharon Rios
Chelsea McDow

Kinder: Robin Foster
Michelle Arenas

First: Gloria Fare
Meredith Stratton

Second: Debbie Coberly
Cortney Liu
Queenie Ngan

Third: Noreen Abulencia
Sibyl Felts
Queenie Ngan

Fourth: Gina Arguello
Jason Miranda

Fifth: Franklin Hagarty
Rachel Rehmtulla

Special Education:
Preschool- TK: Kari Trainor,
K - 2: Christina Bailey,
3rd - 5th: Kristy Kious

Response to Intervention (RTI)
Teacher: Tiffany Kwok
Resource Specialist Program
Teacher: Windy Smith
Speech: Alexis Crawford
Occupational Therapist: Laura Labrador
Psychologist: Amanda Plante
Counselor: Vada Courtney
Music Teacher: TBD
Art Teacher: Korin Andreatta
Garden Lead: HEAL Project
Legarza PBIS: TBD

SUPPORT STAFF:

Librarian: Shauna Koperski
Clerical: Tiffany Hanna, Jenny Gadwah, Vicki Broadway, Christina Stewart
Instructional: Jenny Johnson, Jeanette Hoffman, Janet Jackson, Samantha Lee, Rose McElearney, Elizabeth Moore, Jennifer Offenbach, Mary Pilster, Silvia Rocha
Custodial: Santos Vicente Ramirez, Eric Jones
Nutritional: Julie Gallagher, Rosaline Romero

ATTENDANCE

If your child is absent from school, please telephone the school office (650-738-6670) before 10:00 a.m. The school has an answering machine if you wish to leave a message before or after school hours. **Schools no longer receive funding for excused absences. Funding will be based on the actual days of attendance. It is vital that students be in school except when truly ill – every absence costs your child's school instructional dollars.**

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

Independent Study

If you must plan a trip or go out of town, please remember that the school cannot receive credit for your child's attendance unless the absence meets the criteria for **INDEPENDENT STUDY**: short term (absence of 1 - 10 days). It is important that your child be placed on Independent Study, if eligible. **Independent study must be requested and approved two weeks before the first day of your child's absence.** It is a simple process and will help keep your child up with his class work. The District will also receive full attendance credit. Your child's teacher or the office would be happy to help you place your child on Independent Study. The Independent Study contract must be signed before the student is out of school.

If the assigned school work is incomplete or not turned in when the student returns, the absences will not qualify for Independent Study and will be marked as unexcused.

SARB (SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND REVIEW BOARD)

Excessive absences or tardies from school not resolved between administration and the family will be reported to the School Attendance and Review Board. SARB is a cooperative effort between the school district and the community aimed at keeping students in school.

Leaving School Grounds

We have a "closed campus" which means students may not leave school during school hours without a parent signing the student out at the school office. Please remember to bring a photo ID when signing your child out.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Bicycles, Scooters & Skateboards

Students who ride a bicycle or scooter to school must wear a helmet. A bike and skateboard rack is available to lock bikes, scooters and skateboards in front of the library. Riding bicycles, skateboards and scooters on campus from 8AM - 3PM is prohibited.

Student safety remains a top priority, and we are seeing an increase in the number of students using E-Bikes as transportation to and from school. We would like to partner with families to reinforce safe riding practices, review expectations, and help ensure all students arrive safely each day.

We would like to clarify the difference between an E-Bike and an E-Moto.

- **Legal E-Bikes**
  - Max Power 750 watts
  - Max Speed 20 mph for Class 1 & Class 2 (currently no age limit)
  - Max Speed 28 mph for Class 3 **(rider must be 16 years old)**
- **E-Motos (Electric Motorcycles)**
  - Throttle-activated electric two-wheelers **without** working pedals
  - Throttle-activated electric two-wheelers **with** working pedals that have motors larger than 750 watts, or if the motors work above 20 mph

  *Companies are marketing these devices to teens and pre-teens, and are misleading the public into believing they are legal E-Bikes and appropriate for children. It is not legal for **anyone** without a driver's license and DMV plates to operate E-Motos on public streets, sidewalks, or school property.*

It is not legal for anyone under 16 to operate an E-Scooter (learner's permit or driver's license required, helmet required under 18).

