

Charles Helmers

Parent & Student Handbook 2024 - 2025



Dear Parent or Guardian:

Governing boards of school districts are required to notify parents or guardians of certain rights and responsibilities as specified in the Education Code and other state and federal regulations. This booklet contains the Education Code sections that are concerned with these rights and responsibilities, along with other important information.

Your signature on your child's online registration acknowledges that you have received this notice.

SAUGUS
UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
Excellence in Elementary Education

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Site-Specific Information

This Parent and Student Handbook contains an information section specific to your school, district-wide information, as well as information which the state requires districts provide to parents and guardians annually. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the contents of this handbook. If you require additional information, the school office will assist you.

Letter from the Principal

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year at Charles Helmers Elementary School! As the new school year begins, we are so happy to welcome you and your children to our wonderful school. Helmers' staff collaborates to create a safe, inclusive environment where all children are valued, respected, and provided rigorous instruction to become lifelong learners. In order to achieve our mission, we collaborate with all members of the Helmers' community for the success of every child, develop and implement a variety of effective strategies that include all children, value and utilize the expertise of others, and engage in meaningful staff development to enhance our professional skills. The dedicated and highly qualified educators at Helmers work together as a Professional Learning Community utilizing best practices to deliver a coherent and relevant curriculum across all grade levels. In addition, it is our commitment to listen to the concerns of students' families, address students' needs to the best extent possible, and make families feel welcome in the school.

Furthermore, to create a safe and comfortable place for all children to learn, we implement Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports at Helmers. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is an approach to teaching and supporting positive behaviors and meeting the needs of ALL students. This school-wide approach to discipline focuses on building a safe and positive environment in which all students can learn. The foundation of PBIS at Helmers is the four school-wide expectations:

- Have respect (Treat others politely)
- Own your actions (Take responsibility for your words, deeds, and learning)
- Work to succeed (Give 110% in learning and growing your brain)
- Lead with kindness (Show care and courtesy in your words and actions to ALL)

As you can see, Helmers' Huskies H.O.W.L.! Our school expectations specifically address behaviors to provide for a safer school environment and give more time for instruction. We seek to apply consistent consequences and positive reinforcement for all students. By detailing expected behaviors and teaching children in a positive way, we provide a common language for everyone in our building, including students, teachers, and staff. In addition, students are taught how to act at school according to the four expectations. Teachers and support staff help students learn what the expectations "look" and "sound" like in every setting during the school day. Finally, these lessons are retaught and reinforced throughout the school year.

This handbook serves as a source for information between the Saugus Union School District, Charles Helmers Elementary School, and your home. It details the procedures we utilize to create an atmosphere that promotes academic excellence, character development, unity, and a thirst for lifelong learning. We hope you will have a greater understanding about Helmers, its programs, policies, and vision for students.

Please remember that my door is always open to share your ideas, concerns, or comments. As our district mission statements explains, we are committed to the personal and academic success of every child. Together we achieve more for our children!

Sincerely,

Robin Deschamps, Principal

PRINCIPAL CONTACT

The principal can be contacted during office hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) by an email, note, telephone call, or appointment. The Office Manager can schedule an appointment or conference upon your request. Administration will make every effort to respond to emails or notes and return telephone calls within 24 - 48 hours.

"HELMERS HAPPENINGS" NEWS BULLETIN

"Helmers Happenings" - This is a weekly parent communiqué to keep you updated on events and important information. Please take time to read this, as many of your questions will be answered. It will be sent to you each week via Parent Square.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION EXCUSALS

Excusal from physical education because of minor illness or injury are obtained by written request from a parent. If a child is expected to be excused from physical education for more than 3 days, it is requested that a physician certify this with a note to the school, or that you contact the school about the issue.

TEACHER CONTACT

Any time you have a question/concern, please contact the teacher immediately through an email, a note, or by leaving a telephone message. Drop-in and informal after-school conferences are discouraged since they impact scheduled meetings, planning, and other conferences. Teachers are not available for conferences during the regular school instruction hours. This time is designated for classroom teaching. All teachers have an email account at the school. It is the first initial of his/her first name and the full last name @saugusd.org. The teacher will make every effort to respond within 24 - 48 hours.

