



COTTONWOOD ELEMENTARY
HANDBOOK & CALENDAR
2026-2027

COTTONWOOD ELEMENTARY
709 Hedge Lane, Paola, KS 66071
913-294-8050
Brennan Riffel, Principal

Welcome

Welcome to Cottonwood Elementary School. This is a preschool, kindergarten, first, and second-grade building for approximately 400 students. Our focus is to help students build an educational foundation by providing an academic and developmental program. This is best accomplished through teamwork with the students, parents, and teachers supporting educational opportunities. Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit with the staff about questions and concerns.

Cottonwood Mission Statement

The Mission of Paola Cottonwood Elementary School is “We are committed to providing opportunities for all students to succeed to the best of their abilities.”

Paola Unified School District #368

Non-Discrimination Act

In compliance with Executive Order 11246; Title II of the Education Amendments of 1976; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972; Title IX Regulation Implementing Education Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and all other Federal, State, School rules, laws, regulations, and policies, Paola USD #368 shall not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin or ancestry, sex, age, handicap or political affiliation in admission to or employment in its education programs or activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

It is the intent of Paola USD 368, Paola, KS to comply with both the letter and spirit of the law in making sure certain discrimination does not exist in its policies, regulations, and operations. Grievance procedures for Title IX and Section 504 have been established for students, their parents, and employees who feel discrimination has been shown by the local school district.

Specific complaints of alleged discrimination under Title IX and Section 504 should be referred to Title IX and Section 504 Coordinator, Matt Meek, Superintendent of Schools, 1115 E. 303rd St. , Paola KS 66071, 913/294-8000.

Discrimination complaints can also be filed with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, One Petticoat Lane, 1010 Walnut St., Suite 320, Kansas City, MO, 64106; Telephone 816-268-0550; Fax: 816-268-0599; TTY: 877-521-2172; Email: OCR.KansasCity@ed.gov.

DISTRICT HANDBOOK

Additional information related to your child attending USD 368 schools can be found in the **DISTRICT HANDBOOK** located at www.usd368.org, or a print copy upon request from the building or district office.

FOSTER CARE AND HOMELESS DISTRICT COORDINATOR

Coordinator (913) 294-8000

BELL SCHEDULE

Arrival – The first bell rings at 8:00. The school day starts at 8:10. Students arriving after 8:05 will have to report directly to their classroom and will not be able to eat breakfast. Any students arriving late on buses will be given the opportunity to eat breakfast.

Dismissal- Dismissal time is 3:10. Car riders need to go through the car rider line. Parents should not park in the South parking lot to pick up students. Students walking home will be assisted across the main intersection in front of Cottonwood. After crossing the intersection students will be released to meet siblings at the middle school parking lot or walk home. We encourage families to not pick up in the middle school parking lot and instead use our car rider line. Parents may NOT wait outside of the main office doors for students.

Changes in Transportation – Please make arrangements with your child before school in regards to changes. Please make any changes in transportation with your child’s teacher prior to 2:00 p.m. Avoid calling the school at dismissal time if at all possible. Numerous phone calls are received in the office at dismissal time. This creates interruptions and confusion for students and teachers. There is always a danger of miscommunication in the case of late phone calls. If sending an email to the teacher, please cc one of the secretaries so that if a teacher is absent, the office will know about the change.

TARDIES

TARDY BELL RINGS AT 8:10

At 10 Tardies: A letter will be sent to the family and placed in the student's cumulative file.

At 15 Tardies: A letter will be sent home and placed in the student's cumulative file.

At 20 Tardies: A letter will be sent and a plan will be developed with the parents and social worker to try to solve the problem.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

A written excuse or telephone call is required from you each time your child is absent or tardy, otherwise the absence is recorded as unexcused. Students must be in attendance the majority of the day in order to participate in after-school activities. Students going homesick may not return to participate in after-school activities. According to USD 368 Board Policy JBD, when a student is absent from school, an attempt shall be made to contact the parent or guardian to determine the reason for the absence. The principal has been designated to determine the acceptability and validity of excuses presented by the parent(s) or the student. If your child’s attendance gets close to the 90% rate, the principal has the right to take further action. According to the State’s Quality Performance Accreditation criteria, 90% attendance by students is required for our school to be accredited. If there is to be a change in your child's transportation home from school, a written note is required. Otherwise, he/she will be sent home as usual. PLEASE INFORM THE SCHOOL OF ANY CHANGES IN BABYSITTERS, ADDRESSES, PARENTS' PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT, AND PHONE NUMBERS. WE DO NEED EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS.

