

# CANYON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

# HANDBOOK

## 2011

*This handbook is to inform students, parents, and other members of the Canyon School community about how we work and where to go to find out more.\* It is available both in printed form and online at the school web site. If you have comments or suggestions for future revisions, please convey them to school staff or Board members. Thank you!*

\*References and online links to official Board policies and administrative regulations are included (for example, BP 5131, AR 5144). The complete manual of district policies and regulations can be consulted in the school office.

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## Part I - INTRODUCTION

### Mission Statement

*Canyon School's mission is to foster lifelong love of learning, integrating individual academic growth and achievement with artistic expression.*

*We draw strength from our extended community rich in historic tradition, our unique natural setting, and our small size.*

*The School provides a sanctuary for developing the talents, strengths, and confidence of each individual so that our students become resourceful adults who think and act creatively and critically in the world community.*

### Canyon and the Canyon School Community

Canyon Elementary School, the only school in the Canyon Elementary School District, is a public school serving approximately sixty-eight students in grades kindergarten through eight, located in the tiny unincorporated community of Canyon, California. Watershed, regional parks, and pasturelands surround Canyon and provide a buffer from the neighboring cities of Oakland and Orinda and the town of Moraga. The school and the only other public building, the Post Office, are located on Pinehurst Road on the banks of the Upper San Leandro Creek. Homes are found along steep, narrow private roads and footpaths that extend from the redwood groves and ferns along the creek, through the mixed live oak, bay, and madrone forests on the steep hillsides, up to the chaparral and knobcone pines that grow along the ridge. Canyon has a colorful history. Logging camps and notorious saloons helped establish a local reputation for rowdiness in the nineteenth century and in the late 1960s Canyon became a center of political and social protest and creative alternative lifestyles. Today's residents still work together to maintain their own roads and water systems, and Canyon Community Association volunteers provide mediation services, emergency planning, and interface with county and state agencies.

The School District was established—and the original one-room schoolhouse was built—in 1918. From the beginning, the school also served as a meeting hall and a focus of community activity. Canyon residents have worked hard over the years to ensure the School's survival and excellence, providing countless hours of volunteer labor, seeking out families with children to rent to in order to keep attendance up, and actively opposing the State's repeated efforts to force consolidation with other districts. Nearly a third of Canyon's current adult population, representing more than half of the families with children, has served

as school employees or School Board members. After the old school building was condemned in 1985, years of unprecedented effort and dedication on the part of the School Board and other volunteers made it possible to construct a beautiful new facility, custom designed to support the School's multi-grade classes and community-centered activities and to harmonize with the natural environment. The new building opened in 1993. Taking advantage of its larger size and recent laws that allow students to transfer between public school districts, the School now welcomes many non-resident families.

*We define our school community as including all students and their families, paid staff and volunteers, and all other supporters, past and present.*

## **Part II - OPERATIONS**

### **School Programs and Services**

***The Instructional Program.*** We have an academic program that strives to integrate the arts (drama, recitation, drawing and music) into each subject area. We stress critical thinking and problem solving, and we support hands-on, discovery-oriented learning. Computer technology is integrated into the learning process in the upper grades. Specialized emphases on environmental studies and performing arts complement our focus on traditional academic skills. Students are required to work in the school/community garden and participate in class performances as part of their studies. Our weekly Wednesday schedule includes music, art, and movement classes and an all-school assembly. The instructional program is aligned with State of California frameworks, and we administer State-mandated standardized tests (though we are not driven by test scores, we realize that testing is a part of society and we strive to make the process as educational and stress-free as possible). Report cards are issued three times a year, and parent/teacher conferences are arranged whenever either party desires. [See BP and AR 5125 - Student records; AR 5125.3 - Challenging Student Records; BP and AR 5020 - Parent Rights and Responsibilities]

***Field trips,*** both daytime and overnight, are also a regular part of our curriculum. Parents are informed of field trips via a note from the teacher or the school secretary, which includes a permission slip to be signed and returned. Spontaneous local field trips (i.e., walking trips in Canyon), however, may be covered by a parent's consent and signature on the Emergency Form. Parents are asked not to send money with a child on a field trip unless requested by staff. Parents of children who need to ride in child booster seats (8 years of age or 4'9" tall) should bring the seats to the school on the day of the field trip. [See below for instructions for Field Trip Drivers/Chaperones]

