

ORTEGA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HANDBOOK



A community full of lifelong learners!

Patrick Jackson, Principal

2021-2022

At Ortega Elementary School, our mission is to support staff and families in providing a safe and nurturing environment in which each student can be successful academically, socially, and emotionally, according to his or her potential.

ORTEGA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1283 Terra Nova Blvd.

Pacifica, CA 94044

650.738.6670 - Telephone 650.738.6672 - FAX

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."

PACIFICA SCHOOL DISTRICT

375 REINA DEL MAR AVENUE

PACIFICA, CA 94044

650.738.6600

www.PacificaSD.org

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

LAVERNE VILLALOBOS

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PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the 2021/22 school year! For families who may be new to the school, my name is Patrick Jackson and this will be my 7th year at Ortega School and 4th year as Principal. I am looking forward to sharing an exciting year of learning, exploration and growth with your students!

The important partnership between school and community is stronger than ever after the pandemic. This partnership is what drives instruction for our students and help to maintain the standard of education our students deserve. As a school, we want you to know that we are here to support you in any and every way we possibly can. At Ortega, we are dedicated in 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, whether students are engaged at home or in the classroom.

Now that we are back to full in-person instruction, I can't wait to see each and every Ortega family back here at school! Our Otters will have the opportunity to experience the traditions and culture of Ortega in-person and prepare themselves for the future. I look forward to a productive and incredible school year for all of our Otters!

Sincerely,

Patrick Jackson

Principal

ORTEGA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
TIME SCHEDULE

Regular Schedule

Wednesdays & Minimum Days

TK/KINDERGARTEN

8:30 – 12:30

8:30 – 12:30

(Kinder Beginning of Dec. starts Rotating, once a week 12:30-- 1:30)

RECESS: 10:30 – 10:50

GRADES 1 and 2

8:30 – 2:35

8:30 – 1:35

RECESS: 10:10 – 10:30 LUNCH TIME: 11:45 – 12:25

GRADE 3

8:30 – 2:35

8:30 – 1:35

RECESS: 10:30 – 10:50 LUNCH TIME: 12:30 – 1:10

GRADE 4 and 5

8:30 – 2:55

8:30 – 1:35

RECESS: 10:30 – 10:50 LUNCH TIME: 12:30 – 1:10

Ortega Elementary School Staff

FACULTY

Kinder: Robin Foster
Michelle Arenas
Chelsea McDow
Sharon Rios (TK)

First: Michelle Kale
Lisa DeVry
Gloria Fare

Second: Katherine Prescenzi
Meredith Shannon
Queenie Ngan

Third: Debbie Coberly
Noreen Abulencia
Sibyl Felts

Fourth: Gina Arguello
Debbie Andre

Fifth: Karen Stevenson (4/5 Combo)
Denise Chase
Diane Siegel
Jessica Parque

Special Education: Christina Bailey, Stephanie Symons, Jacqueline Leppa
Speech: Mary Carniglia, Jill Kirkendall
Psychologist: Darrel Costello

SUPPORT STAFF

Librarian: Julia Hall

Clerical: Tiffany Hanna, Tenishia Kavanaugh, Tarna Ramsey, Victoria Broadway,

Instructional: Cindy Szentkuti, Charlene Moore, Gail Barrett, Mimi Agunbiade, Marina Larrarte, Rondel Davis,
Mary Pilster, Rose McElearney

Custodial: Scott Newbold, Chris Sanford

Nutritional: Julie Gallagher, Rosaline Romero

GENERAL INFORMATION

Absences/Independent Study

If your child is absent from school, please telephone the school office (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. If you are unable to call the school, please have your child bring a note when he/she returns to school, containing the date(s) of absence, reason for absence, name of student and signature of parent or guardian. The State of California Code #12401 requires a written excuse for absence. **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.**

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 5 – 10 DAYS) AND LONG-TERM (ABSENCE OF 1 SEMESTER – 1 YEAR)**. It is important that your child be placed on Independent Study, if eligible. **Independent study must be requested and approved 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. Also, the District will receive full attendance credit. Your child’s teacher or the office would be happy to help you place your child on Independent Study.

