



STUDENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK 2026-27

Note: The contents of this handbook are subject to change and update in accordance with changes in law and MVUSD board policy. In the event of conflicting information, California and Federal laws and MVUSD board policies supersede guidance in this handbook.

*Please see the complete listing of MVUSD Board Policies at the below link:
<https://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/site/default.aspx?PageID=17>*



RAIL RANCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

OUR MISSION

At Rail Ranch Elementary we are committed to high levels of learning in a safe environment by developing systems that educate, empower, and support the whole child.

OUR VALUES

- We build strong family-school partnerships
- We create a positive school climate where everyone feels valued and included in our school community
- We teach students to be respectful, kind and accountable to others
- We ensure student learning through professional educator collaboration
- We provide high quality, effective instruction for all students
- We utilize systems to provide evidence-based interventions to support student learning

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C.A.R.E.



Compassion



Achievement



Responsibility



Excellence

SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION

Principal:

Lynn Nord

lnord@murrieta.k12.ca.us

Assistant Principal:

Nick Lawson

nlawson@murrieta.k12.ca.us

Site Secretary:

Monica Villafranco

mvillafranco@murrieta.k12.ca.us

School Counselor:

Nicole Vergara

nvergara@murrieta.k12.ca.us

Attendance Clerk/Registrar:

Michelle Tompkins

mtompkins@murrieta.k12.ca.us

School Psychologist:

Jen Savage

jsavage@murrieta.k12.ca.us

Health Tech:

Daysis Urias

durias@murrieta.k12.ca.us

School Nurse: (offsite)

Oscar Gutierrez, RN

ogutierrez@murrieta.k12.ca.us

Office Clerk:

Laura Giancola

lgiancola@murrieta.k12.ca.us

SEED Lead:

Heather Gustafson

hgustafson@murrieta.k12.ca.us

Parent Liaison:

Dani Pegnato

dpegnato@murrieta.k12.ca.us

School Phone Number: (951) 696-1404

MVUSD Website:

<https://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/>

School Website:

<https://redtailedhawks.murrieta.k12.ca.us/>

AERIES PARENT PORTAL

What Is Aeries?

Aeries is an online tool that students, parents, and teachers use to keep track of important school information. It helps manage things like grades, attendance, test scores, and more — all in one place. It also helps families stay connected with their school.

Parents & Guardians:

You can use your Aeries account to:

- Check your child's grades and attendance
- View test scores and other school records
- Complete registration or re-enrollment forms at the start of the school year

To learn more, visit:

<https://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/AERIES>

ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

School attendance is legally required in California.

For more information, please see the below MVUSD board policies and administrative regulations at this link: <https://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/site/Default.aspx?PageID=16>
[MVUSD Board Policies Index](#)

Absences and Excuses: BP 5113, AR 5113

Chronic Absence and Truancy: BP 5113.1, AR 5113.1

District School Attendance Review Board: BP 5113.12, AR 5113.12

The MVUSD Student Support/Attendance page is linked below:

<https://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/Page/286>

See the following page for important information about student attendance at Rail Ranch.

Set Your Student Up For Success With GREAT School Attendance Habits!

Did You Know...

- Starting in TK and Kindergarten, too many absences can cause students to fall behind in school.
- Missing only 2 days each month or arriving to school late often can make it harder for students to learn reading and math skills.
- Absences and tardiness can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help students to catch up.
- Attending school regularly and on-time helps students to feel better about themselves and school.
- Good attendance is a skill that will help students to succeed in high school, college, and careers!

How YOU Can Help:

- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Lay out backpacks and clothes the night before.
- Bring your students early to school for our no-cost breakfast and supervision as early as 7:00 AM.
- Make sure that your student has regular medical care to keep them healthy.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school in case something comes up. Connect with a neighbor, family member, or another Rail Ranch parent.
- Schedule non-urgent medical appointments outside of the school day.
- Schedule vacations during breaks from school.
- If you are concerned that your child might be worried about coming to school, talk your student's teacher or our school counselor for support.
- Follow our district guidelines for staying home when ill and contagious.

What is an Excused Absence?



Student illness or medical appointment



Funeral of a student's immediate family member



Spending time with immediate family member who is active-duty who is on leave or being deployed



Justifiable personal reasons (only with advance approval from school administrator)



**A PATTERN OF EXCESSIVE EXCUSED ABSENCES
WILL REQUIRE PHYSICIAN VERIFICATION.**

When Do Absences Become a Problem?



CHRONIC ABSENCE

9 Days/Semester
18 or More Days/Year

WARNING SIGNS

5-7 Days/Semester
10-17 Days/Year

SATISFACTORY

4 or Fewer Days/Semester
9 or Fewer Days/Year

What To Do If Your Student Is Absent:

- You will receive a message from ParentSquare prompting you to clear your student's absence. You can reply to this message within 24 hours with the reason for the absence and no call to our office is necessary.
- You may also contact our Attendance Clerk, Michelle Tompkins: mtompkins@murrieta.k12.ca.us



Have Questions or Need More Information?