OFFICE PROCEDURES AND COMMUNICATIONS

In case of an emergency, parents wishing to leave messages for their children may do so by contacting the school office by 12:00 noon. Any articles to be delivered to children should be left with the office staff.

We try very hard to avoid unnecessary interruptions during "PRIME TIME" from 8:00 am until the beginning of that grade level's lunch period. There are several ways that parents can be of assistance:

1. Check with your child prior to leaving for school to see that he/she has a lunch and all necessary materials for class.
2. If there is a change in how a child will be transported after school, it is required that the parent sends a note to the teacher indicating the change. This includes being picked up by a friend, neighbor, or relative. Before leaving for school, please make sure your child is aware that there will be a change in their regular pick-up routine.
3. Avoid calling the school to leave a message for your child during the last 45 minutes of his or her school day. Many classes are at physical education and cannot easily be reached.

VERIFICATION OF ADDRESS

The policy established by the Saugus Board of Trustees requires all new families to the school to verify their address by submitting copies of two current utility bills that show their name and address. Copies of these bills should be submitted by the 4th week of school. If the school encounters an invalid address or telephone number proof of residency may be required.

STUDENT USE OF PHONE

Students may use the office phone for emergencies only. Students should make arrangements with parents before school if they wish to visit friends after school or have any other special requests. The office phone cannot be used for this purpose. Students may not use the phone to call for homework.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Helmers encourages active parent involvement in the educational decisions and processes of our school. Our active and supportive parent community enhances the overall educational experience for all children.

School Site Council

The School Site Council is an integral part of the school improvement process. Elected committee members include parents, teachers and other personnel in addition to the Principal.

Site Council's functions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Participating in decision-making processes through involvement in assessing educational needs, planning the educational program, defining goals and evaluating the program, and approving the Single Plan for Student Achievement.
- Facilitating communication between school, parents, and community.
- Informing and advising school staff regarding community conditions, aspirations and goals.
- Supporting school programs for parents, teachers, students and community.

We encourage and welcome your attendance at council meetings. If you have suggestions that you would like the committee to consider, and are unable to attend the meetings, you may contact one of the committee members or leave your suggestions in the office.

The Site Council meets monthly or as needed. These meetings are open to community members.

PTA

The Parent Teacher Association's purpose is to support the school programs and provide another avenue of home-school communication. The monthly meetings are open to community members, and all parents are urged to become involved in this organization.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Parents are welcome to visit/observe classes at Helmers. Observations are limited to 20 minutes and must be accompanied by an Administrator or other staff member. Please prearrange your observation with the classroom teacher to avoid unnecessary interruptions to the instructional program. All parents who observe a classroom are required to first sign in at the school office and obtain a visitor sticker.

VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS

Helmers values and appreciates its parent volunteers. Please remember that it is required that **all volunteers sign in through the school's Raptor System using their photo ID in the school office and wear a volunteer or visitor sticker while on campus.** We must be aware of all non-employees on the school campus to ensure the safety of the students. Anyone not wearing a visitor or sticker will be approached and asked to go to the school office.

- State Law requires all volunteers to submit proof of a negative T.B. Test result prior to working with children.
- All volunteers must participate in an annual Volunteer Orientation and agree to follow the protocols provided in the training.

CLASS PLACEMENT

Much time and effort is given to placing students in classes. It is the goal of the staff to place a child where he/she will be most successful. To help ensure that classrooms are evenly balanced and comply with state and federal laws, requests for classroom placements are **not** accepted. Due to changing enrollment, all children are assigned to classrooms on a temporary basis. Changes within the first few weeks of school might be necessary to accommodate unforeseen enrollment changes. If adjustments are necessary, they will be based on teacher recommendations in order to best meet student needs.

SAFETY

To ensure student safety at all times, certain rules and regulations have been established, keeping in mind the best interest of each child.

Disaster Preparedness: The school has an emergency plan. It includes the proper dismissal of students **ONLY** to those listed on the special disaster release card or the emergency card. In the event of a disaster, the campus will be secured so that students are dismissed in a proper and orderly manner. After checking in and being admitted to the school grounds, parents and/or designated adults should go to the checkout center and sign out the student, showing identification. Regular lockdown, fire and quarterly earthquake drills are held for evacuation and protective procedures.

