

Marsh School

Family Handbook

2014-2015

"The Sunshine School..."



Artwork by Margaret Garcia. Class of 2013

Members of Our School Family

Robert Webb, Superintendent
Kristin Steed, Principal and Early Childhood Coordinator

Secretary
Cindy Golden

Preschool Team
Lori Christensen
Kim Maestas
Jenny Noonan
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Kindergarten Teachers
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Title 1 Teacher
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Food Service
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Teresa Flores

Nurse K - 12
Angela Bergann

Monte Vista School District

OUR VISION IS TO ACHIEVE EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE BY PREPARING STUDENTS,
PARENTS, STAFF, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS FOR THE FUTURE

Our mission is to inspire the pursuit of excellence, one student at a time.

At our school we say -

Marsh School...

...where purposeful play propels our bright futures -

-and-

Our mission is to provide children a “just right” place filled with
purposeful play -

A place to grow in the knowledge that each is loved and
can love others,

A place to be innocent among trustworthy adults and
caring friends,

A place where the spark of creativity is fueled by good
food and activity indoors and out,

A place where it's safe to make mistakes while learning
to focus and have self-control,

A place to ponder good questions and share ideas,

A place to embrace challenges and choose to learn...
...a place we all want to be!



At Marsh School, we focus our attention on four principles:

- Family Connections
- A Safe and Happy School
- Wellness & Wellbeing
- and Early Learning

The information in this handbook is organized by these same principles.

Family Connections

Family members are encouraged to visit our school and volunteer in our classrooms. These visits provide opportunities for families to be involved in our school's daily educational environment. We welcome and encourage family participation in a variety of ways that include, but are not limited to, the following:

Early Childhood Improvement Team

The Early Childhood Improvement Team is a group of Marsh parents and staff members that serves in an advisory and support capacity. The team assists the school in achieving the high, but achievable, goals and objectives related to improving our school climate, environment, and instruction. Members of this team design and implement effective plans for the improvement of our school, make decisions as the Colorado Preschool Program District Council, help plan special events (i.e. parent/teacher conferences and open houses), promote our school to the community, encourage other parents to be involved in school activities, and host family events.

Volunteering

Parents are encouraged to help in our classrooms or in our school if they would like to. We ask that they make arrangements to meet with you or the front office staff to find out how they can best support in the classroom or school. We often need extra support during events like vision and hearing screenings and book fairs.



Frequent Visits

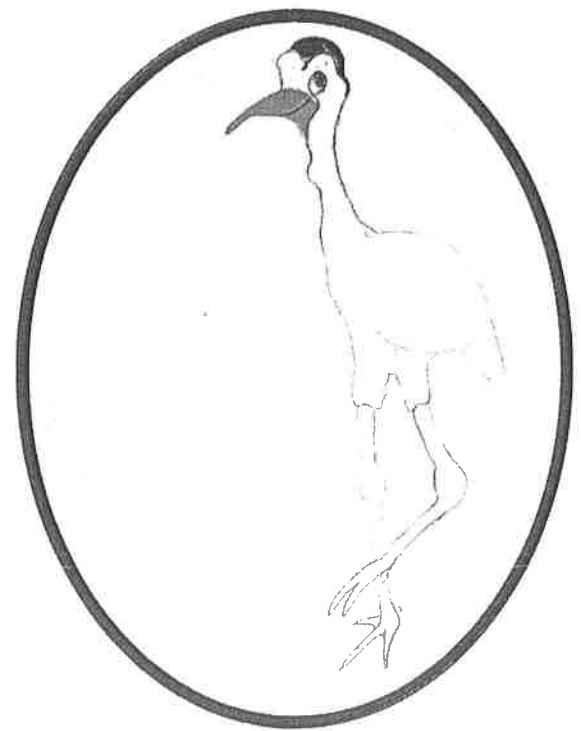
Family members are welcome to join us for lunch or come and visit our classrooms. The more adults that are at the tables with children, the more opportunities they have to share their stories, learn new words and experience the joy of conversation.

