

Cottonwood Creek Elementary School
Cougar Handbook

Cherry Creek School District Mission
“To inspire every student to think, to learn, to
achieve, and to care.”



Dear Parents,

Our Parent Handbook serves as a tool to communicate some of our school's expectations, rules, procedures, and norms. However, this handbook is not inclusive of all school or district policies and procedures. The items listed in this document answer many of the frequently asked questions received by our staff. You are always encouraged to contact us with any other questions you may have. We hope that you find this handbook to be a valuable resource as we progress through the school year together.

As always, thanks for your continued support and cooperation in maintaining an optimal learning environment for all children.

Sincerely,

The Cottonwood Creek Staff

Communication

We believe strongly that communication between the school and the home is critical for student success. We attempt to keep parents informed and gather parental ideas and input about school activities.

- Each grade level has a consistent system for sending home graded student work and school information. Some grades utilize Friday Folders, while others send information home daily. Please look in your child's backpack, and go through the contents thoroughly. Notify your child's teacher if there is anything about which you need more information.
- The school newsletter, The Courier, is published and sent home via email or with each family's youngest child at Cottonwood Creek every other Friday. Please contact the main office if you are currently receiving a hard copy but would prefer to have it sent to you electronically. The Courier contains details concerning current educational topics, school committee news, upcoming dates, events, and school information. The Courier can also be found on our school's website.
- Our school website is www.cot.ccsd.k12.co.us

Telephone Usage

The main number for Cottonwood Creek Elementary is 720-554-3200. Office hours are from 7:30-4:30 Monday through Friday.

To report an absence from school, please leave a message in the attendance mail box (720-554-3295) stating the date, student's name, teacher, and reason for the absence.

Except in cases of an absolute emergency, teachers are not called to the telephone during school hours. Staff members will make every effort to return calls during their planning times and after school. Our goal is to return all phone calls within 24 hours.

Parents should feel free to call the school at any time. The school office staff will make every effort to deliver important messages to students at the end of the day or during a break in the class schedule. To ensure that students receive messages before they are dismissed, it is necessary for you to call at least 30 minutes prior to the end of the school. Students are allowed to use the telephone only for emergencies or as requested by a staff member. We believe students need to learn responsibility and to plan ahead. Students are strongly encouraged not to call their parents to bring forgotten homework or musical instruments or to make arrangements for after school plans. All plans for after school activities must be arranged prior to coming to school. We ask for parental support with these procedures.

There may be times when students need to bring cell phones with them to school. If your child needs a cell phone, it must be put away and turned off during the school day. If it is a disruption, the phone will be confiscated by a staff member and returned to the child's parent. The school is not responsible for cell phones that may be lost or stolen.

Use of Electronics

Students should not bring electronic equipment to school. Again, the school will not be responsible for any electronic devices that may be lost or stolen.

Student Progress Report Cards and Conferences

All students will receive a progress report three times per year. Teachers will meet with all parents and students at least two times during the year. Our conference weeks are scheduled by the school district. Additionally, parents may request a conference at other times with their child's teacher or other teachers who work with their child. Teachers and parents are encouraged to have children be a part of these meetings whenever both feel it is appropriate. Kindergarten teachers will meet with parents and students in their classrooms during the first two days of the school year.

Conference Dates - 11/5-11/9 and 2/25-3/1

TCAP (CSAP) Testing Schedule

TSAP stands for Transitional Student Assessment Program. The test was formerly known as CSAP. It includes a series of tests that are intended to measure student achievement in relation to the Colorado Model Content Standards. These standards identify what students should know at specific grade levels.

There are several ways that you can help to ensure that your child demonstrates success on this important assessment. A good rest on the nights before the test is crucial. Children who are tired are less able to pay attention in class or to handle the demands of the test. A healthful breakfast is also important. Hunger can reduce a good test performance. Make sure that your child is present and on time for the test. Do not plan medical appointments or family vacations on testing days. For specific testing dates and times, please consult your child's classroom teacher.

