



Family Handbook | 2017-18

**Arroyo School
1720 Arroyo Ave.
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San Carlos School District

Welcome Arroyo Upper Elementary School

August, 2016

Dear Parents & Guardians,

We extend our sincerest welcome as we begin this inaugural journey together for the 2016-17 school year. We are very excited to launch our 4th-5th grade school, while we work together to create the best possible learning environment for our students.

We believe our focus on deeper learning through Project Based Learning (PBL) and Personalized Learning will provide an engaging approach to teaching and learning. Additionally, our focus on active learning, character education, and service learning will help to bridge the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) with issues relevant to our community.

During this incredibly exciting time, we invite you to work in partnership with us to create a learning community that includes staff, students and their families, as well as the local and extended community. We hope you will actively participate in our teaching and learning process. We believe this collaborative approach will build stronger relationships and community bonds, while extending the teaching and learning beyond traditional academics.

We look forward to a wonderful year of learning and growing together!

With great respect,

Marie Crawford, Principal

Teachers: Krista Carroll, Jennifer Crettol, Heidi Geiges, Maggie Stewart, Kirsty Mooney, Shelli Murphy, Angela Naughton, Michelle Robinson, Megan Scatena, Miriam Seigel-Stern, Sheila Sevilla, Heidi Umber, Meagan Vizier, Jenny Brady

Arroyo Background and Philosophy

SCSD Vision

The San Carlos School District shall provide an innovative and engaging learning experience that fosters the development of the Whole Child to ensure each student is well prepared for success in the 21st Century, as evidenced by:

- Reaching his/her highest academic, social, emotional, intellectual, and physical potential; and
- Becoming a problem solver, critical thinker, risk-taker, designer, collaborator, and innovator; and
- Developing into a contributing, empathic citizen and leader who is a responsible steward of his/her world and cares about equity and justice, both locally and worldwide.

Arroyo School Mission Statement

The mission of Arroyo School is to inspire our 21st Century learners to achieve their highest academic, social, emotional, intellectual and physical potential, while developing a strong sense of character, community, and stewardship. We aspire to amplify each child's natural curiosity and love of learning so they can become caring and enthusiastic lifelong learners.

We believe:

- Project Based Learning (PBL) experiences, developed from Common Core State Standards (CCSS), promote learning through authentic experiences that encourage critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and social responsibility.
- Personalized learning, designed to adapt to student learning styles and academic needs, can ignite student passions while leading to targeted student growth and ownership over one's own learning.
- Small teams of 4th and 5th grade classes cultivate a safe environment for individual learning and self-discovery, while also building a deep sense of belonging.
- High expectations for character and behavior create a school culture exemplified by physical and emotional safety, integrity, compassion, and respect.
- Shared school traditions and celebrations support personal growth, collaboration, and a strong sense of school community.
- Multiple means of assessment, including portfolios and student-led conferences, along with academic reports, hold students accountable for the highest quality of work.
- Multicultural and world language studies instill tolerance and broad worldviews while fostering an appreciation for local and global diversity.
- Physical fitness, outdoor activities, and visual and performing arts are an integral part of students' daily lives.

An Education for the 21st Century

We recognize that the world is rapidly changing. Success in the 21st Century requires us to think differently and to transform the way in which we educate our students for this changing world. One way that we are shifting our practices is by placing a greater focus on the Habits of Mind for 21st Century Learners, which include: Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking & Problem Solving, Creativity & Innovation, Citizenship/ Stewardship (from local to global), and Ownership. A description of each of these habits is listed below.

Habits of Mind for 21st Century Learners

- **Communication** – To share ideas clearly and constructively, consider other ideas and perspectives, and seek mutual understanding.
- **Collaboration** – To work together constructively, reflect on different perspectives, build on the ideas of others, and take responsibility for my team and myself.
- **Critical Thinking & Problem Solving** – To be curious, motivated, self-reflective learners who ask thoughtful questions to deepen understanding, and ignite work worth doing.
- **Creativity & Innovation** – To share ideas courageously, pursue new paths of thinking, refine prototypes, and design innovative solutions.
- **Citizenship/Stewardship** - To take care of myself, other people, and the environment, so that we can make a positive impact as guardians of our school, local, and global community.
- **Ownership** - To be engaged and focused on my learning. To persevere, self-reflect, and recognize that mistakes and revisions are a part of learning and lead to quality work.

