



# Monta Loma School

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Respect - Responsibility - Hard Work – Courage - Compassion

**Parent / Student  
Handbook**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Monta Loma Elementary is committed to challenging students to reach their academic and social potential to prepare them for success in the world ahead. We provide opportunities for children to develop a positive attitude towards school and learning. Teachers challenge students to think critically, solve problems, communicate effectively, and collaborate with peers. Our teachers participate in professional development and work with an instructional coach throughout the year to continually improve instructional practice, plan engaging lessons, and provide differentiation for all learners.

At Monta Loma, our staff, students, and families work together in order to provide a safe and caring environment for all students based on our core values of Respect, Responsibility, Courage, Compassion, and Hard Work. Our core values are the heart of our school climate and are what guides our behavior and actions in each and every classroom. Students are recognized for demonstrating our core values throughout the year with weekly Leopard Spot Winners and monthly Leopard Leader Awards.

A focus at Monta Loma is to build a strong, collaborative community with an emphasis on parent engagement and high student achievement. We offer a variety of community building events, parent education institutes, and opportunities for parents to contribute to the greater school community. Our goal is for all families to participate in some manner in their child's education during the course of the year, with a target of 30 hours per family per year. Participation varies from working at one of our many PTA events to volunteering in the classroom to attending the weekly Leopard Launch or other school meetings. Families are a critical component of successful students and we warmly welcome you to participate in your child's educational experience.

## II. MISSION, ACADEMICS, SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CORE VALUES

### ***MONTA LOMA MISSION STATEMENT***

**We, the dedicated community of Monta Loma, are committed to challenging students to reach their academic and social potential to prepare them for success in the world ahead.**

#### **HIGH ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS**

At Monta Loma we have high academic expectations for all students. It is our expectation that students will strive to excel in all areas of their education. Monta Loma staff and parents will work together providing differentiated instruction, intervention, and enhancement to give all students the opportunity to reach their academic potential.

**Literacy Instruction:** We offer a multi-disciplinary approach to teaching literacy. Lessons include direct whole group and differentiated small group instruction in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Students are taught strategies for reading, comprehending, analyzing, and writing academic text.

#### **Language Development Philosophy:**

At Monta Loma, we believe that all students, grades Kindergarten through Fifth Grade, developmentally learn the English language regardless of the first language spoken at home. We define language as: *expressive and receptive communication, using words in a structured way in both spoken and written form.* While each student acquires language at their own rate, there is a common progression of language skills that allows us to assess students' current language level and provide specific, targeted instruction that progresses all students academically in the area of literacy and language development.

- √ We believe that language and literacy is the key to student success in the world ahead.
- √ We believe that multi-lingualism is an asset to students and should be encouraged and celebrated.
- √ We believe in including our parent and greater community in supporting, learning, and celebrating multi-lingualism with our student, staff, and parent population.

#### **Approach:**

To address the specific language learning needs for all students, we administer a language assessment that determines a student's language group. We call this learning group time "Language Development". In the past it was referred to as ELD or TIG. Teachers meet each trimester to plan units and lessons that specifically instruct based on students' language development and needs.

Based on the assessment results, students are grouped within their grade level and receive targeted, specific instruction a minimum of 150 minutes per week. Our primary grades focus on beginning listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Upper grades will focus on academic vocabulary, oral presentations, and advanced reading comprehension with an emphasis on writing strategies for reclassification and grade level achievement. In addition, our upper grade students will have access to online English language development programming.

#### **Newcomer Support**

For students entering Monta Loma who are new to speaking English, we offer specific supports to help students integrate into the English-speaking classroom. Supports may include: Rosetta Stone, Imagine Learning, Lexia, or other online supports, leveled reading books, English high frequency word lists, and spelling and phonics work. Your child's teacher can work with you to develop a literacy plan that addresses students new to the English language.

**Mathematics:** Our current mathematic program is Eureka Math and is aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Math instruction provided in both whole group and differentiated small group settings. Individual differentiation is offered through Accelerated Math and ST Math.

**Science:** Our current science program includes FOSS hands on science kits. Each grade level implements one kit per trimester. We also host the Science Is Elementary program in each classroom once a month. Living Classroom works with grades K-3 and every classroom has its own garden bed where students plant, cultivate, and harvest seasonal plants, fruits, and vegetables.

**Project Based Learning:** In September of 2014, our entire teaching staff participated in a three-day professional learning workshop on Project Based Learning (PBL) through the Buck Institute of Education. Teacher teams developed a PBL project per grade level, which is implemented once a year, with the goal of incorporating aspects of PBL learning strategies on a regular basis.

**Arts / PE / Technology:** Students receive art, music, physical education, and technology instruction on a weekly basis. Art and music instruction is provided by CSMA and PE instruction is provided once a week for kindergarten and twice a week for grades 1-5 by Rhythm and Moves. Monta Loma is also gracious to have a full-time Playworks coach who works with children during classroom game times and recess to teach specific outdoor games and respectful sportsmanship.

## CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE

*Responsive Classroom* is a research- and evidence-based approach to elementary education that is associated with greater teacher effectiveness, higher student achievement, and improved school climate. It has been recognized by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) as one of the most well-designed, evidence-based social and emotional learning programs.

