

**USD 262 VALLEY CENTER
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
2007-08**

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District Website: www.usd262.net

Welcome to Valley Center Elementary Schools. This year promises to be an exciting year filled with wonderful learning experiences for our students. Valley Center is a special place where parents and teachers join in providing the most positive learning environment possible. We are very proud of the Valley Center tradition of mutual cooperation, respect, trust and communication among students, parents, teachers and administration. In an effort to promote better communication, the assignment notebook has been provided for each student in grades 3, 4, and 5. In addition to serving as a student handbook, our staff will use it as a homework/communication folder. By combining daily and weekly information with important school information, parents can remain well informed. The assignment notebook will help students become better organized and will allow better communication with parents concerning assignments and notes from the teacher on a daily basis. A monthly newsletter with pertinent dates and information will be sent to you and also posted on the district website. The sign in front of the schools will also list current events. Also available to parents is the Infinite Campus Parent Portal. The Parent Portal is a family centered student information system accessible via the internet. Information about the Parent Portal can be found on our district web-site (www.usd262.net).

Our teachers will provide you with an overview of the grade level expectations, a sketch of the subject area or curriculum expectations, and any special procedures or requirements. Please review these and retain them for future reference. Our rules, policies and procedures help us to provide a safe and positive learning environment. We hope these expectations will provide for a smooth transition this year.

Parent involvement, ownership, and responsibility with school activities are vital to the success of our students. When parents teach good character traits, hold high expectations for education, and model good citizenship, we prepare our students to become a whole person and one who will grow and survive in the future. We welcome you to get involved by conferencing regularly with teachers, eating lunch with your child, assisting with homework, volunteering in the classrooms, and joining PTA/PTO. When you get involved, then students get involved.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HOURS

8:05	Teachers arrive
8:20	Students dismissed to classrooms (Wheatland)
8:25	Students dismissed to classrooms (Abilene & West)
8:30	Classes Begin
11:35	Morning kindergarten dismissed
12:40	Afternoon kindergarten begins
3:40	Town students are dismissed
3:45	Bus students are dismissed
4:00	End of contracted day for teachers

ARRIVAL / DISMISSAL / EARLY DISMISSAL

School begins at 8:30 a.m., dismisses at 3:40 p.m. for town students and 3:45 p.m. for bus students. The Kindergarten schedule is 8:30-11:35 a.m. and 12:40-3:45 p.m. Students will be required to report to the gymnasium prior to the start of school. This will insure that they will be properly supervised. Afternoon kindergarten students should not be at the school before 12:35 p.m.

Abilene - Students may not enter the building until 7:45 a.m. Please, do not drop your child off any earlier than this. Students being delivered to or picked up from school should use the south parking area. The west lot is reserved for bus traffic.

West - Students being delivered to or picked up from school should use the north parking lot. The east lot is reserved for bus traffic.

Wheatland –Students may not enter the building until 7:45 a.m. Students being delivered to school or picked up from school should use the NE parking lot. Before school students should walk down the sidewalk and enter through the main entrance doors. After school, the students who are car riders will be dismissed through the NE doorway. If it is raining in the morning we will have the NE doors open. Should you need to pick up your child during the school day, you must come to the school's office and sign your child out. The office will then call the classroom.

ATTENDANCE and TARDY POLICY

Regular attendance is necessary to maximize the benefits of the educational opportunity. Any student who is absent from school misses out on many aspects of the learning experience; as a result, the educational progress is jeopardized. Good attendance is a discipline and many students who struggle later in life often do so because of a lack of self-discipline. Only through regular class attendance and commitment to personal and educational growth can students achieve optimum benefits. Presence in class should be considered a big priority by all students and parents.

The following list of circumstances is the only recognized excuses for school absence:

- 1) Personal illness
- 2) Family illness
- 3) Death in the family
- 4) Religious holiday
- 5) Doctor appointments.

The student is required to give advance notice to the school in order to be excused for any other type of absence. The principal, or his designated representative, shall be responsible for determining if an absence is excused or unexcused. It is important for all students and parents to know that an absence that is excused at home does not mean it will be excused at school.

Prompt arrival at school is expected of all students. Late arrival disrupts class and causes a loss of instruction time. Any student who arrives at school after 8:30 a.m. is considered tardy. All students who arrive after the tardy bell rings should report to the office before being admitted to class. Tardiness, due to late buses or doctor's appointments, are excused, all others are unexcused. Students arriving before 10:00 am will be counted tardy. Those arriving after 10:00 a.m. will be counted absent 1/2 day. Students that leave before 10:00 am will be counted absent. Students who leave between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. and do not return to school will be counted absent 1/2 day. Students who leave after 2:00 p.m., will be counted present for the full day.

