

*Highlands
Elementary
School*



Family
Handbook

2012 - 2013

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Spring Valley, CA 91977
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Highlands *PeaceBuilders*



Highlands staff and students are fortunate to participate in the PeaceBuilder program. This exciting program is a practical approach to help young people

(adults too) find ways to reduce the level of violence in their lives. PeaceBuilders has helped us build new habits and has established a common language for working out problems. In short, we have adopted a new way of life, one that focuses on finding and honoring the good in people, not emphasizing the bad.

PeaceBuilder's Pledge

I am a PeaceBuilder. I pledge...

To praise people,

To give up put-downs,

To seek wise people,

To notice and speak up about

hurts I have caused, to right wrongs,

and to help others.

I will build peace at home, at Highlands

and in my community each day.

Notes

Emergency Preparedness

Emergency Information

To safeguard your child's health and welfare, the school must have current emergency information on file. This includes the child's home address and telephone number, parent or guardian's telephone number, parent or guardian's work telephone number and at least one relative or friend who is authorized to care for the student in any emergency situation if the parent is unavailable. PLEASE notify the school immediately if any emergency information changes. Children will only be released to those indicated on the emergency information list.



In the event of an earthquake or other major disaster, the following procedures will be followed:

- Our school district will contact you via our automated communication system.
- Students will be released from school only to a parent or individual designated on the emergency list.
- No child will be allowed to leave with any other person, even a relative or babysitter, unless prior written permission is provided by the parent.

- All parents or designated parties who come for students must sign the child out at the office or designated student release station. The school is prepared to care for your child in times of critical situations.
- Please do not call the school. Telephone lines must be open for emergency calls.
- Following an earthquake or other emergency, do not immediately drive to school. The streets may be cluttered with debris and the school access route and street entrance areas must remain clear for emergency vehicles.
- Tune your radio to the emergency numbers being broadcast. Information and further directions will be given on the radio.
- Be sure to have a family plan in case of a disaster, including leaving a note with friends/relatives giving permission to care for your child. Discuss family plans with your child. Children handle things much better when they know what to expect.



Highlands Daily Schedule

Grades K - 6

Start Time: 8:05 End Time: 2:25

Tuesday Modified Day

Start Time: 8:05 End Time: 1:10

Recess Schedule

Grades K-1	10:00 - 10:20
Grades 2-6	10:30 - 10:50

Lunch Schedule

Kindergarten	11:40 - 12:20
Grades 1-2	12:00 - 12:40
Grades 3-6	12:30 - 1:10



Important Dates

August

Wednesday	16	School Begins
Tuesday	21	PTA Board Meeting - 5:00
Thursday	30	Back to School Night

September

Monday	3	Labor Day - No School
Tuesday	18	PTA Board Meeting - 5:00
Wednesday	26	School Pictures

October

Mon - Friday	8-19	Fall Break - No School
Monday	22	Students return to school
Tuesday	23	PTA Board Meeting - 5:00
Wednesday	24	Picture Make-ups

November

Monday	12	Veteran's Day - No School
Tuesday	13	PTA Board Meeting 5:00
Friday	16	Report Cards
Mon - Friday	19-23	Thanksgiving Week - No School
Mon - Fri	26-30	Parent Conferences - Min Days

December

Thurs - Friday	6-7	Vision & Hearing Screening
Thurs - Friday	24-1/4	Winter Break - No School

January

Monday	7	Students Return to School
Tuesday	15	PTA Board Meeting 5:00
Wednesday	16	Vision & Hearing Re-check
Monday	21	Martin Luther King Day - No School

Highlands PTA

Staff Appreciation Day

This is a day for all of us, parents and children alike, to honor our teachers. PTA sponsors a luncheon in honor of our outstanding teachers and our wonderful classified staff. However, nothing means more to our staff than a kind note, card or word from you. Please take a moment to let your child's teacher or any special Highlands Staff Member, know how much you appreciate him/her.