The *Responsive Classroom* is a general approach to teaching, rather than a program designed to address a specific school issue. It is based on the premise that children learn best when they have both academic and social-emotional skills. The *Responsive Classroom* approach consists of a set of practices that build academic and social-emotional competencies and that can be used along with many other programs. These classroom practices are the heart of the *Responsive Classroom* approach:

- **Morning Meeting**—gathering as a whole class each morning to greet one another, share news, and warm up for the day ahead
- **Rule Creation**—helping students create classroom rules to ensure an environment that allows all class members to meet their learning goals
- **Interactive Modeling**—teaching children to notice and internalize expected behaviors through a unique modeling technique
- **Positive Teacher Language**—using words and tone as a tool to promote children's active learning, sense of community, and self-discipline
- **Logical Consequences**—responding to misbehavior in a way that allows children to fix and learn from their mistakes while preserving their dignity
- **Guided Discovery**—introducing classroom materials using a format that encourages independence, creativity, and responsibility
- **Academic Choice**—increasing student learning by allowing students teacher-structured choices in their work
- **Classroom Organization**—setting up the physical room in ways that encourage students' independence, cooperation, and productivity
- **Working with Families**—creating avenues for hearing parents' insights and helping them understand the school's teaching approaches
- **Collaborative Problem Solving**—using conferencing, role playing, and other strategies to resolve problems with students

Monta Loma implements Responsive Classroom as part of our positive campus climate plan, with an emphasis on classroom meetings, rule creation, interactive modeling, logical consequences, working with families, and positive teacher language. Responsive Classroom aligns with Monta Loma's guiding Core Values, which are listed below:

## MONTA LOMA'S FIVE CORE VALUES

We place a strong emphasis on developing the whole child, which includes not only academic excellence, but also a focus on our five core values of character to promote healthy choices. We focus specifically on one core value per month in order to more deeply discuss the characteristics of the core value.

### RESPECT

BE CONSIDERATE OF THE FEELINGS OF OTHERS - FOLLOW THE GOLDEN RULE - BE TOLERANT OF DIFFERENCES - USE GOOD MANNERS, NOT BAD LANGUAGE - DEAL PEACEFULLY WITH ANGER, INSULTS AND DISAGREEMENTS - TAKE TURNS AND SHARE - TAKE CARE OF YOUR SCHOOL.

- RESPONSIBILITY** ALWAYS DO YOUR BEST - USE SELF-CONTROL - FOLLOW THE RULES - THINK BEFORE YOU ACT - CONSIDER THE CONSEQUENCES - BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR YOUR CHOICES - BE HONEST
- COURAGE** MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE EVEN WHEN ITS HARD - TAKE RISKS IN YOUR LEARNING - DARE TO BE GREAT!
- COMPASSION** BE KIND - SHOW YOU CARE - EXPRESS GRATITUDE - FORGIVE OTHERS - HELP PEOPLE IN NEED - THINK OF OTHERS FIRST.
- HARD WORK** DO YOUR BEST - NOT JUST "ENOUGH" - BE WILLING TO WORK, TO TRY, TO FAIL AND TO TRY AGAIN - PERSEVERE – NEVER GIVE UP!

## **APPROACH TO BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE**

In conjunction with Responsive Classroom, Monta Loma uses a school-wide behavior management system based on our 5 Core Values. Just as teachers do not expect students to come to school knowing how to read or write, teachers using this approach do not assume that students will enter school with savvy social and self-management skills. The management system is utilized in a way that encourages positive choices, self-control, self-reflection, and the ability to redirect and change behavior in a supportive, healthy way with the purpose of learning from our mistakes.

In 2015, our Student Council, along with our student population and parent community created school wide rules that reflect our core values, establishes guidelines and expectations for positive behavior, and that create a sense of order and safety throughout our school campus. The purpose of including students in the rule creation process is to help students make sense of the need for rules and fully process the reason behind school rules. We will communicate our school-wide rules with parents and the greater community once we've completed the creation process. Classrooms also implement a variety of other management strategies. Please speak specifically with your child's teacher to learn more about individual classroom procedures, routines, and management strategies.

## **MONTA LOMA SCHOOL RULES:**

### **We will:**

- § Walk in the hallway quietly
- § Listen and follow directions from adults
- § Keep hands to self
- § Be kind and helpful to others
- § Be where you are supposed to be

# Monta Loma School Playground Rules

## Play Structure

No tag or chasing on or around the play structure equipment.

No jumping from play structure platforms.

## Monkey Bars

One student at a time going one direction.

Students are not to be sitting on top of the monkey bars.

## Field

Students may be on the infield of the ballpark if they are participating in an organized game.

Games of tag are allowed in the grass area only.

Students may not go into the bleacher or backstop areas of the ball field.

Students play touch football on the grass area of the ballpark. If playing becomes too rough, we will discontinue.

Students are only allowed in the Monta Loma Park if they are supervised.

## Slides

All slides should be “feet first”. Students may not walk/climb up slides.

One student at a time.

## Equipment

Any equipment checked out from the ballroom is to be returned by the student who checked it out.

All equipment is to be used in a safe and cooperative manner.

Unsafe or disruptive use will result in loss of privileges in using equipment or participating in organized play situations.

## Blacktop

Soccer/kick balls should be used in the basketball/field areas of the playground.

Stay clear of organized games.

# Commitment to Success

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## ***Parents'/Guardians' Commitment***

*We/I fully commit to Monta Loma in the following ways:*

- Be guided by the five core values of respect, responsibility, courage, compassion and hard work
- Hold high expectations for my child
- Monitor and support the timely completion of all homework assignments
- Ensure that my child is reading or being read to every night
- Frequently discuss schoolwork and activities with my child
- Ensure that my child comes to school on time every day and is rested, fed, and dressed appropriately
- Participate in school activities including open house nights, conferences, Fall Festival, Walk-a-Thon, etc.
- Volunteer at least 30 hours per year (avg. 3 hours/month) for the Monta Loma School community (all meetings, any parent education, newsletter collation, take home projects, in class help, everything you do for school counts!)

