

# Ventana Ranch Elementary School Handbook 2009-2010

Ventana Ranch Elementary School is a safe learning community where students, teachers, staff, and parents are committed to the shared responsibility for each child's total development. Through our combined efforts, our students will become responsible, productive, knowledgeable, and skilled contributors to our community and beyond.

## SCHOOL PHONE NUMBERS

Office Hours are 8:00 a.m.-3:45 p.m.

Attendance/Safe Arrival .....	890-7375
Principal (Christy Sigmon).....	890-7375
Office .....	890-7375
Fax.....	890-4124

Please keep the school office informed of your correct home and business addresses and numbers. Remember to keep alternate emergency numbers current and include pager and cell numbers, if you use them.

Cafeteria (Rosalie Cordero, Manager) .....	897-4599
Y.M.C.A. (during Y.M.C.A. hours).....	249-7967
YMCA Main Office .....	899-8417

## **BUS COMPANY**

APS Transportation .....	880-3989
Joseph Gonzales Bus Co. ....	833-1062
Herrera Bus Co. ....	243-1523
Durham Bus Co.....	822-9434

## **APS PHONE NUMBERS**

Central Office Switchboard.....	880-3700
Student Service Center .....	855-9040

## Bell Schedule

Instructional Day (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday)

- \* First Bell 8:05 A.M.
- \* Late Bell 8:10 A.M.
- \* Final Bell 3:05 P.M.

Instructional Day (Wednesday)

- \* First Bell 8:05 A.M.
- \* Late Bell 8:10 A.M.
- \* Final Bell 12:05 P.M.

## **General Information**

### **ABBREVIATED DAYS**

When weather conditions prevent starting school on time, APS schools will go on a “late arrival” schedule and start two hours later. Bus schedules are also delayed two hours. An abbreviated day announcement is made on radio and television by 6:00 A.M. Lunch will be served, but not breakfast.

Classes begin 10:05 am

Classes dismiss 3:10 pm (including Wednesdays)

Occasionally inclement weather will prompt an early dismissal. The news media will announce when school will dismiss and when buses will transport students home. We will follow, to the best of our ability, the plan parents described on the “Early Dismissal” form that was completed at registration.

**ADULT VOLUNTEERS** play an important role in our school. They assist in the office, library, workroom, and in classrooms. The staff provides training. We invite you to actively participate in your child’s education by being a volunteer. For more information on volunteer opportunities, call our office or contact the PTA.

### **ATTENDANCE / SAFE ARRIVAL**

Prompt and regular school attendance is essential for a student to attain success in school. It is important to schedule elective appointments, whenever possible, for times outside the instructional day. When a student is ill, call the school attendance / safe arrival number, 890-7375 option 7, before 9:00 A.M. on the day of the absence. An answering machine will ask you for the following information: your name, the student’s name, date of absence, teacher, grade, and time of call in. The child’s teacher should also be notified in the event of extended anticipated absences due to illness, out-of-town trips, family emergencies, etc. You may wish to leave word for the teacher through the office. This year we will continue our careful adherence to the APS Board of Education absentee policy. Since participation in class is essential for learning, we will consider that all absences “count” in our documentation. (Please note that intermittent absences are as serious an impediment to children’s learning as those that are consecutive. The following procedures apply to total absences.)

\*Three absences: Classroom teacher will call to see how we can help or if makeup work needs to be sent home.

\*Six absences: Principal will send a letter to the home to ensure that families are aware that the number of absences will result in a referral to the court system after the ninth absence.

\*Nine absences: Notification to parents will be sent by certified mail, advising of referral of the family to the District Attendance Office and to the court system. Chronic absenteeism or tardiness will be reported to the district attendance office. The student's status will be evaluated for possible violation of the New Mexico Compulsory Attendance Law and referral to the Educational Neglect Court. Parents of children with chronic conditions may contact the principal for further information about support systems.

We are serious about the importance of your child's attendance at school. Please avoid early pick up and late drop off of your child. We will not allow parents to pick up their students after 2:30 (unless of an extreme emergency) Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and after 11:30 on Wednesdays. Your child's dentists and doctors will work with you to adjust appointments and those that cannot be moved are understood, but your child's attendance for the entire day is directly related to his or her success in school.

### BUS SERVICE

Bus service will be furnished to students who qualify. Please note the following information: Bus privileges may be revoked for students who do not obey bus safety rules. Parents will be advised of problems by means of three letters mailed home.