School Wide Behavior Plan and Expectations

One of our goals at Cottonwood Creek is to promote responsible and respectful student behavior. We must provide students with both the freedom of choice for making responsible decisions as well as carefully defined expectations that allow our school to be a safe and orderly place for learning. Our expectations at Cottonwood Creek are aligned with the Cherry Creek School District.

Students at Cottonwood Creek Elementary ROAR!

- Respect
- Own It
- Attitude
- Responsibility

Our Cougar Pledge

We encourage you to practice and review the pledge at home to reinforce our school's expectations.

Today I will show Respect for people and property. I will take Ownership for my behavior. I will have a positive Attitude, and I will be a Responsible citizen in our learning community.

School Wide Positive Behavior Rewards

Several times each year, teachers will nominate students in their classes for “Licensed to ROAR!” Awards. Students will also be recognized in The Courier and on the ROAR bulletin board at school.

Referrals

Referrals will be written for severe infractions that involve any of the following:

- Fighting
- Destruction of property
- Possession of controlled substances or weapons
- Harassment or threats
- Adult defiance
- Repeated offenses

Adults observing the inappropriate behavior will fill out a referral form and take the student and information about the incident to the office. The administrator will discuss the infraction with the student, determine appropriate consequences, sign the referral form, and contact the student’s parents.

Student Safety

The safety of students at Cottonwood Creek is of primary concern to all personnel at school. Rules and procedures to maintain safety have been established in the following areas:

Safe Walk Plan To and From School

- Walk on sidewalks or facing traffic if you must walk where there is no sidewalk.
- Cross only at marked crosswalks or at street corners.
- Look both ways for traffic and cars turning before crossing the street.
- Walk, rather than run, even if you think you may be late for school.
- Encourage students to walk in groups and not alone.

Bikes at School

- Students are welcome to ride their bicycles to school.
- Students are required to wear safety helmets when riding their bicycles.
- Students must walk their bikes in pedestrian traffic and while on school grounds.
- Students must park their bikes in the bicycle racks provided and secure them with a lock.
- The school will not be responsible for damaged or stolen bikes.
- Students may not ride their bikes during the school day, such as at recess or lunch.
- The consequence for failure to respect these important rules will be temporary or permanent loss of bike riding privileges.

Skateboard, Rollerblade, and Scooter Safety

- Roller blades are not to be worn on school grounds.
- Students may “blade” to school, but should remove the rollerblades at the edge of school property and place them in a back pack until the end of the school day. The same policy applies to skateboards.
- Helmets must be worn while skateboarding or rollerblading.
- Scooters must be walked when on school grounds.
- Students must be able to fold them up and carry them into school to be stored in an appropriate place that does not cause a safety hazard.

Bus Safety

In the interest of the safety and welfare of Cottonwood’s school bus passengers, we will follow the Board of Education’s adopted strict bus disciplinary regulation. If there are questions concerning this policy, you may contact either Cottonwood Creek or the district’s transportation department at 720-554-4654 during normal school hours.

Car Safety

A School Resource Officer from the Arapahoe Sheriff’s Office frequently monitors traffic at our school. Please adhere to all street signage. When dropping off or picking up students, it is critical that we all observe common safety procedures. Please remember that there is precious cargo being delivered and picked up each day. Students should exit and enter your vehicle from the curbside. To keep the line of traffic moving, once your child has exited the vehicle, please move forward at a safe pace.

Animals/Pets at School

Due to allergies, fur and feather bearing animals are not allowed in classrooms. Animals (including insects) may not be transported on school buses. Please do not bring pets when walking your child(ren) to school or when picking students up at the end of the day. The only reason an animal is allowed on school property is if a classroom teacher deems its presence to be integral for instructional/curricular purposes.

Photographs

Photographs and videos may be taken by families throughout the school year to capture special events as well as daily activities. No newspaper, outside agencies, and the like are allowed to publish photographs and/or videotapes of children unless a release has been signed by the parent/guardian.

Severe Weather Procedures

In the event of severe weather, listen to your radio or television, or look at the District Web Site www.ccsd.k12.co.us for notification of school closing, delayed opening or early

dismissal. Please note that these decisions are made by the district office and not at the school site. These decisions are based on safety concerns for all Cherry Creek School District's students.