***Gifted and Talented Education (GATE).*** We receive funding from the State of California for our GATE program, which recognizes gifted and talented students in any and all areas of personal growth. We use GATE funds in an "Inclusive" program, to supplement the entire curriculum, rather than a "Pull-out" program. GATE meetings are held three times a year and all members of the school

community are invited to attend. [See BP and AR 6172 – Gifted and Talented Student Program]

**Supplemental Instruction.** We provide supplemental instruction to help students overcome academic deficiencies, attain grade-level academic standards, and enhance critical skills. Programs include tutoring, after-school enrichment, summer school, and/or home involvement. [See BP 6179 - Supplemental Instruction]

**Independent Study** arrangements are made for students whose needs are best met through study outside of the regular classroom setting. [See BP and AR 6158 - Independent Study]

**Special Education.** The Contra Costa County Office of Education assigns us part-time employees (a resource specialist, a resource aide, a speech therapist, and a psychologist) who provide special education services. A Student Study Team (SST), which includes the teachers and parents involved, can be set up to analyze a student's strengths and weaknesses. When special needs are assessed, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is written and implemented. Special needs of students may be met on- or off-site. [See BP 6164.4 - Identification of Individuals for Special Education]

**Parent Events** include Back to School Night and Parent Education Nights (for adults only) and Open House (for all ages).

**Health Services.** The School administers tests for vision, hearing and scoliosis as required by law. School employees are also required to report all known or suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect. Kindergarteners and all other entering students need to have completed immunization forms and standard health forms before they can be admitted to the school; for possible waivers for these, or for information regarding free or low-cost clinics, parents should see the School Secretary. Arrangements can be made for a student to take or be given prescribed medication, or receive essential monitoring, testing, or other treatment of an existing medical condition. [See BP and AR 5141.21 - Administering Medication & Monitoring Health Conditions]

**Lunch Program.** We offer a menu of nutritionally sound and balanced hot lunches made from scratch, using organic produce and dairy products, and “free-range” and “hormone free” poultry and meat whenever possible. Some of the produce is grown by students in our own school garden. Current lunch rates are as follows:

*Students –\$2.75*

*Adults – \$3.50*

You can purchase a student lunch card (good for 20 lunches) for \$55. The monthly menu is circulated in advance in the school newsletter. Payments go to the school secretary. When you prepay, you or your child is assigned a card indicating the number of purchased lunches, which are marked off each time a lunch is eaten. Lunch orders are taken each morning from students in their classrooms and from adults at the school office (by 10:00). Free or reduced-

price lunches are available to children of qualified low-income families – information is provided in the summer mailing. Students not participating in the lunch program must bring lunches from home. [See BP and AR 3553 - Free and reduced price meals]

***After School Care Program.*** The Canyon After-School Program (CASP) provides a fun, safe environment that offers several enrichment opportunities.

*There is more information on the After School Care Program in Summer Mailing Packet. If you have any questions, please contact Camille Rodriguez.*

## **Participants and Their Contributions**

Canyon School has always been a do-it-yourself project. The School and the District would not exist without staff who contribute above and beyond what they can be paid for, students who not only perform well academically but take pride in their school and help keep it clean and safe, and an extended school community that donates labor, money, and materials as well as endless talent, energy and ideas.

### ***Students***

We have high expectations for our students. Not only do they pursue their studies with energy and creativity, they also take pride in their school and help make it work by taking on such tasks as cleaning the building and grounds, managing the composting, serving lunches, and helping out in the office. Older students are expected to assist and set good examples for the younger ones.

In order to do well in school, students need a place to study without distractions and an orderly schedule for meals and bedtimes. They also need their parents' interest, encouragement, praise, and respect.

Canyon School does have a dress code: Clothing that reveals undergarments, excessively baggy pants, revealing clothing, tank tops with spaghetti straps, halter-tops, strapless tops, and crop tops that reveal the midriff are not acceptable. Shorts must be mid-thigh length or longer. No clothing that depicts any drug, alcohol, sexual reference, derogatory or inappropriate message or graphic may be worn at Canyon School.

If a student's dress is inappropriate or such that it disrupts the educational program, the student will be required to change into proper attire.