Bicycles

Students who ride a bicycle or scooter to school must wear a helmet; a bike rack is available to park and lock one’s bicycle. Riding bicycles and scooters on campus from 8am-3pm is prohibited. Skateboards are not allowed at school.

Cafeteria

Students may bring or purchase their lunch. Money can be added to lunch accounts **in the office before school begins** and on-line at: <http://www.PacificaSD.org>. We also provide Breakfast for purchase each morning beginning at 8:00 AM.

Cellphones

Students are permitted to have cellphones; however, these devices should be turned off/silenced and stored away during school hours. Students will not be allowed to use cellphones during the school day except in emergency situations. Parents and students should make prior arrangements for rainy days, after-school activities, etc.

Class Parties/Special Activities

Class parties/special activities are held at the discretion of the teacher. Birthday celebrations and unhealthy snacks are strongly discouraged.

Conferences

Parents are always welcome to come to school and discuss class work. If a conference with a teacher is in order, please call or email for an appointment. When visiting school, adults must first sign in at the school office and have the secretary notify the teacher that the parent has arrived. Twice a year, teachers schedule parent-teacher conferences at a convenient time to discuss student progress.

Disaster Preparedness and Drills

In the event of a severe earthquake or other disaster during the school day, students will be kept on the school site with the faculty until such time as it is declared safe by the principal to dismiss the students. The principal will be in close contact with other agencies and make decisions based upon best judgment for the welfare of the students, in following the Big Five Safety Protocol (see below).

Each classroom has an emergency kit purchased by the district.

A fire and/or disaster drill is held monthly. These drills 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.

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.

School Rules/Discipline Plan

- **PAWS** – Students are expected to model **P**ositive behavior, **A**ct responsibly, **W**ork respectfully, and act **S**afely.
- **TEASING, NAME-CALLING, PUT-DOWNS,** or sexual innuendos of any type are not allowed on our school campus. Any child who feels victimized may approach their teacher, the office, our school psychologist, or the principal with concerns. Staff follows the guidelines and procedures in our **District Sexual Harassment Policy, AR 5145.7,** to stop such behavior and maintain a safe campus. Bullying is a suspendable offense, including cyber bullying that disrupts school.

- **ORTEGA SCHOOL IS A CLOSED CAMPUS.** This means that students are not allowed to leave school without permission. Any violation of the closed campus rule will subject the violator to disciplinary action.

- **DRESS CODE**

- Hats, hoods, knit caps, or other head covers while inside,
- Clothing should not distract from the learning environment: Wear appropriate shoes to school: No clothing with offensive pictures, words, or advocating drugs, alcohol, or gang affiliation. Tank tops must have 1" straps, shorts must extend past fingertips, and tops should not expose the student's mid-section.
- Ortega School will exercise its responsibility to determine whether a student's appearance is disruptive or disturbing to others.

- **DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

- **STOP AND THINK SLIPS** -- Stop and Think! Slips are a teacher-monitored system for tracking and documenting behavior. They are sent home for signature to keep parents/guardians informed of behaviors at school.
- **SUSPENSION AT HOME** – The student remains at home and is responsible to complete school assignments.
- **SUSPENSION IN SCHOOL** - The student works on assignments in school under the supervision of the school administrator.

- **PROHIBITED MATERIALS**

- **WEAPONS** – possession of any object with the potential to cause damage or injury to another person or their property. Pacifica Police may be notified.
- **SKATEBOARDS, ROLLER SKATES**, scooters, heely's, baseball bats, toys and other items disruptive to teaching and learning.
- **MATCHES, LIGHTERS**, stink bombs, and all types of noise-making devices are banned from school. The Pacifica Police may be notified.
- **NO GUM CHEWING ON CAMPUS.**
- **POSSESSION OF DRUGS, TOBACCO, OR ALCOHOL** is a violation of state law and is cause for suspension or expulsion from school. Pacifica Police may be notified.
- **LEAVE VALUABLE ITEMS AT HOME.**

- **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.

