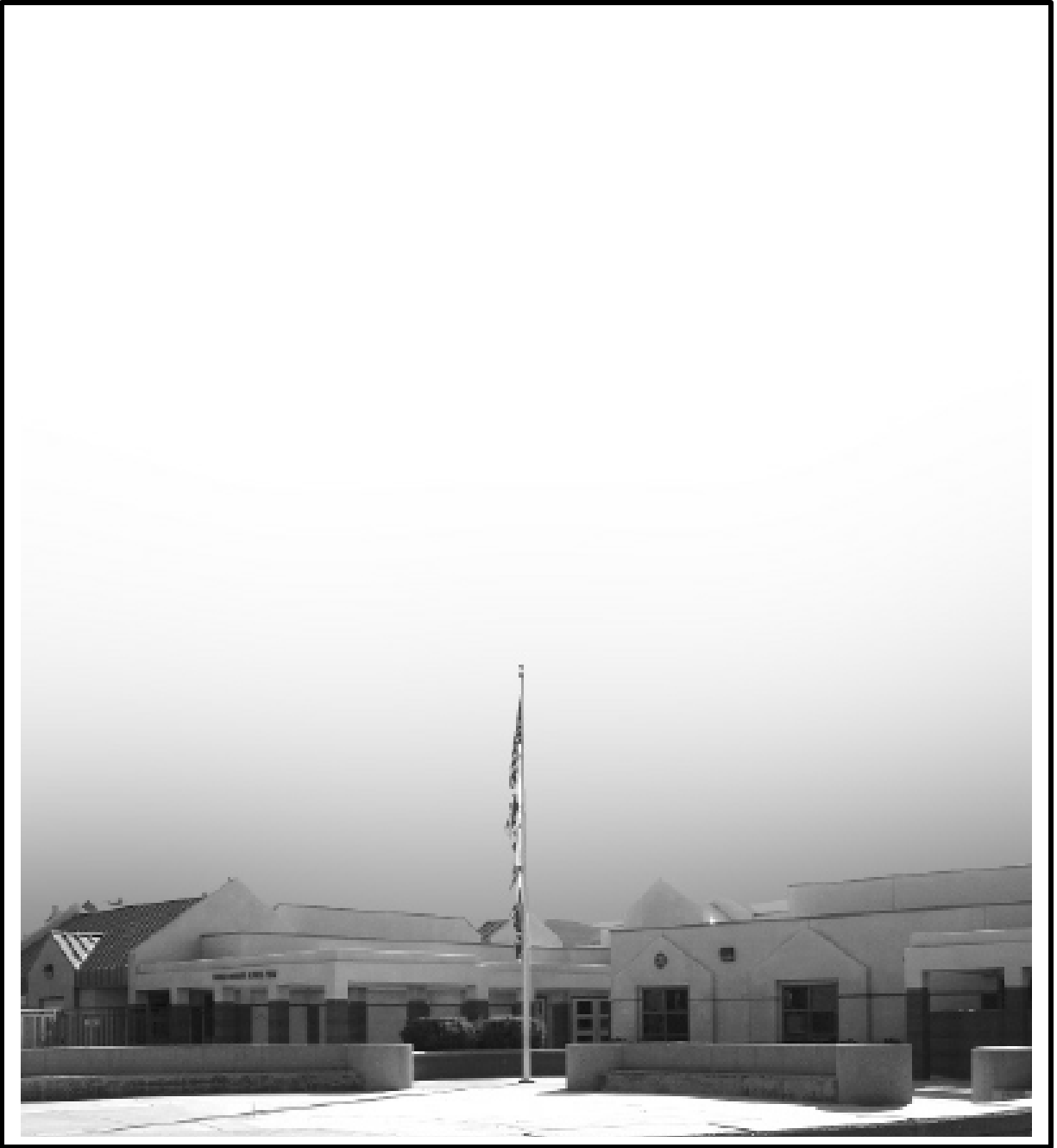


# Plum Canyon Elementary School

## 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 emergency card or online registration acknowledges that you have received this notice. (Please return the emergency card immediately if you did not register online.)**

**SAUGUS**  
UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT  
*Excellence in Elementary Education*

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**RESPECT | INTEGRITY | LEARNING | TEAMWORK | ENTHUSIASM**

### 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.

Welcome to Plum Canyon Elementary School, a California Distinguished and California Gold Ribbon school. We offer a well-rounded and integrated educational program that is designed to meet the academic, social, physical and emotional needs of our scholars. Our Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) program allows us to create an environment that fosters learning and reinforces school motto of PRIDE: **P**ositivity, **R**espect, **I**ntegrity, **D**etermination and **E**xcellence.