Admission requirements: students must either reside in the District or obtain an interdistrict transfer, which must also be approved by their district of residence. [See "Choosing Your Child's School" (California Dept. of Education, 1994); BP and AR 5118 - Interdistrict Transfers]

## **School Staff**

**The Superintendent** works with the School Board to oversee district operations and represents the district in negotiations with other agencies. *Gloria Faircloth has been our Business Manager since 1994 and was promoted to Superintendent, Chief Business Official in August of 2006. She is responsible for preparing and tracking the District's budget and managing contracts and purchases and processing warrants and payroll. She is also the parent of two Canyon School graduates.*

**The Principal/Teacher** coordinates communication between all members of the school community. As Principal, he supports teaching staff, students and parents. As Teacher, he provides additional classroom instruction. This is the person to whom to bring your school-wide questions and concerns. He will be able to find an answer to any school-related inquiry. *Chris Kerrigan is a state credentialed teacher and a certified Montessori teacher. He also has previous experience administering a small school.*

**Teachers'** duties include teaching, identifying student needs, supervising aides, assistants and volunteers, developing curriculum, and keeping up on their own professional development. Because of our small size and unusual structure, our teachers have to meet special demands: managing multi-grade classes, coordinating resource use, and performing committee and supervisory duties that are, in most schools, spread among a much larger teaching staff. These are the individuals to whom to bring your classroom and instruction questions and concerns. Each of them will be able to address any issue in their classes.

*Jim Peterson, author of a book and several articles on holistic education and the parent of a Canyon school graduate, has taught K-1-2 since 1989. Esperanza Surls, an accomplished painter, singer, poet, and gardener, and herself a former student of Canyon School, taught the 3-4-5 class from 1990 - 2010. This year she will return as the primary 6-7-8 teacher and also teaches art to all the grades. Brendan Smith, is our floating teacher again this year, teaching various subjects, including history, language arts and mathematics, in all classes and heads the enrichment and internship programs for the 6-7-8 and the community service jobs for grades 3 – 8. He has taught here since 2007. He previously taught middle school in Castro Valley. Rebecca Young will remain being the primary 3-4-5 classroom teacher this year. She has worked here since 2005.*

**Part-time instructors, teaching aides and assistants, and resource specialists** provide additional teaching. *Ken Pitts, master instructor at the Pitts Martial Arts Academy in Oakland, teaches Capoeira and martial arts. Our resource specialists come from the CCCOE.*

**Our School Secretary** serves as receptionist, typist, records manager, attendance clerk, and security officer, among other things. She manages the School's email lists (let her know if you want to be on it) and prepares and distributes the newsletter as well as the agendas and minutes of School Board

meetings. *Ramona Nisbet, a graduate of Canyon School, has served as Secretary since 1997.*

**The Food Program Director, Misty Hardesty,** plans, purchases and prepares lunches, manages the kitchen, and supervises student volunteers.

**The Librarian** (part-time) maintains the library collection, keeps circulation records, and assists teachers and students in the library. *Stacy Vogan works here on Tuesdays.*

**Our Information Systems Managers** keep our computer network running smoothly. *Rocky Murdock, a parent of a former student, and Montana Rane, a former student of Canyon School, and a parent of a current student, are our largely unseen but much appreciated Information Systems Managers.*

**Our Maintenance Manager** helps monitor, maintain and repair all elements of the physical plant. *James McNeil takes special care to respect the harmony between the School and its natural environment and has a granddaughter who is a student here.*

*Staff qualifications and duties are governed by State and Federal regulations. Contractors provide janitorial and other services. Staff positions and opportunities to bid for contracts are advertised locally and regionally, and hiring decisions are announced at public Board meetings.*

## **The School Board**

*(The Governing Board of the Canyon Elementary School District)*

The School Board's responsibilities include setting policies, hiring and releasing employees, overseeing the curriculum, the budget, and other operations, and hearing appeals. Board members must be residents of the district and are elected by voters in the district (or, in the case of mid-term vacancies, appointed with the consent of the voters).

Board meetings convene at 7:00 p.m. at the School on the second Tuesday of each month, unless otherwise posted. Notices and agendas are posted at least 72 hours in advance on the outdoor bulletin board at the front entrance to the School and at the Canyon Post Office, and they are also sent out via email to those who request them. The Board occasionally meets in closed session to consider confidential matters such as personnel actions and student discipline proceedings, but all other sessions are open to the public. The initial minutes of Board meetings are reserved for public comment: this is a time for anyone to directly convey their ideas, issues or thoughts whether or not they are about matters on the published agenda.