The reporting of absences by parents helps to insure the safety and welfare of your children, and we need your cooperation in this matter. The procedure is very simple. If your child is absent for any reason, please call the school by 9:00 a.m. that day. Classroom teachers make early absentee reports to the school's office. The secretaries will then check the list of absentee students and will make home calls. A prior call by the parents greatly helps to eliminate duplicate calls. This will require some time and effort by the parents, but we feel that it is worth the effort to protect our children. The phone numbers are: Abilene 755-7190 West 755-7200 Wheatland 755-7220.

An example of a call which would require only a moment of your time is as follows:

"Hello, this is Mrs. Jones and my daughter Susie is in Mr. Smith's class. She has the flu (give reasons for absence) and will not be at school today." (A doctor's note is required for students returning to school after five days of absence.)

ASSEMBLIES

Assemblies are planned periodically as special events on the school calendar. Some typical assembly themes include athletics, cultural presentations, and professional speakers. There is often a significant investment in time and money in preparation for an assembly program. Special attention to etiquette and good citizenship is expected of all students.

BAND

Instrumental music is available to all fifth graders. At the beginning of each school year, the band instructor will meet with the students and demonstrate various types of band instruments available to them. The band director will also schedule a parent meeting. During the parent meeting it will be possible to rent or purchase a band instrument.

BICYCLES / SCOOTERS

Bicycles / Scooters are to be parked in the racks provided. Bicycles/Scooters are never to be ridden on the school grounds or school sidewalks. Students are reminded to walk their bikes/scooters when using the crosswalks. At Abilene Elementary, only third grade students are permitted to ride their bicycles. It is recommended that all bicycles and scooters be padlocked.

BUS TRANSPORTATION / SHUTTLE BUS SERVICE

All students in our school system who ride a bus are subject to passenger rules and procedures, until they get off the bus at their school or the bus stop near their home. Students must conduct themselves on the bus as they would at their own schools. A copy of the Transportation Passenger Rules and Procedures will be made available at enrollment time. Riding in a bus is a privilege and the privilege may be revoked if the students fail to comply with the rules and procedures.

Shuttle bus services are available for students attending Wheatland. In order to ride a shuttle bus, students must be at Abilene or West no later than 8:00 a.m. Shuttle service will also be provided at the conclusion of the school day to return to Abilene or West from Wheatland. SHUTTLE SERVICE IS PROVIDED BETWEEN ALL THREE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

CAFETERIA (Breakfast / Lunch Menu, Student Lunch Accounts, Cafeteria Policy)

Our cooks, working in cooperation with a registered dietitian, determine the daily menus for our school meal programs. The menus are posted one week in advance in the cafeteria near the kitchen. It is also published in the local newspaper on Thursday afternoon. Monthly menus are sent home at the end of each month for the upcoming month.

Each student will have a food service account to purchase breakfast and/or lunch. Milk may also be purchased on the student account. Periodic payment reminders will be sent home with the student when the account balance is low. Prices for the lunch/breakfast program are set by the Board of Education during the month of July each year.

1) The students are to get their trays and silverware and sit at their assigned table in a quiet, orderly manner. Children must ask permission to leave their table. The cafeteria aide will help the student get an item that was forgotten or get an item that has dropped off his/her tray.

2) The students may visit quietly with classmates at their same table in an appropriate table voice. We want the cafeteria to be as normal as possible so students can enjoy their mealtime. If the noise level becomes too high, a pre-arranged signal will alert the students that loud talking should cease. Students who do not respond to these warnings will be subject to a loss of privileges. Individuals who cause problems in the lunchroom will be disciplined on an individual basis.

- 3) The students are not allowed to trade food. This applies to hot and cold meals.
- 4) The students who bring pop to school as a part of their cold lunch should bring it in a thermos. Pop in bottles or in cans will not be permitted in the cafeteria. Soda Pop is discouraged in the cafeteria.
- 5) The students are to walk in a normal manner and not run in the cafeteria.
- 6) Food, other than cold meals, may not be taken from the lunchroom.
- 7) Straws and/or milk cartons are not permitted to be taken from the cafeteria, unless requested by teachers.
- 8) Good manners, courtesy and respect for the rights of others, should be the guide for all students attending school, whether they are in the halls, classrooms, or in the cafeteria. Any student who follows these guidelines will have few, if any, discipline problems.

COUNSELOR

Valley Center is fortunate to have counselors assigned to the buildings. They are involved in providing whole class instruction, small group discussion, and individual counseling. They are interested in the educational progress of all the students. Please contact your counselor for assistance.