ABSENCES (EXCUSED)

Regular attendance is important for academic success. The Board of Education, administrators, and teachers strongly support regular attendance. There is a direct correlation between the habits of students today and their work habits in the future. Families and schools must work together to support good attendance. A written excuse or telephone call is required from you each time your child is absent or tardy, otherwise, the absence is recorded as unexcused. If there is to be a change in your child's transportation home from school we need a phone call, an email, or a written note from the parent. Otherwise, he/she will be sent home as usual.

Attendance Procedure

Please notify the school by **9 a.m.** if a student will be absent. Please remember that Kansas Law (K.S.A. 72-113) requires attendance in school. An absence will be considered unexcused if you do not call in or email the office at cesoffice@usd368.org.

**PLEASE NOTE: STUDENT ATTENDANCE WILL BE TRACKED BY THE MINUTES A STUDENT IS AT SCHOOL.
Any student being checked out before 3:10 will be counted absent for the number of minutes left in the day.**

At 8 absences / 3160 Minutes– Red Flag to School Social Worker and/or Phone contact with family from school social worker.

At 10 absences/3950 Minutes – Letter to family from school social worker.

At 15 absences/5925 Minutes – Student is nearing 10% absentee rate, a letter from the principal.

At 20 absences/7900 Minutes – Letter from principal requiring doctor's note for further excused absences.

Greater than 20 Absences – Attendance rate below 90%, truancy report made to the county attorney.

Unexcused Absence Policy

Kansas State and District Policy **requires** school officials to report to the County Attorney when a student has 3 consecutive unexcused absences, 5 cumulative unexcused absences in one semester or a total of 7 unexcused absences within one full school term.

In addition, the Federal Law is known as “No Child Left Behind” and Kansas QPA standards stress the importance of regular school attendance. Schools are reported as not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress if the attendance rate falls below 90%. You will be notified by letter if your child's attendance falls below 90%. The principal reserves the right to report to the appropriate agency any student whose attendance falls below 90%, regardless of whether it is excused or unexcused.

Excused Absence Policy

An excused absence is one, which has been classified by the building administration. An absence that falls under one of the six (6) approved reasons for absence will be classified excused if the building attendance procedure is followed by the student and the parent/legal guardian. Suspensions are considered excused. Make-up privileges are allowed for excused absences. Absences shall be excused for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness. School administration may, with due notice to the student or parent/legal guardian, require verification from a physician of absences due to reasons of health.
2. Serious illness or death of a member of the family.
3. Obligatory religious observances of the student's own faith. Administrators and teachers shall avoid scheduling tests, project deadlines, and wherever possible extra-curricular activities on religious holidays to ensure that students should not be penalized for these absences from school.
4. Participation in a Kansas State High School Activities Association activity, a district-approved function or school-sponsored activity.
5. Family emergency situation requiring immediate action.
6. An absence that has been requested in writing and approved in advance by the building administration. Activities of an educational nature or involving the student's family will fall in this category. Since this absence is approved in advance, make-up work is to be requested by the student before the student leaves. Tests may be taken when the student returns.

In cases of extreme absenteeism (lower than 90% attendance or more than 3 unexcused absences), the office may, with due notice to the student and parents, require verification from a physician that an absence is due to reasons of health and/or verification of doctor and dental appointments. Whether an absence is excused or unexcused is left to the discretion of the principal. All work missed must be made up.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

School Web Page: www.usd368.org – click on Cottonwood Elementary

Facebook page: Cottonwood Elementary School USD 369 Paola, KS <https://www.facebook.com/cottonwoodelementaryusd368>

BIRTH CERTIFICATE

State law (KS 72-53, 106) requires that an official birth certificate be presented when a child is enrolled for the first time in school. The law also states that the principal is required to report to the local police department any child for whom a birth certificate has not been presented. USD #368 Board Policy JBC states, “All students enrolling in the district for the first time shall provide required proof of identity. Students enrolling in kindergarten or first grade shall provide a certified copy of their birth certificate, a certified copy of the court order placing the child in the custody of the Secretary of the Department for Children and Families, or other documentation that the board determines to be satisfactory.” ***Your child's enrollment will not be accepted until we have a birth certificate on file.***

COMMUNICATIONS

Teachers are encouraged to keep parents informed about their child's progress and classroom activities. Parents are encouraged to call, email, or stop by if they have a question or concern. We think of the school and the home as partners in the education of a child. A newsletter is sent home monthly to keep families up-to-date on events happening at school.