PTA Membership

We invite you and your family to become a member of the Highlands Elementary School PTA. This is a wonderful way for you and your family to show support for your child and our school. Membership dollars directly support many of the programs here at Highlands. Becoming a member supports programs and activities including PeaceBuilders, art, fieldtrips, and family nights. Becoming a member does not require volunteering, working on any committees, or attending PTA meetings.

Cost for membership is \$6.00 per person and up and anyone can join: parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, neighbors and businesses. Get involved—join today!

Spring Pictures

In the spring, students' pictures are taken by LifeTouch Photography. Once pictures have been received by the school, the package is sent home for parents to review. Parents may choose to keep the pictures and send payment or return the pictures with no obligation.

Sixth Grade Activities

Sixth grade end of the year activities are co-sponsored by our PTA and sixth grade parents. From bake sales to pickle and popcorn sales, PTA and the parents spend the year raising funds for the sixth grade. At the end of the year the sixth grade spends their last week enjoying activities such as the kickball game, sixth grade picnic, and finally, sixth grade promotion. If you are able to help plan or raise funds for the 6th grade activities, please let your child's teacher know.

Highlands PTA

What is PTA?

PTA is a national organization of volunteers whose primary concern is the well-being of children and youth. It is a group of parents and teachers who work and grow together for the betterment of our children - our future.

PTA sponsors educational study trips for each class, book fairs which benefit both students and the school library, picture day and the PeaceBuilder program. In addition, PTA plans special activities throughout the year that foster pride of self, school and a sense of belonging. PTA also organizes room parents and parent volunteers to assist teachers.

Get involved—join today

PTA Meetings

PTA Board meetings are **usually** held the third Wednesday of each month at 4:00 pm. PTA Unit meetings are held in the evenings at school social functions to adopt budgets, audits and to elect nominating committees and officers. **All PTA members are welcome to attend any meeting.**

Art Docent Program



The Art Docent Program is an excellent way to bring the fine arts to our children, and a wonderful opportunity for you to volunteer in your child's classroom. Volunteers are specially trained and provided with materials and lesson plans to present art appreciation lessons to students. If you would

like more information about being an art docent, please call the office at 668-5780.

Book Fairs

Book Fairs are offered at various times throughout the year. Book Fairs offer you the opportunity to add new and exciting books to your children's library. Proceeds from these fairs benefit all students at Highlands.



Assemblies

Each year Highlands presents assemblies to our students. Most of those are paid for by the PTA and offer a wide range of subjects. Each of these assemblies are presented to broaden a child's knowledge of the world.

Important Dates (cont.)

February

Friday	8	Non Workday - No School
Monday	11	Lincoln's Birthday - No School
Monday	18	Washington's Birthday - No School
Tuesday	19	PTA Board Meeting 5:00

March

Friday	8	Report cards go home
Tuesday	19	PTA Board Meeting 5:00
Mon-Friday	3/25-4/5	Spring Break - No School

April

Monday	8	Students return to school
Tuesday	16	PTA Board Meeting 5:00
Thursday	18	Open House

May

Tuesday	21	PTA Board Meeting 5:00
Monday	27	Memorial Day - No School

June

Tuesday	4	PTA Board Meeting 5:00
Tuesday	11	Service Awards Assembly
Thursday	13	6th Grade Promotion
Friday	14	Last Day of School - Report Cards Early Release 1:10

Schoolwide Behavior

Discipline Plan

Teachers have a right to teach and students have a right to learn. To ensure this occurs, we expect the following.

- Before school, students are to remain in the lunch area. At 7:50 they are escorted to the playground by the teacher on duty. They are to line up by their room number.
- Students are not to arrive at school before 7:40 and are to leave school grounds promptly after class is dismissed.
- Snacks are considered a part of lunch and eaten with the teacher's permission only in designated snack areas. Soft drinks and candy are not allowed at school.
- Students are to always walk in the halls or inside the building. No running.
- Students are not to be out of class without a pass.
- NO student is to leave the school grounds during the day without permission.
- Buying/selling or trading personal items at school is not permitted.