At Arroyo School, we are committed to ensuring all of our students acquire these habits so they are able to thrive in a changing world and be contributors to and within community.

Curriculum and Instructional Design

Arroyo School offers a hands-on curriculum that adheres to district and state standards. The goal is to foster academic achievement and character growth while instilling a love of learning and a sense of community.

- **Curriculum:** Academically rigorous projects and service learning inspire students to think and work as professionals do, contributing high quality work to authentic audiences beyond the classroom. Teachers also draw from a variety of sources to support Math, Science, Social Studies, Reading and Writing skill mastery.
- **Instruction:** Teachers use active learning in a variety of ways (Readers/ Writers workshop, Problem-based Math and Science/Engineering projects, etc.) to help students become engaged and collaborative learners where they: make connections, find patterns, see events from different perspectives, experiment, go beyond the

information given, develop empathy and compassion for events, people, and subjects.

- **Assessment:** Teachers engage in ongoing data inquiry and analysis, examining everything from patterns in student work to results from state testing. Students continually reflect on and improve the quality of their work through the use of models, reflection, critique, rubrics, and work with peers and experts. Standards-based learning targets drive achievement.
- **School Culture and Character:** Arroyo School builds shared beliefs, traditions, and rituals in order to create a school culture which is characterized by a climate of physical and emotional safety, a sense of adventure, an ethic of service and responsibility, and a commitment to high quality work.
- **Leadership:** Arroyo School supports the development of leadership skills by identifying and supporting many ways to be a leader. Students develop the skills and self-confidence they need to lead their lives and succeed in school and beyond.

Diversity and Inclusion

We strive to foster a culture rich in diversity and inclusion. Our community includes students and families from different backgrounds and experiences. Students (and families) are encouraged to connect with those who are different from them, and to respect and honor those differences as a normal and enriching part of any vibrant community. One way our school honors these differences is by supporting all learners, including those with exceptional needs, encompassing those with accelerated learning needs to those requiring specialized intervention and differentiation. Our goal is to be inclusive of all learning styles and needs and to provide the least restrictive environment for all learners.

Parent/ Community Engagement

One of Arroyo's goals is to make school inextricably connected to community. To accomplish this, we need parents/guardians and other community members to become actively involved in our school. Our programs rely on the assistance, participation, and ideas of our entire school community. Depending on your availability, skills, talents, and interests, there are many ways to support our learning community:

- Administrative: data entry, copying/printing/gathering/making instructional materials
- Classroom: tutoring, reading groups, math centers, activity centers
- Fieldwork: driving, chaperoning, preparing(making calls, gathering materials)
- "Experts": giving presentations on topics of study/interest (local issues, content knowledge, craft skills, etc.) at school
- PTA (Parent Teacher Association): getting involved and helping with events, fundraising, communication and more
- Library: organizing materials, re-shelving books, supporting library time
- School Day: yard duty/supervision, caring for garden plants, organizing materials/play equipment, supporting hot lunch program

- Maker Space: supporting lunchtime or class time ‘maker’ activities
- New ideas? We are open to suggestions.

Character Traits

Our objective is to provide the conditions and skill development needed to be successful, contributing citizens. We will address these behaviors and actions through the teaching and learning of school-wide character traits, spelled out with the acronym: **EAGLES**.