FIELD TRIPS

Parent permission is required for each child who participates in an out-of-town class field trip. During the year there may be one or more out of town and/or local trips.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

If you are coming into the school to get your child for an appointment that requires them to leave school early, you need to PARK your car in the parking lot, not along the curb. The curb is for cars to pull up so their child can get into the car without the parent coming into the school. If a car is parked along the curb, it ties up the flow of traffic. **PLEASE DO NOT COME INTO THE SCHOOL TO GET YOUR STUDENT AT DISMISSAL UNLESS THEY ARE LEAVING FOR AN APPOINTMENT.**

We do have a crosswalk between Cottonwood and Sunflower. In the morning, there is a crossing guard to help students cross. At night, students walking to Sunflower are gathered in the commons area and walked across the street by staff members. Students are not to walk to Cottonwood from Sunflower.

RESPONSIBILITY-CENTERED DISCIPLINE

USD 368 utilizes the principles of a program for discipline called Responsibility-Centered Discipline. It is an approach that is based on six core concepts for developing responsible students. The mission of the Responsibility-Centered Discipline's program is to help schools build systems that help kids learn to take responsibility for their behaviors, and thus, create an environment that brings the best out of everyone.

A component of this program is a five-step guided conversation, called "Give 'em Five" which will be conducted privately between the students and teacher when undesirable behaviors do occur. The five steps to the conversation are as follows:

1. Support (Something positive to start out)
2. Breakdown (To ensure that the student knows what was not acceptable)
3. Expectation (To ensure that the student knows what is expected)
4. Benefit (Explains why it is important for the student to choose the more desirable behavior)
5. Closure (Provides close so that the teacher/student relationship is left intact)

Another component of this program is for each building to establish the "foundations" for its school. The foundations for Cottonwood are:

- BE READY – do your work, supplies are out, quiet and ready in line, listening ears on, criss-cross applesauce
- BE SAFE – always make smart choices, use walking feet, push in your chair, work and play without hurting others, stay in your space

- BE RESPECTFUL – follow directions the first time, use kind words, keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself, help each other, look and listen when someone is talking
- BE RESPONSIBLE – tidy up your area at the end of every day, bring everything every day, clean up after yourself, you are the boss of you, work together

Using this program allows us to build relationships with students while we model respect and promote responsibility.

HEALTH SERVICES

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Physicals: Kindergarten students will need a school entry physical completed within 12 months prior to the first day of school. New students under the age of 9 years who are attending a Kansas school for the first time, also require a physical as described above. **Documentation should be provided to the school at the time of enrollment.** [2025-2026 Immunization Requirement Link](#) (link is still current for 2026-2027 school year).

Immunization Requirements for grades K-2 from the State of Kansas for the 2026-2027 School Year:

- **Diphtheria Tetanus, Pertussis (DTap):** five doses required with 5th dose on or after 4th birthday, 4 doses acceptable if dose 4 is given on or after the 4th birthday and 6 months from dose 3.
- **Poliomyelitis (IPV/OPV) (Polio):** four doses required with the 4th dose on or after 4th birthday. Three doses acceptable, if dose 3 is given on or after 4 years of age and 6 months from dose 2.
- **Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR):** two doses required with the first dose on or after the 1st birthday.
- **Hepatitis B:** three doses required. Dose 3 must be given after 24 weeks of age.
- **Varicella (chickenpox):** two doses required with the first dose on or after the 1st birthday. No doses required if prior varicella disease is documented by a licensed Physician.
- **Hepatitis A:** two doses required with a 6 month min interval between dose 1 and dose 2.

ILLNESS

Your child should be kept home from school if he/she:

- (1) has a temperature over 100 degrees Fahrenheit,
- (2) is vomiting,
- (3) has a severe cough, cold or sore throat or
- (4) has a skin rash of questionable nature.

If your child has any of these symptoms, they will be sent home. Keeping your child home when they are ill prevents the spread of germs to other students. Any child with a fever should be kept home 24 hours after their temperature drops to normal (98.6) without the use of fever-reducing medication such as Tylenol or Motrin.

Communicable Diseases- Students with the following communicable diseases will be excluded from school using these guidelines:

- **Chicken Pox:** Students may return six days after onset of rash or until lesions are fully encrusted, whichever comes first.
- **Influenza (Flu):** Most current state regulations will be followed.
- **Pink Eye:** If a student has Pink Eye (bacterial conjunctivitis) there is reddening of the eye and large amounts of drainage that causes the eye to crust over. These students should remain out of school until 24 hours of treatment is completed.
- **Ringworm:** This is a fungus infection and can affect the scalp, body, feet, and nails. The student may return to school after treatment has started, but should not participate in athletic activities involving skin-to-skin contact until the skin lesions are completely healed.
- **Scabies:** Scabies is caused by a mite that burrows under the skin causing a rash and itching. The student may return after treatment has started. Treatment should include treatment of the child, clothing and bedding.
- **Impetigo:** This is a skin infection caused by staphylococcal bacteria, the same one that causes boils, carbuncles, abscesses, and infected cuts. The student may return to school if receiving treatment. Open wounds should be covered with a clean dressing.
- **MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus):** In the community, most MRSA infections are skin infections that are caused by staphylococcal bacteria that are resistant to certain antibiotics. It appears as pustules or boils which often are red, swollen, painful or have pus or other drainage. The student may return to school if receiving treatment but the site needs to be covered by a dressing.
- **Head Lice:** The Center for Disease Control (CDC) advocates that children should not be excluded from school for lice or nits. If a child has been found to have live head lice, a parent will be notified and asked to initiate treatment. The student may return after appropriate treatment has begun.

Questions about other communicable diseases should be directed to your child's school nurse.

SCREENINGS

Hearing: All Cottonwood students will have their hearing screened annually. A parent or teacher may request that a student be screened at any time. If a child fails the first screen, a second is done. If a child needs further evaluation, a form will be sent home that parents can take to the student's primary care provider for further evaluation.

Vision: All Cottonwood students will have their vision screened annually. A parent or teacher may request that a student be screened at any time. If the vision screening indicates further evaluation is needed, a form will be sent home which can be taken to the student's primary care provider or eye doctor.

Dental Health: Students are encouraged to see their dentist on a yearly basis for preventative care. Dental support will be available to students.

MEDICATION POLICY

When a student requires medication(s), the school works cooperatively with the parents and physician to ensure that the student receives the correct medication and amount at the proper time. Only FDA-approved prescription and over-the-counter medications are allowed to be administered by school personnel. Over-the-counter medication will be given per package label dosing instructions unless prescribed by a physician. **Medications for students should be given at home whenever possible.** Even medications requiring doses three times a day can generally be administered while the student is at home (prior to school, after school, and at bedtime). In the event that a medication needs to be given to the student while at school, the school nurse will require the following in order to do so:

Prescription Medications:

1. Needs to be brought to school by the parent in the currently labeled prescription bottle with the following information: the child's name, the name of the medication, the amount of the medication to be given, and the time that it should be given. **Note: Most pharmacies will provide you with an additional prescription bottle for the medicine that needs to be given at school.**
2. Needs to be accompanied by a Medication Form (which can be obtained from the school nurse and/or office personnel or online at www.usd368.org) that has been completed by the Prescribing Health Care Provider and the parent/guardian. The Prescribing Health Care Provider's orders may also be faxed to the school nurse.
3. A Primary Health Care provider's order for the medication(s) needs to be reviewed and updated at the beginning of each school year and all changes in the amount of medicine to be given will require a newly written order from the Prescribing Health Care Provider. Again, the medication order may be faxed directly to the school nurse.

Non-Prescription (Over the Counter) Medications:

1. Must be brought to school in the original labeled container, clearly showing the amount to be given by age, the ingredients, and expiration date.
2. Must be accompanied by a medication Form with the parent's/guardian's signature or a parent/guardian signed note with the child's name, the name of the medication, the amount of the medication to be given and the day and time to be given.

All medications will be maintained in the health room and given out by the school nurse and/or designated school staff.

Certain medications (i.e. insulin injection) may require the student to keep the medication with them.

GUIDELINES FOR PARTIES

- Students are not allowed to distribute party invitations at school unless an invitation is being given to every child in their class.
- Student birthday celebrations at school are arranged in advance with the classroom teacher. Due to the number of allergies and dietary restrictions, we ask that treats are individually wrapped and should not contain nuts. Cupcakes purchased from stores will provide nutrition information. Families can also bring school-approved non-food-related items, instead of treats (Examples: Pens/Pencils/ Stickers)
- Gift exchanges among students are not allowed.

- Floral and balloon bouquets sent to school may be picked up in the office at dismissal time. These are not delivered to classrooms. Just a reminder that balloons and glass cannot go on the bus.
- We have 3 parties at school per year: Halloween, Christmas, and Valentine's Day. Valentine's day parties are not open to parents.

LIBRARY

Students in Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 may check out library books at least once during the week. Occasionally books are lost and payment for book replacement is expected. Refunds will be made if the book is found.

LUNCHROOM POLICY

- We do not permit outside food to be brought into our lunchroom from fast food restaurants – McDonald's, Pizza, Arby's, etc.
- We discourage students leaving for just lunch with a relative. Students only have 25 minutes for lunch and if leaving they will miss class time and instruction.
- 2026-2027 Meal Prices for Breakfast, Lunch, and Extra Milk prices will be established by the Board of Education.
- You may have lunch with your child, but it must be pre-approved by the building administration. Please email brennan_riffel@usd368.org for approval.