Attendance Clerk: Michelle Tompkins
mtompkins@murrieta.k12.ca.us

School Counselor: Nicole Vergara
nvergara@murrieta.k12.ca.us

Parent Liaison: Dani Pagnato
dpagnato@murrieta.k12.ca.us

ARRIVAL & PICK-UP OF STUDENTS

Safety is our first priority for our students, staff and families.

When dropping off/picking up your student in loops 1 and 2, please pull up as far as possible before letting your student exit/enter the vehicle. The right lane is for vehicle exiting/entering **ONLY**. The left lane is to be used to go around traffic **AFTER** your student has exited/entered your vehicle. **Do not use the left lane to cut in front of other vehicles that are in the right lane.** We have added new signage and secured additional supervision staff (crossing guards) to greet students and keep traffic moving. Murrieta PD is also working with us during our arrival and drop-off to monitor safety and adherence to traffic rules.

Thank you for following our posted signage and obeying all traffic rules while on or near our campus.

Students must be picked up in a timely manner after school. There is no supervision available after school hours except through the SEED program. If a student is not picked up within a reasonable amount of time, office staff will call emergency contacts for someone to pick up the student. If you will be late to pick up, you **MUST** call the front office in advance.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the front office.

BEFORE SCHOOL SUPERVISION & BREAKFAST

All Rail Ranch students can come to school early for a free breakfast in the MPR (Multi-Purpose Room) starting at 7:00 AM through our Meet and Eat program. You don't need to sign up—just show up!

If your child wants to eat breakfast at school, please make sure they arrive before 7:55 AM. School starts right at 8:00 AM, and students who come after 7:45 might not have enough time to eat before class begins.

To see the breakfast and lunch menus or learn more, visit the MVUSD Nutrition Services website: <https://murrietaschoolnutrition.com>

BIKES, SCOOTERS & WALKING TO SCHOOL

Keeping our students, staff, and families safe is our number one priority.

Parents should decide if their child is responsible and mature enough to walk, bike, or ride a scooter to school on their own.

We recommend practicing the route together so your child knows how to get to school safely and understands the safety rules.

Students must listen to all school staff, including crossing guards and campus supervisors.

If your student rides a bike or scooter, please follow these safety rules:

- Always wear a helmet — even when riding with a parent
- Follow all traffic signs and rules
- Walk your bike or scooter on sidewalks and be careful around others

Thank you for following traffic rules and signs around our school. If you have any questions, please call the front office.

BIRTHDAY TREATS & SHARING OF FOOD

We love to celebrate birthdays at Rail Ranch, and families are welcome to bring treats to share — but we need your help to keep all students safe.

Some students have food allergies, are on special diets, or have families that prefer healthy food. Because of this, we suggest bringing non-food treats (like pencils, stickers, or erasers) if you'd like to share something.

If you choose to bring food:

- It must be store-bought, packaged, and labeled with all ingredients and allergy information.
- It must be approved ahead of time by your child's teacher.
- It will be passed out at the end of the day, not during lunch.
- Some classrooms cannot accept food or treats because of severe allergies — your teacher will let you know if this applies.

If you drop off treats at the office, we will check with the teacher to make sure it was pre-arranged. We cannot accept treats that were not planned in advance.

Also, please remember: If you are bringing a special birthday lunch for your own child, do not bring food for other students. We have a no food-sharing rule to protect students with allergies.

If you have questions, please contact your child's teacher or the front office.