Safe and Happy School

Creating and maintaining a safe and positive school climate is a top priority in Monte Vista, where we have implemented Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Capturing Kids Hearts (CKH). Both are district-wide initiatives. Rather than a program, PBIS is a framework that encourages positive behavior in students and staff by teaching, practicing and affirming common behavior expectations. Our Early Childhood Improvement Team reviews school-wide behavior data and proactively plans strategies to maintain a positive climate as needed. CKH provides us with many of the strategies that support our positive environment: Meet and Greet, Social Contracts, Good Things, Reflective Questioning, and Launches, etc.)

Consequently, in our positive environment, we support families in developing strong, resilient children. We believe that the lessons they learn in these early years help them develop perspective-taking, self-control, persistence in problem-solving and the ability to make choices that benefit themselves and others.

As staff members at Marsh, we recognize "discipline events" as "learning events" - an opportunity to practice these positive behaviors. In partnership with families, we guide students in making good decisions about their behaviors at school and the wider world. All behavior expectations at Marsh School are designed with children's wellbeing and safety in mind.



All school staff members will aim to be consistent and give children:

- a. A clear understanding of what is expected of them.
- b. Specific feedback when behavior is and is not appropriate.
- c. An opportunity to apply problem-solving skills and correct an unwise choice.
- d. A clear understanding of the consequences of a given choice.

Children will not be withheld from physical education classes and recess as a negative consequence for academic or behavioral issues, except on the rare occasion that it is written into an individual learning plan as an intervention that supports the child's own and/or others sense of safety and well-being. Additionally, in some instances, a child may lose their privilege to choose what and where to play on the playground for a limited amount of time as we support his/her ability to increase self-regulation.

Although the need is rare at this age level, disciplinary action shall be taken for violations of the Monte Vista Public Schools' Policy Handbook. Copies of the handbook are available on our district website and parents are requested to sign a form at the beginning of each school year indicating their review of this on-line publication. Only one form is needed for each family and it needs to be returned to their youngest child's school office. By request, hard copies can be obtained at Marsh School.

We care for our children and want to be a partner in supporting their growth as individuals who are capable, cooperative, and caring.

Visitor Sign-In Procedure

In order to increase the level of safety in our building, it is important that we are able to recognize one another and that introductions are made repeatedly as parents and staff members learn one another's names and faces. We would like to encourage you to approach family members, shake hands and introduce yourself in our building and we will do the same. All visitors to our school are asked to sign in at the front office and make a nametag before entering our hallways and classrooms. We know that this adds an extra step to visiting at our school, but we believe that it will go a long way toward keeping all our children safer. Please enter through the front doors on the east side of our school near the flag and Cindy will greet you at the reception window. Parents are also expected to check out at the front office as they are leaving the school.

Children who are not enrolled, but would like to visit our school (i.e. visiting relatives) must be accompanied by an adult due to limitations imposed by our insurance policy.

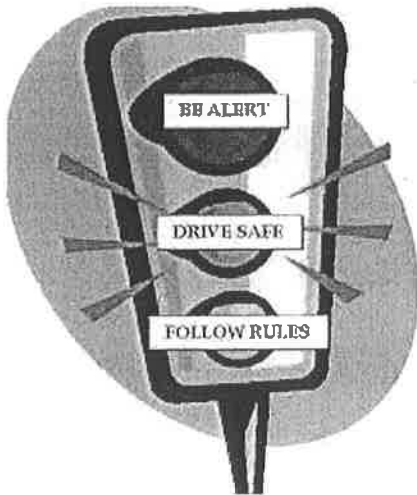
Change of Address/Phone

In case of emergency it is imperative that we have the correct address and phone numbers to reach parents/guardians. If you move or have a change in your phone service please contact the school immediately so we can update our emergency information card.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

East Entrance on Lyell Street

The main entrance into Marsh School is the set of doors near the flagpole on Lyell Street. There are two types of drop-offs in front of our school. The first one is the "kiss-and-go curb" on the north half of the block when traveling southbound. Here, you can pull up to the curb and children can leave their vehicles and enter the building on their own. The second area is on the south half of the block where diagonal parking is available for you to park and leave your car in order to escort your child into the school.