We are a strong family and community-oriented school with a robust culture of collaboration and cooperation between the home and school. We have a strong partnership with our parents and school community through the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). We encourage all parents to join the PTA and to participate in all school activities this school year. We look forward to your partnership that supports our students.

This handbook is intended to provide parents, guardians and students with information about the district and Plum Canyon Elementary programs and policies. Please take time to familiarize yourself with its content. We look forward to working together with you to make the 2024 – 2025 school year an experience that is both rewarding and exciting for our scholars and their families.

Ardrella Hamilton – Principal

## **OFFICE PROCEDURES & COMMUNICATION**

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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. We avoid unnecessary interruptions to the instructional program, especially during Prime Time Instruction. Any articles to be delivered to children should be left in the office. There are several ways that parents can be of assistance with regard to communication:

1. Check with your child prior to leaving for school to see that he/she has a lunch or lunch money, and all necessary materials for class.
2. If there will be a change in your child's regular routine, please make your child aware before leaving for school in the morning. Please send a message via ParentSquare to the teacher.
3. Avoid calling the school to leave a message for your child during the last 45 minutes of his/her school day.

Any change in transportation for children going home requires a message or written note from parents, which should be sent or given to your child's teacher. This includes a friend, neighbor, or relative who will take them home. No child will be released to an adult who is not listed on the emergency card without written approval.

## **PRIME TIME INSTRUCTION**

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Uninterrupted instructional time is critical in the educational process. Prime Time instruction is from the first bell until lunch recess. To help promote best learning practices we will not make phone calls or disrupt the classrooms before lunch recess. Children's textbooks and homework brought to the office will be placed in the teacher's mailbox. We will only interrupt classrooms during Prime-Time Instruction for emergencies.

## **STUDENT USE OF THE OFFICE PHONE**

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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. Every student should know an alternate plan to go home after school in the event the normal routine is disrupted. Students may not use the office phone to call for homework.

## **TEACHER CONTACT**

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Teachers are available for parent conferences both before and after school hours. These can be arranged by contacting the teacher via the telephone, ParentSquare, or a note prior to your requested time for a conference. Drop-in conferences are discouraged, as scheduled meetings,

planning, and other conferences may conflict. Teachers are not available for conferences during regular school instruction hours. This time is designated for classroom teaching.

If you are visiting or volunteering in the classroom, please do not consider it a time to conference with any classroom teacher. These interruptions greatly impact and disrupt instructional time for all students.

## **ADMINISTRATOR CONTACT**

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The administrator(s) may be contacted during office hours by sending a message via ParentSquare or by contacting the Office Manager to schedule an appointment or conference. Administration will make every effort to respond to communication and return messages within 24 to 48 hours.

## **CALENDAR**

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A yearly calendar is sent home at the beginning of each school year listing events, activities and special dates to remember. Events, activities, and dates are updated in the weekly bulletin (Panther Press).

## **VERIFICATION OF ADDRESS**

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

## **ATTENDANCE**

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Regular and prompt attendance is critical to your child's education as stated in the Education Code of the State of California. Medical and dental appointments should be made after the school day.

### Vacation Plans

It is important that children and parents acknowledge the school calendar when planning family vacations. The State of California does not recognize any absences, excused or unexcused. Consistent school attendance has a powerful impact upon a student's learning. Excessive absences (25 days) may result in retention. If students will be gone for five (5) or more days, an Independent Study Contract (ISC) can be prepared to avoid unexcused absences. A minimum of five (5) days notification and a meeting with an administrator is required in order to prepare the necessary ISC documents.

### Absence

When a child is absent, parents must call the school's 24-hour attendance line (294-5365) on the day of the absence.

If you do not use the attendance line, you will need to send a note the day your child returns to school explaining the absence and the date(s) of your child's absence.

When informing the school of an absence, please furnish the following information:

1. Your name
2. Child's name
3. Your child's teacher's name
4. Date of absence
5. Reason for absence (specific illness)

#### Tardy

Please make every effort to ensure that your child attends school on time. Arriving on time promotes responsibility and student success in school. If your child arrives late, he/she is required to go to the office to obtain a pass. Tardy arrival takes away learning time from all students in the classroom, not just the student arriving late. When a student arrives late to class, the teacher must stop teaching to bring the tardy student up to date, collect his/her homework, change the attendance, etc. As a result, the smooth flow of the classroom is interrupted. Parents of students who are frequently tardy or absent may be required to attend a School Attendance Review Team (SART) meeting.