## ***Student's Commitment***

*I fully commit to Monta Loma in the following ways:*

- Be guided by the five core values of respect, responsibility, courage, compassion, and hard work
- Come to school on time, ready and willing to learn
- Participate in school wide events outside of the school day (i.e., Fall Festival, Walk-a-Thon, etc.)
- Complete and turn in all of my homework assignments on time
- Read or have someone read to me every night

## ***Teachers' Commitment***

*I fully commit to Monta Loma in the following ways:*

- Be guided by the five core values of respect, responsibility, courage, compassion and hard work
- Hold high expectations for all students
- Communicate regularly with parents and students about academic progress and behavior
- Provide differentiation in the classroom to meet the needs of all students
- Offer curriculum enhancement opportunities
- Encourage daily parent involvement in my classroom
- Encourage parent involvement
- Handle discipline issues in a fair and appropriate manner
- Ensure all curriculum standards are being met
- Create and maintain a safe classroom environment

## **MONTA LOMA LEOPARD LAUNCH**

On Mondays, teachers and classes will assemble outside at the start of school (8:35 a.m.) in their classroom lines to participate in the Monta Loma Launch. Parents are invited to join at this time! During the launch the students may do all or some of the following:

- Recite the Pledge of Allegiance
- Recite the Monta Loma Creed
- Listen to announcements
- Participate in a core value song, poem or other creative activity

## **MONTA LOMA CREED**

I am a Monta Loma Leopard, an important part of my school.  
I will work hard and respect others.  
I will be responsible and show compassion.  
I will have courage!  
I will not waste this day, because this day will not come again.

## **MONTA LOMA ANTHEM**

I go to Monta Loma  
I'm a leopard to my core.  
I start each day with courage  
Then I leave with so much more  
  
Monta Loma  
I'll make you proud of me  
With respect, hard work, compassion, and responsibility!

## **LEOPARD SPOTS**

Our goal is to promote and celebrate positive student interactions and behaviors. Students receive Leopard Spots for being "spotted" exhibiting one or more of our Core Values. Students write their name and room number on the Leopard Spot and deposit it into the appropriate grade level box located on the stage in the multi-purpose room. Leopard Spots are drawn for each grade level and students are recognized at the weekly Leopard Launch.

## **LEOPARD LEADERS: STUDENTS OF THE MONTH**

Each month, two students per classroom that exemplify the core value of the month, will be selected as Monta Loma Leopard Leaders. Students will be recognized at the morning launch and will receive a certificate of excellence. Parents of monthly Leopard Leaders will be notified ahead of time by their classroom teacher in order to attend the Leopard Launch.

## **CONSEQUENCES FOR MISBEHAVIORS**

Before a consequence is deemed appropriate, a complete investigation must be completed. Investigations are typically handled by the classroom teacher, an office staff member, administrator designee, or principal. We ask that parents be patient as this process can at times take a great deal of time and energy for both staff and students. Once we are able to learn details of the situation and come to a conclusion as to what happened, with whom, and why, we will communicate with parents either in person, on the phone, a written note, or via email. Please note that only information directly related to your child can be shared with you. We are not at liberty to share any information with you regarding another student, including the consequence that was administered. Just as you would want your child's personal information kept confidential, we honor all students' privacy by keeping incidents confidential.

Consequences for behaviors are intended to support student learning and self-reflection. As much as possible, logical consequences that are relevant, realistic, and respectful for misbehaviors will be assigned so that the child has an

opportunity to reflect on why the behavior was inappropriate and develop strategies to change and improve their response in future situations. The goals in responding to misbehaviors are to maintain a safe and orderly campus, help students recognize and fix their mistakes, and support students in developing internal control of their behavior. Examples of consequences include but are not limited to:

- Student conference with school staff member (principal, teacher, office staff, yard supervisor, etc)
- Facilitated student to student conference / conversation to resolve conflict
- Referrals to support services, such as CHAC counseling, student welfare supports, etc.
- Community Service
- Take a break / time out
- Buddy Teacher Break
- “Making it Right”: You break it, you fix it
- Loss of Privilege
- Student Reflection
- In-house suspension
- Suspension from classroom or school
- Possible recommendation for Expulsion

## **SUSPENSION/EXPULSION**

Suspension is the act of temporarily deferring a student from participating in classroom or campus activities. Suspension alone is considered a punishment and can only be imposed when other means of correction, such as those listed above, fail to bring about proper conduct. There are very few cases in which suspension is a first response as a consequence, all in which involve a serious safety threat. As a principal of young children, I aim for the most reasonable consequences that maintains students’ dignity and allows them to learn from their mistake. For most elementary students, logical consequences provide the appropriate response to misbehavior and the opportunity to learn and improve behavior choices. In the rare event that a suspension is deemed appropriate for an offense, parents will be contacted immediately.

## **TEASING, TAUNTING, BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Bullying goes beyond simple verbal teasing and is an expression of power of one student over another. Four criteria are considered when students express concerns about being bullied: 1) Was the act intentional? 2) Was the act hurtful physically, psychologically, or emotionally? 3) Was the act repetitive? 4) Is there an element of power imbalance? Each case will be carefully investigated and appropriate consequences will take place.

Teasing, taunting or bullying will not to be tolerated. Sometimes friends will claim that they are “just joking” or “just fooling around.” It is important to understand that this is never an excuse for making another student feel powerless.