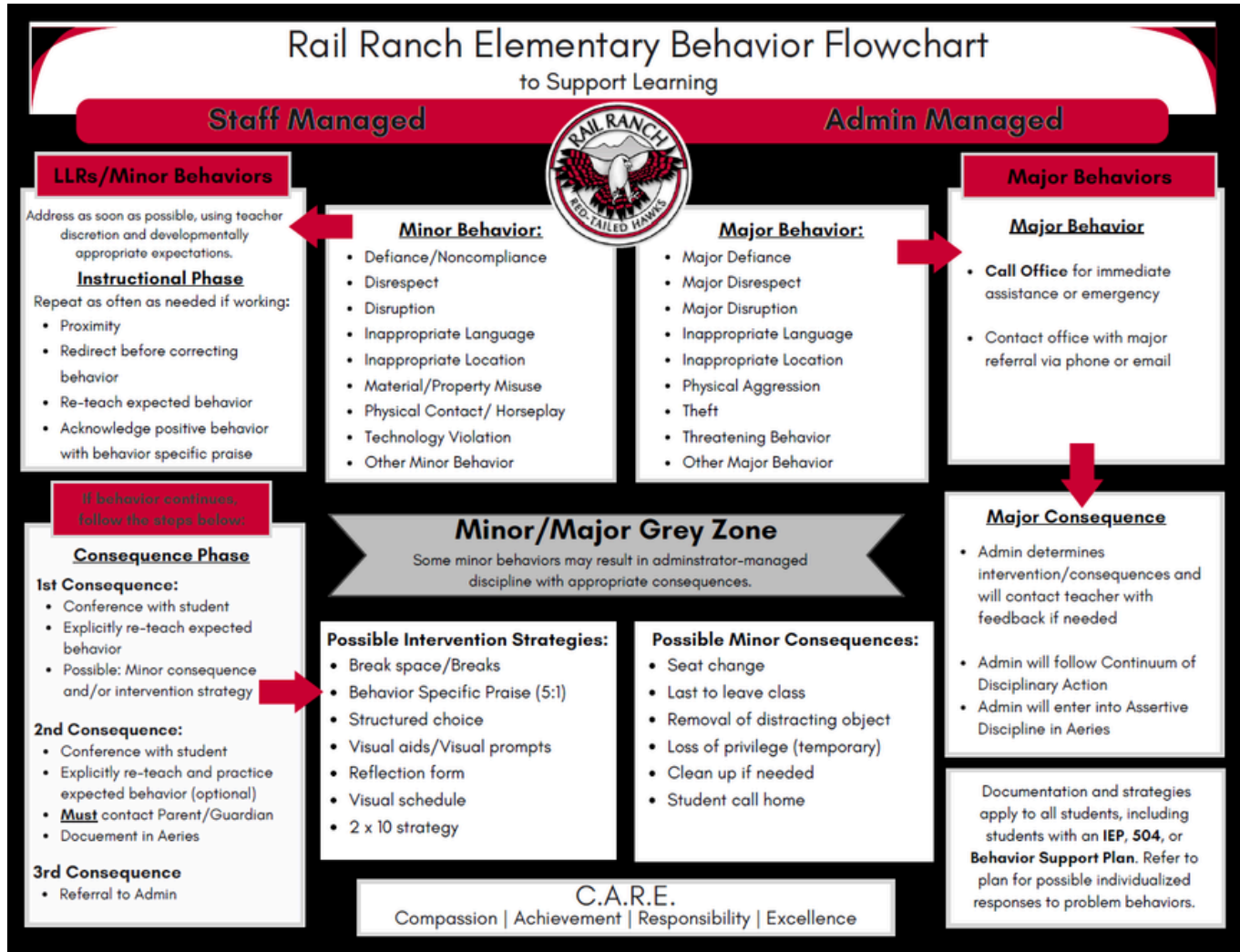
Thank you for helping us keep all students safe!

updated 5/05/26

BEHAVIOR & DISCIPLINE

Rail Ranch Mission: Rail Ranch will ensure a safe environment for high levels of learning by building pathways that educate and empower the whole child.

In support of our mission we use positive, restorative, trauma-informed, tiered, and evidence-based behavior and disciplinary practices to support all students.



OUR GOAL IS TO HELP STUDENTS SEE THE IMPACT OF THEIR BEHAVIOR ON THEMSELVES AND OTHERS AND LEARN TO MAKE BETTER CHOICES. ALL STAFF MEMBERS WORK TO TEACH AND REINFORCE OUR BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS WITH OUR STUDENTS.

BEHAVIOR & DISCIPLINE

Tier 1 Practices That Support ALL Students:

- Clear, behavior expectations for every campus location.
- Explicitly and directly teaching behavior expectations
- Greeting each student by name at the door of the classroom daily
- Creating frequent opportunities for students to connect with one another (Morning Meeting Weekly)
- Teaching Second Step lessons weekly
- Teaching, rehearsing and reinforcing classroom procedures and routines to support learning
- Utilizing a visual classroom schedule
- Proactively communicating with parents about behavior concerns
- Providing a break/sensory space within the classroom
- Positive notes home and Positive Office awards
- Utilizing Behavior Reflection Process when students have repetitive, minor misbehaviors
- Following Rail Ranch's Behavior Flow Chart for minor and major behaviors

Tier 2 Practices for Students Needing Additional Support:

- Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) Intervention
- School Counseling (individual or group)
- Skills Instruction (individual or group)
- Classroom interventions

Tier 3 Practices for Students Needing Individualized Support:

- Individualized behavior interventions (supported by counselor/psychologist and MTSS Behavior Coach)
- School Counseling (individual or group)
- Skills Instruction (individual or group)
- Meetings with SST team
- Referrals for professional support outside of school
- Referrals for Special Education Assessment (if all General Education supports have been exhausted)

Tier 4 Practices for Students Needing Individualized Support through IEPs:

- Behavior intervention plans and/or counseling services to address individualized goals and objectives in student IEPs

Rail Ranch adheres to California Education Code and MVUSD Board Policies for all student discipline. Administration collaborates closely with the MVUSD Student Support Department, our School Resource Officer, the Murrieta Police Department, and other relevant agencies when necessary.

For more information, please see the below MVUSD board policies and administrative regulations at this link: <https://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/site/Default.aspx?PageID=16>
<https://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/about-us/board-of-education/board-policies-index>

Positive School Climate: BP 5137

Conduct: BP 5131

Bullying: BP 5131.2, AR 5131.2

Discipline: BP 5144, AR 5144

Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process: BP: 5144.1, AR 5144.1

Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process (Students with Disabilities): AR 5144.2

California Education Code 48900: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=48900.&lawCode=EDC

Please also see the MVUSD Student Support Department webpage linked below for additional information: <https://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/Domain/63>

BULLYING

Bullying can hurt a student's learning, well-being, and even make them not want to come to school. At Rail Ranch, keeping every student safe and supported is our top priority. It's important for students, parents, and teachers to know exactly what bullying is — and what it is not. Our school has programs to help prevent bullying and to support students who need help with their behavior, emotions, or social skills. We take all reports of bullying seriously.