The traffic flow around Marsh will progress as follows:

- From Highway 160 turn north on Franklin Street
- Make a right turn (east) on Huxley Ave.
- Turn right again onto Lyell Street
- Vehicle traffic will travel south on Lyell St.

to the designated drop-off and pick-up areas. School staff members will help children enter the school or locate and join their families safely.

- The west bound curb of Huxley Avenue will serve as parking for staff members and guest employees.
- From the north-bound (east) curb on Lyell Street vehicles may park and walk their children to the safety box printed on the street and wait for a school guard to give them permission to cross. **CHILDREN MAY ONLY CROSS AT THE CROSSWALKS!**
- **DO NOT** park and/or leave your vehicle on Huxley Avenue along the southern curb or on Lyell St. along the south-bound (west) curb between 7:15am-7:45am or 2:30pm-3:45pm. You may be subject to being ticketed and/or towed.

Bus Delivery and Pick -Up

- School buses will deliver and pick-up students in the alley on the west side of the building. The alley is dedicated to bus transportation routes and will not be accessible for personal vehicle use or thru-traffic.
- The door from the cafeteria into the alley is dedicated to Bus Delivery and Pick - Up of students and for emergency purposes. It is not a public entrance.

North Doors on to Huxley Avenue

- This doorway is only used during emergency procedures and for EXITING the building during dismissal each day. It is not a public entrance.

South Doors on to the Playground

This doorway is used for:

- Students and staff members to enter and exit the building at recess times.
- Students and staff members to exit the building after the dismissal bell rings each day.

In the Event of an Emergency Closure ...

In the event of electrical, water, or heat utility outage for more than two hours, the school will be closed unless outside conditions are unsafe for student dismissal.

The following procedure will be used if it becomes necessary to close school early for emergency or safety reasons.

- The local radio station will be advised to make a public interest announcement concerning full-day closure or late start at 10:00 am.
- An announcement will be made to the students and teachers.
- Staff members will call parents, guardians, or other necessary or concerned individuals giving information about the closure.
- Students who normally ride the bus will be bused unless otherwise notified.
- A staff member will remain in the school office until all students have departed the school grounds.



Important Safety Policy ! Wearing Costumes

Any special event that occurs at Marsh Elementary which involves adults or visitors dressing-up and/or wearing costumes must do so at the exclusion of masks or other props that might prevent instant recognition and identification. Concealment of any person's identity from school personnel is in direct violation of safety policies and is not allowable.

Because we are serving very young children, adults and older children must refrain from wearing costumes that are gory and scary. Any event that includes costume wearing at Marsh is designed for children's enjoyment and should not be marred by unexpected and fearful encounters.

All visitors to the building on special event days must sign-in at the office. If a visitor's attire does not meet the requirements above, they will be asked to leave the premises.

Note: It is permissible for students enrolled at Marsh Elementary, Marsh Elementary staff members, and authorized performers to wear masks and props, as needed for special events.

Wellness and Well Being

Our environment is a healthy, active place to learn. Current brain research indicates the need for physical activity and nutritious food to support our brain's ability to learn and remember. As you have surely noted in the mainstream media, there is a nationwide imperative to attend to this need on behalf of all of us, but particularly our children. Health and wellness are the cornerstones for the quality of our lives as parents, grandparents, teachers, and students; consequently, they are essential and primary conditions if we are to reach our vision and achieve our mission.

Monte Vista in Motion

School starts at 7:45am! Most of our school days begin with all of us together in the cafeteria for "Monte Vista in Motion", a music and movement jubilee to get our day off to a great start! This kind of movement causes our brains to make new neurons that are then picked up and used by our brains in new learning events.

The only exceptions to this are in the first few weeks of school, when all staff members are greeting and supporting new families at that time and the weather is lovely and children want to be outside...and then again at the end of the year when the weather warms up and we go back outside!

