

**WHITETHORN  
SCHOOL**

**PARENT  
HANDBOOK**

**2008-2009**

## Whitethorn School

Hi Parents!

Welcome to the 2008-2009 school year at Whitethorn School! We are pleased to welcome our new 2<sup>nd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher Erica Gray; new secretary Marie Etherton, and new cook Laura Lasseter. We hope you have had some memorable experiences with your child this summer, and are as enthusiastic about this new year as we are!

This handbook contains information pertinent to all parents in our district as well as information specific to our school. Please read through this booklet, and then keep it in a handy location for future reference. It contains a calendar for the school year, daily schedules, emergency information, and much more to help acquaint you with this year's school operation.

### Educational Program

You can support and extend our educational program by:

1. Making sure your child attends school every day unless he/she is ill;
2. Participating in classroom and school activities;
3. Keeping informed about what is being taught in your child's class;
4. Encouraging your child to be productive and well-behaved while at school;
5. Providing a quiet time and place for your child to do homework each night it is assigned; and
6. Helping to instill in your child the value and joy of lifelong learning.

### Pupil Absences – Notifying School

Anytime your child is absent from school, we are required to verify the reason for the absence. After each absence, please send a note with your child or telephone the school stating the reason for his/her absence. Even though we no longer receive funding for excused absence days, we track attendance for other reasons.

### Extended Pupil Absences

If your child will be out of school more than two weeks but will be returning after the extended absence, please notify the school that your child will be returning; otherwise, your child will be dropped from the attendance rolls.

Although independent study cannot duplicate the valuable activities and interactions which take place in the classroom, we recognize that sometimes children participate in other activities which require them to be away from school and which can also have educational value. We will provide an independent study contract with work to be completed for anyone planning to be absent for five days or more. That way your child will keep up with some of his/her missed work and get credit for time away from school. Please notify the school at least one week prior to your departure so the teacher can prepare a contract.

## After School Procedures

If you want your child to go someplace after school other than home, or to the usual place he/she goes after school, a note telling us what he/she is to do is required. Otherwise, we will expect your child to ride his/her regular bus and get off at his/her regular stop or to walk home as usual.

## Vehicle Safety

Please drive slowly while on school property, and watch carefully for students. Keep vehicles clear of bus parking areas.

## Release of Children from School during the School Day

If you wish to have your child picked up at school during the school day by anyone other than an adult member of your immediate family, we must have a note to that effect. Otherwise, we will not be able to release your child.

## Request for Nonparticipation of Children in Certain Programs

You may request that your child not be required to participate in the following programs or activities by filing a written objection with the school office:

1. Sex Education or Sexually Transmitted Disease Education. If courses in either of these areas are planned during the year at Whitethorn School, you will receive prior notification and will have an opportunity to review related instructional materials. Your child may be excused from instruction in these areas due to religious beliefs or personal moral convictions.
2. Physical Examinations. Dental examinations are offered at some grade levels. In each case you will have an opportunity to sign a permission slip. Activities such as taking a child's temperature, bandaging a cut knee, etc. are usually not considered physical examinations. However, if you object to any such activity, you must file a written objection.

## Pupil Release for Religious Instruction

During the school day, a child may be absent for religious instruction, after the child has attended a minimum school day, for as many as four days each school month.

## Giving Medication to Children at School

Medication prescribed by a physician may be administered at school by a nurse or teacher only on written parental request. Medication must be in its original container.

## Breakfast and Lunch Prices

Lunches may be purchased daily for \$3.25 and breakfast may be purchased for \$2.50 – extra milk is 50 cents. Free or reduced price breakfasts and lunches are available to eligible families. Please contact the school if you have not received an application.

## Snacks

Most kids need a snack in the morning, and we take time for this in our mid-morning break. Please choose food that is low in sugar with some nutritional value. Do not send candy, gum, etc. We can really

tell a difference in the children's behavior and ability to concentrate after a sugary snack. We do not have spoons or forks for the children's use. If your child needs one for snack or lunch, please be sure to send one.

## **Transfers**

It is the policy of the Southern Humboldt Unified School District that no transfers be allowed between elementary schools in our district except at the beginning of school, unless a student moves into a different attendance area.

## **Calendar and Schedule**

Included is a calendar for this school year. Please use this when planning vacations, to maximize school attendance.

Children are not to arrive at school before 8:25 a.m., as there is no supervision.

## **Educating Children is our Highest Priority at this School**

Marie, our school secretary, is also an instructional assistant. To avoid interrupting the teacher or aide during class, we ask that unless there is an emergency situation, you call school before school or during lunch, 12:05 until 12:45. If you phone at other times, the answering machine will probably answer your call. Leave your name, number, and the purpose of your call and a human will get back to you as soon as possible. Marie checks the answering machine every few hours, and always prior to the end of school.

