

# **HELEN KELLER SCHOOL**

**2009 – 2010**

**Mr. Bryan K. Relich  
Principal**

**3730 E. Montebello Drive, West  
Colorado Springs, CO 80918**

**Telephone: (719) 328-5900**

# HELEN KELLER SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Helen Keller School. We are very proud of our school and feel certain you will share in that pride. This handbook is designed to familiarize parents with some of the programs, policies, and procedures at Helen Keller School. Parents are encouraged to read the information, discuss it with their children, and SAVE IT FOR FUTURE REFERENCE. We will be well on the way to a successful year when we can operate with a common understanding of school procedure. Our expectations are high--we expect the very best of and for our students.

## SCHOOL HOURS

Student hours are:

\_\_\_\_\_ (Grades 1- 5)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Kindergarten)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Preschool, morning session)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Preschool, afternoon session)

We ask that no students be on school grounds until ten minutes before school starts as there is no supervision before this time.

## INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Helen Keller School has a preschool - fifth grade enrollment of approximately 530 students. There are three or four homeroom classes per grade-level. Generally, teachers work together in "instructional teams." Flexible groupings may be used during the day to provide instruction that closely matches student need.

The Colorado Springs School District Eleven community will demand:

- continuous improvement of student achievement;
- safe school environments;
- efficient and effective use of resources.

The elementary school curriculum promotes skill development in core academic areas. The development of language-related skills is emphasized. Students are provided many opportunities to apply learned skills through activities that require higher-levels of thinking such as creating projects, writing reports, and preparing presentations.

The academic curriculum is supplemented by Music, Physical Education, Art, and Computer Education Programs. String instrument instruction is an option for students in fourth and fifth grades. Band instruction is available for students in fifth grade. Using the community as a classroom, students go on many field trips. Special Education classes, Social Work Services and a Gifted and Talented Consultant add to the educational programs and are available for eligible students.

## ATTENDANCE

Regular school attendance is important. A teacher cannot teach a student who is not present. As a general rule, absences should occur only as a result of illness or injury, and doctors' appointments that cannot be scheduled outside of the school day. When an absence is planned, please inform the office and the teacher as far in advance as possible.

Tardiness has the same impact as does an absence. It is defined as a loss of instructional time.

If a student will be absent, we ask that the parent report the absence by calling the school at 328-5911 before the session begins.

## DISMISSAL DURING THE DAY

No student may leave school grounds during school hours without permission from the Principal's Office. Parents must check students out or in through the office when leaving early, arriving late, or returning from appointments. Please do not go directly to the classroom to take students out of school.

## SCHOOL LUNCHES

School lunches are available for \$\_\_\_\_\_ per day including milk. They may be purchased by the day or by the week. Payment made by check on Monday mornings is preferred. We would encourage younger children to bring their money for lunch in a lunch payment envelope with their name, grade, and teacher listed on the front. Children who do not eat a hot lunch may bring a sack lunch. Milk may be purchased at school.

Children from families whose income is low may be eligible for free lunches or lunches at a reduced rate. To apply at any time during the year, check with the school office for an application form.

## PARKING LOT

The Keller parking lot has been enlarged providing additional parking spaces to be used primarily for **staff parking and separation of school bus/day care van pick-up/drop-off** from other traffic. For the safety of bused students, day care and school buses will load in the new parking lot extension. The original parking lot is to be used primarily by private vehicles to pick up/drop off students and for parent and volunteer parking. **Do not park in the marked bus lanes in front of the school.**

To further reduce parking lot congestion, parents can also arrange to pick up their children on:

- Montebello Place, west of the stoplight, or
- Cambria, east of the parking lot.

## SCHOOL RULES

Every student has a right to learn in an atmosphere which is safe, conducive to the learning process, and free from unnecessary disruption.

A copy of rules enforced in all District Eleven Schools will be sent home with all students early in the school year.

At Keller, all students are expected to follow school rules governing classroom, hallway, restroom, lunchroom, playground and school bus behavior. Classroom rules vary from teacher to teacher. Generally classroom rules are designed to maintain an orderly classroom atmosphere which promotes work-completion, concentration and learning.

To maintain a safe and healthy atmosphere for all students on the school playground, the following rules are to be enforced for all students:

- Students will be allowed to solve problems in ways that do not create problems for someone else. Fighting is prohibited.
- Any action that would be harmful to others including throwing of snow, stones, sand, or dirt; using equipment improperly; tripping, chicken fighting; and tackle games will not be allowed. (Touch football is allowed.)
- All playground equipment is to be used properly.
- Abusive language and disrespectful behavior will not be allowed.