DOCTOR AND DENTIST APPOINTMENTS

Parents are encouraged to make every effort to schedule doctor and dentist appointments for their children outside of school hours. However, when this is not possible, students will be excused for these special appointments. Parents will need to go to the school office to sign the student out for the appointment and sign the student back in upon returning.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Fire drills are conducted once each month and tornado drills are conducted three times a year. Detailed escape plans are posted inside the door of each classroom.

During tornado drills, each classroom goes to a designated area within the building. For fire drills, each class has an escape route to an outside area that is a safe distance from the building. Children are moved to these designated areas in less than 75 seconds in a safe, quiet, and orderly manner.

The school is prepared for a variety of emergency situations, including bomb threats.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

It is very important for the safety of the children that the schools have up-to-date information on file for each student. Each student is required to have on file in the school office the following information:

- Parent (s) or guardian (s) name (s).
- A complete and up-to-date address.
- A current home phone number and the current parent (s) work phone numbers, and any cell phone numbers.
- A contact name and phone number of a friend or relative in case of an emergency and parents can't be reached.
- A physician's name and phone number.
- Any medical alert information of which we should be aware of.

Please notify the school office if any of this information changes throughout the school year.

FEES

The school charges a variety of fees for different services and materials. Fees should be paid promptly. If a student or his/her family has financial problems which affects the payment of school fees, the situation should be brought to the attention of the administration so that suitable arrangements can be made. Parents have a responsibility to have fees paid prior to the end of the school term.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips within our city and to nearby points of interest are scheduled by various classroom teachers throughout the school year. These trips are designed to supplement different aspects of the classroom curriculum and to introduce students to the resources of the community. Parents will receive notices of field trips well in advance of the scheduled trip date and will be asked to sign field trip permission forms. Sometimes a small amount of money may be requested from each student to help defray transportation or facility use costs.

GENERAL BEHAVIOR RULES

The behavior expected from students at school is a combination of common courtesy and safety considerations. There are only a few special areas which require the application of very specific rules. The following types of conduct are never permissible:

- 1) Fighting.
- 2) Defiance of school staff.
- 3) Use of profanity.
- 4) Refusal to prepare assignments or to participate in class.
- 5) Possession of weapons or other dangerous objects.
- 6) Possession or use of tobacco.
- 7) Possession or use of any controlled substance.
- 8) Gambling.
- 9) Vandalism.

In the event these inappropriate actions are committed, the parents will be contacted concerning the student's behavior. If the inappropriate behavior continues, further discipline actions will be implemented by the administration.

GRADING SCALE

Letter Grade	Level of Work	% Scale
A	Superior	90 - 100
B	Above Average	80 - 89
C	Average	70 - 79
D	Below Average	60 - 69
F	Failing	59 - 0

HEALTH MATTERS (Medication Policy, Nurse's Office, Illness, Injury)

1. Diagnosis and treatment of illness and prescribing and administering drugs and medicines are not the responsibility of the public schools and are not practiced by any school personnel, including school nurses, except under the following limited circumstances:

- Prescription medicines may be administered, in accordance with Board Policy, by a Licensed Professional Nurse or school personnel delegated by such licensed professional nurse upon receipt of written authorizations by the student's physician and student's parent. The first authorization must be signed by the student's physician and contain the physician's prescription and approval for the administration of the medication. The parent's written authorization shall be a signed permission form requesting the district to administer the medication and releasing the school district and personnel from liability.
These authorizations must include:
 - The name of the student who will receive the medication
 - The name and description of the medication
 - The dosage to be given
 - Instructions for administration of the medication
 - Suggested times for the administration of the medication
 - A description of any possible side effects
 - Any other instructions or warnings.

All prescriptions must be in the original pharmacy container, clearly marked as to the patient, type of medicine and dosage.

2. Non-prescription medicines will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Approvals will be on a limited basis only. The principal and school nurse may deny administration of the request if they deem it not in the best interest of the student to take the medicine. Non-prescription medicines may be given, upon decision of the principal or nurse, only if accompanied by a written permission form or authorization signed by the parents. That includes the following:
 - The student's name.
 - The name of the non-prescription medicine.
 - The dosage to be given.
 - Instructions for administration of the medication.
 - Suggested time for the administration of the medication.
 - A description of any possible side effects.
 - Any other instructions or warnings.

The non-prescription medication must be in the original sealed container and clearly labeled with the student's name and the dosage recommendations. Due to the possibility of dangerous side effects, aspirin will not be administered to any student.