#### Early Pick-up

If you need to check your child out of school during the school day, you must do so at the office. Written notification is required if someone not specified on your emergency card is picking up your child. They will need to show picture identification before the student will be released.

We kindly request that you make every effort to have your child complete his/her day at school and make get appointments (doctors, dentist, etc.) after school hours. Students will be required to make up any missing assignments. Students who are picked up more than thirty minutes early are marked tardy.

#### School Attendance Review Board (SARB)

The SARB process begins after a pattern of absences has been established. Parents will receive written notification by mail and parents will meet with the school administrator.

### **BULLETIN**

The Panther Press, our school bulletin will be sent via ParentSquare each week. The bulletin includes dates to remember, and information about activities and events. Information to be included in the bulletin must be submitted to the school office on the preceding Thursday. All information, flyers, notices, etc. must receive principal approval prior to being distributed to students.

### **VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS**

Parents are always welcome to visit classes at Plum Canyon Elementary School. Visitations should be limited to 20 minutes and prearranged with the administration and/or classroom teacher to avoid unnecessary interruptions to the instructional program. All volunteers and visitors are required to sign in at the school office through our Raptor System and to wear a volunteer or visitor badge while on campus. We must be aware of all non-employees on the school campus to ensure the safety of students. To maintain safety of all, younger children may not accompany the volunteer to school.

State law requires all volunteers to submit proof of a negative tuberculosis (TB) test result prior to working with children. Copies of TB test results for Plum Canyon's volunteers are kept on file in the Health Office. Volunteers are also asked to review and sign a Volunteer Code of Conduct form.

### **DISTRICT HOMEWORK POLICY**

The Plum Canyon staff supports Saugus Union School District's tenet that homework has a valid purpose in a child's education. Homework reinforces skills taught in the classroom setting, provides opportunity for review, develops organizational skills, and teaches responsibility.

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Plum Canyon Elementary School encourages active parent involvement in educational and planning decisions. Below are ways in which our parent community may choose to participate.

#### School Site Council (SSC)

The School Site Council is the advisory and decision-making body for Plum Canyon's Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA). SSC is comprised of 5 parents, 3 teachers, 1 classified staff member, and the administrator(s). Its job is to establish and approve the goals for the school, and to provide input with regard to the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). SSC members are elected for a two-year term, with one or more positions being elected each year. This council meets monthly, and meetings are open to any community member. 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.

#### Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

The PTA serves as the parent organization that assists with home/school communication, and funds an array of student activities as well as providing for school-wide events. It is responsible for planning activities, such as the school book fair, school pictures, appreciation luncheons, 6th Grade Promotion, room parents, educational

assemblies, yearbook fundraising events, etc. In addition, this group supports disaster preparedness efforts, field trips, and other recognized and requested school resources. Its focus in fundraising is to enrich school activities. Board elections for the PTA are held in late spring of each school year. Their meetings are scheduled monthly. Parents are encouraged to join the PTA and to participate in the activities.

### Volunteers

Classroom teachers generally invite parents to be classroom volunteers at Back-to-School Night. In addition, the PTA will recruit volunteers to assist with special needs, projects and activities.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

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Throughout the year teachers may take their classes on field trips. Parents are often invited to assist with supervision, in which case teachers will communicate chaperone needs prior to the field trip. All parents who attend field trips must have Level II Volunteer status, which means that they have had a TB test and have been fingerprinted. All students going on a class field trip must ride the school bus provided by the district.

## **SCHOOLWIDE AWARDS & EDUCATIONAL ASSEMBLIES**

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School awards are held after each trimester throughout the school year. Parents are invited to attend these assemblies. Awards assemblies are usually held in the morning. Awards are given for English Language Arts, Math, Citizenship and Teachers' Choice Awards, but are subject to change.

Schoolwide educational assemblies are held on a regular basis, but are subject to funding and availability. These assemblies are sponsored through PTA funding.

## **ASSESSMENTS**

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Multiple measures of assessment are reviewed to determine if a child is meeting grade level standards or may qualify for additional support.

District Benchmarks in Language Arts and Mathematics are administered for all students in grades K-6. Authentic assessment tools, i.e., student demonstration and portfolios are utilized to clearly define a student's understanding and growth in all curricular areas. In addition, teacher-created tests and publisher tests are used at the classroom teacher's discretion to assess individual achievement.