Emergency Forms

Every student must have an emergency form on file in the office. These forms should be brought up-to-date every 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, later, 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 can only be released to people listed on the section for emergency release. **Please be sure that several local emergency contacts are listed in the appropriate section.**

Immunizations

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

Library

The library is open during class time. Teachers discuss the procedures for going to the library during school hours. The school librarian explains procedures used for the Ortega Library. Each class has a regularly scheduled weekly library period. Additional time for study and projects is available.

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 semester are boxed and given to a non-denominational, non-profit welfare agency. Please label all rainwear, coats, jackets, sweaters, lunch boxes, backpacks and folders.

Lunch Loans

District policy is not to loan money for lunch. Students who do not have a lunch may visit the snack bar for fruit, vegetables, and milk. The District's Food Service Meal Policy is available online at www.pacificasd.org. Choose 'District Information' then 'Board Policies and Administrative Regulations'. Follow the on-line directions.

Medical

School personnel cannot diagnose or treat illnesses or previous injuries. Only 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. If a child is too ill to be in class, the child is too ill to remain in school.

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 telephone for urgent calls, not to make changes for social purposes.

Parental Rights Notification

At the beginning of each school year, the District provides a 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

Ortega is fortunate to have an active parent group. All parents are encouraged to become members and support this group's activities. Parent volunteers are needed to serve as classroom assistants, room parent, computer aides, librarians, 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.

Permission to Leave School

Permission to leave school for medical and dental appointments are issued by the office upon presentation of a note, or phone call, to the office by parent or guardian, requesting such action. Parents must sign students out in the office before leaving school and upon their return if it is within the same school day.

Police Involvement 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 web site.**

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.

Promotion, Retention, Acceleration – POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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. The text of Board Policy 5123 can be viewed online through the District web site. A copy is also available at the District Office at 375 Reina Del Mar Avenue.

Report Cards

Report Cards are sent home with students at the end of each trimester grading period. Students in grades K-5 receive report cards for three trimesters.

Snacks and Healthy Foods Policy

We encourage nutritious snacks such as: fruit, raisins, cheese and crackers, trail mix, carrot sticks, and celery sticks. Ortega class parties support a policy in which healthy snacks are strongly encouraged. All students have a snack recess in the morning.

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. Students must pay for lost or damaged books before a new book will be issued.

Tardiness

A student who arrives after 8:30 a.m. must report to the office for a tardy pass. This pass is necessary to be admitted to class. The office will closely monitor tardiness, and parents of chronically tardy students will be notified.

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 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. (Full text of District Wellness Policy may be found on the District Website)

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.

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.

Feedback

Students will be given regular feedback on their homework assignments. Each teacher will establish procedures in a manner that is appropriate for their individual classrooms.

Homework for Absent Students

Homework will be provided when students are to be absent more than one day. When homework is requested, parents should call the office early in the day and let us know how long it is anticipated the student absence will be. Homework will then be available to pick up from the office after 3:00 p.m. of the second day of the pupil's absence. Students are also encouraged to check with classmates about class assignments when they are absent.

Summary

Our goal is to make homework an integral part of a balanced curriculum as well as foster communication between the parent, child, and teacher.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

In a brief handbook, it is difficult to explain the entire instructional program at our school. Back-to-School Night, Parent-Teacher Conferences, and Open House will afford you additional opportunities to hear more thorough explanations. The following is a synopsis, by content area, of the instructional program your child will receive during his/her tenure at Ortega School.

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

The Ortega Elementary School staff shares the philosophy that listening, speaking, reading, and writing contain crucial skills that cannot be taught in isolation. Therefore, we focus on teaching these skills with an integrated and meaning-centered curriculum based in Reader's and Writer's Workshop. Our responsibilities lie in teaching primary students how to read and write and in teaching intermediate students how to gain fluency and confidence in reading and writing so that they may become independent learners. Ortega staff members are active participants on the District Literacy Team, and are working cooperatively with staff throughout the District to achieve early literacy for all students. The Ortega staff will implement all aspects of Balanced Literacy and 21st Century learning skills.

Teachers enrich the State framework for language arts by using lessons and ideas gained from our balanced literacy program. We believe that students can be taught the various steps of writing and reading using a workshop approach that strives to instruct each student at their level. A wide variety of material is available at Ortega School, including children's literature books, leveled books, and reference books. Throughout the grades we emphasize reading for meaning and for pleasure. Our well-stocked library is an integral part of a reading program.