Prioritize safety when your student is riding an E-Bike to school. Remember:

- E-Bikes are heavier and faster than conventional bikes, and are harder to control and stop, especially for inexperienced riders. It is important to practice before riding on streets or trails.
- E-Bike riders (and all bicyclists) must understand and follow the same rules as vehicles, including stop signs, lane use, and signaling. Speeding and reckless riding are prohibited.
- Wearing a properly fitted helmet is important and required for those under 18, including passengers.
- Riding double on e-bikes is not safe and is prohibited unless the bike is specifically designed with a second seat with footpegs. Standard e-bikes are built for a single rider, even if they have an elongated seat.
- Using headphones or earbuds when riding is dangerous; riders need to be able to hear what is going on around them.
- All electric bicycles must now be equipped with a red reflector or a red light (solid or flashing) that is visible from about 500 feet at all times, not just at night.
- Per AB1096, all eclectic bicycles must have a manufacturer produced permanent classification sticker visible.

E-Bike Resources

- What Parents Should Know (English), Lo que los padres deben saber (Spanish)

- Electric Wheels, Real Responsibilities (English & Spanish)
- E-Bike Handbook (English, Spanish, Chinese)
- Webinar: "E-Bike for The Holidays - How to Buy Smart and Ride Legal"

Emergency Forms

Every student must have an emergency form on file in the office. These forms should be updated every school year. Families will be given an emergency form at the beginning of the school year. Each family should fill it out and return it to the homeroom teacher or office. If, throughout the school year the address or telephone number is changed, please see that any changes are sent to the school office. In case of an emergency, it is very important that the office have on file current telephone numbers for the home, parents' work and a friend or neighbor who would be willing to care for students whose parents cannot be reached. **Students cannot be released to anyone whose name is not on their emergency form. Please be sure that several local emergency contacts are listed in the appropriate section.**

Disaster Preparedness and Drills

A fire and/or disaster drill is held monthly. These drills follow the Big Five Safety Protocol (see below) and are carried out for the safety of the students in case of emergency. Staff has been trained in emergency procedures and an extensive school disaster plan has been designed and implemented. Each classroom has an emergency kit purchased by the district.

Action Response Definitions and Protocols

Ortega School follows the **Big Five Safety Protocol**

Shelter in Place: For environmental hazards: Go inside immediately. Close doors, windows, and vents.

Drop, Cover and Hold On: For earthquakes and explosions: Protect from falling debris. Drop to the floor. Take cover and hold on.

Secure Campus: For potential threats of violence nearby: Go inside the nearest building. Close and lock all doors. Remain inside until the threat has passed.

Lockdown/Barricade: For immediate threats of violence on premises: Go inside. Lock and barricade all doors. Cover windows and turn off lights. Remain quiet and alert

Evacuation: When conditions outside are safer than inside: Exit the building, and move to a safe location.

Positive Behavior Interventions & Support (PBIS)

PBIS is a proactive approach to building a sense of community at our school. Together the staff created behavior expectations for all students. The expectations can be seen posted throughout the school. Assemblies are also held to review expectations. Our goal is to support students making good choices.

PAWS – Students are expected to

- model **P**ositive behavior
- **A**ct responsibly
- **W**ork respectfully
- act **S**afely.

Like No Otter: Practicing Our PAWS

	Positive Behavior	Act Responsibly	Work / Play Respectfully	Safety First
Hallways	Help others if you can Be quiet when others are learning	Stay in line Keep your hands and body to yourself	Purposefully walk to your destination Stay with your class	Walk on the right side of the hallway (treat it like a road) Walk quietly
Cafeteria	Use a quiet voice Eat your own food Use good manners	Dispose of trash accordingly Keep food on your plate Move about with permission only	Sit in designated areas Observe "nut-free" spaces at the table Sit at the table with feet on the floor	Clean your spills, or let an adult know if you need help Walk through the hallway out to the play yard Keep your hands to yourself
On the Yard	Share and include others in the game Use kind words Practice good sportsmanship	Return equipment to ball cart after using it Be aware of others Eat your snack in designated areas and dispose of trash accordingly	Park your bike as soon as you enter campus Play on the yard in the morning Follow game rules	Step away from the game if you need a break Keep your hands to yourself Find an adult or Peacemaker if there is a conflict
Restrooms	Walk to your destination Use a quiet voice	Save socializing for the yard Use designated restroom Dispose of hygiene items properly	Flush, wash, return to class Keep the area clean Give others privacy	Report safety or plumbing issues to the office Keep your feet on the ground

Uniform Complaint Procedures and Sexual Harassment Notification

Ortega School follows district guidelines for Sexual Harassment BP 5145.7 and AR 1312.3 Uniform Complaint Procedures. For more complete information on Education Code requirements related to student behavior as well as Uniform Complaint Procedures please refer to the District Handbook/Annual Parent Notification available online and at the District Office.

