



RICHARD T.
CASTRO
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Richard T. Castro Elementary

Home of the Cheetahs

Parent/Student Handbook

Richard T. Castro Elementary
845 S. Lowell Blvd.
Denver, CO 80219

Main Office: 720-424-8990
Attendance Line: 720-424-8990
Fax: 720-424-9015
Office Hours: 8AM - 4PM

Principal: Dr. Robert Villarreal
Assistant Principal: Sun Coates

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WELCOME!

The faculty, staff and administration of Richard T. Castro Elementary welcome you. It is our sincere commitment to provide your child with a challenging and exciting academic experience.

Our school mission is to enable all students to reach their full potential as responsible citizens. It is important to understand that the choices one makes, as a student, will determine the growth made academically and socially.

The purpose of this handbook is to help parents and students become aware of Castro privileges, opportunities and responsibilities. Each parent and student is asked to thoughtfully read this handbook together and be knowledgeable of its content. If you have any questions, please contact one of your teachers or administrator.

School office hours are Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The school telephone number is (720) 424-8990.

Daily Schedule

School begins at 8:15 a.m. and ends at 2:15 p.m. every Monday, and 8:15a.m. - 3:15 p.m. Tuesday through Friday. Students are to enter the school through the cafeteria. Students participating in the breakfast program should enter the cafeteria through the courtyard/playground. Students are released on the playground after school. On severe weather days parents are asked to wait in the cafeteria. Children will be brought to the cafeteria for parent pick-up at 3:15 p.m.

Arrival

Students may be dropped off on the playground, as early as 7:30 a.m. Outdoor supervision begins at 7:30 a.m.

Breakfast and Lunch Program

Denver Public Schools provides a breakfast and lunch program. Every family is required to complete a Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Form. There is no cost for **breakfast which is served each day from 7:30 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.** Breakfast will not be served after 8:00 a.m. Food may not be taken out of the lunchroom. If parents have questions about the breakfast or lunch programs, please contact our Food Services Manager, at 720-424-8990.

Parents are encouraged to eat lunch with their child on **WEDNESDAYS** only. Please enter through the cafeteria doors, not the main office.

Lunchroom Expectations

Students are expected to:

- A. Walk at all times.
- B. Be courteous to cooks, custodians, staff, and fellow students.
- C. Follow directions the first time they are given.
- D. Remain seated while eating.
- E. Put all trash in the proper containers.
- F. Comply when asked to pick up food or waste.
- G. Raise their hand to be dismissed.
- H. Children are asked to wipe their area with the dish cloth before leaving

Parents are expected to follow all lunchroom expectations including:

- A. Only having lunch on Wednesday's
- B. Keeping younger siblings with them at all times. Please monitor your children
- C. NO STROLLERS GOING THROUGH LUNCH LINE
- D. Peanuts and Takis are not allowed (these have been shown to have an ill effect on a child's stomach and allergies)

Change in Student Information

If **at any time your address and/or telephone number changes**, please contact the school office to give updated information. It is important to have updated contact information in case of emergencies.

Attendance

It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to ensure that students attend school daily. We ask parents to comply with school attendance policies. **School begins promptly at 8:15 a.m. Any student arriving after 8:15 a.m. is considered tardy.** Students who arrive after 8:15 a.m. must check in at the main office to obtain a tardy slip before going to class. Excessive tardies will result in having to stay after school to make up lost academic time.

If your child is going to be absent from school please call 720-424-8990 before 7:30 a.m. on the day of the absence.

All absences must be called in by a parent/guardian. An excused absence must have written documentation from medical, dental, or court officials. When absences and tardies become chronic and excessive, medical documentation will be required. Unexcused absences will require a parent conference with the school Principal. Truancy is an absence without permission of the parent / guardian or school teacher/principal.

The attendance law allows 10 days total unexcused absences. Violation of the law may result in the initiation of an Attendance Filing in Denver Juvenile Court.

Dress Code Policy

Students at Castro Elementary are required to wear a Castro t-shirt every day. The LAST Friday of the month is casual Friday, children are not required to wear a Castro t-shirt.

Appropriate school attire includes:

- All clothing must fit properly,
- Appropriate footwear (no flip flops, slippers, house shoes),

Inappropriate school attire includes:

- Sagging or overly-baggy clothing,
- Pajamas or sleep-wear
- Tank tops, halter tops, short shorts and short skirts,
- Hats, bandanas, doo-rags
- Gang-related clothing is prohibited. This includes colors and styles.

Students not adhering to the dress code will be asked to change into a Castro t-shirt. Students refusing to respect the dress code will be sent to the office. An administrator or designee will provide the student with a “loaner” Castro t-shirt or, the student may contact a parent to bring appropriate clothing. Students refusing to comply will be sent home and given an unexcused absence for the day. Continuous inappropriate dress will result in additional consequences.