Playground

At the sound of the recess bell students are expected to stop all play and crouch down. The playground supervisor's whistle is a signal to stop, listen for directions, and line up.

- Be courteous, share equipment, and avoid interfering with games of others. **No closed games.**
- A "hall pass" is required before leaving the playground during recess.
- Wrestling, chasing, tag, keep-away, or other such contact games are not permitted.
- Proper use of playground equipment is required of all students.
- Report "ball-over-fence or in parking lot" and "stranger-on-playground" to playground supervisor immediately.
- **Safe and appropriate shoes** are to be worn during recess and P.E. activities. Open toed shoes are not permitted.
- Ball caps may be worn during recess for sun protection ONLY. They should be worn brim forward only.
- Toys and sports equipment from home are not permitted on the playground

Lunch Area Guidelines

- Use good manners and talk softly with neighbors.
- All students are responsible for cleaning up the lunch area.
- Have respect for each other's personal space.
- Sharing of food or lunch money is not permitted.

Transportation

Bicycles and Skateboards

District policy allows for students in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades to ride their bicycle to and from school. We consider riding a bicycle to school a privilege, and certain standards of safety must be maintained. California law requires all children under 18 years of age to wear a helmet when riding a bicycle. Failure to follow student bicycle safety standards while coming to and from school will result in the loss of bicycle riding privileges. Bicycles are not to be ridden on the school grounds at any time. Every bicycle should be padlocked in the bicycle area as the school does not take responsibility for bicycle security. **Students are not allowed to ride skateboards to school.**



Bus Transportation

Transportation for all students living beyond established walking distances is available through the La Mesa/Spring Valley School District. Families who do not qualify for free transportation can opt to ride for a fee. The fee for bus transportation service for the first child in a family is \$175/year, \$105/semester or \$40 for a book of 40 tickets. For the second child

in a family the fee is \$105/year and \$63/semester. Reduced price passes are available for eligible families for \$70/year and \$42/semester. Ticket books and passes are available from the Transportation Department. Individual round-trip tickets are available for purchase for \$2.00 from the Highlands office.

Students are expected to have good behavior at bus stops and on the bus in order to continue to have the privilege of bus transportation. If a child misbehaves on the bus or at the bus stop, a citation will be issued by the driver.

- First citation in a school year—warning, ticket sent home with child to parents
- Second citation in a school year—five day suspension from the bus
- Third citation in a school year—ten day suspension from the bus
- Fourth citation in a school year—loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year
- For additional information call the transportation department at 668-5856



Health Information

All medication must be brought to school by an adult. “ Medication” refers to inhalers, prescription medicine and over the counter medicine such as aspirin, cough preparations or lozenges.

Health Services

Health services at our school are provided by our health technician, Mrs. Kuhle and by school district nurses who are on-call. We DO NOT have a nurse on campus. Health services include minor first aid, calls to parents whose children are ill, communicable disease control, counseling of children and parents regarding common health problems and maintenance of student health records.

Communicable Disease

Many parents are unsure when their child should stay home from school. Guidelines for keeping your child home when symptoms of illness are present are as follows:

- Children should remain at home until free from fever for 24 hours.
- Children who have diarrhea or vomit at home, or are sent home from school because of this, should stay home until free from symptoms.

- Many childhood diseases start with signs and symptoms similar to a cold, so children should remain at home until these symptoms subside.
- Children should not come to school with any of the following conditions: inflamed eye, swollen glands or stiff neck, headache, earache, toothache, rash, lice or nits.

These guidelines are provided for the protection of your children and all other children at school.

Please call the school at 668-5780 by 11:00 am the morning of the illness if your child will miss school. If the school is made aware that a child has a communicable disease, parents of other children in the class will be promptly notified.

KEEP EMERGENCY INFORMATION CURRENT!