Severe weather may cause schools to be closed for an entire day or days. The Cherry Creek School District will attempt to make a decision on the status of the next day prior to the 10:00 P.M. news. In some cases, the decision will be made early in the morning, and announcements will be on the 6:00 A.M. news.

The district's Weather Hotline is 720-554-4702.

Occasionally, the weather permits schools to open later than the normal time. A delayed opening schedule is used on these days to avoid closing school for the entire day. On these days, bus schedules will be delayed by 1 hour for elementary schools. Cottonwood Creek students will arrive at 10:00 A.M.

It may be necessary to dismiss students early because of severe weather. Elementary students should be prepared in advance in the event of early dismissal. Please work out a plan and discuss it with your children. We suggest that arrangements are made for children to stay with a friend or neighbor when parents are not at home. Parents should give each student's teacher a form outlining the plan.

Please make sure emergency contact information is updated in the main office.
Students will only be able to leave school with individuals listed on the parent/guardian approval form.

The principal may call late dismissals when there is sudden weather that could be dangerous to students near dismissal time. Children will remain in their classrooms or designated safe areas until the danger has passed. If you wish to pick up your children during severe weather, please stop at the school office, and they will contact your child. In the event that we are under a severe weather warning, we will ask parents to wait in safe areas with staff and children until the danger has passed. If you are unable to pick up your child(ren), please discuss alternate plans with a neighbor or friend who is available to pick them up for you, and let your child(ren) know what arrangements have been made for their safe transport home. Please let the office know when alternate plans have been made.

School-Wide Homework Policy

The goal of homework is to help students meet or exceed academic expectations.

The purposes of homework are:

- to reinforce skills previously taught.
- to extend and/or enrich concepts.
- to develop responsibility and good study habits.
- to provide opportunities to demonstrate learning for self, parents, and teachers.

Some reasons that homework may be given are:

- completion of assignments.
- preparation for the next day's work.
- make-up work due to absence.
- parent request.
- student request.
- to practice skills in literacy and numeracy.

Daily time allocations for homework, not including silent reading, by grade level are as follows:

Kindergarten 10 minutes

First grade 10-20 minutes

Second grade 20-30 minutes

Third grade 30-40 minutes

Fourth grade 40-50 minutes

Fifth grade 50-60 minutes

Homework should be done after school hours. Students who are absent are responsible for requesting and completing missed assignments. There will be limited or no homework given during vacation times or on weekends.

Homework assignments may be differentiated based on students' needs.

Student's Role:

- spend allotted time completing homework.
- if finished early, use remainder of allotted time for reading, math facts, etc.
- communicate with parents and teacher about homework concerns.
- turn in homework on time.
- use the student planner to track your homework.

Parents' Role:

- encourage proper study habits.
- provide a regular time and place for homework.
- monitor and acknowledge homework completion.
- monitor the time and effort spent completing homework (if time spent is

less than allotted, ensure that additional time is spent on reading, math facts, etc.)

- if time spent is frequently more than allotted, communicate this with the teacher.
- follow the teacher's homework expectation system.
- sign off on homework completion according to the grade level system.
- monitor use of the student planner.

Teacher's Role:

- have a system in place to communicate with parents and students about homework expectations and how parents can best assist their child.
- periodically seek feedback regarding homework (e.g., through conferences, newsletters, via email) at a minimum of two times per year.
- set up a system by grade level for parents to monitor homework completion at least weekly.
- monitor use of the student planner.

Custody Paperwork

Please let the office know of any concerns about family custody situations involving your child(ren). In order for our office to support the needs of your family, we must have current court documentation on file each school year.

Lost and Found

Personal property that your child brings to school should be plainly marked with the owner's name. We keep lost and found items in a box located near the library. It should be checked often for missing items. Periodically, the unclaimed contents are donated to charity organizations. Although the school takes every precaution to safeguard private property, no responsibility can be assumed for articles brought to school.

Student Code of Conduct Booklets

Our school's norms for student behavior align with The Cherry Creek School District Student Code of Conduct and Discipline. The policies, procedures and rules in the Code of Conduct booklet have been formally adopted by our Board of Education. As a community we are committed to enforcing and upholding the regulations for the safety and learning of all students. Please make certain that you take time to read and review this district document.