Injured Students: Students requiring the use of crutches, casts, or any other appliance will need a note from the attending physician authorizing their use at school. A "Re-Admission Form" obtained in the school office needs to be completed and signed by the attending physician. All children with casts or crutches must sit out during recesses until this form is completed by the doctor and the child is released to play on the playground.

School And Playground Rules: At the beginning of the school year or upon enrolling in school, each child will be informed of and taught the school and playground expectations.

Bicycles: Students in grades 3-6 may ride their bicycles to and from school. Bicycle permits may be obtained at the school office. Bicycles must be registered. Bicycles are to be walked to the bicycle rack once the student reaches school grounds. Bicycles are to be kept locked during the school day. Bicycle riding is not permitted on school grounds. Students are not permitted in the bicycle rack area during the school day. Students who ride bicycles to school are required to follow the rules of the road and to adhere to school behavior expectations. Bike riding students must wear helmets.

No other type of transportation equipment is allowed at school, **including skateboards or scooters.**

The school is not liable for bicycles or other equipment brought to school.

Walking to and from school: If your child walks to school, please make sure your child is using the safest route. Reinforce with your child the importance of walking with other children and the importance of avoiding strangers. **As supervision is not provided after school, it is expected that all students go directly home at the close of the school day.** Students should use paseos and corners to cross the street. Students should not cross Grandview by themselves. Students should arrive at school no earlier than 7:30 am as there is no supervision available before 7:30 am. Without adult supervision, students are at risk in case of emergencies and/or natural disasters. **For the safety of your child, we ask that you arrive to school between 7:35 and 7:55 am.** If you arrive earlier than 7:30am, please stay with your child until he/she enters the school campus.

Parking lot: The parking lot is closed to during drop off and dismissal. For the safety of all students, all parents are asked to park their car on the street before students exit the vehicle. Use crosswalks where available and follow the crossing guard's instructions. Children should not cross the street unless accompanied by an adult. Please use the sidewalks; do not walk through the parking lot. We want to emphasize safety at all times.

ATTENDANCE

ABSENCES: Consistent school attendance is essential for your child's success in school. Unless your child is ill, please send him/her to school each and every day on time.

If your child is absent from school, please call our school office at 661-294-5345 or email heattendance@saugusd.org and your child's teacher to report an absence. It is important that we receive specific information regarding your child's absence as it is required and checked by state auditors. Any student who is absent from school without a valid excuse more than three days or tardy in excess of 30 minutes on each or more than three days in one school year is considered truant. (Section 48260 for the California Education Code).

AWARDS

Positive recognition of academic achievement, citizenship, and overall effort is emphasized. Staff members regularly reinforce accomplishments. School wide recognition is also routine. Students' efforts and accomplishments are also reinforced during school-wide awards assemblies. Awards assemblies are periodically scheduled throughout the school year. Parents of children receiving an award are invited and encouraged to attend the celebration.

SCHOOL RULES

PBIS: Helmers implements Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). PBIS is designed around the belief that schools should explicitly teach behavioral expectations to students as they would any other core subject. When expectations are clear and consistently reinforced, there is less ambiguity and the majority of students will choose to act appropriately. Positive reinforcements will be provided for students who demonstrate behaviors aligned with Helmers stated PBIS goals (H.O.W.L.):

1. Have Respect
2. Own My Actions
3. Work to Succeed
4. Lead with Kindness

Consequences for inappropriate actions during the school day are based on the inappropriate action and Ed. Code laws. Consequences are confidential and are only shared with the student and his/her parents or guardian.

GENERAL

1. Students are to respect authority.
2. Students are to exercise self-control.
3. Students are to respect rights and property of others.
4. Students are to observe rules and regulations.
5. Students are to cooperate with others.

PLAYGROUND RULES

During School: The playground is supervised at all times during the school day when children are on it. The school has established rules and regulations designed to safeguard each child.