*Current Board members are Geronimo Bernard, Brian Coyle, Ian Llewellyn, Karen Pickett, and Jim Smith.*

## **Volunteers**

(parents and others)

**CATSS (Canyon Association To Support the School)**, our parent organization, provides opportunities for school community members to get together socially to share ideas and concerns and to raise funds for the school. New suggestions are always welcome. Traditionally CATSS plans and organizes special events such as the Halloween Carnival and the Annual Auction, which are intended both as community building activities and as fundraisers for field trips and other special activities. CATSS maintains binders containing detailed records of past events and supplies such as signs, props and dishes. CATSS also ensures that there is help and food available at key school events such as school plays, open houses, and graduation. CATSS meets monthly at members' homes, with childcare provided, but participation is welcome even if you cannot attend the meetings. Look for volunteer sign up sheets in the school foyer. This year's presidents are Mimi Jung and Avril Thompson, the Vice President is Mary Burns, the treasurer is Sonya Wilson and the secretary is Romy Falck.

**Canyon Education Foundation** is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to providing long-term support to sustain and enhance the programs of the Canyon Elementary School District. The foundation aims to work closely with the school board and staff and complement the activities of CATSS. The Foundation's current directors are Gwen Winslow, David Lascurettes, and Gail Smith- Pratt.

**Classroom volunteers.** Each class has a volunteer *room parent*, who works closely with the teacher to communicate with parents and coordinate their support for class activities including performances. (All families are asked to help with special activities in their child's class). Other volunteers, supervised by teachers, tutor students and help with in-class activities.

**Lunch and playground volunteers** distribute lunch cards and provide lunchtime playground supervision. They are invited to eat the school lunch if they want to (free of charge). They are responsible for knowing and enforcing the School's behavior guidelines (Be Safe – Be Kind – Do Your Best) as well as specific rules for student behavior at lunch (students should sit while eating, not throw food, use indoor voices and walking feet when indoors, etc.) and on the playground. They should be ready to use conflict resolution procedures in case of disputes between students. Lunch and playground volunteers work under the supervision of School staff.

**Snack providers** bring healthy mid-morning snacks for children in each classroom. Snacks are not meant to satisfy students' hunger or spoil their appetites for lunch but only to tide them over, so small portions are definitely in order. Snacks may be left in the classrooms at the beginning of the school day; if it is necessary to put them in the refrigerator, be sure that they are labeled and that the teacher or aide knows about them. Appropriate snacks include fruit, vegetables, bread or rice cakes, perhaps accompanied by cheese, peanut butter, or salsa. PLEASE DO NOT BRING SWEETS OR HIGH FAT-CONTENT FOODS! Although children often appreciate them, such snacks can lead to tooth

decay, obesity, and other health problems and they may contribute to behavior problems. Schedules for snack volunteers are provided by room parents. Participation is voluntary – all families are asked to participate, but they may tell the room parent that they do not wish to. No child will be denied snack.

**Field trip drivers/chaperones** are usually recruited from, but not limited to, the parents of the students who are going. Drivers must have submitted required forms to the School office certifying that they have an appropriate level of car insurance, that their cars are in safe condition, and that they have seat belts for all passengers. Car assignments are made by teachers or school staff and should never be changed without their permission, because it is essential to know who is riding with whom. Drivers are provided with emergency information cards for all children in their care. Drivers and other parents who come along also serve as chaperones during the field trip. Chaperones are expected to remain attentive, model appropriate behavior, assist wherever necessary in supervising students' behavior, and follow the instructions of the teacher in charge. They should refrain from buying treats or souvenirs for their own children unless they are prepared to do the same for all students. Each chaperone should continuously monitor the children from their own car group for the duration of the field trip. [*Field Trip Driver's Information Forms* are included in the summer mailing]

**Garden volunteers** work with teachers and students in class activities, coordinate with the food services manager to provide produce for lunches, and care for the garden outside school time.

**Landscaping volunteers** care for native plants and work to eliminate noxious and invasive plants, prevent fires, and control erosion. For several years, an annual Canyon School workday has been held in the winter by volunteers from the Restoration Team of the East Bay Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, and their energy and expertise have been most welcome. Volunteers are needed to assist them – a great opportunity to learn more about the local ecology and native landscape.