School Visitations

For the safety of our children, we ask that all visitors report to the office upon entering the building and obtain a visitors sticker. We ask that you sign in and out on the Visitors List at the front desk. As a matter of courtesy and to maximize the effectiveness of your visit, please contact your child's teacher ahead of time to determine the length of your visit and the day's activities. While visiting, keep in mind that children are easily distracted by conversation between adults. Discussions should be saved for a conference time that the teacher will be happy to schedule with you. Occasionally students will have out-of-town company. These visitors are welcome to spend lunchtime with our students, but class time is for registered students only. Children who are not enrolled at

Cottonwood Creek are not permitted to visit classrooms unless accompanied by an adult. You may visit with your child's classroom teacher if you have a specific request. Our goal is to limit classroom schedule interruptions as much as possible.

School Entrances

Anyone entering the school grounds during the school day must use the main entrance and report to the school office before proceeding elsewhere. We welcome parents and community members to visit the school any time, but we want to ensure that students are always safe. The front door is the only entrance accessible to visitors during the school day for security reasons. A doorbell system is monitored by our front office staff. All other doors will remain locked during the day.

The School Day

The school day for grades 1-5 is from 9:00 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. The first bell rings at 8:55 A.M., the tardy bell at 9:00 A.M. Outdoor supervision begins at 8:45 A.M. each morning. Please make sure children do not arrive earlier than 8:45 for their safety. Supervisions after school dismissal ends at 3:45. If you need to drop students off earlier than 8:45 a.m. or pick them up after 3:45 p.m., we ask that you contact Karen Spears in our Kids Club Program at 720-554-3266 to register for before and/or after school care.

Kindergarten School Day

Morning kindergarten begins at 9:00 A.M. and they are dismissed at 11:50 A.M. Afternoon kindergarten begins at 12:40 P.M. and they are dismissed at 3:30 P.M.

Arrival Procedures

Students should arrive at school no earlier than 8:45 A.M. (unless prior arrangements have been made with a staff member). Outdoor supervision is provided for students beginning at 8:45 A.M. When students arrive on campus (between 8:45 and 9:00 A.M.) they must refrain from play on the fields and equipment and line up on the blacktop with their classmates near each grade level door.

As you drop children off by vehicle, make sure they get out on the curbside only. The drop off lane is the lane nearest to the front of the building. If students are riding bikes or skateboards to school, we ask that they do not ride on school property. Children are required to walk bikes/carry skateboards until they are on a public sidewalk.

Students must adhere to using assigned grade level doors. Our main office, located at the front door, is a busy place each morning. Having students ring the doorbell and enter the main hallway creates congestion and increases traffic in this already busy space. Please respect this school procedure even if you are volunteering or attending a parent meeting that same day. We are asking that you drop off your children at their respective grade level doors, and then you may come to the front door and check in at the main office.

Dismissal Procedures

Students are dismissed from school at 3:30. Parents may pick up their children at the end of the school day outside of their assigned grade level doors or at the front of the building. Classroom teachers will escort students out of the grade level exterior doors, and the teachers will wait until all students disperse and have been accounted for. Parents who are driving may utilize the drop-off and pick-up lane at the front of the school building or park their cars in designated parking spaces. Please follow the posted signs when picking up students. As a courtesy to those needing handicapped spaces, please do not stop or park in front of them.

Late Arrivals

Students who arrive at school after the starting time of 9:00 A.M. must sign in at the school office prior to going to class. The student will be given a late pass to take to the teacher and the attendance record will be corrected. To excuse a late arrival in advance, please call the attendance line, 720-554-3295, and leave a message in the voice mailbox.

Attendance and Reporting Absences

Regular attendance is an important ingredient in a student's overall school success. We monitor students' attendance carefully and contact parents if a pattern of frequent absence or consistent tardiness exists. If your child has a medical problem that may hinder his or her school attendance, a note from your doctor would be helpful to us. In some cases, a written doctor's excuse may be required. When your student is ill and needs to remain at home, please call the attendance voice mailbox each day. Please call every day your child is to be away from school. To place information in the attendance voice mailbox, you may call the school between the hours of 4:30 P.M. and 7:30 A.M. You will need to say your child's name, teacher's name and reason for the absence or tardy. Our office staff places calls daily to parents of unreported absentees.