Consequences for rule violations should be expected.

## STUDENT MEDICATION

Medications are rarely necessary for students during the school day. They are justified in some chronic health conditions or short-term acute health conditions. If possible, medication should be given at home. When medication must be administered during the school day, it is the policy of School District Eleven that no medication is to be given in the schools without a signed form from the doctor. The medication must be brought to school in a container appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or doctor. Also needed on the form is when the medication is to be administered, the dosage, and the date. A parent signature is required on the form. You may pick up the form in the Keller office for your doctor to complete when the medication is prescribed.

## **OUTDOOR RECESS**

Recess is scheduled as part of the regular school day. This time serves as a break for students and some teachers. As a general rule, if your child is too ill to participate in recess, he/she should be kept at home. A signed note from the parent is required for students to stay inside. A doctor's certificate will be required of any child staying in for an extended period of time. The number of days must be specified.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Feel free to contact your child's teacher or the principal with any questions or concerns you might have. As a rule, deal with the person most directly involved first. If your child is having a problem, start with the teacher. This is the person most familiar with your child. See the principal when it is a general school problem. He is the most informed in this area.

## **REPORTING TO PARENTS**

Report cards are sent home quarterly. Parent-teacher conferences are also scheduled during the year. If you have questions about your child's progress at any time, please contact your teacher to set up an appointment for a conference.

## **NEWSLETTERS AND NOTICES**

A newsletter is sent home at the beginning of each month and special notices will be sent home as the need arises. Please stress to your child/children the importance of getting these items home to you.

## **VISITING SCHOOL**

You are always welcome and encouraged to visit any time. We ask that you check in at the office when you arrive.

## **PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION**

Helen Keller has an active PTA that involves many parents who are interested in supporting school activities. The Keller PTA strives to benefit all our children by providing volunteer assistance, support/resources for instructional programs and health/safety protection at school and in the neighborhood. Additionally, the PTA supports enrichment activities for students, organizes the school volunteer programs, and makes special purchases to enhance our facilities.

Three General Membership Meetings are held during the year to select officers, approve the annual budget, and to present reports on PTA activities. In addition, the PTA Board, made up of PTA Officers and Committee Chairmen, meets monthly to transact necessary business. Specific meeting dates and times are published in the monthly school newsletter. ALL interested parents are encouraged to attend the meetings. Please consider donating some of your energy, time, and talent to our school by becoming active in the Keller PTA.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Many parents and other volunteers give some of their time to work at school. It does not matter how much time you can give -- your help is needed! If you can help, please complete the "Tickets for Time" sign-up packets sent home at the beginning of the year or contact your child's teacher. Also, each year, please register with the office as a volunteer.

## **DELAYED START FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER**

District Eleven may utilize a two-hour delayed school start on bad-weather days. On bad-weather days, be sure to listen to major local radio stations for information on school opening. Before-school activities will be cancelled. Morning Kindergarten and Preschool will be cancelled. Buses will run two hours later than normal. As usual, we ask that no students be on school grounds until ten minutes before school starts as there is no supervision before this time.

## **EMERGENCY CLOSING OF SCHOOL FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

On "bad weather" days, children may be dismissed two-hours early. Listen to major radio stations that will broadcast this information. Afternoon Kindergarten and Preschool will be cancelled.

- Parents must complete, and return, an "Early Dismissal Plan" to the school for each child.
- Parents are responsible for updating these plans as family information and/or circumstances change.
- Parents are responsible for periodically reminding their children of early dismissal instructions.
- Students will eat lunch at school unless their "Early Dismissal Plan" says they are to leave before lunchtime.

### **TELEPHONE USE**

The school telephones are business phones. Student use is limited to emergencies and students must receive permission from a teacher to use the phone. Please help by seeing that your child has homework, books, supplies, and has made after school plans before leaving for school.

### **SCHOOL INSURANCE**

School District Eleven has liability insurance for accidents ONLY if the school is found to be negligent. If you do not have family insurance, or would like additional insurance for your child, a voluntary insurance program is offered as a service to pupils and parents in District Eleven. You can find insurance forms in the front office at the beginning of the school year.

### **VALUABLES**

Parents are urged to see that children do not wear valuable jewelry, bring large amounts of cash or other costly items to school. Toys should not be brought to school. School personnel cannot be responsible for loss or damage to items of this nature.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

Please clearly label all items of clothing, lunch boxes, and school supplies. A lost and found closet is kept in the front hallway of the school.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Written permission from the parent is required in order for a child to be allowed to go on school-sponsored field trips. When your child brings home a request for permission to go on a field trip, please see that he/she returns it promptly to the teacher.