**Housekeeping volunteers** (including Summer Work Day volunteers) perform tasks such as moving furniture for floor cleaning, cleaning out roof gutters, spreading ground cover in the playground, dusting high shelves, and cleaning windows. Many of the tasks are suitable for children, who can take part under a parent's supervision. This is easy but necessary work, and all families are asked to participate – those who cannot attend organized summer or weekend work days should contact a staff member about completing housekeeping tasks at other times.

**Special events helpers** (many of them for each event) take care of publicizing, setting up, catering, cleaning up, and providing thanks and acknowledgments. CATSS coordinates helpers for all special events.

**The Webmaster** works with the Principal and Superintendent to maintain our web site in accordance with applicable laws and regulations and respond to the needs and suggestions of users. Eric Reynolds is our current webmaster.

**Committee members.** Three parents are elected by other parents to serve on the School Site Council, an important governing body that assists in consolidating and improving a single school-wide plan for student achievement, deciding how restricted categorical funds will be spent, and participating in mandatory State reviews. Other committees with opportunities for parents and other adults include the GATE, Facilities, Technology, and Strategic Planning committees as well as temporary committees that may be set up for tasks such as hiring. (Committee meetings are open to the public.)

**Donors of professional services and useable goods** can save us a great deal of money and provide those extra touches we could not afford to pay for. We especially welcome services such as graphic design, printing, mediation training, grant development, plumbing, construction, tree-trimming, etc., and goods such as art and garden supplies, sports equipment, books, paper, furniture, and tools. Please contact the Principal, Superintendent, or the Business Manager regarding possible donations.

**Donors of money.** The low level of funding for public education and the current State budget crisis compel us to ask for donations of money to help pay for some of our most important operations.

*Volunteers who spend a significant amount of time in contact with students, such as lunch, playground and classroom volunteers, are required to return an up-to-date Tuberculosis Test Form (included in the summer mailing) to the office.*

## Facilities and Grounds

**Classrooms.** These are the teachers' turf and should be used only with their consent. Students may be assigned desks, cubbies, lockers, or coat hooks for their personal use.

**The Front Lobby** contains mailboxes for current School families. These are used for communications from staff and other parents, student work, newsletters, etc., and should be checked daily if possible. There are also mailboxes for CATSS, and the After School Care program. Bulletin boards outside the lobby are for posting official school notices; bulletin boards inside the lobby may be used by CATSS and other members of the school community.

**The School Office** also serves as the District Office. The Secretary has her desk in the front room, while the back room contains the Principal desk and the Superintendent/Chief Business Official desk and also serves as our conference room. With permission from the staff, the telephone may be used for brief local calls and the photocopy and fax machines may be used for small jobs (fees may be charged for photocopies and faxes).

**The Multi-Purpose Room or Center Room**, which has a mezzanine and a raised stage, serves as auditorium, gymnasium, cafeteria, and extra classroom. CATSS' supplies and other storage items are kept in locked cupboards under the stage. Anyone using these spaces must work quietly to avoid disturbing other users as well as classes in the adjoining classrooms.

**The Library** is located in the stage area adjoining the multi-purpose room and may be closed off by large wooden sliding doors. Library books may be checked out by students or parents who sign them out in the provided ledgers and should be returned to the marked boxes.

**The Kitchen** is used by the Food Program Manager in the morning and midday and by the After School Care program in the afternoon on school days, and it may also be used for class projects. For specific weekend and evening events, it is used by CATSS and other volunteers. All users must leave the room and equipment clean and tidy – instructions for use and clean-up are posted. To phone the kitchen, or After School Care workers on duty, call (925) 377-9438.

**The Back Hallway** provides access to the playground and restrooms, storage for the folding tables and chairs used for lunch and other activities.

**The Playground and the Redwood Grove** are across the creek from the main school building (go carefully on the bridges – they can be quite slippery when wet). Students must be supervised on the playground, and they may cross the bridge to the grove only when accompanied by an adult. Students may go in the creek only with the permission of the supervising adult and they must wear boots or “creek shoes”, the water must be clear, not brown or high.

**The School/Community Garden** is located on the old railroad grade (“the tracks”) above the Post Office, a short walk from the School. Classes visit regularly to plant, weed, water, harvest, and observe. Organic salad greens, squash, beans, peas, strawberries, carrots, herbs, flowers and more are grown in the garden using sustainable methods. Kathleen Henderson (has two children that graduated from Canyon, and has a current Canyon student and is also a Canyon resident) manages the garden throughout the year.