Payment and Balances: To allow for the convenience of checking meal balances and making payments, the following procedures can be used:

The Infinite Campus food service software will allow you to:

- View balances via the Infinite Campus Portal or Infinite Campus mobile applications. Directions and login information can be obtained from your child's school office staff.

Meals Charging Policy: Students will be allowed to charge up to but not to exceed \$10.00 for Paid status and \$5.00 for Reduced status at any one time. Ala carte purchases will not be allowed once a student has a negative balance.

Please feel free to contact Food Service for questions related to food service. Contact the Business Office at 913-294-8000 for questions related to online payment.

RECESS

Cottonwood Elementary's recess policy states that if your child is well enough to come to school, then he/she will go outside for a 15-minute recess. The exception will be if your child has been ill and is taking an antibiotic and has a written note from a physician stating that he/she should not go outside for recess. Students at Cottonwood will have indoor recess if either the temperature OR the wind chill is below 20 degrees. It does not have to be both of them – it is either one of them. Students will have indoor recess if either the temperature OR the heat index is above 95 degrees. It does not have to be both of them – it is either one of them.

CES/SES PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization)

All parents are invited to join the Parent Teacher Organization that supports school programs at both Sunflower and Cottonwood Schools. More information can be found at their website <http://www.sunflowercottonwoodpto.com>

PICTURES

Pictures or reproductions of your child may be used by Paola Schools, without financial compensation, for the purpose of promoting the district's students, curriculum, and programs; and said pictures may be included within or utilized as illustrations, advertisements or publications, either in printed form or on television.

If you want your child removed from photographic situations for the above purpose, please notify the school secretary.

STUDENT USE OF CELL PHONES AND OTHER PERSONAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Kansas law prohibits students from using or having access to their cell phones and other personal electronic communication devices from the start of school at until the dismissal bell, except as otherwise provided in board policy JCDC. When entering the school each day, students will be required to turn their cell phones off and store them in their locker and/or backpack.

If a parent or guardian needs to contact their student during the school day for any reason, they may call or email the office so we may assist. If the student needs to reach a family member or caregiver during the school day, they should let a teacher know or stop by the office during passing period for prompt assistance. We encourage students to leave personal electronic communication devices at home or in a locked vehicle during the school day. We also understand that is not always possible or preferable. Please note that students failing to comply with this policy will be subject to the following disciplinary action.

- 1st Offense: Student asked to turn off device and secure in their locker and/or backpack.
- 2nd Offense: Confiscation of the device and returned at the end of the day.
- 3rd Offense: Confiscation of the device, Parent/guardian notification to pick up from administration.
- 4th Offense: Progressive disciplinary measures for repeated violations.

Messaging Between Students and Employees

Safety of our students and staff is our top priority. This includes the use of digital communication tools that are approved, used, monitored, and archived with district oversight. Messaging between our students and teachers, coaches, sponsors or other employees will use the district's email system, Google Classroom, or other district approved system. Please allow an employee up to 24 hours for a response during a school week. School staff members are not requested nor required to monitor messages over

weekends or other times when the school is closed for breaks or holidays, unless they are working in an official capacity during that time. If you have an urgent need, please contact the school or district office for assistance. Use of other digital communication tools for direct communication between a student and employee is not permitted and may be subject to disciplinary action. If you ever have concerns about communication between a student and employee, please contact the principal without delay to request assistance or make a report.

VISITORS

Visitors must sign in at our office. Any visits should be pre-approved by the classroom teacher and administration. We have a sign-in sheet and we ask that you enter the time you arrive and the time when you leave, as well as the reason you are here visiting. At the time you sign in, you will receive a visitor's badge to wear during your time in the building. **If you plan to be here for lunch we must know by 8:30 a.m. when we call in our lunch count for the day.**

TITLE I SERVICE

Cottonwood Elementary is a Title I school. This means that students can benefit from supplemental Reading support from staff funded by a federal grant. The extra instruction assistance helps students achieve at a higher level. Guidelines within the grant require that parents have the right to know the following information:

- Whether the teacher has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
- The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- Whether the child is provided services by a paraprofessional and, if so, the qualifications.

Parents also have the right to their student assessment scores. Formal assessment scores are either sent to parents or shared at parent/teacher conferences.