DRESS CODE

Students shall dress appropriately for school. Clothing and footwear should allow students to safely participate in a variety of school activities.

The following guidelines shall apply to all regular school activities:

1. Clothing, jewelry, and personal items shall be free of writing, pictures, or any other insignia which is vulgar, lewd, obscene, profane, or sexually suggestive or which promotes the use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or other illegal activity.
2. Appropriate shoes that are considered safe for the given school activity must be worn at all times.
3. Hats, caps, and hoods may be worn indoors. Student's eyes and ears must be visible and unobstructed.

The dress code shall be modified as appropriate to accommodate a student's religious or cultural observance, health condition, or other circumstance deemed necessary by the principal or designee. In addition, the principal or designee may impose dress requirements to accommodate the needs of special school activities, physical education classes, athletic activities, and other extracurricular and cocurricular activities. We appreciate your assistance in helping children come to school dressed safely and appropriately for all school activities.

STUDENT SERVICES

Cellphones, Smart Watches, and other Electronic Devices.

Students shall not use smartphones or other mobile communication devices while at a school site or under the supervision and control of a district employee. Students who have cellphones and Apple or Smart Watches **should turn these devices off and/or silence them and store them in their backpack during school hours.** If a student needs to contact their family they can use the phone in the office. If adults need to contact their student they should call the office. Parents and students should make prior arrangements for rainy days, after-school activities, etc. If a child is caught with an electronic device by a staff member and they deem it to be a distraction, it will be turned into the main office and a parent or legal guardian must come to pick up the device.

Immunizations

For the most recent changes to immunization requirements, please visit the district website: www.pacificasd.org/District/1586-New-immunization-Requirements.html

Medical

School personnel cannot diagnose or treat illnesses or previous injuries. First aid can be administered at school. When a sick or injured student is brought to the office, the school secretary or a school assistant will administer first aid and notify parents for more serious problems.

Medication at School

If it is necessary to take medication during school hours, parents must provide medications, and a written notification of this must be on file in the office. District policy does not allow medications to be kept with the student. Provisions for storage of medication must be made with the school secretary. Medications must be accompanied by a doctor's note and should be in the original container. Prescriptions must have the student's name and the appropriate dosage on the label of the original container.

Office

Office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Messages for students will be delivered only at lunchtime or at the end of the school day, unless there is an emergency. Please limit messages for students to urgent or most necessary situations. Children are allowed to use the office phone for urgent calls.

Lost and Found

Personal articles or clothing found on the school grounds or in the building are kept in the hallway next to the office. Items not claimed by the end of each trimester are boxed and given to PARCA. Please label all materials and clothing your student brings to school

Parental Rights Notification

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

Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

Ortega is fortunate to have an active parent group. All parents are encouraged to participate and support this group's activities. Parent volunteers are needed to serve as classroom assistants, room parents, librarian aides, as well as other positions. A volunteer form is sent home at the beginning of the year so parents can indicate their interests and talents. Please take time to complete the form and return it to school. The PTO supports many school activities: Birthday Recognition, Read-A-Thon, assemblies, field trips, library, science, art, gardening and others.

There are monthly hybrid PTO meetings all community members are invited to attend. They are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 PM.

Police On School Campuses

School staff will cooperate with law enforcement officers as needed to maintain a safe and orderly environment. Police investigations are conducted independently from the school district and school officials cannot interfere in police investigations. School officials shall provide support and privacy for the student to the extent possible. The text of Board Policy 5145.11 can be viewed online through the District website.

By law, parents/guardians do not need to be informed or to give consent before the law enforcement officer interviews a student on school premises. PC 830.1 However, the school official will ensure that the student's parents are notified that the interview took place unless instructed otherwise by the police officer.

Rainy Day Procedure:

During inclement weather, students arriving at school for breakfast will be permitted into the cafeteria at 8:00 a.m. TK - 3rd graders will report to their classrooms at 8:15 AM. 4th & 5th graders will wait in the cafeteria for their teachers to pick them up at the 8:30 AM bell.

Student Bills

Students are charged with the responsibility of accounting for school materials. Students will be billed for all lost textbooks, library books, and classroom literature books and for all willful destruction of school property including chromebooks. Students must pay for lost or damaged books before a new book will be issued.

Visitors

According to state law, all visitors are required to check in at the school office and obtain a Visitor's Badge.