Breakfast After The Bell

A nutritious breakfast will be available to all children free of charge as they enter their classroom at 8:00AM. While it is offered to all children, it is an individual choice and children are not required to take a breakfast. Breakfast After The Bell is considered a beneficial practice:



- Students are more likely to consume a nutritionally substantive breakfast.
- Providing breakfast for all students has shown greater improvements in math scores, attendance and punctuality ...
- ...and a reduction in anxiety and hyperactivity.

School Lunches

Lunch is also served to kindergartners. The cost of a school lunches is: \$2.10 per day, \$8.40 per week for elementary students. Milk in the lunchroom costs \$.40. Adult lunches are \$3.20. Families should pay for lunches in the cafeteria. Parents are welcome to take their preschool children to lunch in our cafeteria.

Parents need to make sure that free and reduced meal applications are turned in no later than five days after school begins. Students will not be able to "charge" meals. Notes will be sent home to inform parents when their child's balance is getting low.



Recess and Noon Hour

All students are expected to go outside for recesses unless they have a written note from their physician to remain inside for health reasons. To ensure their safety, students may not leave the school grounds to go home for lunch at noon unless their parents come to check them out in the office.

Wellness Guidelines for School-Offered Foods

In accordance with the Monte Vista Public School District Wellness Policy, Marsh School and Bill Metz Elementary Schools have implemented guidelines to ensure nutritious foods and beverages at school. These healthy guidelines apply to all school-based events where food is shared in a group including snacks, classroom celebrations and fund-raisers. Foods and beverages should be nutrient-dense such as fruits, vegetables, cheese and 100% juice. The MVSD Wellness Policy encourages healthy eating and physical activity in order to help students learn better. Quite simply, emphasizing good nutrition, and wellness in general, is good for our brains.

At our schools, we offer the following healthy guidelines regarding foods intended for snacks, or foods to be shared at parties, celebrations, and school functions.

Snacks: We encourage fresh fruits and vegetables for our students. Snack time becomes an opportunity to promote and learn healthy lifelong snacking habits. If your child has special needs for snacks please speak with his or her teacher.

Birthday Celebrations: Alternative suggestions for parents when recognizing their child's birthday at school include:

- Giving a small item to child's classmates (sending in cards, stickers, poems, erasers, pencils or flowers.)
- Some families donate a book in honor of their child to our permanent library that includes a bookplate with their name and birth date.
- Some family members come as guests to lunch or take their children out to lunch on their birthday.

Please save cupcakes, cakes, etc. for celebrations at home. Please speak with your child's teacher about your plans, if you decide to recognize your child's birthday at school.

Classroom Parties: We want to support parents in caring for children's health! We ask that school community members and room parents provide foods and beverages that benefit our students' ability to learn and their overall wellbeing. Consider providing a fruit tray with yogurt

dip, vegetable or cheese trays and other nutrient dense foods. Sweet foods are only included in moderation. Please speak with a room parent or teacher when bringing in foods to be shared.

Classroom Rewards: Rewarding students with food is discouraged.

School Functions: Please support the student body (and their student bodies!) by bringing nutritious foods and beverages to all school functions and events.

Fund-raisers: Food items sold on campus must meet the minimum standards of the Monte Vista Wellness Policy.

Child's Statement of Health Status

The Department of Human Resources, Child Care Division requires that all children enrolled in preschool have a wellness check-up and present a *Child's Statement of Health Status Form* at the time of enrollment. Children will not be able to attend school until this form is on file in the front office.



Immunizations

State statute requires that all students present up-to-date immunization records in order to enroll in preschool and public school programs. Comprehensive information about these requirements is included in our spring registration packets and fall enrollment forms.

Administering Medication to Students



Medications are rarely necessary for pupils during the school day. They are justified only in chronic health conditions or short-term acute health conditions.

If under exceptional circumstances a student is required to take oral medication during school hours and the parent cannot be at school to administer medications, only the school nurse or the nurse's designee will administer the medication in compliance with the following regulations.