3. At the end of each semester, the parents are requested to contact the school nurse in regard to the disposition or return of medicines. Any medicine left in the possession of the school district after three weeks from the end of the semester will be destroyed.

It may be easier for all concerned to adjust the medication times (unless specifically ordered by your doctor) i.e. give before coming to school, right after school and then wake your child up at 10:00 p.m. for the last dose of the day.

Another helpful hint is to ask the pharmacist for an extra-labeled bottle, which you can send to school with just the medication your child will need. Then, you won't have to worry about your child remembering to bring his medication home.

Other health services provided are vision, hearing, scoliosis, and dental screenings. If you feel your child has a vision or hearing problem, please don't hesitate to call and check with the school nurse. Likewise, if you receive a note stating that your child may have a vision or hearing problem, keep in mind that these are only screenings; but it is recommended that you have your child examined further by an eye or ear care specialist.

Dental screenings are done annually in the schools by a dental hygienist. If your child is absent that day he/she will not be screened at a later time. These screenings are not to take the place of your regular check-up at the dentist. Moreover, if your child has been to the dentist, please return his/her dental card to the school and he/she will not have to participate in the screenings.

The school nurse's office is located adjacent to the office. The nurse is responsible for the maintenance of health records, routine health checks, and parental contact concerning health problems, care of minor injuries, assistance in health teaching, and vision and hearing screenings. Please be sure to contact the nurse if your child is absent from school due to a communicable disease. Precautions will be taken to protect other children in the school by sending home notes, especially in cases of strep and other communicable diseases.

In case of illness or injury, a student will be cared for temporarily by the school nurse or a member of the school staff. School personnel will render first aid treatment only. If emergency medical treatment is necessary, the parents will be contacted. If parents are not available, the student will be taken to the emergency room at the nearest hospital. Please remember, an emergency telephone number where parents can be reached and the name and telephone number of the student's family doctor must be on file at the school.

HONOR ROLL

Students enrolled in grades 3, 4, and 5 will be eligible for Honor Roll recognition. The student may achieve the "A Honor Roll" or "A-B" Honor Roll. Criteria for "A Honor Roll" is to have received an "A" in all subjects, and "A-B Honor Roll" is to have A's or B's in all subject areas. Grades will not be averaged.

INSURANCE

Independent insurance companies offer student insurance at the beginning of each school year. This insurance is not offered or provided by the district, and the district makes no recommendation as to the quality of any insurance. Insurance forms are located in each school office and can be picked up at any time during the school year.

KINDERGARTEN

Children entering kindergarten are required to be five years old on or before August 31st for the school year in which they are enrolling. Pre-registration takes place in the spring. Parents must bring birth certificates, immunization records, health assessments, and the child's Social Security number in order to complete the enrollment.

LATE PAPER POLICY

Grades 3, 4, and 5

Assignments that are on time receive full credit.

Assignments that are late receive 75% of credit.

Assignments not received earn no credit.

Assignments will not be accepted for credit after one week.

LIBRARY

The library is open on a regularly scheduled basis and is supervised by the librarian. Library classes are held for grades K-5 and for special classes in the school. They are held for the purpose of library instruction, as well as for the enjoyment of the materials and books. Students are allowed to use the library during library hours with the permission of their classroom teacher. They may use the library to read, check out books, return books, use audio-visual materials, and do reference work or work on special projects. There is no fine for overdue books, but lost or damaged books must be paid for to replace them. The library collection is constantly updated and expanded. Books are chosen for either their educational or recreational value. A variety of audio-visual materials is available through the library for teacher use in the classroom.

LOST AND FOUND ITEMS

All clothing found, regardless of its value, is placed in the lost and found. Money, jewelry, or any other articles of value are turned in to the office. Students may claim items after proper identification. Items will be donated periodically throughout the school year.

MAKE-UP WORK

The school may provide make-up work for absences. Students or their parents are responsible for requesting make-up work immediately upon the student's return to school. Students will be allowed one (1) day to submit make-up work for each day of absence. At the discretion of the administration students may also be allowed one (1) additional day to submit make-up work. If dates of student's absence are known in advance, the teacher should be notified so planned assignments may be given.

MONEY

Children should not bring money to school unless there is a special reason: lunch money, school pictures, field trips, or ordering books. If a child has to bring money to school, he/she should leave it with his/her teacher or in the office for safekeeping.

MUSIC

All students at our school are enrolled in periodic music classes. The music program provides opportunities for students to develop music skills and have a better understanding and enjoyment of music. The basic elements of music are presented to students through various experiences involving singing, playing instruments, listening, movement, expression, and music reading.