What Is Bullying?

According to California law (Ed Code 48900r), bullying is when someone does something on purpose to hurt another person — physically, emotionally, or socially — and it happens more than once or is really serious. Bullying can be done in person, online, or through writing.

Bullying includes:

- Making someone scared that they or their belongings will be hurt
- Hurting someone's mental or physical health
- Making it hard for someone to learn
- Making it hard for someone to feel like they belong at school

Bullying often includes a difference in power — like size, popularity, or social status — and is meant to cause harm.

What Is NOT Bullying?

Not all mean or rude behavior is bullying. Here are some examples that are not considered bullying:

- Not liking someone
- Leaving someone out of a game or group
- Bumping into someone by accident
- Being "bossy" while playing
- Telling one joke or making fun of someone once
- Arguments or disagreements between students
- Saying mean or rude things one time
- Minor actions that bother someone but don't happen often

Even if something isn't bullying, it can still be wrong or hurtful — and we'll help students deal with it.

How to Report Bullying

If you think you are being bullied, or you see someone else being bullied, tell a teacher or any staff member right away. Students or parents can also report bullying to school administration by phone or email.

All bullying reports are taken seriously and kept private. The school will look into the situation by:

- Talking to everyone involved
- Asking teachers or staff what they've seen
- Looking at any other proof
- Checking student records

When the investigation is done, the school will share the results with the students and parents. We will also provide support to help everyone move forward.

Even if the behavior doesn't count as "bullying" by definition, students will still get help through:

- Restorative conversations
- Counseling or referrals
- Parent meetings
- Behavior support plans
- Other steps to make things better

Discipline for other students is private, so we do not share those details with anyone except their own parents.

Want to Learn More About Bullying?

- [California Education Code 48900\(r\)](#)
- [MVUSD Board Policies](#)
- StopBullying.gov

If you have questions, please contact your student's teacher or school administration.

CONDUCT ON CAMPUS

To help create a positive learning environment at our school, all students, staff, and visitors are expected to follow our schoolwide behavior

guidelines – C.A.R.E.

C.A.R.E.



Compassion



Achievement



Responsibility



Excellence

Please see MVUSD Board Policies for additional information: <https://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/about-us/board-of-education/board-policies-index/board-policies-0000-4000>

STUDENT ACADEMIC HONESTY

At Rail Ranch Elementary School, students will not cheat, lie, plagiarize, or commit other acts of academic dishonesty. This follows the school district's rule (MVUSD Board Policy 5131.9), which can be read on the district website under Students – BP 5000's – 5131.9: <https://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/about-us/board-of-education/board-policies/board-policies-5000-9000#6000>

DRESS CODE

We know that the clothes students wear and their personal style are important to who they are. At the same time, it's important that students dress in a way that helps everyone learn and stay safe at school.

Students must wear clothes that are good for school activities like P.E. and recess. Clothes that might be unsafe or could disrupt learning are not allowed. If there's a problem with a student's clothing or grooming, the school will talk with the student privately and respectfully. Parents will be told if their child needs to change clothes or take off anything unsafe or distracting.

For more details, you can check the MVUSD board policies here: <https://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/about-us/board-of-education/board-policies-index>

CELL PHONES & STUDENT USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Cell Phones:

We know that some families give their students cell phones or smart watches to help them stay safe or keep in touch.

While students are at school during the day, these devices must be turned off and stored in a cell phone keeper with their teacher.

Since phones and smart watches can distract students from learning, they can only be used before and after school outside of school gates — not during arrival (Meet and Eat, amphitheater), not during class time, and not while exiting the school during dismissal.

This follows the school district's rule (MVUSD Board Policy 5131.8), which can be read on the district website under Students - BP 5000's - 5131.8: <https://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/about-us/board-of-education/board-policies/board-policies-5000-9000#6000>

Student Use of Technology:

Students must use technology (laptops, desktop computers, tablets, etc.) in a safe, responsible, and proper manner while on school grounds. This follows the school district's rule (MVUSD Board Policy 6163.4), which can be read on the district website under Instruction - BP 6000's - 6163.4: <https://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/about-us/board-of-education/board-policies/board-policies-5000-9000#60>

COMMUNICATION

At Rail Ranch, we believe that working closely with families is very important. When parents, teachers, and school leaders talk and share information often, it helps everyone stay on the same page about student learning, school events, and what to do in an emergency.

Rail Ranch and MVUSD use ParentSquare for all official school messages. This includes our weekly school newsletter (The Hawk Herald), school news, event updates, and messages between parents, teachers, and staff.

Emergency alerts will only be sent through ParentSquare, so it's very important that all parents and guardians download and use the app.