Standardized State testing (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress – CAASPP) occurs in the spring of each school year for students in grades 3–6. The computerized administration of the CAASPP test

measures student achievement of the California State Standards.

All students in grade 3 are assessed for the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program using the NNAT.

English Language Learners are assessed as well. They are given the English Language Proficiency Assessment of California (ELPAC). Those new to California schools are assessed in the Fall using the ELPAC Initial, and all English Language Learners are given the ELPAC Summative in the Spring. Both assessments are used to determine language proficiency, so that English language development instruction is conducted at the appropriate level.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

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Students must participate in 200 minutes of physical education every ten days of school per the California Education Code. Excuses from physical education because of minor illness or injury need to be written by a parent or physician. If a child is expected to be excused from physical education for more than 3 days, a physician must certify this with a note to the school.

To ensure student safety, students who are excused from physical education may not engage in playground activities during recess and lunch. All physical education excusals must be given to the classroom teacher at the beginning of the day, and must include the date range of days to be missed.

## **INJURED STUDENTS**

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In the event of an emergency, every attempt will be made to contact parents if a student requires immediate medical attention. The information entered into Infinite Campus is the most important information that a teacher and/or office staff member has for reaching parents. It needs to be very accurate and updated (by parents) when changes occur. It is kept on file in the school office and it lists who is to be contacted in case of an emergency. School staff will follow parents' directions as much as it is possible to do so.

Students requiring the use of ace wraps, casts, crutches, braces or any other appliance will need a note from the attending physician authorizing their use at school. A re-admission form, which can be obtained in the school office, must be completed and signed by the attending physician. All children with ace wraps, casts, crutches, braces or any other appliance must sit in a designated area during morning and lunch recess.

Office personnel will assist students who have minor injuries and illnesses. If necessary, parents will be called for additional assistance. The office staff will always inform parents of a head injury reported to the office.

## **ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL**

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### Arrival

All students using morning valet will be dropped off in the parking lot in the rear of the school off of Alfred Way. To move traffic efficiently, we ask drivers to follow these simple steps:

1. Enter the drop-off zone in the rear lot and move as far forward as possible.
2. Come to a complete stop so the valet can open the door.
3. Students need to be ready to exit the vehicle. This means that backpacks are on their laps or by their feet, and they are able to unbuckle, etc. as this action will impede traffic flow.
4. Once the students have exited and the car ahead has gone, please move forward onto the street.
5. Once drivers have entered the drop-off zone, drivers must remain in line until all cars in front have moved on. This is a single lane, and there is no early exiting from this zone.

Parents may park along the side streets and walk their children across the street if they choose. NO child will be allowed to cross the street on his/her own and no school personnel will cross the child for the parent.

The entrances and exits for the front school and childcare parking lots will be chained off at 7:45am daily.

### Dismissal

There is no valet at dismissal. All students will be walked to the front by their teachers. Primary students should be met there by a parent or guardian, or someone who is authorized to pick up. Upper grade students may walk home from the front circle. There is no formal supervision of students on the playground after school hours.

## **WALKING TO AND FROM SCHOOL**

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As a neighborhood school, most of our students are able to walk to and from school. Students are encouraged to walk in pairs or groups. They are responsible for using school behavior standards while in route. Students need to take care when crossing streets, and use the school crosswalks as well as heed the directions of the city-provided crossing guard.

It is expected that at the close of school, students will walk directly home. Children cannot remain on school grounds nor in the school office unsupervised while waiting for older siblings to be dismissed. We are required to report such instances to the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) and/or the Sheriff. Playground supervision is not provided for after school hours.

## **RAINY DAY SCHEDULE**

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Rainy day schedule does not affect arrival and/or dismissal times. Classrooms are open to students at 8:00 am on rainy days, but they may wait for their teachers in the MPR starting at 7:45 am. Recess and lunch periods are held in the classroom and/or multipurpose room.

## **SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS**

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We use the Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) framework for our schoolwide discipline plan. All school rules and expectations fall under our PRIDE Matrix: Positivity, Respect, Integrity, Determination, and Excellence. The school rules have been organized for different areas around campus: Classroom, Indoors, Restroom, Lunch Area and Playgrounds. Behavior expectations are explicitly taught to students in the classroom and schoolwide. We expect students to respect and follow the school rules at all times to ensure their safety and well-being. Students are reminded of behavior expectations by classroom teachers, administration and staff members and rules are reinforced by students earning Panther PRIDE tickets and hearing announcements. Teachers are given the flexibility to modify behavior expectations for their classroom.