COTTONWOOD ELEMENTARY STAFF 2026-2027

Principal

Preschool

Title Reading

Special Education

Brennan Riffel

Secretaries

Kathy Ferguson

Kelli Whitney

Student Services

Ivy Poetter

Nurse

Robin Meeks

Social Worker

Erin Hamm

Custodians

Melissa Hay

Michele Minden

Trinity Spurgeon

Lunchroom

Maria Diaz

Sarah Lovesee

Cheryl Nagel

Walter Shelton

Melissa Wade

Helen Woolsey

Kindergarten

Karla Haddock

Maggie Koechner

Megan Olson

Victoria Thomas

Kennedy Voss

First Grade

Ashley Davis

Maddie Harvey

Haylee Huber

Chelsie Kettler

Jamie Smith

Second Grade

Erin Bidon

Alexis Combes

Jamie Glenn

Zach King

Janice McWilliams

Ashley Sullivan

Shauneen Wolf

Art

Mary Ure

Computers

Cora Jackowski

Music

Mary Kathryn Argeropoulos

Library

April Johnston

Physical Education

Dallas Armbruster

Science

Kristie Heger

Stacy McKinney-Interrelated

Angie Davey -Interrelated

Kayla Eppel-Speech

Kathy Johnson-Speech Para

Jennifer Siders-School Psych

Tammy Bridgeman-Para

Amanda Palkowitsh - Speech

Carmen Weidenbach-OT

Marilyn Friesen-PT

Paraeducators

Sara Banks

Tresa Brandt

Tracy Bryant

Amber Buisch

Susie Griffith-Hizey

Brooklyn Hornbacher

Lindsey Kees

Kara Maupin

Paige Miller

Shannon Morgan

Karley Mowen

Ana Santillan

Devan Stallbaumer

Dawn Stites

Cassidy Tanck

Ashlyn Wade

STUDENT ACCEPTABLE TECHNOLOGY USE POLICY (K-12)

Paola USD 368 is pleased to offer all students access to district technology. Technology will encompass all media that enhances the educational program for students. Access to technology enables students to become better prepared for their future.

Access to resources around the world makes materials available that may not be considered of educational value. Paola USD 368 realizes it is impossible to control all materials that a student user may discover either accidentally or deliberately. The benefits to students far outweigh the possibility that users may find material that is not consistent with the educational goals of Paola USD 368.

Students must have no expectation of privacy when using district technology. All information, browser logs, Web pages, and e-mails created by students shall be considered district property and shall be subject to unannounced monitoring by district administrators. The district retains the right to discipline any student, up to and including expulsion, for violations of this policy.

This Policy is to ensure that the use of district technology is consistent with the district's stated mission, goals, and objectives. These terms are provided so students are aware of their responsibilities. Access is a privilege provided to the students of Paola USD 368—not a right. Violation of these terms will result in specified consequences.

Student users are:

- Expected to act in a responsible, ethical, legal, and polite manner while using district technology.
- Reminded that school policies against sexual harassment and other forms of discriminatory harassment apply equally to communication on school computer systems.
- Not permitted to transmit, receive, submit, or publish any defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually-oriented, threatening, offensive, or illegal material.
- Not permitted to use any computer resource for commercial purposes, product advertising, political lobbying, or political campaigning.
- Not permitted to tamper physically or electronically with any district technology.
- Expected to know and respect all copyright and intellectual property laws that protect the rights of software owners, artists, and authors.
- Not to use another user's password. Logging on as anyone other than you, and/or accessing another user's folders, is not permitted.
- Expected to understand that any computer application, information, Internet browser logs, or e-mail messages in district computer systems are subject to monitoring by the administration. The district retains the right to duplicate any information in the system or on any hard drive.
- Not permitted to install or download any software programs on any computer system
- To understand using any information obtained via the Internet is at the student user's risk. The District specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services.
- Will not access the Internet without an approved educational purpose and adult supervision.

Violation of the District's Acceptable Use Policy could result in the loss of technology access, as well as other disciplinary or legal actions. Student users are subject to all local, state, and federal laws.

COMPLETE ONLY IF RESTRICTIONS APPLY COMPLETE ONLY IF RESTRICTIONS APPLY

Parent Restrictions Request

Any restrictions to the use of my students name, picture, works or his/her access to the district technologies for educational purposes is described in detail below.

Student's Name (please print) _____ Parent's Signature _____ Date _____

Detailed description of any restrictions for the 20__-20__ school year: (To be completed each school year)



PARENTS/GUARDIAN EMERGENCY SCHOOL INFORMATION



If an emergency or disaster situation ever arises while your student is in school, we want you to be aware that our schools have made preparations to respond effectively. Paola School District has an emergency plan that has been formulated to respond to large or small emergencies such as threats or inclement weather. This plan has been developed to ensure the safety and protection of all students. No one likes to dwell on emergency situations. However, we believe that planning ahead helps alleviate additional stress and concern. Please be assured that our entire staff is trained to respond to emergencies in a calm and professional manner.