**Computers** located in the offices and classrooms are for use by school staff and by students under direct staff supervision. Before using the district's on-line resources, students and their parents must sign and return an *Internet Use Agreement* (included in the summer mailing) specifying user obligations and responsibilities. With permission from the Principal or Superintendent, others may be allowed to use school computers for legitimate school or community projects. Everyone is urged to check out the school web site (which also serves as District web site) for current newsletters, announcements of events, teachers' pages with information about class projects and homework, and other information including our School Accountability Report Card (SARC). The web address (URL) is [www.canyon.k12.ca.us](http://www.canyon.k12.ca.us) [See BP and AR 6163.4 - Student Use of the Internet; BP and AR 0510 - School Accountability Report Card]

**Parking** is extremely limited on school grounds. Please do not park or leave your car unattended even momentarily by the fire hydrant or anywhere that blocks access to the front driveway, which is a fire lane.

**Recycling and waste disposal.** Everyone helps recycle or compost waste materials whenever possible. Paper and cardboard recycling goes in the marked bins in the office, classrooms, and in the back hallway; glass and plastic recycling goes in a bin in the back hallway. Compostable food garbage – including fruit and most vegetables, but not large amounts of starchy foods, meat products, or other substances that tend to attract vermin – is collected in marked buckets in the kitchen and at lunchtime. Other, mixed garbage goes in the ordinary (“land-fill”) trash receptacles found throughout the school and on the playground.

**Other Uses of School Facilities.** If they are not needed for school-related activities, the building and/or grounds may be reserved for evening, weekend, or holiday use by community organizations or for private events such as weddings, dances, or retreats. Fees may be charged. Please do not intrude when school facilities are being used by others. However, if you see urgent security or safety violations at any time, please report them immediately to school personnel, the Fire Department, or law enforcement officials, as appropriate. [See BP and AR 1330 – Use of School Facilities; and our *Application for Use of School Facility or Equipment*]

## Part III - RULES AND PROCEDURES

### Conduct

**General Guidelines.** There are three guidelines for appropriate conduct at Canyon School: Be Safe, Be Kind, and Do Your Best. Safe behavior includes conduct that does not endanger oneself or other people. Kind behavior includes being attentive and courteous toward others, and refraining from harassment, bullying, or any other verbal, written or physical conduct that causes or threatens to cause bodily harm or emotional suffering. Doing one’s best includes carrying out school projects and assignments diligently and honestly, not disrupting the orderly classroom or school environment, and treating the natural environment, school property, and the property of others with care and respect.

**Students** are responsible for their own conduct and are encouraged to help promote the appropriate conduct of others. Students shall conduct themselves in accordance with the guidelines, obey specific school rules, and follow instructions given by teachers and supervising adults.

Canyon School does have a dress code: Clothing that reveals undergarments, excessively baggy pants, revealing clothing, tank tops with spaghetti straps, halter-tops, strapless tops, and crop tops that reveal the midriff are not acceptable. Shorts must be mid-thigh length or longer. No clothing that depicts any drug, alcohol, sexual reference, derogatory or inappropriate message or graphic may be worn at Canyon School.

If a student's dress is inappropriate or such that it disrupts the educational program, the student will be required to change into proper attire.

**Staff, parents, and volunteers** are expected to discuss the guidelines, enforce them as necessary, give instructions that are consistent with them, and demonstrate them in their own conduct.

**Visitors** are welcome. It is helpful if they make appointments in advance. They should check in at the school office when they arrive, follow staff instructions and school rules, avoid disrupting school activities, and leave promptly when asked to.

Appointments should be scheduled ahead of time with the teacher whose class you wish to visit or with the superintendent/principal.

**Other School Rules.** Within the general guidelines, more specific rules have been developed by the school staff and board. Copies of the complete rules of Canyon School are available in the office. Teachers may also develop and post specific rules for their classrooms. Hats are not worn in the classrooms. [See BP 5131 and AR 5131 – Conduct]

**Dress Code:** Clothing that reveals undergarments, excessively baggy pants, revealing clothing, tank tops with spaghetti straps, halter-tops, strapless tops, and crop tops that reveal the midriff are not acceptable. Shorts must be mid-thigh length or longer. No clothing that depicts any drug, alcohol, sexual reference, derogatory or inappropriate message or graphic may be worn at Canyon School.

If a student's dress is inappropriate or such that it disrupts the educational program, the student will be required to change into proper attire.