Medication

Medication may be given in school only if times cannot be arranged for doses to be given outside of school hours.

If your child must take medication during school hours, please follow this procedure:

- All medication must be brought by the parent or guardian to the Castro Health Clinic in a PHARMACY LABELED CONTAINER. The medicine must be labeled with the name of the student, name of drug, strength, dosage, frequency, name of physician, and date of original prescription.
- For the school to dispense ANY medications, prescribed by a doctor OR over the counter medicine (Tylenol, Advil, Midol, cough drops, if the medicine is in liquid form, please enclose a measured dispensing tool) a medication authorization form must be completed and on file in the Castro Health Clinic. A parent release and a Physician’s written order is required.
- Medications must be left in school. They will not be returned to the student; when it needs to go home, a parent or guardian must sign out the medication.

Students may not carry or take any pill, inhaler, etc. in class. THE SCHOOL NURSE MUST ADMINISTER ALL MEDICATIONS.

Internet Use Agreement

Inappropriate activities on the Internet include, but are not limited to the following:

- Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
- Using profanity and / or obscene language
- Harassing, bullying, insulting or attacking others
- Damaging computers, computer systems or software programs
- Trespassing into another person's folders, work or files
- Using the network for financial or commercial gain
- Using another student's password
- Accessing sites in which a warning is giving stating someone must be at least 18 years old to enter.

The following statement is included in registration materials and must be signed by parent and child: **I understand and will abide by the Denver Public Schools' terms and conditions for internet use. In addition, I will follow all school procedures and guidelines for Internet use. I also understand that any violation of the Internet rules may result in school disciplinary or legal action and / or legal action and / or complete loss of Internet access. I accept the Internet rules and above conditions.**

Media Permission

Castro will receive local, state and national media coverage for our exceptional academic program. Should you wish not to have your child filmed for television or photographed by the media, you have the option to deny permission for your child to participate in all media events. There is a permission form in the registration packet, please complete it.

Field Trips

Classroom teachers plan academic oriented field trips for specific learning objectives. Teachers will send information and permission slips home. In order to participate, a child must have a field trip permission slip signed by the parent. Your teacher will send a notice prior to each field trip to inform parents of scheduled field trips. If you do not wish for your child to participate, arrangements can be made for the child to remain at school with another class.

Inclement Weather

Castro will adhere to Denver Public Schools' inclement weather policies. If DPS is closed, Castro will be closed. In the event of an unscheduled or early closure, after-school programs will also be canceled.

Money and Valuables

Children should not bring money or valuables to school. Money to buy breakfast and lunch is the only exception. Children are asked to not bring any type of electronic equipment, i.e. mp3 players, cell phones; if these items are brought to school and items are taken, stolen or missing; it will not be the school's responsibility. Phones brought to school, with parent permission, must be turned into the office in the morning for safe keeping. Children may retrieve their phones after school.

Lost and Found

Clothing and personal property should be labeled with the student's name. If a student loses an item they may go to the school lost and found located in the cafeteria

Early Dismissal Requests

Please make every effort to adhere to dismissal times. If your child needs to be excused from school before the official dismissal time, the child must be signed out in the main office before s/he will be released from class. Only an authorized adult (at least 18 years old) listed on the registration information, will be permitted to remove a child from school. Your child will not be released to anyone who does not have the parent's written permission to take him or her out of school. Please help us protect your child by providing names and telephone numbers of persons who have (or do not have) your permission to take your child out of school. The authorized adult picking up the student must have a photo ID.

Children WILL NOT be released early from school unless they have a documented appointment. Classes end at 2:15 on Mondays and 3:15 Tuesday- Friday.

Parking

The streets around Castro have signs posted about parking. Be aware of the restrictions; cars can and will be ticketed. The streets during dismissal time become crowded with people in cars waiting for students. **Please do not double park and / or leave your car double parked on the street.**

Emergency Drills

Fire drills will be held monthly during the school year. In addition, students will participate in tornado drills, modified lockdown and lockdown drills.

Student Support and Family Involvement

Learning Environment

Castro is committed to creating and maintaining a positive learning environment that encourages cooperation, fosters creativity, and nurtures students to take risks in learning. The learning environment provides all students access to a world-class education. Parents and community members play an important role in supporting the learning environment by using respectful language that encourages and inspires students, as well as set limits.

Special Education Support

Special education services are provided by the Denver Public Schools. Teachers provide differentiated instruction, and Castro supports an inclusive education model.