Written notice is required for all absences of which you have prior knowledge such as family vacations, doctor appointments, or other special events.

The parent should be presented written notice to both the office and the teacher prior to the absence and should include the following information:

- Date of note
- Reason for absence
- Date/dates of absence
- Signature of parent/guardian

We strongly discourage taking your student out of school for family vacations, but we recognize that these are unusual opportunities and exceptions can be made. In order for vacation time to count as an excused absence, two things must happen

- : • Parents must notify teacher a week in advance.
- Arrangements must be made for the student's missed assignments to be completed when he/she returns to school.

Leaving During The School Day

If your child must leave school early due to special circumstances such as a doctor appointment, please report to the school office whereupon the student will be called from his/her classroom for dismissal. Parents will always sign students out at the office when they are picked up prior to the regular dismissal time. NO student will be permitted to leave the school with any other adult unless the parent or guardian has given us permission in writing to release the student in that person's custody. Identification may be required in these situations.

Student Withdrawals

Let us know as soon as possible if you will be moving. It is imperative that your child return all school-owned books and materials. Early notification will enable your child's new school to receive his/her records more promptly. As families leave Cottonwood Creek Elementary, we will be happy to forward student records to the new school once we have received a signed release from the receiving school. Our purpose for this policy is to provide you with the most effective and efficient way of transferring this important confidential information.

Lunch Program

Students will have approximately twenty minutes to eat lunch in the cafeteria and twenty minutes to play outdoors. Teachers escort students to the cafeteria, and Teacher Assistants supervise the children while eating, transferring to the playground, and playing outdoors. Please contact our cafeteria staff with any questions regarding our lunch program. They can be reached at 720-554-3271.

Lunchroom Conduct

We expect our lunchroom to be a reflection of proper meal-time manners and courtesies taught and expected at home. Children are expected to use proper manners and follow all lunchroom rules because of the large number of students gathered together.

Specific rules and procedures include:

- Select one seat for the entire lunch period. Moving from one table to another is not appropriate.
- Speak using indoor voices.
- Many students have food allergies. Because of this, we ask that students do not share food with one another.
- When students are finished eating, we ask that they clean their tables and line up to go out for recess.

Snacks

Snacks can be purchased from the cafeteria and may be eaten during lunchtime. Students may bring a healthy snack to school from home each day. Teachers

will decide the most appropriate time for snacks in their class schedule. Families are responsible for determining what a healthy snack might consist of for their child(ren). As teachers give rewards in their classes, they will consider the nutritional value of the treat or possibly give non-food items. Cottonwood Creek is a state model school for our Health and Wellness pilot program. This program was created in 2006 by our school's principal and P.E. teacher to promote healthy living for all students. The Student Nutrition Center (SNC) will be providing educational materials/handouts to our school throughout the school year. Some of the topics will include: Healthy Breakfast, Healthy Birthday snack options, Healthy Snacks, Background of the SNC program, Benefits of Chocolate Milk and many others. Please look for these handouts in upcoming newsletters or at the main office. For other information regarding health, wellness and the SNC please visit www.ccsdcafe.org.

Before and After School Care Program

This program offers a variety of activities including dance, tennis, crafts, and computers. It is held every day that school is in session. Students in grades K-5 are welcome as long as they are registered in the program. The hours are 6:30 A.M. to 9:00 A.M. and 3:30 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.

Extended Day Kindergarten Program - KEP

This program is designed for Cottonwood Creek kindergartners during the half days that they are not in their regular kindergarten classroom. Children participate in a variety of fun activities. Children who are enrolled in morning kindergarten may attend Kindergarten Enrichment in the afternoons, and those who are enrolled in afternoon kindergarten may attend KEP each morning. Lunch is provided only for kindergarten students who participate in the Kindergarten Enrichment program. Children must attend the program five days a week.