**Discrimination and sexual harassment** are prohibited at the school and at school-sponsored or school-related activities under State and Federal law. [See BP and AR 5145.7 - Sexual harassment; BP 0410 Nondiscrimination in District Programs and Activities; BP and AR 1312.3 - Uniform complaint procedure]

## **What To Bring To School and What Not To Bring**

**Clothing.** Since the school environment is often cooler and damper than surrounding areas, it is important to wear warm enough clothing. Younger children should be provided with a complete change of clothing, which will be kept in the child's classroom. Complete rain gear (waterproof boots, jacket, and hood, hat or umbrella) is required for outdoor play when it is raining lightly; during heavy rain students remain indoors. Wet and used clothing will be sent home and should be replaced right away. Please label your child's clothing.

**Bicycles, skateboards, and other wheeled devices** may not be used on school grounds. Students may ride bicycles to school, although riding along

Pinehurst Road is not recommended. State law requires all minors to wear a properly fitted and fastened bicycle helmet. Bicycles are to be parked in the rack provided, and parents are advised to supply locks for them.

**Gum** is prohibited.

**Invitations and treats for birthdays and other parties** should not be distributed at school unless the entire class or the entire school is invited or included, to avoid hurt feelings. Edible treats, if provided, should be healthy (non-sugar or low-sugar) and not too messy. Parents should consider signing up for snack or lunch duty on a child's birthday or other special occasion to assist in the distribution of treats.

**Cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices including personal music players and video games** may not be used on campus. They should be turned off and put away during school hours.

**Animals** may be brought to school by students only with their parent's and teacher's consent. The animals must be clean, healthy, safe and properly controlled. Dogs should not run loose on school grounds (if you see one, please help chase it away or tie it up or report it to a staff member).

**Smoking or use of any tobacco-related products**, and disposal of any tobacco-related waste, are prohibited on school grounds.

**Weapons, other dangerous objects, alcohol, and illegal drugs** are prohibited at all times.

## Attendance

**Schedules.** The *Bell Schedule* and the annual *Events Calendar* are posted in the lobby and at the web site and included in the summer mailing. Morning supervision begins at 8:20, so no child should be sent to school or dropped off earlier than that.

**Compulsory Attendance.** Students are required by law to attend school. "Excused" absences are when the student is ill, when there has been a death in the student's family, or for the actual time needed for the student to attend a medical or dental appointment. The law also specifies a few other circumstances under which absences are excused, including for students to receive moral or religious instruction. [See BP and AR 5113 - Absences and Excuses; BP and AR 5113.1 - Truancy]

**Notifications.** After five absences, a letter will be sent home indicating that the student is nearing an excessive level of absences. After ten, a meeting will be scheduled with staff, the student and parents.

**Illness.** Students who are ill, and especially any student with a rash, a fever, or any possible communicable disease, should not attend school. Parents whose

child has a contagious illness or health problem (such as chicken pox, strep throat, or lice) should let the office know as soon as possible. In case a child becomes ill at school, the Secretary will call the parent or a person designated by the parent on the child's emergency card – so it is important that daytime phone numbers and other information on the card be kept up to date.

***Independent Study Plans.*** If at any time it looks like a child will be absent from the school for five or more days, for whatever reason (including illness), parents are asked to inform the teacher as soon as possible so the teacher may prepare an Independent Study Plan (ISP). ISPs must be approved by the Principal, and prepared by a teacher in advance, and they must last at least five days. The purpose of an ISP is to provide educational activities a child can carry out during an absence, and in fact it allows the School to receive funding as if the child were present. Parents should keep in mind that the School loses funding for each absence without an ISP, whether or not the absence is legally “excused” – and that a longer absence with an ISP could make more educational sense than a shorter one without. [See BP and AR 6158 - Independent Study]

***Unexcused absences.*** Although, as explained above, the difference between “excused” and “unexcused” absences has no effect on funding, there are good reasons for avoiding unexcused absences. For one thing, in some cases parents may be prosecuted under truancy laws or charged with child neglect. For another, California law assures that students can receive credit for work made up following excused, but not unexcused, absences. Catching up after absences makes extra work for the teachers and takes away from their attentions to the other students. And most important, the child misses out on instruction—even a child who is doing well can be thrown off track by missing a particular exercise or bit of information. [See Education Code 48205 – Excused absences]

***Tardiness.*** Parents should make every effort to have their child arrive at school on time. Not only do children who are tardy miss part of the day's program, they disrupt others and can be embarrassed themselves. Habitual tardiness also counts as truancy and is punishable by law. *School starts every day at 8:35 a.m.*

***Absence Forms.*** Whenever a child has been absent from school for any reason, the parent must either send a signed and dated note stating the cause of the absence (a *Canyon Elementary School Absence Form* may be used) or phone the School Secretary with that information.