- The first letter will serve as a warning of inappropriate behavior.
- The second letter will inform you that the unsafe behavior continues and suspension is imminent.
- The third and final letter will notify you that your child is suspended from the bus for the remainder of the school year.

Bus regulations prohibit students from riding buses other than their own. Once the dismissal bell has rung, children will board assigned buses and may be picked up at their regular stops. Parents, whether on foot or in a vehicle are not allowed access to the bus loading area. In case of an emergency, the office should be contacted before dismissal.

### BEFORE / AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM (On Site)

Y.M.C.A. offers a program for the children of working parents from 7:00 A.M. – 8:55 A.M. and from 3:43 P.M. - 6:00 P.M., Monday through Friday, and on Wednesday from 12:43 - 6:00 P.M. For more information, phone 899-8417.

### BEFORE / AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM (Off Site)

Kinder Care and La Petite drop off and pick up at Ventana Ranch Elementary. Please contact these programs for more information.

### MSCI

The Middle School Cluster Initiative is a grant sponsored by the City of Albuquerque in order to provide free after school programs. Both academic and extra curricular activities will be offered. For more information, please contact Annette Parks at 890-7375

### BUILDING USE

Ventana Ranch Elementary considers itself to be an integral part of our community. We are pleased to offer our facilities for use to scout troops, community organizations, and sports teams. In all cases, a District Building Use form is filled out and returned to the office for approval by the principal and routing to the district finance office. In cases when after-hours use of the facility is required, arrangements are made with custodial or other staff for coverage. Please request more information from the office about Board Policies if you wish to qualify for such events.

## CAFETERIA

A meal ticket, which allows a student to pay for many meals at one time, may be purchased through our cafeteria staff. Please keep track of your child's meal ticket balance. A student is permitted to "charge" lunch if one is forgotten, but they're more comfortable if lunch money is taken care of in advance. Letters will be sent home if your child's account is overdrawn. For your child to become eligible for reduced or free lunch, a form must be filled out and approved by the cafeteria manager. Snacks or treats, such as slushies, pickles, or popcorn may be sold a day or two a week. These items must not compete with the sale of school lunches. Please discuss the need for extra spending money with your child if you wish him/her to participate in these sales. Children are responsible for their own spending money. PLEASE NOTE: No charges are issued during the month of May.

## CELL PHONES

Students will be able to have a cell phone as long as it is turned off and remains in their backpacks during the school day. They will not be allowed to use them during the school day unless it is in an extreme emergency. Ventana Ranch ES is NOT responsible for any lost, damaged, or stolen cell phones.

## COMPUTER LAB

Classes go to the computer lab on a weekly basis. Students learn the basic mechanics of operating a computer and how to use a variety of software. As our networking has been completed, students, staff, and community have played an important part in the design and growth of Ventana Ranch's web page. We have a full-time technology team who assists in designing staff development for our teachers, community, and other learners.

## COUNSELING

The counselors help our learning community in many ways. They work closely with parents, teachers, administrators, and various community agencies to provide guidance to our students and their families. The major goals of the counseling program are to help children to understand their feelings, develop problem-solving strategies, and to see themselves as worthwhile, productive human beings.

## CURRICULUM

Albuquerque Public Schools has set forth minimum expected competencies for each subject area (math, reading, social studies, etc.) for every grade, K-12. These are the basic skills and concepts that a child should master by the end of each year. Report cards, which are given at the end of each twelve-week period, correspond to these competencies. Curriculum details are available to you through your child's teacher and the instructional team.

## DRESS CODE (subject to change)

Currently, Ventana Ranch Elementary observes the APS Dress Code. Standards exist to support a healthy learning environment. To that end, we ask that parents assist their children in dressing appropriately for school. Hats, scarves, bandanas, and sun glasses are not worn inside buildings or classrooms but are encouraged for wear outside to protect from sun damage. Tank tops, spaghetti straps, and shirts that expose the abdomen are not to be worn. Clothing should fit comfortably and be appropriately sized. Excessively baggy pants (those which are more than one size too large) and clothing promoting drug or alcohol products are not allowed at school. Shorts and skirts should be no shorter than "fingertip length." The same fingertip measure will be used to judge appropriate length for t-shirts. Children will make a call to a parent if a change of clothing is required.

## FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips are scheduled by teachers for instructional purposes directly related to APS curriculum guidelines. Written permission is required when students are transported away from the school. Permission forms are usually sent home three to five days prior to the scheduled trip. PLEASE NOTE: *Permission must be granted in writing. Telephone calls cannot replace a written permission form.* In the case of a forgotten permission slip, one of the responsible adults whose name appears on your child's emergency contact list must sign a slip granting permission. Students who do not present a written permission form to their teacher will not be allowed to go on the field trip. Since all trips have an important curricular purpose, they are never used as behavior consequences.