Dress Code

We believe a student's behavior and attitude are related to his or her appearance. It is our desire to foster good grooming and good judgment. With this in mind, parents should convey the following guidelines to their children:

- Clothing advertising inappropriate products or containing inappropriate language will not be permitted.
- Exceptionally short skirts or shorts, crop tops, halter tops, muscle shirts, "low-riding" shorts or pants and other similar attire will be considered "extreme dress". Should "extreme dress" cause disruption to the education process, students may be asked to alter their attire by having parents deliver appropriate clothing.
- Hats and sunglasses are not to be worn in the building other than for special occasions. We encourage students to wear hats and sunglasses during outside activities such as recess to avoid prolonged sun exposure.
- On days when students participate in P.E., they should wear gym-type shoes and clothes suitable for running and other activities. Dresses may be worn with shorts, sweats, or tights underneath them.
- During periods of inclement weather, please be sure that your child comes to school with appropriate clothing including: boots, hat, gloves, socks, coat, etc.

- Children will have outdoor recess except in cases of severe weather. Only children wearing snow boots (or the equivalent) will be permitted off the blacktop areas when we have snow on the ground.
- Children should have closed toe/closed heel shoes if they are going to play in the pebbled, equipment areas of the playground for safety purposes.

Illness

Children who complain of illness are sent to the health room located near the main office. Once checked by our school nurse, if deemed necessary, we make every effort to contact you or the emergency number so that your child can be taken home to recuperate in a comfortable place. Because of the limited amount of space in the health room for children who are ill, you are expected to make arrangements to pick up your child right away. Sick students will not be sent home when no adult is present. Students who are sent home must be free of fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or contagious conditions for 24 hours before returning to school.

Parents of students with known health problems should consult with the school nurse in order to provide more information as to how they prefer the school to handle that specific problem. This information will be put on a health care action plan that is attached to the student's enrollment form.

Only children with a doctor's note will be kept in from recess for either illness or injuries. As needed, students who suffer from severe allergies and/or asthma, will be allowed to remain inside during recess times.

Accidents

Most injuries occurring at school require minimal assistance, which will be administered by school personnel. If your child has a serious accident while at school, we will first attempt to contact the parents at home or at work. Failing that, we will contact the emergency names and numbers and/or the doctor listed on your enrollment sheet. The school nurse and/or office staff will determine when and if paramedics should be summoned.

It is extremely important to have current and updated information on emergency names and numbers in the office!

Medication

It is recommended, whenever possible, that students take medicines before and after school rather than during the school day. All medications administered at school must be kept in the nurse's office and released from there. The office keeps record of all medications given at school and will notify parents when a child's prescription is running low. No student should ever bring prescription or non-prescription medicines to school.

Prescription Medication: If prescription medications must be given at school, they

must be brought by parents in a clearly labeled original pharmacy bottle with the student's name, physician's name, dosage, name of medication, and current dates. A medication release form signed by both the parent and the doctor must accompany the medicine authorizing its release. It is the responsibility of the child to arrive at the office at the appointed time to take his/her medication. When a child cannot meet his/her responsibility, individual arrangements will be made. Changes in prescriptions must be documented in writing by your physician so that we can accommodate the new dosage.

Non-prescription Medication (over-the-counter): These require the same form and procedures as for prescription medication. They are also kept in the school office.

Tylenol/Acetaminophen: This is available for complaints such as: headache, toothache, muscle pain, menstrual cramps, or fever. A signed parent permission form must be on file in the school office each school year for students to receive this medication from the nurse's office.

School Schedule

Grade Level	Specials Time (Art/Music/P.E./Health)	Lunch Café Time	Lunch Recess Time
Kindergarten A.M.	9:55-10:40	11:50-12:15	12:15-12:35
Kindergarten P.M.	2:40-3:25	11:50-12:35	12:15-12:35
First Grade	1:55-2:40	12:40-1:00	12:15-12:40
Second Grade	12:20-1:05	1:25-1:50	1:05-1:25
Third Grade	11:30-12:15	1:05-1:25	1:25-1:50
Fourth Grade	10:40-11:25	11:25-11:50	11:50-12:10
Fifth Grade	9:10-9:55	12:15-12:40	12:40-1:00