E- Energy and enthusiasm

A- Adventurers try new things

G- Giving to others

L- Leaders who help others

E- Embracing and including everyone

S- Stewards of our community

The list below provides standards of behaviors and character traits in action that we will encourage students to embody. We ask that the entire Arroyo community practice these for good role modeling and community building:

- Takes personal risks but does not endanger self and others
- Takes academic risks as a learner
- Tries different approaches and solutions and resists “giving up”
- Stands up for what is right
- Accepts constructive criticism, socially and academically
- Pitches in without measuring contribution against that of others
- Works toward personal bests, socially and academically^[SEP]
- Respects the space and belongings of others
- Takes care of the environment and community
- Concentrates on being on time
- Strives to complete all academic work at a high quality level
- Accepts consequences for actions
- Listens to and speaks kindly to others
- Looks for ways to include and help others
- Celebrates differences

Student Discipline

We recognize that sometimes students will have an ‘off day’ or forget to bring their best behavior and character traits to school. However, all students have the right to learn in an atmosphere that is safe, conducive to learning, and free from disruptions. Arroyo School will not tolerate behaviors that injure or harm others, whether physically, socially, or emotionally. When student actions do not meet the standards set by our school, a four-step disciplinary protocol will be followed:

1. **Teaching** – students will be engaged in discussions about behaviors, and the actions

are reviewed: What did they do? How did this affect those involved? What could they have done differently? How might this have changed the outcome? What action or steps can be taken to fix the situation or repair the relationship?

2. **Removal** – if unable to calm down or re-focus, or if warranted by the nature of offense, students will be moved to another location away from problem location.
3. **Teacher/Principal Conference** – students whose inappropriate behavior continues or when the offense is serious will talk with either/both teachers and the principal. This conference will work towards developing a plan of action (either informally or formally) to address the behavioral issues. If warranted, parents/guardians will be notified. Office Referrals may be received at this stage.
4. **Teacher/Principal/Parent/Guardian Conference** – when step 3 is ineffective or when the initial offense is serious enough or once a student receives three Office Referrals, a meeting of all involved parties will occur. The required parental support in addressing the behavioral issues will be outlined, and either a formal or informal plan of action will be developed.

Initial behavioral issues will be resolved through student-teacher discussion. When warranted, students may receive Office Referrals where they speak with the Principal. As needed, behavioral files will be kept on offending students and parent/guardian conferences arranged if Office Referrals are a pattern (approximately 3 received). As much as possible, we attempt to not suspend students as a disciplinary measure, but in cases of extreme offense or when Step 4 is repeatedly ineffective, students may be suspended. All cases will be assessed on an individual basis. The following list represents offenses that violate portions of Ed Code that would require the school to execute a suspension:

- Intended, attempted, and/or actual physical or emotional violence, including bullying, intimidation, verbal abuse, unwarranted touching, threats, and harassment
- Possession, selling, and/or arranging to obtain alcohol, tobacco, or any other drug considered illegal for those under 18 years of age
- Possession of firearms or weapons, including pocket knives
- Committing or attempting to commit theft or damage
- Possession of or attempting to possess stolen goods

We believe teaching, learning, and personal growth occur best in safe and supportive environments. Our entire community will work diligently to bring that about. We ask for parents'/guardians' commitment to this same goal. Thank you for your support!

Policies and Procedures

School Visitors

All visitors are required to check in and out at the office during school hours and wear a visitor badge while on campus.

Homework Policy

The San Carlos School District has been actively involved in rethinking the homework policy in our school system. This has led to the passage of our new [Homework/Learning Beyond School Hours](#) policy by the SCSD board. This policy supports the following practices for our 4th and 5th graders:

- Students (with the assistance of their teacher) will be encouraged to create personalized 'at-home learning' goals, which will also complement and deepen their in class learning experiences
- Students will be encouraged to work independently or collaboratively on activities that will enhance an assigned piece of writing, experiment or project
- Students are expected to engage in daily reading, which is considered key to each child's long-term success as a learner
- Students are expected to engage in near-daily Math practice and/or problem solving, as assigned by the teacher or further extended by the student (which might include online programs such as Khan Academy, Front Row, etc.)

In other words, we are finding ways to give students homework that makes sense. Ultimately, we want students to strengthen their academic skills but not at the expense of exploring extracurricular passions, connecting with friends and family, relaxing, eating and sleeping.

Attendance Policies

Punctual and regular attendance is extremely important for a student to be successful at school. Additionally, due to current funding laws for public schools, absences cause schools to lose funding for the day, regardless of whether these absence was excused or unexcused.