General Playground Rules

Have Respect:

- Put away before you walk away
- Remain in supervised areas
- Give personal space

Own My Actions:

- Be a good sport
- Learn from mistakes
- Use positive and appropriate language

Work to Succeed:

- Learn new games

Lead with Kindness:

- Invite others to play
- Share, be a positive role model

Cafeteria/Lunch Area

Students will be given ample time to eat their snack and/or lunch. It is expected that all students demonstrate appropriate table manners. Basic rules students are to follow while in the lunch area include:

Have Respect:

- Use quiet voices with appropriate language
- Accept differences

Own My Actions:

- Pick up what you drop
- Eat your own food

Work to Succeed:

- Use your time wisely
- Stay seated

Lead with Kindness:

- Pick up trash
- Say "Please & Thank You"

LIBRARY RULES & PROTOCOLS

Students visit the library at a regularly scheduled time each week. Books are checked out for a specific length of time per grade level and must be returned when they are due. Each grade level is given parameters for checking

out materials. Students may renew their books during their library visit. Students with overdue books will not be allowed to check out any additional books until their record is cleared.

Students are issued a barcode based on their school ID. Every book is barcoded with a title number that is unique to that individual copy of the book. When a student checks out a book, their barcode is scanned and the barcode of the book is scanned. The book will remain on the student's record until the book is returned to the library and scanned into the computer. Books may be renewed but they must be returned to the library and renewed in person.

Overdue notices are issued when a book is overdue.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY

Except when caused by accident, students are liable for damage or loss to school property. Parents are held liable for willful damage and for property loaned to students

STUDENTS' PERSONAL PROPERTY

Personal items of value (iPods, cameras, electronic games, computers, toys, trading cards, etc.) should not be brought to school since loss, theft, or damage is possible. Also, such items can be distracting to the educational process and may be confiscated by school personnel. The School/District is not liable or responsible for lost or stolen items.

CELL PHONES/SMART WATCHES

Students may possess cell phones and smart watches, but they must be turned off while the students are on campus. Students may not use cell phones or smart watches during the school day unless deemed medically necessary by a physician. The physician's recommendation should be a part of the student's Health Care Plan.

If a disruption occurs or a student uses any mobile communications device for improper activities, a school employee shall direct the student to turn off the device and/or shall confiscate it. If the school employee finds it necessary to confiscate the device, he/she shall return it at the end of the school day. Subsequent offenses may require a parent/guardian to pick up the device.

In accordance with BP/AR 5145.12 - Search and Seizure, a school official may search a student's mobile communications device, including, but not limited to, reviewing messages or viewing pictures.

The use by any person, including a pupil, of any electronic listening or recording device in any classroom without the prior consent of the teacher and the principal is prohibited as it disrupts and impairs the teaching process and discipline in the schools. Any person, other than the pupil, willfully in violation shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. Any pupil in violation shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. EC 51512

LOST AND FOUND

In order to ensure that lost articles are returned to their proper owner, please be sure that your child's name is printed on articles such as sweaters, coats, lunch pails, etc. Articles that are found will be turned into the school office or placed in the lost and found area and may be claimed at recess or after school.

BIRTHDAYS

Classroom teachers may still recognize your child's birthday on his or her special day. For students' birthdays, parents are encouraged to donate a favorite book to our school library or classroom library. Donated books will be clearly labeled with your child's name.

Due to the District's Wellness Program, allergies and other potential health risks to students and staff, **birthday treats will not be permitted. Unfortunately, all sweets brought to celebrate a child's birthday will need to be sent back to the parent.**

CLASS PARTIES

Two class parties are permitted per year (Winter holiday and end of year). All food provided must be commercially prepared and delivered in the original sealed package. Homemade foods cannot be distributed to the students. All food items must be consulted with the classroom teacher and office staff for potential food allergy concerns.

ANIMALS ON CAMPUS

For the safety and health of our students, animals (pets) other than those specifically brought for class purposes are prohibited on school grounds during school hours or whenever students are present. Any animal brought to school must be approved by the Administration and be properly housed. Pets/animals found on the grounds are subject to impoundment by the Los Angeles County Animal Control Center. **Please refrain from bringing leashed dogs or other pets on campus, which includes the school parking lot.**

EXTENDED DAY CARE

On-site after school care is provided by qualified staff between 1:59 P.M. -6:00 p.m. for school-aged children.