Any student who feels he or she is being harassed should immediately ask a teacher or staff member at school for help. Students who feel uncomfortable speaking directly with an adult can also write a note and place it in the principal’s mailbox in the main office, which is checked daily. All complaints will be promptly and appropriately addressed. Schools are required to act upon all reported incidents of harassment. Discipline may include suspension and/or a recommendation for expulsion of a student found guilty of bullying others, harassment, or sexual harassment. (Please see [BP5131.2 – Bullying](#))

## **HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY**

Monta Loma Elementary brings together a diverse group of individuals. We are guided by the principle that respect and consideration for all individuals is foremost in all school activities. It is unlawful to discriminate against any individual based on race, color, religion, sex, nationality, sexual orientation, age, or handicap status. Therefore, any form of coercion or harassment that insults the dignity of others or impedes their freedom to work and learn is considered unacceptable behavior and will not be tolerated. It is the responsibility of every member of the Monta Loma community to uphold the principle of equal opportunity as it affects staff, faculty, and students in all aspects of school life.

## **ABUSE**

By law, all school personnel are mandated reporters of suspected abuse and/or neglect. Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child maltreatment immediately when they have reasonable cause to believe that a child who is 17 years of age or younger and known to them in a professional or official capacity has been harmed or is in danger of being harmed – physically, sexually, or through neglect and that a caregiver either committed the harm or should have taken steps to prevent the child from harm.

## **DRESS CODE**

Student dress should reflect a climate that fosters learning and safety. If clothing is found to be disruptive or distracting to learning or is deemed unsafe, parents will be called and students will be asked to change to appropriate clothing. Arrangements for compliance must be made or students will be sent home.

Unacceptable attire includes bathing suits, half-shirts, short shorts, muscle-man tee shirts, cutoffs, halter-tops, shirts or dresses with spaghetti straps, or excessively baggy clothes. Shirts with sexual innuendoes and images condoning violence, gangs, drugs or alcohol use, or ethnic/racial put-downs are absolutely not allowed.

Students should wear shoes that are suitable for PE participation and playground activities. Shoes without straps, such as clogs, flip flops and sandals, and open toed shoes, can be dangerous and/or unsafe on the playground and during PE. If rubber boots are worn on rainy days, children must bring shoes to wear in the classroom.

## **TELEPHONE/CELL PHONE USE**

Students may not use any school phone without permission from a teacher. Students will only be allowed to use the school phone in case of emergency or to inform a parent/guardian regarding a specific need.

Cell phone use -While some individual circumstances may require students to bring cell phones to school, this practice is not encouraged due to potential distractions it may cause during the school day. If a student must bring a phone to school, the following apply:

- Cell phones must be completely powered off during the school day
- Cell phones must not be used during school hours, other than for medically approved use.
- Students may only use cell phones after dismissal or in case of emergency
- Infractions will result in loss of the privilege of bringing a cell phone to school, and the student's parents will be contacted to pick up the phone.
- The school is not responsible for stolen/lost items.

## **NON-SCHOOL MATERIALS / PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Students should not bring items other than school materials on campus without the consent of the classroom teacher. The school is not responsible for the loss or damage of personal materials.

All allowable personal items, including lunch pails and backpacks, should be clearly marked with the child's name.

### **Please do not bring the following items to school:**

Soda

Candy

Over the counter medicine, such as aspirin, allergy tablets, etc.

Cash

Jewelry or accessories that distract from learning or pose a hazard

Stuffed animals, dolls or toys

Handheld electronic devices (Nintendo DS, iPod, etc)

Footballs, baseball gloves, baseballs, hockey equipment

Other sports equipment (at teacher's discretion)

Weapons; including toy and "look alike" weapons

Any illegal substance

## **BICYCLES/SKATEBOARD/ROLLERBLADES**

Bicycles are to be walked at all times on the school grounds. The bicycles are to be locked in the bike racks located in the front & back of the school. Students in kindergarten and grade one should not ride bikes to school unless accompanied by an adult.

Students who ride other wheeled devices to school must carry them upon reaching the school grounds. Shoes with wheels must be removed or placed in an inoperable position while at school.

### III. SCHOOL POLICIES AND INFORMATION

#### BELL SCHEDULE AND SUPERVISION

Playground supervision begins at 8:20 AM. Supervision is provided in the multipurpose room beginning at 7:55 AM. Students are not to arrive at school before 7:55 AM. All students must report to the multipurpose room if they arrive prior to 8:20 AM. At the end of the day there is no supervision. Students are to leave the school campus immediately after school unless they are enrolled in an afterschool program such as Beyond the Bell, YMCA, Art Club or Chorus. These students must proceed directly to the meeting spot for their designated program.

Students in grades 1-5 arriving after 8:20 A.M. are to report to the playground area behind the school. Kindergartners go to their own playground where supervision begins at 8:20 AM. When the bell rings, the students “freeze” (stop what they are doing) and wait for the whistle. When the whistle is blown, the students are to walk to the area where they line up for class. Students arriving after 8:35AM are late and must go to the office before entering class to obtain a late slip.