Please make sure your email address and phone number are always up to date, and that your notification settings are turned ON, so you don't miss anything important.

ParentSquare Information for Rail Ranch Families

Why Download the ParentSquare App?



It's the only official district and school communication platform for emergency and safety information.



The Hawk Herald, our weekly school newsletter, is sent each month only through ParentSquare. It contains important information for parents and families, including school events, programs, safety, and more!



ParentSquare messages and posts send texts and emails so you don't miss important information. You can reply directly to the school or your student's teacher in the app.



You can quickly and easily clear student absences through Parent Square! Just reply to the message that you receive within 24 hours. No call required!



Rail Ranch teachers send class newsletters and other important classroom reminders through ParentSquare.

Download the **ParentSquare** app today!

Stay involved with your child's learning and activities at school, from anywhere.



Aeries Communications | 



Messages are automatically translated to your preferred language. Accessibility options are also embedded for those with visual impairments.

Need Help With ParentSquare?

Call our front office:
(951) 696-1404

Stop by during our normal business hours: 7:30-3:00, M-F.

Email our Parent Liaison,
Dani Pegnato: dpegnato@murrieta.k12.ca.us

COUNSELING SUPPORT

Did you know Rail Ranch has a full-time School Counselor?

Mrs. Vergara is our School Counselor, and she's an important part of our school team. She helps make sure all students feel included, ready for the future, and supported in learning, behavior, and emotions.

Mrs. Vergara works with teachers and parents to support students in many ways. She meets with students one-on-one, in small groups, and with whole classes to help with things like emotions, problem-solving, and having a positive mindset.

She also helps students who may need extra support with their behavior or feelings, and she works with families to come up with the best plan.

If a student is going through a tough time or needs help with their mental health, Mrs. Vergara is always here to help. Teachers and staff can ask her to check in with a student, and students can ask for help themselves too. If a student needs more help than school can give, she'll work with families to find the right outside support.

You can contact Mrs. Vergara (Nicole Vergara) by email: nvergara@murrieta.k12.ca.us

Please see MVUSD's Behavioral Health Webpage for additional information and resources:
<https://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/domain/70>

CONCERNS & QUESTIONS

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DROP-OFF OF ITEMS

Sometimes students forget to bring things to school that they need, such as library books and lunch. In these events, families are welcome to bring those missing items to the front office during school hours. Our front office staff will notify the teacher so that the teacher can send the student at a time that does not disrupt instruction.

EMERGENCIES & SCHOOL SAFETY

Safety is our first priority for our students, staff and families.

Each year, Rail Ranch updates its School Safety Plan in accordance with MVUSD district policy and California State Law.

One component of our Safety Plan is practicing emergency procedures, including Earthquake Drills, Fire Drills, and Lockdown Drills. Practicing these safety procedures helps to ensure that all students and staff know what to do in an emergency and have prior experience calmly following our procedures in the event of a true emergency.

If you have questions about our school's Safety Plan, please contact the Principal or Assistant Principal.

Whenever there is a true emergency, the ONLY way that you will receive official communication from MVUSD and Rail Ranch is through the ParentSquare app. Please make sure that you download this app and keep parent/guardian and emergency contact information updated, including current emails and cell phone numbers. It is also important to turn on notifications and not block the number that sends ParentSquare messages and alerts, or you will not receive important safety information.

If you would like more information about safety in MVUSD, please visit the Student Support Department webpage at: <https://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/domain/12>

The MVUSD Board Policies and Administrative Regulations website also contains more information, including links to BP and AR 5142 (Safety), at the following link: <https://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/site/default.aspx?PageID=17>



Need Help With ParentSquare?

Call our front office:
(951) 696-1404

Stop by during our normal business hours:
7:30-3:00, M-F.

Email our Parent Liaison,
Dani Pegnato: dpegnato@murrieta.k12.ca.us

EMERGENCIES & SCHOOL SAFETY

Fire Drill Expectations



Compassion	Achievement	Responsibility	Excellence
Use a voice level 1 (silent) so everyone can hear instructions	Stop your activity immediately	Calmly line up and <u>walk</u> in a straight line	Stay silent and attentive at all times
Help others remember expectations	Eyes on your teacher	KAHFOOTY	Stay seated until you're dismissed by principal
Be patient when moving with your class	Listen to instructions the first time	<u>Sit</u> on your class line on the black top	Return to class safely and silently when directed

Earthquake Drill Expectations



Compassion	Achievement	Responsibility	Excellence
Use a voice level 1 so everyone can hear instructions	Stop your activity immediately	Duck down	Stay silent and still during the entire drill
Encourage others to follow directions	Eyes on your teacher	Get under something sturdy (student desk or table)	If outside, move away from buildings and trees
Stay as calm as possible	Listen to instructions the first time	Cover your head with your hands	Stay away from windows and shelves

Lockdown Drill Expectations



Compassion	Achievement	Responsibility	Excellence
Use a voice level 1 so everyone can hear instructions	Stop your activity immediately	Stay in the room until you are given the "all clear"	Stay silent and still during the entire drill
Encourage others to follow directions	Eyes on your teacher	If you are outside, move quickly and find the nearest classroom to enter	Stay focused until the "all clear"
Stay as calm as possible	Listen to instructions the first time	Keep the door closed at all times	Practice like it's the real thing

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP



At Rail Ranch, we believe strongly that family-school partnership is an essential part of the learning success of our students. We are working to shift from a traditional model of family participation/compliance to a model that focuses on true partnerships in support of student learning.