- **Home address**
- **Home telephone**
- **Work telephone**
- **Relative or friend authorized to care for your child in an emergency**
- **Emergency numbers to contact in case you are not available**

Schoolwide Behavior

- All students must eat lunch every day unless the child’s parent writes a note permitting their child to skip lunch. This note should be delivered to the health office.
- Students will remain seated for at least 20 minutes to eat their lunch.
- Students are not to be in the hallways or return to the classroom during lunch or recess.
- tops are considered inappropriate for school and are not permitted.
- Hats are only allowed on the playground and must be worn brim forward, sunglasses are not allowed, except for medical reasons (a meeting with the Principal must take place)
- Makeup of any kind is not permitted (**this includes acrylic nails**)

Dress Code

As parents and teachers, we are concerned that our children become educated, responsible citizens. We want our students to realize that dress and appearance on campus are important, and should be a reflection of a serious learning environment. We believe that appropriate dress and good grooming contribute to a positive atmosphere and promote safety. In the best interest of our school and community, we have set forth the following rules for appropriate dress at school and school-sponsored functions:

- Clothing must be worn as designed and must be clean
- Gang-related signs, logos, colors or distracting modes of dress are not allowed
- Clothing displaying alcohol, drugs, tobacco, profane language, racial, ethnic or disrespectful slurs are prohibited
- Pants should be worn at waist level—no hanging belts
- Backless, strapless, see-through, spaghetti straps and bare midriff
- Earrings are permitted but must not hang more than 1/2 inch
- Shoes must have a heel lower than 1/2 inch and must have a back strap—no flip flops or clogs
- No body art, including tattoos
- Girls shorts and skirts should be fingertip length when standing up.
- Natural hair colors only.
- If your child wants a Mohawk or designs in their hair please consider doing those at the beginning of the summer break so it has time to grow in before school begins.
- If you are choosing to get your child a Mohawk please do not wear it gelled up at school.
- Teachers and staff reserve the right to identify any clothing that might be distracting, safety or gang-related and take appropriate action.

Schoolwide Behavior/General Information

If a student is in violation of the dress code, he/she will be asked to make whatever changes are necessary to comply with the appropriate standard of dress. This may necessitate changing into clothes brought from home or turning a shirt or blouse inside-out. The student's parents will be informed to prevent any future dress code problems.

Textbook Agreement

As part of your child's educational program, various textbooks and library books will be issued to him/her during the year. Many of these books will be going home on a daily basis for homework assignments and independent study. Highlands Elementary is emphasizing the importance of the proper care of these school materials. Your child is responsible for any textbooks assigned to him/her and will be expected to reimburse the school if a book is lost or damaged.



Absences and Tardies

In order to receive the best possible education, your child must attend school on time every day. Education Code Section 48200 states that all children between the ages of six and sixteen are subject to compulsory full-time education.

Your child must be on time every day. Tardies interrupt learning for all children in the class. When children arrive later than 15 minutes to school they must check in at the office, and take a tardy slip to class.

When your child is absent, please call the school. You may report your child's absence any time of the day or night by calling 668-5780, press 1 for the attendance line. Absences and tardies are excused when a child is ill, has a doctor or dentist appointment or attended the funeral of a close relative. All other absences and tardies are unexcused. Parents will be notified of excessive tardies or absences.

If your child is going to be absent from school for unexcused reasons, such as travel or vacation, and the absence will be for five or more consecutive days, please let the office staff know at least three days in advance. An Independent Study Agreement (ISA) will be arranged for your child. The ISA helps your child keep up with school work and skills.

Only students who have no absences are eligible for a Perfect Attendance Certificate at the end of the school year. No late tardies and no more than two regular tardies will preclude a student from receiving a Perfect Attendance Certificate.

General/Health Information

Breakfast/Lunch Program (continued)

Applications for free or reduced price meals are available in the school office throughout the year. Any child who qualifies for free or reduced price lunches also qualifies for free or reduced price breakfast.