### Bell Schedule

**Instruction Starts at 8:35 for all students**

|  | Mon/Tue/Wed/Fri | EVERY Thursday<br>Early Dismissal |
|--|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Kindergarten</b>                            |                 |                                   |
| Recess   | 10:00           | 10:00                             |
| Lunch  | 11:50 – 12:35   | *12:30 – 12:55 see note below     |
| Dismissal                                      | 2:05            | 12:30                             |
| <b>1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade</b> |                 |                                   |
| Recess   | 10:40 – 11:00   | 10:40 – 11:00                     |
| Lunch  | 11:50 – 12:35   | *12:30 – 12:55 see note below     |
| Dismissal                                      | 3:10            | 12:30                             |
| <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Grade</b>                    |                 |                                   |
| Recess   | 10:15 – 10:35   | 10:15 – 10:35                     |
| Lunch  | 12:40 – 1:25    | *12:30 – 12:55 see note below     |
| Dismissal                                      | 3:10            | 12:30                             |
| <b>4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade</b> |                 |                                   |
| Recess   | 10:15 – 10:35   | 10:15 – 10:35                     |
| Lunch  | 12:40 – 1:25    | *12:30 – 12:55 see note below     |
| Dismissal                                      | 3:15            | 12:30                             |

\*Lunch on Thursdays is optional except for students who take the bus and participate in an afterschool program. Any other students opting for lunch on Thursday will be dismissed at 12:55.

**\*For safety reasons,** students opting in for lunch will not be dismissed from the multi until 12:50-12:55.

Parents/guardians may NOT ENTER the multi during Thursday lunch. Please wait outside near the bus pick-up area.

#### ATTENDANCE

Students are to attend school on time every day, except in the case of illness or injury. Any loss of classroom time is a loss of learning for your child. Excused absences include illness, injury, medical appointments, and bereavement.

##### Illness:

An ill child must be fever-free for 24 hours without taking medication before returning to school. If students are taking antibiotics, they must be on the medication for 24 hours prior to returning to school. If your child will be sick for a number of days, please contact your child’s teacher to request work that your child can complete while at home.

Should your child become ill or injured while at school, an adult who is listed on the emergency card will be contacted to pick up the child immediately. The adult must come to the office to sign the child out, and must provide identification.

Absence Reporting: All student absences must be reported to the school office **daily** by 8:45 am. You may send an email message to [MLabsence@mvwsd.org](mailto:MLabsence@mvwsd.org) or you can call the 24-hr student absence line at 650-903-6915 ext. 3880. Please include in your message student's first and last name, room number, and reason for absence. Absences should be reported **on the same day** that your child is absent. Absences not reported to the school office may be considered unexcused.

Advance written notice must be obtained from the principal or designee if your student will be absent from school for any reason other than illness, medical appointment or bereavement ([AR – 5113](#)) Please submit written requests to [MLabsence@mvwsd.org](mailto:MLabsence@mvwsd.org) for administrative consideration.

Extended Absence: Should your child need to accompany you on an unavoidable trip of more than five days and less than three weeks while school is in session, you may request from the school office an Independent Study Contract (ISC). Your child will be given work assignments to complete and will receive credit for the time away from school.

At least **one week** prior written notice must be given to the front office so that the contract may be signed and homework collected. Please submit written requests to [MLabsence@mvwsd.org](mailto:MLabsence@mvwsd.org) and include the dates your student will be absent, the date your student will return and reason for absence. Independent Study Contracts are not granted after May 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year and should not exceed a total of 15 days per school year.

Late Arrival/Tardies: Students who arrive after 8:35A.M. must report to the office first to receive a late admit slip. All tardies are considered unexcused with the exception of doctor/dental appointments accompanied with **a note** from the doctor/dentist.

The Mountain View Whisman School District tracks individual student attendance habits (tardiness and absences, excused and unexcused). If a student is late or absent repeatedly, action will be taken by the principal to correct the behavior. Continued absences or tardiness may result in referral to the school attendance review board (SARB) or Santa Clara County District Attorney. The law requires student attendance!

## **DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP AREAS**

Monta Loma has worked diligently with the MVPD and the neighborhood to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety during drop off and dismissal sessions. We ask that parents exhibit patience and understanding and follow the procedures put into place for drop off and dismissal. Plastic or tag board placards, displaying your child's last name and hung in your windshield are available from the front office. Plastic placards are \$3.00. Tag board placards are available at no cost. Please contact [nherrera@mvwsd.org](mailto:nherrera@mvwsd.org) if you would like a placard. We have three vehicle loops where parents can pick up and drop off students. To identify the difference between the three vehicle loops in front of the school they are titled:

- A. Office Loop (loop in front of the school's main office and current pick-up loop)
- B. Multi Loop (loop in front of the multi that is currently labeled as BUSES ONLY)
- C. Park Loop (loop in front of Monta Loma Park, near the kindergarten wing)

### Morning Drop-Off:

- Drop-off is from 7:55 am – 8:35 am
- PLEASE, NO PARKING IN ANY LOOP
- Office Loop is open all day
- Multi Loop will be open as soon as morning bus leaves (approximately 8:20 am) to 8:35 am
- Park Loop will be open for DROP-OFF ONLY from 7:55 – 8:20 am.

#### Afternoon Dismissal:

- Dismissal is from 3:10 – 3:30 pm. **You MUST pick up your child by 3:30 pm.** MVPD will be called for students not picked up after school in a timely manner.
- Office Loop is open as usual
- Multi Loop will now be open from 3:10 – 3:20 pm.
- Multi Loop will be blocked for the bus starting at 3:20 pm. Remainder of students will be picked up through the office loop.
- There will be a designated area for students to wait and a designated area for parents to wait. Please wait in designated areas.
- Please use the tag to post your child's name and grade level in your dashboard or window. This will be available to you at the beginning of the year. This helps to speed up the loading process.

#### Thursday Dismissal:

- Dismissal is at 12:30 pm.
- Office Loop will be open as usual.
- Multi Loop will be open from 12:30 – 12:50 pm
- Multi Loop will be closed at 12:50 pm for bus
- Remainder of students will be picked up in Office Loop.