MATHEMATICS

The goal of our mathematics program is for students to experience the enjoyment and fascination of mathematics as they gain confidence and skills using the Bridges Mathematics curriculum. We believe every student should be exposed to all of the strands of mathematics – numbers, measurement, geometry, patterns and functions, logic, algebra, and statistics and probability on a regular basis.

At Ortega, we believe the early years of mathematics education are critical to children's later attitudes and achievement. Therefore, we incorporate many experiential activities and math games with manipulative materials starting in kindergarten. Children work in small groups to solve problems and work with various materials such as pattern blocks, cubes, dice, geoboards, attribute blocks, number tiles, and calculators. Computer-based programs are also sometimes used to practice computation and develop more effective problem solving strategies. In addition, students explain their thinking, orally and in writing, and build their understanding of mathematics over a long period of time.

HISTORY/SOCIAL SCIENCE

Our history-social science program helps all students to develop their potential for personal, civic, and professional life. Goals of the curriculum include: 1) acquisition of basic knowledge and cultural understanding; 2) understanding democratic and civic values; and 3) skills attainment and social participation.

A variety of materials, resources, strategies, and technologies are used to engage students. Much of the literature used to enhance the curriculum emphasizes heroes, adventure, moral challenges, faraway places and distant times so that students' imaginations are captivated. The elementary program encompasses numerous opportunities for interdisciplinary studies. The history-social science program is augmented with field trips, assemblies, projects, children's literature, and community projects.

SCIENCE

Our science program is designed to offer students a variety of experiences at all levels, in alignment with NGSS. The curriculum becomes more specialized as children progress through the grade levels. Throughout the K-5 program, each student is exposed to life, physical, and earth sciences. We are most fortunate at Ortega in that our students have the opportunity to work in our large science lab and garden/greenhouse area.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

The essence of our school site is visible in our student-produced art. Artistic and dramatic products are extensions of teaching experiences in social science, language arts and reading, and science. Hallway exhibits highlight student achievement throughout the year, demonstrating lessons in use of materials, form and function, texture, perspective, and artistic style.

Our Parent-Teacher Organization supports this curriculum with assemblies, and the Pacifica Education Foundation supports Ortega with music and poetry programs. Staff recognizes that artistic achievement is an expressive and imaginative outlet for many children.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HEALTH EDUCATION

Motor skills, fitness, and sportsmanship are emphasized through the Playworks program. This program gives young children additional experience with balance, hand-eye coordination, games, and dance that results in enhanced skills and self-confidence. Students in the upper grades take part in a regularly scheduled PE. Stamina, flexibility, muscle strengthening, game skills, and dance are components of the PE curriculum at Ortega School. Activities de-emphasize winning and losing and stress the importance of self-improvement and activity participation.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Ortega Elementary School proudly hosts a Special Education program for students with special needs. Supports include teacher specialists and instructional assistants, supplemental materials, computer-assisted learning, and tutoring. Special Education students participate in all school activities and are enrolled in Special Day classes or general education classes.

ORTEGA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CALENDAR
Early Out Days and Holidays (Wednesdays are all minimum days)

2021-2022

August

18 School Begins! (Early Out)
19-20 Early Out

September

02 Back to School Night (Early Out)
06 **Labor Day Holiday**

October

08 PD Day – NO SCHOOL
29 Halloween (Early Out)

November

11 **Veteran's Day School Holiday**
15-19 Parent Conferences (Early Out Days)
22-26 **Thanksgiving Recess**

December

21 Early Out
22-04 **Winter Recess**

January

05 School Resumes
17 **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day School Holiday**

February

14 Valentine's Day
21-25 **President's Week**
28 PD Day – NO SCHOOL

March

15-19 Parent Conferences (Early Out Days)

April

11-15 **Spring Conference Week**
15 Early Out
18-22 Spring Recess

May

5 **Open House (Early Out)**
30 Memorial Day

June

6-7 Early Out
9 Last Day of School