PARENT INFORMATION

- **During an emergency**, your access to the school may be limited due to emergency vehicles. In addition, the phone lines may be busy due to the volume of incoming calls from parents and telephone lines needed for emergency communication with police, fire, and other emergency personnel. Please be patient as we try to help you in as timely a manner as possible.
- **Please be assured that parents and guardians** will be kept informed with accurate communication through IC messenger as information is available. This will help alleviate conflicting and unconfirmed information.
- **Impress upon your student(s) the need** for them to follow the directions of any school personnel in times of an emergency.
- **In the event our students are evacuated** to an offsite location you will receive immediate information regarding that location. Please be patient at the release location as security will be tightened and release procedures will require proper identification before the release of any student.
- **In the event a building is in Lock-Down**, no one will be allowed to enter or leave the building until law enforcement resolves the situation. A Lock-Down may occur due to an off-campus community threat or an on-campus threat.

- **In the event students are Sheltered-In-Place**, guests entering the building will be detained in the office area and students will be kept within the building until the situation is resolved. Shelter-In-Place may occur due to inclement weather or a threat.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

USD 368 has emergency procedures in place. These are shared with law enforcement agencies for student safety. Due to security, not all components can be publicly shared. During any critical incident, the district collaborates with law enforcement. At any time, parents and students are encouraged to share with school officials or law enforcement officers relevant security information that can benefit student safety.

HOW WILL YOU RECEIVE EMERGENCY SCHOOL INFORMATION?

The Paola School District has multiple ways of notifying you of school emergencies. Parents can find links to these resources on the USD 368 website:

- **Text Caster** is a service parents voluntarily sign up for through our web page. Parents will be sent text messages or emails from identified schools for activity changes and school reminders.
- **Infinite Campus – Parent Access**. Infinite Campus is our district student management system. Parents can log on and find out information about student grades, lunch info and many other things. All parents should contact their schools to gain access to Infinite Campus. Once there, make sure current emails are in the program. Information emails are sent from school on a regular basis.

Kansas regulations require that school districts develop and implement written policies to govern the use of emergency safety interventions in all schools and that the district's policies should be provided to parents once a year. Below you will find USD 368's ESI Policy.

4.11

USD 368 Emergency Safety Intervention Policy

GAAF Emergency Safety Interventions (See JRB, JQ, JQA, and KN)

The Board of Education is committed to limiting the use of Emergency Safety Interventions (ESI), such as seclusion and restraint, with all students. The board of education encourages all employees to utilize other behavioral management tools, including prevention techniques, de-escalation techniques, and positive behavioral intervention strategies.

This policy shall be made available on the district website with links to the policy available on any individual school pages. In addition, this policy shall be included in at least one of the following: each school's code of conduct, school safety plan, or student

handbook.

Definitions (See K.A.R. 91-42-1)

“Emergency Safety Intervention” is the use of seclusion or physical restraint when a student presents an immediate danger to self or others. Violent action that is destructive of property may necessitate the use of an emergency safety intervention.

“Seclusion” requires all three of the following conditions to be met: (1) the student is placed in an enclosed area by school personnel; (2) the student is purposefully isolated from adults and peers; and (3) the student is prevented from leaving the enclosed area.

“Chemical Restraint” means the use of medication to control a student’s violent physical behavior or restrict a student’s freedom of movement.

“Mechanical Restraint” means any device or object used to limit a student’s movement.

“Physical Restraint” means bodily force used to substantially limit a student’s movement.

“Physical Escort” means the temporary touching or holding the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back of a student who is acting out for the purpose of inducing the student to walk to a safe location.

“Time-out” means a behavioral intervention in which a student is temporarily removed from a learning activity without being confined.

Prohibited Types of Restraint

All staff members are prohibited from engaging in the following actions with all students:

- Using face-down (prone) physical restraint;
- Using face-up (supine) physical restraint;
- Using physical restraint that obstructs the student’s airway;
- Using physical restraint that impacts a student’s primary mode of communication;
- Using chemical restraint, except as prescribed by a licensed healthcare professional for treatment of a medical or psychiatric condition; and
- Use of mechanical restraint, except;
 - Protective or stabilizing devices required by law or used in accordance with an order from a licensed healthcare professional;
 - Any device used by law enforcement officers to carry out law enforcement duties; or
 - Seat Belts and other safety equipment used to secure students during transportation.