When dropping off or picking up your child, please do so in the drive-through area in front of the school office. If you need to come into the school at any time during the day, please park in a designated parking space in the side parking area, or on the neighborhood streets closest to the school. Do not leave your car in the yellow passenger loading zone or curbs marked red. In an effort to keep students safe and supervised on our campus, please:

- Do not allow children to cut across parking lots unattended.
- Do not park in the parking lot near the kindergarten wing. This is STAFF ONLY PARKING. Violators will be towed at their own expense.

#### TRANSPORTATION

Bus transportation is available on a limited basis. All students must apply for a bus pass at the District Office and will not be permitted to ride without a bus pass.

Applications will be approved on a space-available basis according to district priorities.

Please see [www.mvwsd.org](http://www.mvwsd.org) or contact the district office for more information.

#### FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

Our breakfast, 2<sup>nd</sup> chance breakfast, and lunch program is on a prepaid basis and is available for all students at Monta Loma. Full price meals cost \$2.50 for breakfast and \$3.50 for lunch. Reduced price is \$0.40 for lunch and \$0.30 for breakfast. Prepayment for school lunches/breakfast can be made at the school office with cash or check. If paying by check, please make the check payable to the Mountain View-Whisman School District. Payment can also be made online. You will also be able to check your student's balance when paying online. Go to [EzSchoolPay.com](http://EzSchoolPay.com). There is a 3% charge by EZSchool Pay. You will need your student's student ID number for this option. Please check with the school office to obtain this information. We appreciate your attention in maintaining a positive balance in your food account to cover your student's lunches. Our lunch supervisor will send out notifications when there is an outstanding balance in the student's account. Applications for free or reduced pricing lunches **MUST BE COMPLETED EVERY YEAR.**

#### EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Every child must have current emergency information. If you move or change telephone numbers, you must notify the school office immediately. Should your child become ill or if an emergency arises, it is important that we are able to reach you or the listed emergency contacts. **Students will only be released to an adult listed on their emergency card.** Please email [nherrera@mvwsd.org](mailto:nherrera@mvwsd.org) with any changes.

## **MEDICATION**

In compliance with the California Education Code, Section 49423, the requirements for dispensing student medication are as follows:

Medication must be brought to the school office by the parent and/or guardian and registered with office personnel.

**The parent or guardian and the child's physician must complete a Student Medication Form.** This form is available in the school office. A new form is required each school year.

The school must have the medication in the original prescription container, listing the date, the name of the physician, the name of the students, and the instructions for administering the medication.

Medication is not to be sent to school in a baggie, an envelope, a tissue, or any other wrapping that does not identify the medication.

Students may not carry with them any non-prescription medication of any kind (over the counter drugs) at school. **This includes aspirin, cold tablets, allergy pills, eye drops, cough drops, etc.** If a student requires such medication, the family physician must direct the pharmacy to place such medication in a prescription container, listing the date, the name of the student, the name of the physician, and the instructions for administration, as in any prescription medication.

If medication is to be given three times a day, it is recommended that a dose is given at home before school, a dose upon arriving home, and a dose at bedtime – providing this meets the physician's approval.

All medications are administered in the school office and recorded by school personnel.

If a student brings unregistered medication to school, school personnel will confiscate it and parents will be contacted.

If you have questions regarding medication or other medical concerns, please contact the school district nurse by email. Check with the school office for email address.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

Our task in an emergency situation is to create a safe, secure, organized environment for our students while allowing for students' orderly dismissal to parents.

Monta Loma maintains an emergency preparedness plan in case of an emergency situation during the school day. We have emergency water and first aid supplies to adequately serve our population of students for an extended time period. In addition, each classroom and learning center has an emergency backpack where additional first aid supplies are within a moment's reach of the classroom teacher. Our emergency preparedness plan is available for review by contacting Noemi Herrera in the main office.

In case of an emergency situation such as an earthquake, we would evacuate the school and assemble in the grass area of the playground. A first aid and checkout station would immediately be set up. Parents (or others listed on the child's emergency card) **MUST** report to the checkout station before the child will be released.

## **VISITORS/VOLUNTEERS**

For the safety of all our students Monta Loma uses KeepNTrack kiosk to register and badge all Visitors/Volunteers.

Monta Loma parents/guardians are considered "Approved Volunteers" and will see their name come up when they sign in/out at the kiosk. Visitors will be asked for their date of birth when signing in at the kiosk.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Throughout the school year, students at Monta Loma have the opportunity to go on field trips, which enhance the regular educational program. All students must have a permission slip signed by the parent or guardian for each field trip. Buses are the preferred mode of transportation. In the event parent drivers are utilized, all requirements of school board policy must be met.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Lost articles are located near the library and are sorted regularly by our local Girl Scout troop. Items not claimed will be given to charity at the end of each trimester. Children are encouraged to check the rack as soon as possible after losing an article. An attempt will be made to return clothing items that have identification on them. Please mark your items if possible.

## **CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS**

Any plans made in relation to a classroom celebration must first be discussed and approved by the classroom teacher.

Please provide healthy choices when providing food items in conjunction with any celebration. Some healthy choices include fruit, vegetables, popcorn, etc. Our goal is to stay away from sugary foods such as cookies, cupcakes, donuts, candy, etc. Some children are allergic to particular foods such as dairy products and nuts. **If food items are provided to a classroom, parents must check with the teacher and get prior approval to bring the food item.**

The office will not accept any items from parents for classroom celebrations. Please arrange with your child's teacher for delivery. If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday, instead of bringing food items to the classroom, consider recognizing your child's birthday by providing a "Birthday Book" for the class. This is an excellent choice as books can bring attention to the student's birthday while at the same time incorporating literature.