Lunch is served each day. Students can choose from a hot entrée (varies each day),, peanut butter and jelly sandwich or yogurt and graham crackers. In addition there is a salad bar that hosts a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. Students who buy

lunch can also select either chocolate or white milk. Lunch is \$2.00 per day for full pay. Reduced price lunch is no cost. Elaine Owen is our Cafeteria Manager and she can be reached by calling the school office if you have any questions.

Snacks

Children are allowed to eat a healthy snack during the 20 minute recess period. Unless the teacher has asked for a snack for the entire class, please send snack for your child only.

Health Information

Accident Insurance

The La Mesa/Spring Valley School District does not provide medical or dental insurance for students injured while at school or while participating in school activities. The district does provide the opportunity for parents to take advantage of group accident insurance for their children. Call 668-5700 for information regarding coverage offered.

Emergencies

It is extremely important that we have current phone numbers where you may be reached when your child is ill or in the case of an emergency.

Please note that emergency numbers should be different from the home phone.

Medicine at School

Medication may be administered to students at school only in exceptional circumstances in which the child's health may be jeopardized without it. In order for your child to take medicine at school, an Authorization for Medication Administration form must be completed by you and your physician and returned to the school.

General Information

Preserving Instructional Time (continued)

The following are some guidelines for parents and students to follow which will help us protect the valuable classroom instructional time.

- Arrive on time to school each day and be prepared to learn.
- Try to avoid scheduling doctor/dental appointments during the school day. Early pick-ups disrupt the learning of all the students in the classroom.
- Drop off any items for students (i.e. lunches, homework, etc.) at the office. **DO NOT BRING IT DIRECTLY TO YOUR CHILD'S CLASSROOM.** The office will deliver these items at a time that is least disruptive to the classroom.
- If you need to speak to your child's teacher, please send a note or schedule an appointment. Teachers need to be focused on student learning in the morning and are not always available to address parent concerns/questions at that time.
- If you are working as a classroom volunteer, please remember to sign in at the front office and please leave your cell phone off.

We thank you in advance for your support and cooperation.

Money at School

Please try to avoid sending money to school with your child. Lunch money may be left in the office in a lunch envelope which will then be forwarded to the cafeteria. Staff cannot be responsible for lost/stolen money.

Breakfast/Lunch Program

Breakfast is available for all students beginning at 7:40 each day. Students who eat breakfast at school have their choice of at least one hot entrée, cereal and milk, or another cold entrée. Breakfast cost \$1 for full paying students. For students who are on a reduced fee program there is no cost and those who are part of the free lunch program receive breakfast free of charge as well. Students use their meal card for breakfast just as they do for lunch.

All students have a lunch card that they use in the cafeteria. You can send in money that will be applied to your child's card at anytime. Many families prefer to send in \$10 or \$20 so that they don't have to send money every day. When your child's card is out of money you will receive an automated phone message reminding you to send in money for future meals.

General Information

Lost and Found

Please mark all clothing and personal belongings clearly so that lost articles can be returned. Children often do not recognize their own clothing. Children and parents should notify the teacher or school office of lost articles



and money immediately and should continue to periodically check the lost and found cart located in the auditorium.

Please check with the office for small items such as jewelry, glasses, keys, etc. Items not claimed at the end of each trimester will be donated to charity. Students and/or families should never take items from lost and found when they need something.

The School Schedule

Children will begin school at 8:05 am and be dismissed at 2:25 pm every day except Tuesday. Students will be dismissed at 1:10 pm every Tuesday.

Tobacco Free

The Board of Education has declared all LM-SV schools to be tobacco free. This means the use of any tobacco product is strictly prohibited anywhere on campus or at school functions. For more information see Board Policy 1331.

Nondiscrimination

The La Mesa-Spring Valley

School District does not discriminate against anyone with respect to color, race, creed, religion, national origin, sex, handicap, or age. For further information see Board Policy 5152.

Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of the La Mesa-Spring Valley Board of Education that all persons regardless of their sex be afforded equal rights and opportunities, and enjoy freedom from discrimination of any kind in educational programs and settings. Furthermore, the Governing Board considers sexual harassment to be an offense which can result in suspension or expulsion of the offending student. Any student who feels he or she has been the victim of sexual harassment shall immediately report the incident to the principal or other staff member. For more information see Board Policy 5131.9.

Arrival/Dismissal

Students should arrive at school no more than 15 minutes before class begins and should leave school grounds immediately after class is dismissed. School personnel cannot be depended upon, due to job constraints, to supervise children who are left at school for longer than 15 minutes.

General Information

Safety

The safety and well-being of students is everyone's concern at Highlands. Parents, we must have your cooperation to ensure the safety of all children arriving and departing from school. We ask you to please adhere to the following:

- Drive with great caution when you are in the vicinity of the school.
- Drop your child off at the playground loop.
- Do not use the bus loop parking lot for dropping off and picking up your child. The parking lot is not a safe place for children.
- Always check in at the office when visiting campus.

Pick up Information

There are several options for picking up your child at the end of the day. It is important that you coordinate your pick up with your child so that he/she is in the right place when you arrive at the end of the day. Some parents prefer to park their car and walk on to campus. You are able to park in certain areas on the street (please watch for signs as the Highway Patrol will issue citations for illegally parked vehicles) and you can park in open spaces in the parking lots. Parents who choose to park and walk in to meet their child should set up a pick up area either near the flag pole, in the grassy area near room 9,



or in the lunch area. Other parents choose the pick up loop as the place to meet their child. The loop is located in the north parking lot. It is designed to allow you to drive through to the pick up area. A teacher or other school employee will bring your child to you at your car. If you use the loop you do not get out of your car to get your child, rather, we bring him/her to you. Please be aware of cars in front of you and pull as far forward as possible. Again, we will bring your child to you. Employees are in the loop for pickup for 15 minutes after the end of the school bell.

Telephones

Please remember that the school has a limited number of telephone lines. Students will be allowed to use the phone in an emergency only. Due to the large number of phone calls received, the office staff cannot be responsible for relaying messages to your child. You can help school staff by arranging after-school plans with your child before school begins.

Cell Phones

We feel strongly that elementary students should not be in possession of cell phones at school; they are quite a temptation. However, we realize that at times circumstances (i.e. after school activities) necessitate that students have access to their cell phones after school while waiting in the student pickup area. Please

General Information

be aware of the following school guidelines regarding cell phones at Highlands:

- Cell phones must remain in backpacks or given to the teacher while on campus and /or the school bus.
- Students will not be permitted to make calls on their cell phones while at school.
- Cell phones must remain off while in students' backpacks.
- If cell phones are found out of the backpacks, they will be taken away from students and brought to the office. Parents will need to come to the office to retrieve the cell phones.
- The camera feature on a cell phone is not to be used on campus at **any time**.
- The school and/or school district is not responsible for lost, misplaced or stolen cell phones.



Toys at School

Toys, sports equipment, and personal items are not allowed at school unless specific arrangements are made with the classroom teacher. Lost or broken items upset children and disrupt the classroom. If an item is brought to share with the teacher's permission, please explain to your child that the item must remain in the classroom during the day and must be taken

home that same day. Items transported on the school bus must be cleared with the bus driver and placed in a backpack or paper bag to avoid problems on the bus.

If a child brings any of the above mentioned items to school, they will be taken away. Items taken from students will not be returned to the students. A parent must pick up the item.

Visiting the School

Parents and interested community members are always welcome to visit the school. **For the safety of all children, visitors must first check in at the school office and sign in prior to visiting anywhere on campus.** This will protect children from unauthorized visitors and will allow the office to locate the teacher if the class is out of the room at the time. Whenever possible, please check with the teacher prior to visiting as teachers are involved with instruction during the school day and do not have time to conference without prior notice/ arrangement.

Preserving Instructional Time

At Highlands Elementary School, the teachers and staff have established guidelines for limiting classroom interruptions which disrupt student learning.