Training

All staff members shall be trained regarding the use of positive behavioral intervention strategies, de-escalation techniques, and prevention techniques. Such training shall be consistent with nationally recognized training programs on the use of emergency

safety interventions. The intensity of the training provided will depend upon the employee's position. Administrators, licensed staff members, and other staff deemed most likely to need to restrain a student will be provided more intense training than classified staff who do not work directly with students in the classroom. District and building administration shall make the determination of the intensity of training required for each position.

Each school building shall maintain documentation regarding the training that was provided and a list of participants.

Documentation

The principal or designee shall provide written notification to the student's parents any time that ESI is used with a student. Such notification must be provided within two (2) school days.

In addition, each building shall maintain documentation any time ESI is used with a student. Such documentation must include all of the following:

- o Date and time of the intervention,
- o Type of intervention,
- o Length of time the intervention was used, and
- o School personnel who participated in or supervised the intervention.

All such documentation shall be provided to the building principal, who shall be responsible for providing copies of such documentation to the superintendent on at least a biannual basis.

At least once per school year, each building principal or designee shall review the documentation of ESI incidents with appropriate staff members to consider the appropriateness of the use of ESI in those instances.

Reporting Data

District administration shall report ESI data to the state department of education as required.

Local Dispute Resolution Process

The board of education encourages parents to attempt to resolve issues relating to the use of ESI informally with the building principal and/or superintendent before filing a formal complaint with the board. In the event that the complaint is resolved informally, the administrator must provide a written report of the informal resolution to the superintendent and the parents and retain a copy of the

report at the school. The superintendent will share the informal resolution with the board of education and provide a copy to the state department of education.

If the issues are not resolved informally with the building principal and/or the superintendent, the parents may submit a formal written complaint to the board of education by providing a copy of the complaint to the clerk of the board and the superintendent.

Upon receipt of a formal written complaint, the board president shall assign an investigator to review the complaint and report findings to the board as a whole. Such an investigator may be a board member, a school administrator selected by the board, or a board attorney. Such investigators shall be informed of the obligation to maintain confidentiality of student records and shall report the findings and recommended action to the board in executive session.

Any such investigation must be completed within thirty (30) days of receipt of the formal written complaint by the board clerk and superintendent. On or before the 30th day after receipt of the written complaint, the board shall adopt a report containing written findings of fact and, if necessary, appropriate corrective action. A copy of the report adopted by the board shall be provided to the parents, the school, and the state board of education.

Approved: KASB Recommendation – 6/13

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Cottonwood Elementary Bullying Policy

Definition

The legal definition of bullying in Kansas requires bullying to be severe, persistent or pervasive. Kansas legislation requires that the board of education of each school district shall adopt a policy to prohibit bullying either by any student, staff member or parent towards a student or by a student, staff member or parent towards a staff member on or while utilizing school property, in a school vehicle or at a school-sponsored activity or event.

According to the U.S. Department of Education bullying involves the following:

- Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions
- Bullying usually (but not always) involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time.
- Bullying involves an imbalance of power or strength.

Cyberbullying

means bullying by use of any electronic communication device through means including, but not limited to, e-mail, instant messaging, text messages, blogs, mobile phones, pagers, online games, and websites.

Parental Cooperation

The prevention of bullying in our schools must be a joint effort involving both school staff and parents/guardians. The role of the parent of the target and or aggressor in understanding the bullying situation and working with their child and the school is crucial to the student's development of appropriate social skills.

Reporting

Staff members will report to the school administration when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying. Reporting to the school administration does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

For isolated incidents of peer aggression, staff and administration will implement standard discipline measures. If it is determined to be repeated behavior then bullying policies will be followed.

The school encourages students who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying involving a student to report it to school staff and/or administration.

Students will be provided practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member or with the school administration.

HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT

Please contact the school principal or the classroom teacher to register a complaint.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline will be administered according to the school handbook and district policy. If the school administration decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education

Improvement Act (IDEA).

If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

PREVENTION

Bullying prevention efforts will be supported by establishing a safe and supportive school environment. General teaching approaches that provide that support are:

- Setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines.
- Creating safe school and classroom environments for all students
- Encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students.
- Modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors.
- Using positive approaches to behavioral health that aid in social and emotional development
- Using the internet safely.

Supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength

Dress Code

It is important that a student wear clothing to school that is comfortable, clean, appropriate for work and play, and suitable for the weather.

Students should NOT wear the following:

- Clothing with references to alcohol, tobacco, or other controlled substances
- Clothing displaying vulgar, sexual, or violent references
- Heelys or other "wheeled" footwear
- No strapless, bare midriffs, or visible underclothing.
- Hats or hoods should not be worn in the building.