### **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

School personnel are required by Colorado State Law to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services.

### **BICYCLES, ROLLER BLADES, AND SKATEBOARDS**

A fenced bike rack is available east of the parking lot. Students must provide their own bike locks. As a safety precaution, bicycles may not be ridden on school grounds during the school day. Roller blades and skateboards are not allowed at school.

### **PETS**

Pets may be brought to school only with prior approval of the homeroom teacher. A parent must accompany any pet brought to school.

August, 2009

Dear Parents:

The Fourth and Fifth Grade teaching team would like to welcome each of our students and their parents to the 2009 - 2010 school year. We are looking forward to a year of working and learning together. At Keller, all 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers use Premier Academic Planners to help students and parents monitor daily assignments. It is very important for students to develop the habit of keeping track of and completing all assignments on time. Middle and High School teachers (as well as students who visit us after they have moved on) tell us that students who do well in the upper grades are those who have developed good study habits, strong basic skills and who complete school work on time. Organization and time management are crucial to success in school, just as they are in the real world. This letter will review and update students and parents about expected homework practices.

### ***REASONS FOR HOMEWORK***

Homework is given for a variety of reasons including:

- completion of work started in class;
- drill and practice on basic skills;
- recreational reading;
- work on a special project;
- prescriptive assignments for special help.

Parents and students should consider many of these categories as “standing homework” that parents can support by setting the expectation that it will be done on a nightly basis. A nightly homework schedule for a fourth or fifth grade student would include:

- reading for pleasure for 20 - 30 minutes.
- memorizing math facts using flash cards for 10 minutes.
- practicing a band and orchestra instrument as directed by the Band/Orchestra teacher.

Children who follow this schedule perform better in school than those who do not.

Because students work at differing speeds and some use school time more effectively, one student may complete an assignment at school during the time given. Another may need to take the work home to complete it. A time to complete unfinished class work also needs to be provided at home.

Sometimes a unit will include a culminating project that is to be done at home. These types of assignments help students learn to apply research skills, to plan, organize and create a project. Again, parents can help with this type of task by providing a work area, materials, and technical assistance such as transportation to the Library. As a parent, be cautious: Do not complete this type of assignment for your child. You will deny him/her a valuable learning opportunity.

### **HOW PARENTS CAN HELP**

The following tips for parents are from *Instructor* magazine:

- communicate an expectation that work completion and homework is important;
- provide a quiet place to do homework and a consistent homework time;
- keep pencils, paper, scissors, and such on hand;
- offer help, but make sure the student gets the work done on his or her own.

### **THE SCHOOL'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

It concerns school staff when in spite of parents' and teachers' best efforts, some students hand in their work late. When assignments are handed in much later than their due date, it defeats the purpose of the work. Frequently, the student doesn't remember the directions, has to get a new copy of the worksheet, or may even have forgotten the background information necessary to do the work.

Teachers use a variety of techniques to encourage work and homework completion. These include: telling students the purpose of the assignment and giving clear directions, writing the assignments on the board as well as saying them, teaching students to keep an assignment notebook or planner, providing time after school or at recess to help individual students, and encouraging students to ask for help.

If you have any questions about this information, feel free to contact your child's teacher. Your support in this matter is appreciated and can only result in a more responsible and better-educated student.

Sincerely,

Fourth and Fifth Grade Team

## **DISTRICT ELEVEN POLICIES**

A complete list of School District Eleven Policies and Regulations are available at each school and via the Colorado Springs School District Web Site (<http://www.cssd11.k12.co.us/>). The following District Eleven Policies are printed in student handbooks each year:

### **WEAPONS IN SCHOOL**

The Board of Education determines that possession and/or use of a weapon by students is detrimental to the welfare and safety of the students and school personnel within the district.

Carrying, bringing, using or possessing any deadly weapon in any school building, on school grounds, in any school vehicle or at any school-sponsored activity without the authorization of the school or the school district is prohibited. Such weapons may include but shall not be limited to the following: any pistol, revolver, rifle, shotgun, air gun or spring gun; slingshot; bludgeon; brass knuckles or artificial knuckles of any kind; any knife having a blade of greater than three inches, any knife the blades or which can be opened by a flick of a button or pressure on the handle, or any pocketknife where the blade is carried in a partially-opened position; and any other weapon, device, instrument, material, or substance whether animate or inanimate, which in the manner it is used or intended to be used is capable of producing death or serious bodily injury.

Violation of this policy shall require that proceedings for the expulsion of the student involved be initiated immediately.