Student Discipline Policy

An effective discipline policy is extremely important to the school culture. With positive discipline, the school will achieve its primary responsibility for developing citizenship and academic excellence. With an effective discipline policy, students achieve their greatest opportunities for academic growth. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that respects rights and privileges of others. Students are expected to respect authority, abide by school expectations, regulations, and all provisions of the law.

Rules and regulations governing students as stated in the Castro student handbook, and Denver Public Schools' district discipline policy apply to all students.

Infractions

It is administration's expectation that most infractions are best handled in the classroom. Students must be given the opportunity to think about their actions and make better choices.

Classroom teachers are asked to take the following steps when addressing infractions:

- Step 1: The teacher gives a verbal warning.
- Step 2: Parents are contacted by the classroom teacher
- Step 3: Child is referred to the Student Advisor
- Step 4: Administration contact

Grounds for Suspension or Expulsion

Students may be suspended, expelled, or denied admission for inappropriate conduct while on school property, or during a school-sponsored activity. Any behavior which interferes with or obstructs the mission, operations of the school, safety and welfare of students or employees is grounds for suspension or expulsion.

The Colorado Revised Statutes 22-33-106, states that the following shall be grounds for suspension or expulsion from a public school:

- A. Behavior that is detrimental to the welfare or safety of pupils or school personnel including intentional or reckless behavior, which creates a threat of physical harm to any person;
- B. Repeated interference with the school's ability to provide educational opportunities to other students;
- C. Continued willful disobedience or open and persistent defiance of school authorities;
- D. Willful destruction or defacing of school property;
- E. Participation in gang-related activity;
- F. Carrying, bringing, using or possessing a dangerous weapon (firearm, pellet or BB gun, a fixed blade/knife longer than three inches, a spring loaded knife, a pocket knife with a blade longer than three and one-half inches, any object, device, instrument, material, or substance used or intended to be used to inflict death or serious bodily injury;
- G. The sale of a drug or other controlled substance;
- H. Distribution, possession, use, or being under the influence of alcohol, drugs; etc.
- I. Commission of first or second degree assault;
- J. Commission of a robbery;
- K. Assault, disorderly conduct, harassment, or false accusations against staff.

Suspensions for any of the above reason (A-K) may be considered grounds for declaring a student to be habitually disruptive. A student with three or more out-of-school suspensions for any of these reasons is subject to expulsion proceedings.

Expulsion proceedings are mandatory for reason F, G, I, and J and an "Extension of Suspension Request" must be made by the administrator.

Parents will be called for any of the above infractions. The aforementioned are not all-inclusive, there may be a behavior not listed that can result in suspension and/or expulsion. When school staff is unable to control a student, or a student violates the law; parents and/or authorities will be called to remove the student from the school community. This action is necessary in order to ensure the safety of the learner and to maintain a positive learning environment.

Out of School Suspension and Reinstatement to Class

If a student is suspended for the reasons (A-K) listed above, there must be a reinstatement meeting before the child can return to class. Attendees at the meeting will be the student, the parent, the administrator and if available the referring teacher. During the meeting, a behavior support plan will be developed to address the child's disruptive behavior, his/her educational needs, and the goal for keeping the child in school. **If a student's parent or guardian does not attend the reinstatement meeting, the child will not be allowed to re-enter school.**

Strategies to Promote Positive Learning Environment

- Classroom teachers will model and practice school expectations during the first month of school.
- Students are directly instructed on the School Expectations and the Core Values daily (PAWS)
- Expectations are posted in each classroom and throughout the school
- Information on school expectations and consequences are made available to parents in the Student handbook.

Hallway Expectations

- Students are expected to walk in the building
- Student will respect the rights of others by engaging in quiet conversations
- Students will keep hands and feet to themselves.
- Students must have a pass to be in the hall without a teacher.

Bathroom Expectations

- Student will use the bathroom in an appropriate manner.
- Students will not damage the bathroom facilities.
- Students will use quiet voices in the bathroom.

Office Expectations

- Students will come to the office with a hall pass.
- Students waiting in the office will sit quietly.
- Students will come to the health office with a pass, with the exception of emergencies.

General Expectations

- Students will conduct themselves in a way that is safe for themselves and others
- Students will show respect for themselves and others at all times.
- Students will not arrive at school earlier than 7:30 a.m.
- Students not participating in school activities will leave the school grounds immediately after school is dismissed (3:15).
- The use of cell phones, MP3 players/IPODs, video games, and other such personal property are not permitted in school. If students use these electronics during school hours; staff members will confiscate the items; students may retrieve these items from the office personnel after school. **Administration strongly discourages students from bringing any electronic devices and will not be able to assist students with stolen items due to time constraints.**

Award Assemblies

Each trimester, awards assemblies are held to honor students in various categories, including perfect attendance, academic honor roll, and citizenship.