Strong family-school partnerships benefit students, educators, families, and our entire school community.

We have many opportunities for family partnership in support of student learning at Rail Ranch, including:

- Weekly Friday Morning Sing Assemblies
- Coffee & Conversations Meetings
- Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Back-to-School Night
- Open House
- Back-to-School Preview Events
- "Ready, Set, Go!" Incoming TK and Kinder Preview Events
- TK Family Preview Events
- PTA Family and Community Events
- Parent/Guardian Volunteer Opportunities (based on need and availability)
- Family Learning Nights (through our Title I program)
- Parent Conferences
- Student Study Team Meetings
- IEP and 504 Meetings
- Monthly School Community Newsletter: The Hawk Herald
- ParentSquare posts, updates, and direct, two-way messaging
- Rail Ranch Parent Liaison (Dani Pegnato)
- English Language Advisory Council (ELAC) meetings at Rail Ranch
- Other District Advisory Groups
- School Site Council
- And More!!

Please make sure to check your ParentSquare for the monthly Hawk Herald, which contains information and opportunities for you to get involved at Rail Ranch. We appreciate your partnership!

Continual improvement is important to us! If you have any questions about family partnership at Rail Ranch, or have any ideas for how we can strengthen our efforts, please contact school administration.

FRIDAY MORNING SING

Each Friday (weather-permitting,) we have our weekly Friday Morning Sing in our amphitheater. Families are invited to join us for a salute to the flag, important announcements, fun activities and celebrations, and recognition of students, staff, and others for achievements. Family members will be required to check in using the Raptor Safe system. While enjoying the assembly, make sure to stand behind students and classes, ensuring that students are able to see and participate.

We start each Friday Morning Sing at 8:15. Should the weather be unsafe or too rainy, we will notify the community through ParentSquare in advance.

If you have any questions about Friday Morning Sing, please contact the Rail Ranch office.

HEALTH OFFICE

At Rail Ranch, we have a full-time Health Tech who works closely with our School Nurse and the District Nurse (who is off-site). The Health Office helps students with things like first aid for small cuts or bruises, giving medicine, watching students' health needs, and handling health emergencies.

If your child needs medicine or special health care at school, please contact the front office. You will need to get paperwork filled out by your child's doctor.

If your child gets hurt at school and needs more than just a band-aid or rest, the Health Tech or school staff will call you. Please keep your phone numbers and emergency contacts updated in Aeries so we can reach you quickly.

If your child is sick or hurt and needs to go home, the Health Tech will call you. If you can't be reached, we will call the emergency contacts listed in Aeries to come pick up your child.

For more on MVUSD Health Services and Health Office procedures, visit:

<https://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/families/health-services/health-q-a>

LOST & FOUND

Please make sure that you **clearly label student jackets, backpacks, lunch boxes, and water bottles**. All items that are found on campus will be sent to the school Lost and Found, which is located just outside of the main gate (breezeway). As the Lost and Found is often overflowing with "found" student items that are unclaimed, we will clean out and donate unclaimed items several times per year.

If your student is missing something, please encourage them to check the Lost and Found and ask their teacher for assistance.

Parents and guardians should make sure to check the Lost and Found regularly. We will send messages to the school community before the collection of unclaimed items are donated, which generally occurs around Winter Break and before Summer Break.

LUNCH

A NO-COST, healthy lunch is available to every Rail Ranch student every day. No sign-up or eligibility is required.

Please visit the MVUSD Nutrition Services webpage for more information and current menus:

<https://murrietaschoolnutrition.com/>

Students are welcome to bring a lunch from home if they do not wish to eat school lunch. Families are encouraged to pack healthy lunches and snacks for their students.

Menus will be shared out digitally through our Monthly Hawk Herald in ParentSquare as well.

LUNCH DELIVERIES

Rail Ranch is unable to accept restaurant food deliveries and/or parent food deliveries for student lunches. If your student forgets their lunch at home, they will be provided with a healthy, no-cost lunch at school. If your student is bringing a lunch from home, be sure they have it with them before they leave for school.

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (MTSS)

At Rail Ranch, we use something called MTSS, which stands for Multi-Tiered System of Supports. This is a plan that helps teachers support all students — not just with schoolwork, but also with behavior, feelings, attendance, and being part of the school community.

With MTSS, we give every student what they need to do their best. Teachers and staff talk often about student progress and use that information to give extra help when needed. All the supports we use are based on research or best practices that are proven to help students.

What Are the MTSS Tiers?