## HEALTH ROOM

A full-time nurse and a full-time health room assistant staff our health room. Should your child be injured or become ill, he/she will be sent to the health room. If the injury is serious, parents will be contacted. The health room assistant keeps an emergency card on file. It is extremely important that parents keep all home and work phone numbers updated by calling the office when changes occur.

Vision and hearing tests are routinely done on all kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students. School personnel are not allowed to administer medication to students. ONLY the nurse or the health room assistant may do so if the parents have provided a doctor's prescription with proper instructions on dispensing the medication.

## LIBRARY

Ventana Ranch Elementary's library is an integral part of our school. An active group of volunteers and friends of the library assists with storytelling, shelving, special events, maintenance and repair, and book displays. They help to enhance and enrich the offerings of our library. Children are encouraged to choose books for many purposes and to learn the responsibility required to care for books. Each child is expected to return books in their "check out" condition and to pay for any lost or damaged books.

## LOST AND FOUND

Please see that clothing and lunch boxes are clearly marked with your child's name. If your child has lost an article of clothing, look in our "Lost and Found" box located in the cafeteria. Money, keys, pieces of jewelry, or small items are kept in the office. The office will display the contents of the box several times during the year. Items that are not claimed are donated to the APS Clothing Bank.

## PARENT / TEACHER / STUDENT CONFERENCES

Frequent communication between parents and teachers is encouraged. Your child's teacher will schedule conferences with you after the first and second trimesters. This is a conference designed for the "team" of student, parents, and teacher to set and review goals, academic performance, social skills, work habits, and behavior. It is also a time for you to ask questions about curriculum

and instruction. In addition, we will hold a "Portfolio Sharing Evening" for our community in the spring. Teachers are happy to confer with parents at other times. Please call to schedule an appointment time with a teacher.

## PARENT CONCERNS

Parents who have concerns about their child's progress or well being in school should first discuss issues with their child's teacher. Most issues are resolved during this important step. Should there be continuing concerns, please contact an administrator. To assist us in meeting your needs, we have developed a Parent Input/Concern Card, which is available in the office and from your child's teacher. Through the use of the card we hope to improve response time and quality in resolving issues at Ventana Ranch Elementary.

## PARENT VISITS

Classroom visitors are always welcome. If you wish to visit your child's classroom, please make arrangements with your child's teacher. All visitors MUST gain permission from the office before entering the campus (by Albuquerque City Ordinance.) A visitor's badge will be issued to authorized visitors. Our regular volunteers will wear a special, personalized badge with their names while they are on campus. Any parent has a right to do an observation in a child's class. However, we require 24-hour advance notice with the approval from the administration. The observer will provide a written statement about the purpose of the observation and what will be done with the observation. If a parent or parent's designee wants to observe a class for a lengthy period of time, clearance (involving fingerprinting, etc.) is required by the central processing office.

## PHONE CALLS

In the case of illness or another concern, your child's teacher, the health room, or the office will contact you by phone. Students are not allowed to call home unless directed to by their teachers. To curtail interruption of precious instructional time, messages will not be given to children over the intercom system. In the case of an emergency, the child will come to the office, where the speaker phone can be used to allow extra support for the child. Please make all after-school plans at home in the morning, since a change in travel plans does not constitute an emergency.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

P.E. is part of our curriculum. All students are expected to participate in a variety of experiences with the same enthusiasm afforded to other facets of study. Participation is required unless a student has a detailed doctor's statement excusing him/her. Please make sure your child wears appropriate shoes and clothing on their P.E. day.

## RECESS

All children go outside to play at recess. Help your child plan for outdoor time by dressing appropriately. Children who are ill should stay home until they are able to play outside. During inclement weather, children will have recess indoors.

## STUDENT INSURANCE

The laws of New Mexico are such that a school district cannot assume liability for costs incurred in student accidents. For this reason, the Board of Education makes a student accident insurance policy available to all regularly enrolled students of the school system. The policy which is low in cost and optional, is explained in brochures available at registration.

## SAFETY

The safety of your child is of paramount importance to us. To that end, we have developed a comprehensive Safe Schools Plan that is reviewed at least yearly and available for your input and review. Regular drills are scheduled to practice for emergency situations. Fire drills are held four

times the first month of school and at least once a month thereafter. "Shelter in Place" drills are held during the year as well. These drills are designed to practice for the unlikely event of a fire, an intruder, or other problem on our campus. Please discuss our evacuation plans with your children so that they can share what they have learned.