### **SCHOOL SITE COUNCIL (SSC)**

The Monta Loma School Site Council, mandated by California state law, is our school advisory committee. The Council is composed of teachers, the principal, and parents who meet monthly to discuss long-range planning and enrichment opportunities, as well as monitor the school safety and site plans. Parents who are interested in having a voice regarding the vision and future of Monta Loma are strongly encouraged to run for a Site Council position. Elections are held each spring. Check the school calendar for meeting dates and times.

### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ELAC)**

The Monta Loma English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC), mandated by California state law, is our language instruction advisory committee. Our ELAC committee is comprised of teachers, the principal, and parents who meet regularly throughout the year to discuss the CELDT test, reclassification process, parenting information and support, and long-range instructional planning for our students learning English. Any parent is welcome to attend. Parents who are interested in having a voice regarding English language development are strongly encouraged to attend the ELAC meetings or run for an ELAC board position. Elections are held each spring. Check the school calendar for meeting dates and times.

### **PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)**

The Monta Loma PTA is our parent and teacher association. They are primarily responsible for fundraising and volunteerism at Monta Loma.

### **COMMUNICATIONS/SCHOOL CALENDAR / SIMPLY CIRCLE**

Our staff values the importance of consistent and clear communication with families. School-wide communication is sent via email and **Simply Circle** to parents every Wednesday through our Monta Loma's newsletter, "Spotlights". We are piloting **Simply Circle** in the 2015-16 school year in an effort to consolidate all school communication. **Simply Circle** is a private, group communication tool parents can use to keep track of all school communication. You must opt in to **Simply Circle** if you would like to utilize this free service. Information on how to access **Simply Circle** will be posted on our website.

All school newsletters, district information, PTA information, and flyers will be posted on our school website and through **Simply Circle**. Parents who do not have access to email can request a hard copy of the newsletter from their child's teacher. A hard copy of our newsletters will also be posted in the main office. It is critical that all families read this newsletter each week as it contains important information about upcoming events both district and school-wide.

Additionally, you may access this same information and more on our school website, <http://www.montaloma.mvwsd.org>. The website contains a link to our calendar which is continually updated with the latest information. All staff members at Monta Loma have email access as well as a voicemail box. Additionally, all teachers send bi-monthly newsletters to parents. Please see the staff roster at the end of this handbook (or the web site) for staff contact information.

## IV. ACADEMIC POLICIES

### CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Our curriculum is driven by clear performance standards for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level to be successful in top quality high schools and colleges. For each grade level, standards are based on national and state curriculum frameworks in each subject area. We believe that through the mastery of these standards the students at Monta Loma will be fully prepared for continued academic success in middle school and beyond.

Teachers will use regular assessments to measure how well students are mastering the standards. We use knowledge about student skills to shape whole class instruction, small group work, and one-on-one tutoring. Using individual student data, instruction can be targeted to better meet individual student needs.

**Language Arts:** Monta Loma uses a variety of instructional strategies to foster a balanced approach to literacy instruction. Teachers use Houghton Mifflin Reading, as well as books from our leveled book room, to explicitly instruct students in reading skills and strategies, including phonemic awareness, phonics and word knowledge, and comprehension skills and strategies. In addition, Monta Loma teachers use guided reading and book clubs to ensure reading instruction is individualized according to students' needs. Each grade level uses *Step Up to Writing* as a part of our strategy to teach organization in writing. To address the Common Core State Standards, teachers also have access to a wide variety of online instructional lessons, materials, and resources. Our goal is for students to read and understand high quality texts while being able to think and respond critically to what has been read. Specific strategies to engage in high level literature is taught so that students can question, debate, collaborate, and effectively communicate through oral and written means.

**Math:** Students in all grade levels use the Scott Foresman *EnVision MATH* program, supplemented by TERK investigations (a more hands-on, conceptual program). Each grade level also spends an additional 15-20 minutes per day on Board Math, a review/preview program that ensures exposure to every math standard. Math instruction also includes 1-2 sessions weekly of ST Math, which is a grade level software program focusing on enhancing non-verbal conceptual mathematical understanding. Individual grade levels offer differentiation and enrichment to ensure all students are being challenged.

**Social Studies:** The Mountain View/Whisman School District uses Scott Foresman as the primary curriculum for social studies. Topics are integrated throughout the curriculum to provide students opportunities to learn through a variety of means. Field trips often coordinate with grade level social studies units.

**Science:** The Mountain View/Whisman School District uses FOSS kits (hands-on activities) and supplements the hands-on activities with non-fiction literature. Further, Monta Loma hosts outside science organizations, such as Science is Elementary, Living Classroom, and Science Institute.

**Physical Education:** Every student receives 100 minutes per week of PE instruction. The Playworks program provides PE instruction once a week for students in grades K-3. 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students receive instruction from a credentialed PE instructor through Rhythm and Moves two times a week.

**Music and Art:** The Community School of Music and Art (CSMA) program provides Monta Loma students with art and music instruction. All students in grades K-3 receive music instruction weekly for half of the school year and art every other week for the other half of the year. 4<sup>th</sup> grade students learn to play the recorder as part of their music instruction, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students can choose to participate in band, strings or chorus/music appreciation during the school day.