Tier 1: Help for All Students

This is support that every student gets, like:

- Regular classroom instruction
- Positive behavior expectations
- Lessons on social and emotional skills
- Attendance reminders
- “What I Need” (WIN) time in class for extra help with reading or math

Tier 2: Extra Help for Some Students

This is for students who need a little more support. It may include:

- Pull-out reading help (Title I)
- After-school reading or math support (ELOP)
- Social/emotional lessons
- Counseling (small group or one-on-one)
- Attendance support
- Behavior support programs like Check-In/Check-Out (CICO)

Tier 3: Individual Help for Students Who Need More

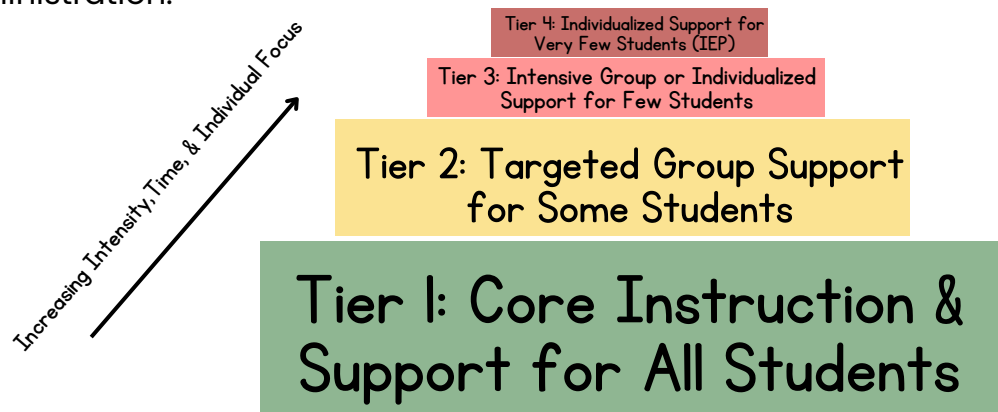
This is for students who need more support than Tiers 1 and 2. It may include:

- Intensive reading or math help
- Student Study Team (SST) meetings
- Referrals for help outside of school
- Personal behavior or emotional support plans
- Attendance meetings (SART or SARB) to remove barriers to school success

Tier 4: Special Education Support

If a student has a disability that affects their learning, they may get special support through an Individualized Education Program (IEP). This includes personalized instruction, services, and sometimes different school placement or tools to help them succeed.

Our leadership team at Rail Ranch works hard to keep improving our MTSS system. If you have questions or want to know more, please contact the school office or administration.



PARENT LIAISON

At Rail Ranch, we are so lucky to have Dani Pegnato as our Parent Liaison. We utilize our Parent Liaison position to support family partnership on many levels, including parent volunteer programs, community outreach, support for student attendance/engagement, and more!

Meet your Parent Liaison DANI PEGNATO

About Me



- Rail Ranch Parent since 2017
- Substitute Teacher
- PTA President
- UCSB Alumni
- Former geographer and current map nerd

My Purpose

- To help bridge the gap between school and family
- To serve as a dedicated resource ensuring that all families' voices are heard, concerns are addressed, information flows seamlessly between home and school
- To connect families with the support, resources and services they need

Contact Me

Email: DPegnato@murrieta.k12.ca.us

By working together, we can empower each child to reach their full potential.

I Can Help With

- General questions about Rail Ranch, school tours for new students, and Aeries issues
- Referrals to community agencies for needs relating to welfare, housing, family counseling and employment
- More information about
 - school policies and procedures
 - Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP) and other after school programs
- Interest in becoming more involved with the Rail Ranch community through:
 - PTA and PTA sponsored events
 - Parent Advisory Councils (PACs)
 - Volunteering on Campus



PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

Rail Ranch Elementary has a fantastic Parent Teacher Association (PTA), which supports our school with fun and engaging activities and financial support through donations. These donations are utilized by our teachers for grade-level activities and field trips.

Each year, PTA provides our school community with many "giveback" events funded by fundraising donations, including many positive and family-friendly events and activities such as:

School Dances
Family Movie Nights
Trunk or Treat
School Festivals/Carnivals
School Garden Improvement/Cleanup
And many more!

Please consider joining our Rail Ranch PTA, and thank you for your support with donations that support student learning and family engagement and make Rail Ranch a wonderful and fun school community!

Please contact the Rail Ranch PTA President for more information: railranchpta@gmail.com

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

All students at Rail Ranch participate in Physical Education, according to California Education Code 51223. Each student receives a minimum of 200 minutes of PE instruction every 10 days. Teachers provide this PE instruction during our daily "Specials" block, which includes three days of teacher-led PE.

Please make sure that students wear clothing and shoes that are safe and appropriate for PE activities. Your student's teacher will share which days they participate in PE and other physical activities.

RECESS

We're bringing the fun back to recess — and it's helping students learn and grow!

Play is important because it helps students make friends, solve problems, and keep trying even when things get tough. That's why MVUSD has partnered with Playworks, a group that helps schools make recess a place where everyone can play and feel included.

Our staff — including the principal and playground aides — has participated in special training from Playworks. We've also received lots of new playground games and equipment to make recess even more fun!