Visitors

All visitors must sign in at the office and obtain a visitor's pass before going to a classroom. Faculty awareness of adults who are in the building is a primary factor in assuring your student's safety. All visitors are required to wear appropriate identification issued by the office. Thank you for supporting our efforts to maintain a safe school environment.

Volunteers

We welcome volunteers in our school. All volunteers who work with children must be screened per the Denver Public Schools policy. Please contact the Main Office for more information.

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is a crucial component for students to be successful academically, socially, emotionally and physically. We encourage parents to meet and become familiar with their child's teacher and learn how they can assist in making Castro Elementary a premier school in America. We encourage parents to stay involved in their child's education throughout the school year.

Appendix I – Student Bill of Rights

Human rights accrue to all people simply because they are human. One’s humanness cannot be denied because of temporary status as a student; nor should students be denied the opportunity to learn about and practice, in the school setting, behaviors that respect human rights, human dignity, equality, and safety.

Of equal importance is the right of school authorities, consistent with fundamental constitutional safeguards, to prescribe and control conduct in the schools. The difference between freedom expected by the students and the necessary restrictions of their actions in the rules set by the school to maintain good order can be bridged by appropriate conduct on the part of both parties.

Student Rights

1. Students have the right to a safe and equitable education relevant to their needs and abilities.
2. Students have the right to be treated with respect by other students and school staff.
3. Students have the right to assemble and express themselves through speaking, writing, distributing, wearing or displaying symbols of ethnic, cultural, or political values such as buttons emblems, and armbands or through their mode of dress or grooming, except that the principal, or designee, may regulate expression, provided there is a factual basis for believing a specific form of expression by a specific student is causing or will cause substantial disruption of school activities or constitutes a health or safety hazard. Students shall also have the right to refrain from expressing themselves in these student-originated activities.
4. Students have the right to lodge a complaint or grievance with their principal, designee, or other appropriate administrator, if they feel their rights have been violated. If the subject of the complaint or grievance is the principal, the complaint or grievance shall be made to the supervising instructional superintendent and/or “Safe to Tell.”

Student Responsibilities

While on school grounds, in school facilities, in district-approved vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school sponsored events, the responsibilities are as follows:

1. To help maintain and overall atmosphere conducive to learning, and to respect the principle that no student shall engage in any activity that disrupts or threatens to disrupt the school operation and/or interfere with the educational rights of others.
2. To refrain from any conduct with discriminates against or other students on the basis of race, ethnicity, sex/gender, marital status, national origin, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, or gender identity.
3. To respect all members of the school community, including other students, parents, and district staff by refraining from using disrespectful language and gestures.
4. To promote the physical safety and personal security of all others by refraining from assaultive behavior, including fighting with students, staff, or other persons.
5. To treat the property of the school district with care and to refrain from stealing or damaging any property of the district, staff, or other students.
6. To personally refrain from, and discourage others from bringing, carrying, possessing or using any kind of weapon.
7. To refrain from using, possessing, buying, selling, or exchanging alcohol, narcotics, drugs, or controlled substances, including anabolic steroids and prescription drugs or other dangerous drugs and to refrain from selling or exchanging substances with the student represents as drugs or controlled substances.
8. To attend classes, be on time, and attempt to complete graduation requirements as prescribed by the Board of Education.
9. To return all district property to the school, or reimburse the school at replacement value of each item, prior to transfer from the district, grade level change within the district, or graduation.
10. To practice honesty in academic work and in all other transactions.

Castro Parent / Student / School Agreement

I have read the Richard T. Castro Elementary Student-Parent Handbook and I, _____ (student), agree to follow the school-wide policies for discipline, attendance, school expectations, computer and internet usage and media releases.

I, _____ (parent), **WILL ATTEND STUDENT LEARNING CONFERENCES** and I will ensure that my child attends school every day from 8:15 a.m.–3:15 p.m. and **Monday's from 8:15 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.** for the full academic year.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Student Signature

Date

Teacher

Date

Vision Statement

Castro strives to be an exemplary school on the forefront of developing academic excellence and 21st century skills.

Mission Statement

At Castro Elementary School we provide an *exciting and empowering* environment that *celebrates and nurtures students, teachers, and parents*. Castro develops curious and imaginative critical thinkers prepared to be lifelong learners. We strengthen *collaborative partnerships* with parents and community. Castro inspires *culturally responsive* students with strong communication skills to succeed in a global society and nurtures *high ethical standards* within self and others. We are *dedicated to excellence*; not for the returns we may get, but simply because we can't imagine doing it any other way. We are the Castro Family!