1. Written orders (the required form is available in all school offices and at the back of this book) from the student's physician must be on file in the school stating:
 - a. Student's name
 - b. Name of medication
 - c. Dosage
 - d. Purpose of medication
 - e. Time of day medication is to be given
 - f. Anticipated number of days it needs to be given in school
 - g. Possible side effects
2. The medication must be brought to school by a parent in a container appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or physician.
3. An individual record will be kept of such prescription medications administered by school personnel.
4. Medication will be stored in a clean, locked cabinet or container. Any exceptions (asthma inhalers, etc.) to this provision must be specifically stated by the physician on the written form.

Unless these requirements can be met, medication cannot be administered at school.

Early Learning

Focus on Self-Regulation



A growing body of research indicates that many children start school not ready to learn, not because they do not know their letters or numbers, but because they are not on their way to developing a critical ability: the ability to regulate their social, emotional, and cognitive behaviors. Current research shows that self-regulation - often called executive function -- has a stronger association with academic achievement than IQ or entry-level reading or math skills. Go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3S0xS2hdi4 to see a delightful video of children trying to regulate their behavior.

Our early childhood curriculum focuses on self-regulation. It is called Tools of the Mind. Please visit the website www.toolsofthemind.org and click on the Parent Tab for more detailed information like the following:

Children from ages 3-5 years

At this age, children have the idea of *how* to pretend but need ideas of *what* to pretend:



- Use everyday chores and situations to set up play ideas. Use errands as an opportunity for playing. Point out people and talk about what they say and do. These people will become the "roles" the child plays. Everything the child sees becomes fodder for rich play when you get home.
- Help your child turn everyday experiences into play by providing props. Don't have a doctor's uniform—use an old grown-up shirt and put something on it that signifies the doctor. Don't have a stethoscope? Make one out of a piece of string and a circle attached to it. Remember that props don't need to be an exact replica—creating something symbolic takes more thought.
- You take on a role, too—a secondary role. You want your child to direct the entire play scene as much as possible. You do what she says. You want her to tell you what to do and what will come next. If the child is unclear about what the main person does, you give suggestions, but try hard not to take over. For example, your son would be the doctor and

you would be the patient or the dad with the sick baby First your baby is sick with a fever. Then you pretend that he has broken his arm. You take on a secondary role that changes the scenario, such as prompting a house call. Encourage your child to tell you what to do—"What's going to happen next?" When your child directs the play, you are promoting planning skills that are a part of self-regulation.

- Help your child expand the roles and add to the script. "Now, what could happen next? Can we pretend that we had to go to the hospital in an ambulance? What else could happen?" Add onto the ideas you have already played out.
- Read a story together and let that be the basis of play. Use a story that your child likes and has heard many times and act that out.
- After playing a role and a scene several times, suggest a new twist. What if you were the doctor on a pirate ship? In outer space? Have the same role happen in a different place.
- By 4 years of age, children should begin to be able to play with fewer props, not needing the elaborate dressing up that they need earlier. They can make up their own props. You can play anywhere—in the car, in the supermarket, at home.
- Have other children over who can join in the play.
- Introduce simple games with rules. Board games like "Chutes and Ladders" or "Candy Land" are great--these are an extension of make-believe play.



Our Learning Approach

We celebrate the fact that all learners are different! Whether we are adults or children we learn in different ways and at different rates. Some children who come to our school are just beginning to be interested in writing their name or saying the alphabet and a few enter our doors reading. Without exception, we seek to ensure that each of them make one or more than one year's growth in the developmental areas of social/emotional, physical, language and cognition and the learning areas of literacy and math. All the staff members at our school support children's learning and development in a variety of ways. We continue to increase our ability to diagnose the differences in children's approaches to learning and then meet their specific needs. Children's learning growth is carefully monitored, recorded and shared with family members throughout the school year.

Attendance

The habit of regular attendance is desirable for successful school achievement. Students will be considered excused from school only in the case of illness or emergency. All other absences are considered unexcused, unless arrangements have been made with the building principal. In addition, every attempt should be made to schedule medical and dental appointments for out-of-school hours. If appointments must be scheduled during school hours, children should only be gone from school for the length of the appointment.