At recess, students can still choose what they want to do, like:

- Relax in the shady "Chill Zone"
- Play safer tag games like Sharks and Minnows
- Join in fun blacktop games like Switch or Rochambeau Relay

Our Recess Coaches help students learn the rules of games, play along with them, and make sure everyone is included and having fun.

We're also teaching kids how to:

- Solve disagreements or ties
- Use kind words if they feel upset or if they get "out" in a game

Each recess starts with a short "opening" to remind students of the rules and games. It ends with a "closing" that includes positive feedback, stretching, and calming exercises to help students return to class ready to learn.

Since we started using Playworks, we've seen:

- ✓ More students playing together nicely
- ✓ Fewer problems or behavior issues during recess
- ✓ More learning time in the classroom

That's a win for everyone! Want to learn more about Playworks? 🖱️ <https://www.playworks.org>

REPORT CARDS & PROGRESS REPORTS

Student report cards and progress reports are an important way to stay up-to-date about your student's learning progress.

Rail Ranch administration will send out communication through ParentSquare for all families in advance of each of the release dates for student report cards and progress reports. These documents are viewable within the Aeries Parent Portal only. Each announcement will include directions for parents/guardians for how to access these documents. Please contact your student's teacher if you need a paper copy of your student's progress report or report card. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your student's progress, please contact your student's teacher directly, either through ParentSquare, email, or by phone.

Please see the MVUSD Elementary Educational Services website for more information:
<https://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/site/Default.aspx?PageID=83>

SECTION 504

Students with physical or mental impairments impacting their ability to perform a major life activity may be eligible for an accommodation plan through Section 504. Please contact our school's Section 504 Coordinator, Mr. Lawson:
nlawson@murrieta.k12.ca.us if you have any questions about Section 504.

STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM (SST) MEETINGS

When needed, or requested by Rail Ranch staff or parents, the Rail Ranch Student Support Team (SST) may meet to discuss supports for an individual student. During these meetings, parents, teachers, support staff, and intervention staff review student learning progress, discuss concerns, and set up any needed interventions for students.

Please contact the Title I/Intervention team if you have any questions about the SST process.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Children between the ages of 2 years, 6 months and 21 years old who have certain learning or developmental challenges may be able to receive special education services for free. These services are given in a way that helps students learn alongside their peers as much as possible, depending on each student's needs.

This includes students who go to:

- Public schools
- Private schools
- Home schools

Students might be eligible for special education if they have:

- Intellectual disabilities
- Emotional challenges
- More than one disability
- Hearing loss or are deaf
- Physical disabilities
- Autism
- Health conditions that affect learning
- Brain injuries
- Speech or language delays
- Learning disabilities
- Medical conditions
- Vision loss or blindness

At Rail Ranch and in MVUSD, we offer many different services to meet the needs of students with disabilities. These may include:

- Help from special education teachers
- Speech and language therapy
- Occupational or physical therapy
- Behavior support services
- Help for students with autism
- Preschool programs for children ages 3–5

Parents of students who receive special education have special rights called Parent Rights and Procedural Safeguards to make sure their child gets the help they need.

If you have questions about your child's learning or the programs we offer, please talk to your child's teacher. You can also contact our School Psychologist or school administration anytime.

To learn more about MVUSD's special education services and your rights as a parent, visit: <https://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/families/special-education/overview>

VISITORS & VOLUNTEERS

Visitors and Observations

- All visitors are required to check in at the school office upon entering campus and check-in through the Raptor system (iPads) with a government-issued ID or a QR code supplied by the Raptor Safe App.
- Visitors are required to sign both in and out, and to wear a badge during the entire visit.
- Parents or outside agency providers (with a signed release of information form) are welcome to observe on campus. School administration will accompany visitors/observers to answer any questions and preserve the instructional environment. Teachers are not available for conferences during instructional time. Observations are scheduled for 30 minutes at a time.
- Students from other schools and younger siblings may not visit during school hours, except for during specially-arranged events.

Volunteers:

We love volunteers at our school!

- All volunteer opportunities are communicated through teachers and administration, and are subject to need and availability. Volunteer opportunities may be cancelled without notice.
- Volunteering on campus is for a specific task/assignment and is NOT observational in nature.
- Volunteers must stay in their assigned location and complete assigned tasks; they are not to be in other areas or engage in other activities on campus that have not specifically been assigned.
- Volunteers must check in at the school office upon entering campus and sign in through the Raptor system with a government-issued ID.
- Volunteers are required to sign both in and out, and to wear a badge during the entire visit.
- Volunteers expecting to perform more than 20 hours of volunteer service at Rail Ranch will need to have a MVUSD background check completed. See administration for details.

If you have any questions or if you'd like more information, please contact Rail Ranch school administration, and see MVUSD's Board Policies, including Volunteer Assistance (BP 1240 and AR 1240), Visitors/Outsiders (BP 1250 and AR 1250) listed at the below link:

<https://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/about-us/board-of-education/board-policies-index/board-policies-0000-4000>