***Leaving School Grounds.*** Except as arranged by their parents for the end of the school day, students must never leave the school grounds without the permission of a teacher or the Principal/Superintendent.

## Safety

***Safety Plan.*** The District has developed a Comprehensive Safety Plan, which includes procedures for responding to disasters, threats, and ongoing safety concerns. A copy is available for review in the office. In accordance with the Safety Plan, regular fire drills and inspections are conducted, safety issues are

discussed in classes and assemblies, and members of the teaching staff receive training in first aid.

**Disasters.** In the event of a disaster, all efforts will be made to reach parents by phone. We use an automated Alert System to notify parents, please fill out the Alert Now System Telephone Request and give to the secretary in the office. A staff member will remain with children until all are picked up or a delegated parent takes over (all teachers are required by law to serve as emergency workers for up to three days in the event of a disaster). Staff will use their best judgment as to whether or not to remain on school grounds. If it becomes necessary to leave the school grounds, notes will also be placed on school doors and gates to indicate where students are. If it becomes necessary to evacuate Canyon, as in case of a large fire, refuge may be sought at the Moraga Public Library (1500 St. Mary's Road, 925-376-6852) or at the Montclair branch of the Oakland Public Library (1687 Mountain Blvd., 510-482-7810), depending on which direction provides the safer exit. Both libraries have parks nearby to meet at if the buildings are closed.

## Discipline

**Students** who violate rules may be subject to disciplinary actions, including but not limited to time out, being sent to the office, having a parent called, losing recess or another privilege, signing a behavior contract, or being suspended, expelled, or transferred to an alternative program, in accordance with Board policy and administrative regulation. [See BP 5131 - Conduct; BP and AR 5144 - Discipline; BP and AR 5144.1 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process]

**Parents and visitors** who disrupt classes or refuse to leave the school when asked are committing a misdemeanor and may be subject to arrest.

## Information about Parental Notifications

School districts are required by law to provide parental notifications in writing. Canyon Elementary School normally distributes written notifications by a combination of these means: placing them in the mailboxes provided for each family at the school; emailing them; or posting them at the school web site where they can be read, downloaded and/or printed. Parents may request to receive the annual parental notifications by any of these means, and when they have received them, they need to sign a form and return it to the office. [Our *Annual Parental Notifications Acknowledgment* form is included in the summer mailing].

The following topics are included in the parental notifications:

ABSENCES, EXCUSED  
 ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS  
 ANIMALS, RIGHT TO REFRAIN FROM HARMING  
 ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT  
 ATTENDANCE OPTIONS  
 CONFIDENTIAL MEDICAL SERVICES (7th and 8<sup>th</sup> grade)

COURSE PROSPECTUS AVAILABLE  
DIRECTORY INFORMATION, RELEASE OF  
DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES  
FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEALS  
HEALTH SCREENING EXAMINATION (KINDERGARTENERS)  
HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS  
IDENTIFICATION OF CHILDREN WITH EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS (CHILD FIND SYSTEM)  
IMMUNIZATIONS  
INSURANCE, AVAILABILITY OF  
MEDICAL AND HOSPITAL SERVICES NOT PROVIDED  
MEDICATION, STUDENTS ON  
NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY  
PARENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
PARENTAL ATTENDANCE REQUIRED IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES  
PHYSICAL EXAMINATION, REFUSAL TO CONSENT TO  
PESTICIDE PRODUCTS, USE OF  
PRIVACY POLICY  
QUALIFICATIONS OF TEACHERS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS  
SCHEDULE OF MINIMUM DAYS AND PUPIL-FREE STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAYS  
SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT CARD PROVIDED  
SEX EDUCATION, AIDS INSTRUCTION, AND VENERAL DISEASE INSTRUCTION  
SEX / HEALTH EDUCATION, EXCUSE FROM  
SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY  
STUDENT INTERNET ACCESS POLICY  
STUDENT RECORDS, RIGHT TO INSPECT  
STUDENT WITH TEMPORARY DISABILITIES  
UNIFORM COMPLAINT