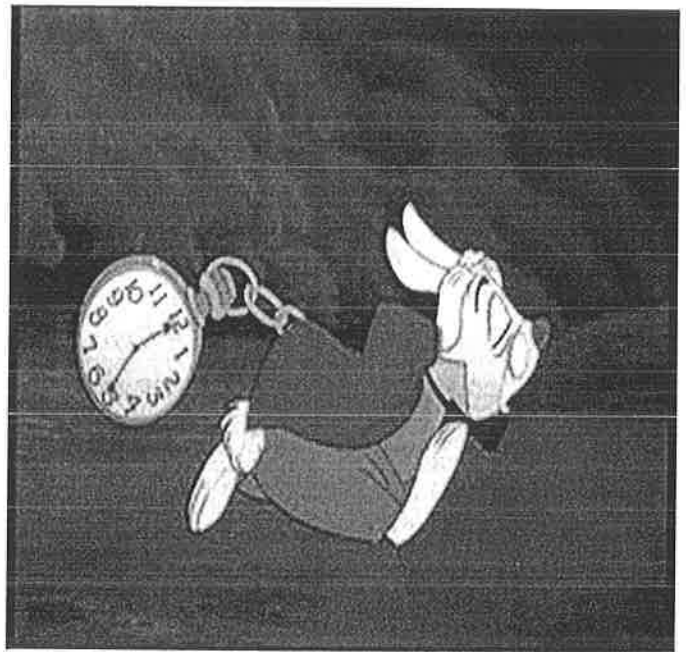


If your child is ill, or will be absent for the day, please call the office by 7:45 am. After that time, the office will make a reasonable effort to contact family members by phone. Students who have been absent or tardy for any reason should bring a note from their parents when they return to school, if there has been no previous contact with the school. The note should explain the circumstances of the absence or tardiness and should be given to the office when the child is checking back into the school. Please report cases of any child who has a contagious disease to the school nurse.

Our instructional day begins at 7:45 and ends at 3:30. Kindergartners attend from 7:45 - 3:30. Preschoolers will either attend from 8:00 - 11:00 or from 12:00 - 3:00. Learning activities are planned for this entire time period and interruptions in the routine can be detrimental to the learning environment. We set the stage for our school day during the first few minutes in the classroom with routines and special school and classroom announcements. **We want to emphasize how important it is for children to be here to start and end their school day with their classmates.**

Coming to School Too Late

Tardiness is defined as a student arriving at school after the scheduled time that classes begin. The disruptive nature of tardiness has a detrimental effect upon the rights of the non-tardy student to uninterrupted learning. It also has a negative impact on the tardy student's ability to start the day smoothly. We ask that you have your child to school by 7:45am, or 12:00pm if attending the afternoon session, so that they have every advantage needed to ensure a successful day.



...and last but not least...

Leaving School Too Early

Parents are urged not to ask for early dismissal of children except in unusual circumstances. In the rare instance that it may be necessary for parents to check their child out before the end of the school day they will need to come to the front office and sign their child out on the available form. In no event will a child be released to a person without proper authorization and identification.



**We're still playing and learning together
until the very end!**

**We are proud of our website. It was built and is continually refined
by students at Monte Vista High School. Please visit us at:**

<http://www.monte.k12.co.us/Marsh/MarshMain/default.htm>

Monte Vista School District
Permission for Medication

Name of student _____

School _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____

Medication _____ Dosage _____

Purpose of medication _____

Time of day medication is to be given _____

Possible side effects _____

Anticipated number of days it needs to be given at school _____

Date _____

Signature of Physician

It is understood that the medication is administered solely at the request of and as an accommodation to the undersigned parent or guardian. In consideration of the acceptance of the request to perform this service by the school nurse or other designee employed by the Monte Vista School District, the undersigned parent or guardian hereby agrees to release the Monte Vista School District and its personnel from any legal claim which they now have or may hereafter have arising out of the administration or failure to administer the medication to the student, side effects or other medical consequences of the medication.

I hereby give my permission for _____ to take the above prescription at school as ordered. I understand that it is my responsibility to furnish this medication.

Date _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Note: The prescription medication is to be brought to school in a container appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or physician stating the name of the medication and the dosage.