NEWSLETTER

A school newsletter containing items of interest to students and parents will be distributed monthly. The newsletter will feature at least one presentation concerning a major facet of the school program, and it will include timely information. Classroom and individual notices and reminders will be sent home periodically. The newsletters will also be posted on the district's website.

PARENT / TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled during the first nine-week period first and second semester. The parent's attendance at conferences is very important. A parent may request a conference with his/her child's teacher at any time during the school year. Please call the school for an appointment if a conference is desired. Likewise, a teacher may find it necessary to request a special conference with a parent. Please make every effort to meet with the teacher if you receive such a request.

PARTIES

At Abilene and West Elementary, the refreshments should be limited to one item. The teacher should be notified by sending a note the day before the party to avoid conflicts. At Wheatland Elementary, all birthdays for the month will be celebrated at one time and will be scheduled at the teacher's discretion.

PETS

No pets, of any kind, are allowed at school without advanced written permission and the pet's current vaccination record. Under no circumstances is a potentially dangerous pet to be brought to school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION ATTIRE

For your child's safety, athletic tennis shoes must be worn in all physical education classes. Failure to do so will result in non-participation and will affect the child's grade. Girls need to wear shorts under dresses or skirts. If your child needs to be excused or is unable to participate for more than three consecutive days of physical education classes, a physician's note will be required or they will be unexcused. If your child needs to be excused on a daily basis, not exceeding three consecutive days, a note signed by the parents will be required. Should there be any questions or concerns pertaining to physical education, please feel free to contact the physical education teacher at your school.

PLAYGROUND SUPERVISION

Supervised playtimes are morning, noon, and afternoon recesses provided at various times throughout the day. Adults are on the playground during regularly scheduled breaks. The playground is not supervised before and after school. Students are expected to leave for home immediately following dismissal.

PTA / PTO

Parent organizations have been highly involved in improving our schools. All parents are urged to become involved and to actively participate. Meetings are scheduled on a regular basis and they are announced in advance.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards will be issued one week following the completion of each nine-week grading period. Please carefully review your child's progress and contact the school if you have questions regarding grades. The grade sheet that is sent home does not need to be returned but the envelope that comes home with the grade sheet needs to be signed and returned each nine-week grading period.

SNOW AND BAD WEATHER

Students and parents should listen to their home radio or selected television stations during inclement weather. Announcements will be made as soon as possible if school is to be closed. All radio and television stations will be notified. During school hours, school will be dismissed whenever it is deemed necessary to do so in order to get the buses through. It is suggested that parents instruct their children where to go or what to do in case no one is at home.

SCHOOL ATTIRE

School attire is expected to be appropriate to learning activities. Clothing that calls attention to itself or is distracting is inappropriate. The following are examples of clothing not acceptable for school: flip flops or open toed sandals, slang or obscenities printed on clothing, see-through clothing, bare midriffs, halter-tops and tank tops. Shorts and skirts must be at finger-tip length or longer.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Activities are an important part of school and we want students to have the opportunity to participate in musicals, plays and field trips. Academics, however, are our first priority. Students may be excluded from school activities.

STUDY SKILLS

Specific skills and techniques can make learning easier and more enjoyable. The following are student guidelines for achieving good study habits:

- Come to class prepared with pencil, paper, and other necessary materials.
- Be an active participant in class. Listen well and take part in class.
- Ask questions to clarify problems.
- Plan your day and schedule time for homework.
- Use what is learned and apply it to new situations.
- Strive to do the very best work possible. Just "getting by" is not a worthwhile goal.

Homework is important. It is an extension of the learning that takes place in school. Homework can provide practice and drill that reinforces classroom learning and can provide opportunities for independent study, research, and creative thinking. Parents can help their children by arranging a quiet, comfortable place for the students to work and by seeing that assignments are completed. Parents should review the assignment books daily.

TELEPHONE

The office telephone is a business phone and is not to be used by students, except in an emergency. Students are not allowed to use the phone to make personal arrangements (such as requesting permission to go to another student's home after school).

VISITORS

All parents/visitors are welcome. **Parents / Visitors must register in the office, sign the visitor log and wear a visitor's badge before visiting other areas in the building.** Notices are placed at each school's entryway, regarding procedures for visitor registration. Parents are invited to visit at any time. It is best if parents wait until the third or fourth week of school. This allows the teacher and students time to become familiar with the daily routine. Pre-school children are not to visit school unless accompanied by their parents. School age children may visit with the teacher's prior consent.

WALKING STUDENTS

Students who walk to school should come straight to school. Students should walk on sidewalks at all times when available. Students should cross streets only at designated crosswalks. Please remember the safety rules: walk with a friend and never accept a ride from a stranger.