Here are some school expectations aligned to our behavior matrix:

1. Students are to respect authority
2. Students are to respect rights and property of others
3. Students are to exercise self-control and make safe choices
4. Students are to take responsibility for following behavior expectations
5. Students are to take responsibility for their actions

### Behavior Referrals

When students have minor or major infractions of the PRIDE rules, he/she will receive a referral from a staff member. The staff member and/or administrator will further investigate the infraction and a consequence may be administered. Consequences will be determined by the investigation findings of the inappropriate action(s), repeat behaviors and Education Code. Specific consequences are confidential and are only shared with the student and his/her parents or guardian.

Our goal is help students develop personal responsibility, cooperation and mutual respect. We appreciate your support in trying to create a better learning environment for your children and a safe climate at school that fosters high expectations for learning and student behavior. With your support, Plum Canyon can continue to be an exemplary school with students who consistently model

positive behavior. Students who demonstrate PRIDE focus their energies on learning and high academic achievement.

## **TOYS AND DANGEROUS OBJECTS**

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Unless given permission by your child's classroom teacher and/or administrator, students must refrain from bringing toys, devices and objects that can distract students from learning. Dangerous objects that have the potential to inflict serious bodily injury to others are not permitted.

Examples of these objects include, but are not limited to, laser pointers, mini baseball bats, martial arts weapons (e.g., nunchaku, throwing stars), or any other sharp, pointy objects.

## **RESPONSIBILITY FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY**

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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.

## **PLAYGROUND EXPECTATIONS**

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The playground is supervised at all times during the school day when children are present. The school has established rules and regulations designed to safeguard each child. Abuse of the rules will result in specific consequences that may lead to being excluded from the privilege of the playground, suspension and/or expulsion.

### General Playground Expectations

1. Play all games according to their rules
2. Keep hands and feet to self
3. Use appropriate language
4. Be respectful – (teasing, taunting, and/or threatening other students is not permitted)
5. No running on the blacktop except in permitted areas (i.e. basketball court)
6. Walk around (not through) games in progress
7. Only school equipment is to be used on the playground (Games, toys, balls, cell phones, electronic games, etc. are not to be brought from home)
8. Stop all activities immediately upon hearing the bell or whistle
9. Follow instructions from the campus supervisors at all times
10. Return all equipment to its appropriate place/bin

## **CAFETERIA RULES & LUNCH INFORMATION**

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Students are given ample time to eat their snack and/or lunch, and will be permitted to finish their lunch. All students are expected to demonstrate appropriate table manners at all times and they are expected to abide by the following basic rules while in the lunch area:

1. Walk in and around the lunch area
2. No throwing food or any other item
3. No sharing food with others
4. Use quiet voices (Please no yelling and/or screaming)
5. Raise hand to receive permission to leave the lunch table to use the restroom or purchase an item from the red cart
6. Leave table area clean, both on the table top, and below and around the table

The Saugus Union School District contracts out all cafeteria and Red Cart services. If you have specific concerns regarding the food served or the service provided you may contact the Santa Clarita Valley School Food Services Agency at (661) 295-1574.

Hot lunch, including milk, is served daily. Prices and details regarding bulk lunch purchasing will be communicated. Menus are sent home the first of every month.

Children from families whose income is below levels established by the Federal Government may be eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch. Contact the Santa Clarita Valley School Food Services Agency at (661) 295-1574 for further information.

For the safety of all children, parents who wish to eat lunch with their child(ren) are welcome to do so as long as they check their child(ren) out at the front office. For safety reasons, we ask that parents do not eat with their children on campus.

## **BICYCLES**

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Students in grades 3-6 may ride their bicycles to and from school. If you agree to the following bicycle safety rules, you can obtain a bicycle permit at the school office to be signed by the student and parent/guardian.

1. Students who ride bicycles to school are required to follow the rules of the road and to adhere to school behavior expectations.
2. Bicycles are to be walked to the bicycle cage once the student reaches school grounds. They are to be kept locked during the school day.
3. Students may not ride their bicycle on school grounds.
4. Students are not permitted in the bicycle cage during the school day.
5. Students riding bikes and/or scooters must wear helmets.
6. Skateboards and scooters must be checked-in and out with the school administrator. Generally, skate-related items are NOT allowed on school grounds after school and during evening activities.