## **Emergency Plan**

Whitethorn School has an Earthquake/Emergency Preparedness Plan which prepares us for a major region-wide disaster that may leave roads, telephones, and electricity inoperable. We are prepared to keep students up to 72 hours if necessary.

Be assured that in the event of a region-wide disaster, our focus will be to reunite you with your child(ren) as quickly as possible. Please read the plan for retrieving children carefully, and keep this handbook in a handy location for reference. Your cooperation is essential to the plan's success.

In addition, please send the items listed below. They will be stored for easy access during an emergency, and will provide comfort for your child.

- A disposable flashlight with batteries;
- A small towel;
- A small teddy or huggie;
- A snack which can be eaten cold and doesn't require a can opener (granola bars, fruit rolls, etc.)
- A can or box of juice;
- A warm change of clothes;

- Any medication your child may need during a 72 hour stay (label with child's name and specific instructions for use);
- Anything else you think may be important (please keep in mind that storage space is very limited).

You may want to label each item with your child's name. Place all in a gallon Ziploc bag and label the bag with a permanent marker.

Our intention is not to spread fear, but rather to provide for your peace of mind in knowing that your children will be well cared for in case of a school time earthquake or other emergency. Again, your cooperation and support of the school's emergency preparedness plan are essential to its success.

### **Plan for Retrieving Children**

In the event of a region-wide disaster such as an earthquake, please follow these guidelines:

- Do not call the school. We will need to keep the lines open. Tune in to KMUD on a battery-operated radio for information.
- Check the safety of your road before traveling.
- Park along the county road in front of the school. Please do not block the drive to the parking lot of the school.
- Walk to the door of the school or the gate, to the sign that states, "Sign Out."
- You will be asked to sign your name and the time you leave. Please do not take your child(ren) without signing. We need to account for each student.
- If you can, we may need your help; otherwise, leave the school immediately to make room for others.
- No child may go with an adult who is not listed on the child's emergency card.

If you have any questions regarding the above information or your child's school activities, please contact me by phone at the School District Office, 943-1789.

Susie Jennings  
Principal

## Whitethorn School Vision/Mission Statement

The vision of the Whitethorn School is to teach each child the skills they need and to support each child to develop to his/her full potential.

Adults will:

- Provide focus and direction so children are able to be challenged and produce their best work.
- Allow for the individual pace and development of each child.
- Teach content knowledge in a variety of unique and interesting ways to address a variety of learning modalities.
- Develop the whole person through enrichment activities.
- Provide social, emotional and academic learning opportunities.

Students will:

- Develop the ability to think logically and creatively and use problem-solving skills;
- Develop a strong sense of self-worth.
- Take responsibility for their own learning.
- Understand their rural roots as well as a global perspective in order to be able to flourish confidently wherever they choose.
- Develop a sense of continuity;
- View their world with curiosity, joy and the challenge of discovery;
- Develop self-discipline; and
- Understand their responsibilities as part of their community.

## Parent Pledge

As a parent, to start the new year right, I pledge to:

**P**articipate in my children's education by supervising homework, talking to my children about school and volunteering.

**A**ccept my children for who they are. I will try to nurture those qualities that make each of my children special.

**R**ead to or with my children every day of the year.

**E**xpect the very best from my children at all time.

**N**ever let a day go by without telling each of my children that I love them.

**T**urn off the television for homework, reading time, and for special times with my children.

## WHITETHORN SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

Consistent with School Board Goals for 2008-2009

### Safe Schools

- Review and revise the Whitethorn School Safe Schools Plan at the October staff meeting.
- Develop a list of local resources, including nearby EMTs.
- Contact CAL Fire, Sheriff's Department, local EMTs and invite to school for a planning meeting.
- Conduct a table-top drill at the December staff meeting.
- Conduct a whole-school drill by end of December.
- Review the Emergency Plan at least twice per year at a staff meeting.

### Culture of Shared Responsibility

#### Attendance

- A letter, with the calendar for the coming school year, will be sent home in May encouraging families to plan their vacations during school breaks.
- Reminders about the importance of good attendance will be discussed at Back to School Night, and also sent home in the first newsletter of the year and at each trimester.
- Attendance issues will be discussed during parent conferences and with phone calls home when needed.
- Serious attendance issues will be referred to the School Attendance Review Board for assistance.

#### Parent Involvement

- Parents will provide information to other parents regarding harmful effects of too much time spent on electronics, at school events and in newsletters.
- Students will bring books from home for a book exchange in June so students will have reading materials for the summer.
- The principal will sponsor a pizza party in September for all students reading a minimum number of minutes over the summer. Parents will be encouraged to only sign logs if students actually do the reading.
- Initiate a "tip of the month" for parents. Parents will be encouraged to submit ideas on ways to help children with school-related issues. One idea will be published for each classroom in the monthly newsletters.

- Parents who are comfortable with volunteering at school will phone other parents and ask if they have questions about how they can get involved.
- Teachers will phone each parent who does not attend a parent conference.