### TEXTBOOKS AND LIBRARY BOOKS

All textbooks and library books are supplied by Mountain View Whisman School District and are issued to your child by the teacher or librarian. As soon as items are issued, the student assumes responsibility for their care. Loss or damage of textbooks or library books will result in the assessment of a fee sufficient for its repair or replacement. **Failure to pay the fee to replace or repair textbooks or library books could result in the withholding of a student's report card at the end of the school year.**

### HOMEWORK

As a district, we have embraced a Continuous Improvement model as our strategy for meeting our goal of academic excellence. Homework, including nightly reading, plays an integral role in helping students improve literacy, mathematical thinking and skills, and allows students to exercise responsibility, perseverance, and self-reflection.

Generally, parents should expect an average of 10 minutes of homework per grade level per night, keeping in mind that different students may take slightly more or less time to complete assignments. For example, student should expect 30 minutes of homework nightly in 3rd grade, 40 minutes in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and 50 minutes in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. If you have concerns about your child's homework, please contact his/her teacher to discuss. Please note that homework belongs

to students, not parents. We encourage you to support your child with his/her homework, but ask that you not complete the work for them. If your child complains that homework is too challenging or is showing signs of stress, please contact the classroom teacher immediately to determine a homework plan that allows for student success.

### **MAKE-UP WORK**

Students who miss schoolwork because of an excused absence shall be given the opportunity to complete all assignments and tests that can be reasonably provided. As determined by the teacher, the assignments and tests shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the assignments and tests missed during the absence. Students shall receive full credit for work satisfactorily completed within a reasonable period of time that is agreed upon by teacher, student, and parent.

Students who miss schoolwork because of unexcused absences shall be given the opportunity to make up missed work, although full or partial credit may not be given. Teachers shall assign such makeup work as necessary to ensure academic progress.

### **STUDENT EVALUATION**

Monta Loma students are evaluated in a variety of ways. Teachers use district and site-based formative assessments throughout the school year to ensure academic, emotional, and social progress. Results of these assessments are shared with parents on a regular basis through fall conferences, parent-teacher meetings / conversations, email, and report cards. Reports cards are based on the academic standards taught each trimester and are sent home 3 times per year. Additionally, students in grades 3-5 take the SBAC exam each spring. This test measures the students understanding of the Common Core State Standards. Students who are learning English will take the CELDT (California English Language Development Test) in the fall to determine level of English skills and language instruction required for the year.

Students who, with the support of differentiated instruction and intervention, continue to struggle academically may be referred to our Student Success Team, which meets regularly throughout the school year to address a variety of student needs. This team may include the principal, instructional coach, school psychologist, classroom teacher, parent(s), and student (if applicable). Together this team creates a success plan for each individual child and monitors progress during the school year.

### **CHEATING**

Cheating contradicts the core value of responsibility – our responsibility to be honest. It is a serious offense. If a student copies another student's work, gives another student his/her work, or gains an unfair advantage it is considered cheating. The "work" in question will be given 0 points or an unsatisfactory score and the student will be referred to the principal's office for disciplinary action.

### **CHAC SERVICES**

Meeting the needs of each student at Monta Loma is our main priority. Students come with a variety of academic, emotional, and social needs. In order to meet the more significant social and emotional needs of our students, MVWSD partners with the Community Health Awareness Council (CHAC), who provides Monta Loma with 2-3 counseling interns yearly that work with students needing counseling. This service is offered during the school day and is free of charge to families. For more information on CHAC services for your child or your family, please stop by the main office.

### **AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMMING**

Outside organizations offer afterschool programming on the Monta Loma campus. Most of these programs run independently from the school, such as Soccer, Tennis, Chess Club, Lego Robotics etc. Please review the Spotlights for information regarding afterschool programming. Two additional afterschool programs include the YMCA child care and Beyond the Bell (BTB), which is a tutoring and park & rec program offered to selected students. Please see the program coordinators directly for more information.

## V. FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

### VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are an essential part of the Monta Loma Community. By becoming involved with the school and the school community we demonstrate to our children that education is valuable to us. This involvement helps to inspire our children to take school seriously and **work hard**. By helping to ensure that our children complete their homework and do quality work, we teach them about the importance of taking **responsibility** for learning. By participating in whole school events such as Open House, concerts, and clean up days, we teach our children that friendship and relationships to community and family are valuable; we demonstrate **respect** for the school and for the accomplishments of its students. We help them learn to take pride in their accomplishments, and we push them to grow. Whenever we take time out of our busy lives to spend time in the classroom working with our children and their peers, we show children that many adults care about them and want them to grow and succeed. When we work with other students, other teachers, and other classes as well as participating in food drives, toy drives, and fund raisers, we demonstrate **compassion** for those who need our help and assistance. By coming to school events even though we may not know many of the other families, the school system may be different from the one in which we grew up, and English may be difficult for us to understand, we demonstrate the **courage** to take risks and do what is right for our children.

Our goal is that all families participate a total of 30 hours per year. This includes volunteering at our two major fundraising events: Fall Festival and Walk-a-Thon. Other hours include Back-to-School-Night, parent-teacher conferences, Campus Clean-up Days, PTA movie nights, Open House, attending concerts and field trips, serving on SSC or ELAC, and weekly classroom support. Please place time on your calendar to support Monta Loma so that we can best serve your children; our students.

### PARENT/GUARDIAN, STUDENT, TEACHER CONFERENCES

Goal-setting conferences are held in the fall with all parents. The purpose of the conference is to identify your student's strengths and areas of growth, and to set academic and personal goals for the school year. Parents/guardians must attend conferences with teachers to understand your student's goals, progress toward those goals and how you can support your student. Students are often invited to participate in conferences.

For students who are not making academic progress, your teacher may schedule an additional conference with you during the school year. You are also always welcome to schedule a conference with your child's teacher to ask questions and share any concerns that you have. You may contact your teacher directly to schedule a conference.