- **Absences**
If a student is absent for any reason, a parent/guardian must inform the school office as soon as possible by calling the attendance line at 650-632-8300.
- **Truancy**
A student who misses school entirely or a portion of the day without appropriate permission is considered truant. Truancy is a serious offense. If three or more days are missed and not excused, a letter will be sent home explaining the next steps in the process.

- **Tardiness**

All students are required to be on time to school. Students are also expected to be on time to classes throughout the day. If a student is struggling with being on time to school or to his/her classes, the Arroyo school staff will discuss the problem and support the student to improve this behavior. If a student has 3 or more 30 minute or greater unexcused tardies, this is considered to be a truancy issue and thus will be addressed with a letter home outlining the next steps in the process to support the student.

- **Appointments during the school day:**

If a student must leave school during the day for any reason, a parent/guardian will need to make this request and inform the school office. When leaving school, a parent/guardian must sign out the student in the office. If the student returns to school after the appointment, a parent/guardian will need to sign the student back into class.

Dress Code

The purpose of this dress code is to ensure a safe and productive learning environment for students at Arroyo School

- Clothing should be comfortable, appropriate for outdoor play and not distract from learning. Clothing with inappropriate themes is not permitted.
- Safe shoes should be worn daily – no flip-flops, wheelies, platform shoes or dress shoes. Tennis shoes are highly recommended!
- Caps, hats and sunglasses may be worn outdoors only.
- Jewelry and accessories can be distracting in class and are not recommended.

Health Policy

All injuries should be reported to a teacher or staff member. If a student becomes ill at school, he/she should report to the office after informing his/her teacher. The office personnel will assess the student and contact parents/guardians if the student needs to be sent home. If a student needs to take any form of medication at school, a signed authorization from the physician and medication in the original prescription container must be provided to the office. Over the counter medication is NOT available in the office. Students with special medical conditions or physical injuries that impact participation in P.E. must have a note brought to the office indicating what the student can and cannot do.

Wellness Policy

In order to create a more rigorous teaching and learning environment, and to promote better health and inclusion, we will follow the Wellness Policy established by SCSD. Research indicates that healthier bodies, minds, emotions, and environments lead to more positive school and life learning and experiences. Arroyo fully supports all avenues for increasing student success. We summarize below the main points of our Wellness Policy:

- Food will not be used as reward or punishment

- Junk foods (candy, soda, chips, gum, etc.) are discouraged for snacks or lunches
- Students will be recognized on their birthdays with special Arroyo non-food related items. Please do not bring food to school to celebrate birthdays.

Technology Policy

All students are expected to handle school equipment with care and respect. Technology provides important educational tools, yet also requires some oversight. Strong software filters and teacher/staff supervision will be in place during Internet use. All student technology shall be turned off while on campus and use is not allowed, except with staff permission. Inappropriate use or handling of technology equipment while on campus or field excursions may elicit disciplinary action. Students may open their email accounts for at-school use (required for some programs we use, such as Google Docs). If you have questions about this, please refer to the District's Board Policy on Student Use of Technology: [<http://gamutonline.net/district/sancarlos/DisplayPolicy/937396/>], or speak with your child's teacher.

Emergency Drills

Emergency drills will be conducted monthly throughout the school year. All students are expected to listen to instructions, to follow established protocols, and to conduct themselves in a most respectful manner. Any parents/visitors on campus during a drill must participate.

Emergency/Disaster

In the event of an emergency situation, Arroyo and CMS both have emergency/safety plans to ensure the safety of the students and adults. Arroyo and CMS share a well-stocked emergency shed, including water, food, and medical supplies. Additionally, the campus is connected by emergency radio with the SCSD district office, and the other school campuses for coordination purposes. Both Arroyo and CMS coordinate emergency drills so that all students and adults are trained to respond to an emergency.

FAMILY HANDBOOK AGREEMENT CONTRACT

Please thoroughly read and go over with your child. Signing this form indicates you understand and will follow the policies outlined herein.

I have read, understand, and agree to follow to the best of my ability the guidelines set forth in the Arroyo School family handbook.

Family name: _____

Date: _____

Student signature

Date: _____

Parent / Guardian signature

Date: _____

Parent / Guardian signature