Expulsion shall be for no less than one full calendar year for a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school. The superintendent or designee may modify the length of this expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis. Other expulsions up to one full calendar year may be assessed for any other weapons violations.

An exception to this policy may be made for students participating in an authorized extracurricular activity or team involving the use of firearms.

### **STUDENT DRESS**

It is recognized that parents and school personnel have a common interest in the educational, physical and moral development of students. Student dress and appearance along with student conduct have a definite influence on class discipline and achievement. The manner in which a student dresses and grooms himself has an important effect on his feelings concerning himself and his school.

Students should exercise good judgment in their choice of clothes for everyday school wear. When in the school during school hours, students shall be appropriately attired and groomed for the classroom. Dress, appearance and behavior for special occasions and activities under the jurisdiction of the school shall be appropriate for these occasions.

Coaches and sponsors of extracurricular activities are granted authority to establish more stringent rules regarding dress and appearance for students participating in such activities. Such additional rules shall not be inconsistent with requirements of the activity and shall require approval of the principal.

The application of this policy shall recognize the right of the individual student in dress and appearance restricted on the basis of health, safety, interference with work or contribution to disorder in the school or classroom. The student in the exercise of his individual right bears a responsibility toward the student with whom he shares a locker; the students with whom he shares classroom, laboratory, shop or other group facility; the staff; and the school.

The exercise of his right shall not adversely affect the health or safety of another or the right of another to work or study without interference nor shall it create or promote disorder in the school or classroom. Further, student dress or appearance which is considered by school officials to be vulgar, lewd, obscene, indecent, or plainly offensive shall not be allowed in school buildings, in or on district property, at school-sponsored events and activities, or in or on district vehicles, regardless of whether the dress or appearance causes a substantial disruption.

Any student who comes to school without proper attention having been given to personal cleanliness, dress or appearance may be sent home to be properly prepared for school or shall be required to prepare himself for the classroom before entering.

## **STAFF PERSONAL SECURITY AND SAFETY**

The following procedures shall be followed in instances of assault, disorderly conduct, harassment, knowingly false allegation of child abuse, or alleged criminal offense by a student directed towards a teacher or school employee.

These same procedures shall be followed in instances of damage by a student to the personal property of a teacher or school employee occurring on school district premises, on school vehicles or at school activities.

1. The teacher or employee shall notify the building principal or designee as soon as possible.
2. The teacher or employee shall contact the local law enforcement agency to report the incident.
3. The teacher or employee shall follow up and file a written report with the principal, the superintendent's office and the board.
4. The principal or designee shall insure that the local law enforcement agency has been contacted, shall conduct an informal hearing after receipt both of the report and adequate proof of the charges, and shall suspend the student for at least three days but no more than 10 days with the possibility of further disciplinary action in accordance with established procedures.
5. The superintendent or designee may initiate procedures for the further suspension or expulsion of the student where injury or property damage has occurred.
6. A copy of this policy shall be distributed to each student and posted in each school building.

### **FORMAL DISCIPLINARY REMOVALS FROM CLASSROOMS BY TEACHERS**

Board Policy JKBA and Regulation JKBA-R, "Formal Disciplinary Removals from Classrooms by Teachers," have been adopted by the Board of Education. The policy and regulations specify the circumstances under which a student may be removed from a teacher's classroom due to behavioral concerns.

## **NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

School District 11 is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in relation to race, creed, color, sex (gender), ancestry, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, age and/or disability. Discrimination and/or harassment based on the aforementioned areas will not be tolerated and must be brought to the immediate attention of the school principal or D11 nondiscrimination compliance coordinator: Marvin R. Adams, Office of Equal Opportunity Programs and Ombudservices, 1115 N. El Paso Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80903, Phone: 520-2271, FAX: 520-2442, EMAIL: [adamsmr@d11.org](mailto:adamsmr@d11.org)

## **DECLARACIÓN DE NO DISCRIMINACIÓN**

El Distrito Escolar 11 de Colorado Springs está comprometido a una política de no discriminación en cuanto a raza, credo, color, sexo, ascendencia, orientación sexual, religión, origen nacional, edad, y/o impedimento. La discriminación y/o el acoso que sucedan a base de factores arriba mencionados no se tolerarán y deben ser denunciados de inmediato al director de la escuela o al coordinador de cumplimiento con la no discriminación en D11: Marvin R. Adams, Office of Equal Opportunity Programs and Ombudservices, 1115 N. El Paso Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80903. Teléfono: 520-2271, FAX: 520-2442, Correo electrónico: [adamsmr@d11.org](mailto:adamsmr@d11.org)