Viewing District Policies Online

The public can view the Pacifica School District Board Policies and Administrative Regulations on-line from the District web site. Visit the District website: http://www.PacificaSD.org. Choose “District Information” then “Board Policies and Administrative Regulations.” Follow the on-line directions.

Wellness Policy

All students have access to free breakfast and lunch this school year. The District’s Food Service Meal Policy and monthly menu is available online at www.pacificasd.org. Breakfast starts at 8:10. Students eat their breakfast on the yard or at the picnic tables outside of the library.

All foods available on each campus during the school day support the district adopted federal nutritional guidelines and objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity in accordance with Board Policy 5030 and the District Student Wellness Plan.

The Board believes that foods and beverages available to students at district schools should support the District health curriculum and promote optimal health, taking into consideration the needs of students with special dietary needs. Nutritional standards adopted by the district for all foods and beverages sold to students during school hours or within a half-hour before/after school meet or exceed state and federal nutritional standards. These foods include beverages provided through the district's food service program, student stores, vending machines, or other venues.

School staff shall encourage parents/guardians or other volunteers to support the district's nutrition education program by considering nutritional quality when selecting any snacks which they may donate for occasional class parties. A maximum of four class parties or celebrations per year shall be held after the lunch period whenever possible as a way to promote student health and maximize the use of instructional time.

In support of this policy, staff, students and parents are strongly encouraged to refrain from bringing snacks to share for birthdays or other celebrations unless it is for one of the four school sanctioned celebration days.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMMING

Class Size

Ortega School has class size reduction of 20 students to 1 classroom teacher and a paraprofessional. 24 students per class in grades K through 3. Grades 4 & 5 have a class size of 32 students. The Pacifica School District reserves the right to add students to any class, which may increase the total number of students in a given class.

Conferences & Report Cards

Parents are always welcome to come to school and discuss class work. If you would like a conference with a teacher, please call or email the teacher for an appointment. When visiting school, all adults must first sign in at the school office and the secretary will notify the teacher that the parent has arrived. In our school calendar we have scheduled parent-teacher conferences twice a year at the end of the first and second trimester to discuss student progress. **This year our conferences will**

be held during the weeks of November 17 - 21, 2025 and March 9 - 12, 2026. Report cards will be sent home with students in November, March & June.

Homework

Philosophy The staff at Ortega Elementary School believes that homework is an important extension of classroom learning. Homework assignments encourage responsibility by providing activities the child can successfully perform independently or with the family, outside the school setting. Our goal is to make homework an integral part of a balanced curriculum as well as foster communication between the parent, child, and teacher.

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

Purpose Homework should supplement, complement, extend and reinforce classroom teaching providing practice, preparation, extension, and enrichment.

Responsibility Homework is a **student** responsibility. Good study habits are learned and last a lifetime.

Time The amount of time needed to complete an average daily homework assignment will vary with each child.

Homework for Absent Students Homework will be provided when students are to be absent more than one day. If you want to request homework please call the office early in the day and let us know how long the student will be absent. Homework will be available for pick up from the office after 3:00 p.m. 4th - 5th grade students are also encouraged to check with classmates about class assignments when they are absent.

Promotion/Retention

The Pacifica School District has adopted a policy (BP 5123) for student promotion/acceleration and retention that states that students must demonstrate growth in learning and meet grade level standards of expected student achievement. These standards go hand in hand with high school graduation requirements and the exit exam established by the state. The text of Board Policy 5123 can be viewed online through the District website. A copy is also available at the District Office at 411 Ocean Blvd.

ORTEGA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CALENDAR

Early Out Days and **Holidays**

All Wednesdays are early out days

2026 - 2027

August

12 1st Day of School, *Early Out,*
13 - 14 *Early Out*
18 Back to School Night, *Early Out*

September

07 **Labor Day, No School**

October

12 **Indigenous Peoples' Day, No School**

November

11 **Veterans Day, No School**
16-20 Parent Conferences: *Early Out*
23-27 **Thanksgiving Recess**, **No School**

December

18 *Early Out*
21-31 **Winter Recess, No School**

January

01 **Winter Recess, No School**
04 **PD Day, no school for students**
05 School Resumes
18 **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, No School**

February

15-19 **President's Week, No School**

March

19 **Staff PD Day, No School**
23-26 Spring Conferences, *Early Out*

April

02 *Early Out*
05-09 **Spring Recess, No School**
12 *Early Out*

May

20 Open House, *Early Out*
22 *Early Out*
28 *Early Out*
31 **Memorial Day, No School**

June

01 *Early Out*
03 Last Day of School, *Early Out*