## **DRESS CODE**

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Student dress and grooming must be safe, clean, modest and conducive to educational pursuits. Casual clothing such as shirts, pants, T-shirts, blouses and shorts are recommended for school except for special “dress-up” occasions. Durable, closed-toed shoes are essential as students do not change for P.E. and feet need to be protected. Apparel must not inhibit participation or cause disruption in any phase of the instructional program.

In order to assist us in maintaining an effective learning environment and keeping the focus of the classroom on learning, the following attire is inappropriate and unacceptable for any student attending Plum Canyon Elementary School:

- Short shorts and cutoff shorts
- Bare midriffs
- Tank tops with oversized armholes
- Oversized pants or shorts
- Shirts with inappropriate language or advertisements
- Plastic (jellies) shoes, platform shoes, or open-toed sandals
- Expensive jewelry
- Makeup (tattoos)
- Gang-related clothing (i.e., long belts, knit caps, trench coats, chains, chain wallets, etc.)
- Unusual hair color
- Spaghetti straps on shirts or dresses
- Clothing that exposes undergarments

## **CELL PHONES (Education Code 48901.5)**

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Students may possess and use cell phones under specific parameters. Cell phones are to be turned off and put away upon arriving to campus and entering the school building. This authorization for student use may be revoked due to misuse or defiance to school personnel regarding use of cell phones. Other electronic devices are not permitted at school. The District assumes no liability for the damage, theft, loss, or misuse of the cell phone or electronic device by the student or another person. Failure to comply with this policy may result in confiscation of cell phone and/or electronic devices by school personnel.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

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Plum Canyon Elementary School has an Emergency Preparedness Plan and drill procedures are reviewed regularly. Copies of this plan are available for review in the school office. In addition, water, food, first aid supplies, and rescue equipment are kept on site. Schoolwide drills for fire/evacuation, lockdown, and earthquake procedures assist students in being prepared. Our emergency plan follows specific guidelines in the event of an emergency/disaster.

The following is an excerpt from our Emergency Preparedness Plan describing how to reunite with your child:

### How to pick up your child in the event of a disaster

- Student Release Station is located on North Alfred Way near the rear parking lot gate. No student will be released from the office.
- Please wait patiently in line for your turn.
- No student will be dismissed from school unless a parent (or individual designated by parent) comes for him/her.
- No child will be released with another person unless we have written permission to that effect or that person is on the Disaster Release form.
- The requesting individual signs for the child on the bottom of the student's Disaster Release Authorization form. (I.D. will be required before student is released).
- Injured students will be released by the First Aid Station when a parent or predetermined designee presents an Authorization for Student Release form, signed by the Student Release Station personnel.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

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In order to ensure that lost articles are returned to their proper owner, please be sure that your child's first and last 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 in the multipurpose room. Items may be claimed at recess or after school. Unclaimed items are donated to charity during winter break and at the end of the school year.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

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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 be sent back to the parent. The Plum Canyon Elementary staff is committed to promoting quality literature for our students. For students' birthdays, parents are encouraged to donate a favorite book to our school or classroom library. Donated books will be clearly labeled with your child's name.

## **CLASS PARTIES**

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Two class parties are permitted per year: Winter and End of Year. All food provided must be commercially prepared and delivered in the original sealed package. Homemade foods cannot be distributed to students. No colored drinks are permitted, as spills may stain carpets. Please refer to the District's Wellness Policy for food guidelines and check with your child's teacher regarding any known food allergies.

## **CUSTODY ISSUES**

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Custody disputes must be handled by the courts. The school has no legal jurisdiction to refuse a biological parent access to his/her child and/or school records. The only exception is when signed restraining orders or proper divorce papers, specifically stating visitation limitations, are on file in the school office. Any student release situation which leaves the student's welfare in question will be handled at the discretion of the site administrator or designee. Should any such situation become a disruption to the school, law enforcement will be contacted and an officer requested to intervene. Parents are asked to make every attempt not to involve school sites in custody matters. The school will make every attempt to reach the custodial parent when a parent or any other person not listed on the emergency card attempts to pick up a child.

## **CIVILITY (BOARD POLICY 1313)**

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It is the intent of this administrative regulation to provide orderly educational and administrative guidelines to ensure that schools, administrative offices, facilities, and activities are free from uncivil conduct as specified in BP 1313 and that unauthorized persons are prevented from entering school/district grounds, facilities, and/or activities. Members of the district community (defined as all employees, parents, students, and the public, hereinafter collectively referred to as "school community") will treat one another with civility and expect the same in return. The district encourages positive communication and discourages conduct likely to interfere with peaceful conduct of the school, facility, or activity. The district seeks public cooperation with this endeavor.