### STUDENT POSSESSIONS

Please encourage your children to leave their toys at home. Toys can create safety problems or disrupt the learning environment. There is also a risk of items being lost, damaged, or stolen. Electronic games, toys, or radio/cassette players may not be brought to school at any time.

### TEXTBOOKS

The New Mexico Department of Education determines which publishers and what materials may be used in schools. The names of the books and materials used at Ventana Ranch Elementary are available from your child's teacher. Students are responsible for good care of learning materials. They will be charged for lost or damaged items that are assigned to them.

### STUDENT PICK-UP AREA

The student pick-up area is off the parking lot on the **south side** of the school. The west side of the school is for staff and handicapped parking ONLY.

Parents may pick up their child by:

→parking in the parking lot and escorting the student to the car, using designated crossing areas OR

→pulling up to the designated curb in front of the school, remaining in the car, and letting the child in on the curbside door.

Do not leave your car unattended!! Please do not block cars and do not block in or park in handicapped parking without appropriate visible identification sign

Because of the size of our school and the high volume of cars, it may take some time for cars to make the entire circuit of the parking lot. Please be patient and wait your turn to pick up your child. Cars may not park or pick up students in the fire lanes. Children may not walk between cars to get to their ride, whether or not an adult accompanies them. Parents who refuse to follow our safety standards may lose access to our campus. Because of safety considerations, it is essential that parents observe the painted crosswalks and duty teachers' instructions when walking to parked cars. **It is equally important to use only the south parking lot area for vehicle pick-ups.**

### WALKING to SCHOOL

Students who walk to school will be provided with crossing guards to cross Ventana Village Rd., the corner of Ventana Village and Las Ventanas, and on Ventana Hills north of the school. All of our children will be taught safety procedures for walking home. Crossing guards remain on duty until 4:00 P.M. in order to assure the safety of all children. Only children who are walking home will be crossed at the crosswalks. For the safety of our children, all afterhours activities will require parent transport.

## School Discipline

### Time to Teach

Our students will receive instruction in character education using the Time to Teach program. This process teaches students specific collaborative skills to work well together. It transfers responsibility to students to help each other learn academic material, and to maintain a positive environment. Students learn to use the process for problem-solving and conflict resolution. Three of the four community agreements families can reinforce at home are:

Mutual Respect  
Attentive Listening  
Appreciations/No Put-Downs

### Conflict Mediation

We will continue to implement the Conflict Mediation program. As part of the curriculum, students will receive instruction in dispute resolution and problem solving skills. Selected fourth and fifth grade students will receive special training to help mediate student disputes. Conflict mediators will be available to assist their peers during recesses. Additional mediation is available through the counselors or the mediation sponsor(s) for issues which are resistant to normal classroom mediation techniques.

### Roadrunner Grams

Recognizing students for positive behavior is an important part of our school discipline plan. Students should be given these slips to recognize and encourage good behavior in areas of the school other than the classroom.

### Oops! Slips (level 1)

Occasionally, students are engaged in inappropriate activity that does not merit a behavior report but needs to be documented. Oops! slips should be used for this purpose. They should be given to the child, with instructions to share the incident with the classroom teacher.

### Discipline Referrals (level 2 and 3)

The discipline referral is for level 2 and level 3 (more serious) offenses. The referral is given to the principal and consequences are discussed with and decided by the student and principal. Parents are contacted and they must sign a copy of the referral.

### Discipline

Disciplinary measures will be aimed toward assisting each student in the development of self-control, self-worth, social responsibility, and the acceptance of appropriate consequences for their actions. Our school discipline plan is based on the use of conflict mediation and adult intervention. Students are expected to treat other students, adults, and school property with respect. A student who: is intentionally cruel (uses physical or verbal abuse with the intent to inflict harm) or intentionally damages school property, or deliberately defies authority will receive appropriate consequences and a "Discipline Referral" will be written to document the misbehavior. A copy of the report will be sent home for parents to review with their child, sign, and send back to school.

## **Dates to Remember**

1<sup>st</sup> Day of School 8/20/09

Fall Break 10/09/09

Thanksgiving Holiday 11/26-11/27/09

Winter Break 12/21/09-1/1/10

Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday 1/18/10

President's Day 2/15/10

Spring Break 3/15/10-3/19/10

Vernal Holiday 4/2/10

Last Day of School 5/28/10