

Rio del Norte Elementary School PARENT/ STUDENT HANDBOOK

2026-2027



Rio del Norte Elementary School

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Principal

LESLEE CYBULSKI

School Specific Information

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Principal's Message

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to a new school year at Rio del Norte Elementary School! As the principal, I am delighted to have the opportunity to work with you and your children once again as we embark on a journey of academic growth and personal development.

At Rio del Norte, our primary goal is to foster a community of academic excellence. By incorporating the latest research in educational leadership and teaching practices, we aim to create a strong foundation for our students' success. Through evidence-based strategies, we strive to enhance our educational community and provide your children with the best possible learning experience.

Our commitment to your child's well-being extends beyond academic achievement. We are dedicated to supporting the holistic development of every student. Our mission is to create an environment where your children feel happy, safe, confident, compassionate, resilient, and successful. To achieve this, we emphasize social, emotional, and functional skills education, equipping them with the tools they need to navigate life's challenges.

Our curriculum integrates the 5 Cs: critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and caring. These essential 21st-century skills are woven into every aspect of our teaching. By focusing on these areas, we aim to develop well-rounded individuals who are prepared to excel in a rapidly changing world.

We hold high expectations for all our students at Rio del Norte. Regardless of their background or abilities, we believe that every child has the potential to thrive. As part of the Rio School District, our overarching goal is to create safe learning environments that support each child's development to their fullest potential. We value your partnership in this educational journey, as together, we can foster an environment conducive to growth and learning.

Our collaboration is built on a commitment to ensuring safe learning and work environments for everyone involved. We strive to provide high-quality learning spaces that cater to the unique needs of each child. Furthermore, we aim to build strong connections with every child and family, promoting open communication and understanding. By engaging every child in meaningful learning experiences, we can unlock their full potential and ignite their passion for education. Additionally, we are dedicated to continuously improving the learning outcomes of every child over time, ensuring they are on a path to lifelong success.

We celebrate our partnership with you in creating safe learning environments that support every child's development and learning to their fullest potential. With your support, we can build a strong educational community that empowers our students to achieve greatness.

Once again, welcome to Rio del Norte Elementary School. Let us embark on this exciting journey together, nurturing academic excellence, fostering personal growth, and inspiring a love for learning in your child(ren).

Yours in education,



Leslee Cybulski, Principal

School Mascot/Symbol

The Eagles



School Colors

Red, White & Blue

School Song

We are the Eagles.
We're full of Pride.
We're working very hard,
Side by side.

We are the Eagles.
Red, white and blue.
Rio del Norte
We love you.

Eagles are writing
Every day
Showing our excellence
In many ways

We are creative
Hard working too
Eagles are writing
For me and you

Eagles are reading lots of books
In our library, and on our Nooks
We're making connections & we're the best
Eagles are reading lots of books

Go Eagles!

Welcome to Rio del Norte Elementary!

We're thrilled to partner with you in your child's educational journey. This handbook is your guide to our school's procedures, policies, and expectations. By working together, we can ensure a safe, supportive, and successful learning environment for all Rio del Norte Eagles!

Getting to and From School

Parking Lot Procedures

For the safety of all our students, staff, and families, **please follow these parking lot procedures strictly**. It can be tempting to quickly stop in restricted areas, but adhering to these rules helps us keep everyone safe.

- **No Student Drop-off or Pick-up in the Staff Parking Lot:** This area is for staff only.
- **Park on City Streets:** Please park your car legally on the city streets surrounding the campus.
- **Supervise Children at Crosswalks:** Always assist and supervise your child(ren) when crossing the street in marked crosswalk areas.
- **No Double Parking:** Seriously, please don't double park! It creates a hazard and is against California parking laws. Always park legally.

School Hours & Drop-off/Pick-up

We have a structured schedule to ensure all students have a productive day. Please help us maintain a smooth start and end to the school day by arriving on time.

Morning Schedule

- **7:45 a.m. - 8:05 a.m.: Free Breakfast**
 - Served in the cafeteria.
 - If students arrive before 8:00 a.m., they must remain in the cafeteria until playground supervision begins.
- **8:00 a.m. - 8:15 a.m.: Playground Supervision Begins**
 - **Kindergarten Parents:** Drop off your child(ren) at the kindergarten gate. Staff will be there to guide them along the yellow line to the kindergarten playground.
 - **1st - 5th Grade Students:** Drop off your child(ren) at the front gate or the cafeteria door. The front gate opens at 8:00 a.m. Students will walk to the playground where staff will be available to assist.
- **8:14 a.m.: Students Line Up for Class**
- **8:15 a.m.: All Classes Begin Promptly**
 - Students arriving after 8:15 a.m. will be marked **tardy** and must enter through the main office, as entry gates will be locked.

Minimum Day Dismissal

On minimum days, please note the adjusted dismissal times:

- **12:55 p.m.:** TK/Kindergarten Dismissal
- **1:00 p.m.:** 1st - 5th Grade Dismissal

Regular Day Dismissal

Dismissal times vary slightly for Kindergarten during the first part of the school year.

- **1:15 p.m.:** Kindergarten Dismissal (August 25 - October 30)
- **2:27 p.m.:** Kindergarten Dismissal (November 2 - June 16)
 - **Kindergarten Parents:** Please **legally park your car** and walk to the kindergarten playground to pick up your child. **No double parking!** Always adhere to California parking laws and rules.
- **2:27 p.m.:** 1st - 5th Grade Regular Day Dismissal
 - **1st-2nd Graders:** Dismissed from the **field gate on Kentia Street.**
 - **3rd-5th Graders:** Dismissed from the **field gate on Quail Run.**
 - **Bus Riders:** Dismissed from the **gate next to the main office.**
 - Students attending the after-school program will report directly to their program teachers near their classrooms.

Food Services

Breakfast and Lunch Program

We're proud to offer **free breakfast and free lunch to all students, regardless of income level!**

To ensure we can continue providing these vital meals to all Rio del Norte students, we need your help. **We must receive 100% of our meal/income verification forms.** Please turn in this form as soon as possible. Your cooperation directly supports this program!

- Students may purchase orange juice for 25¢.

School Attire

At Rio del Norte, we want all students to feel comfortable, safe, and ready to learn. Our dress code promotes a positive learning environment and ensures students can participate fully in all school activities, including physical education.

While we aim to avoid any undue hardship for families, the Board of Trustees and school administration have established simple guidelines to ensure appropriate dress:

- **Safety First:** Any clothing or grooming that could create a disturbance or is unsafe within the educational environment is not permitted. This includes things like:
 - **Footwear:** For safety during running, playing, and PE, we do not allow sandals, open-toed/backless shoes (like Crocs), flip-flops, slides, heels, or shoes with heel straps. Shoes with embedded wheels (Heelys) are only permitted if the wheels are removed.
 - **Fingernails:** Natural or fake fingernails should be a length that allows safe participation in all school activities.
- **School Appropriate:** Clothing should be suitable for a school setting and conducive to active participation. This means avoiding:
 - See-through or fishnet fabrics, halter tops, off-the-shoulder or low-cut tops, bare midriffs.
 - Skirts or shorts shorter than mid-thigh.
 - Clothing, jewelry, or personal items (backpacks, gym bags, water bottles, etc.) with crude, vulgar, profane, sexually suggestive images, or advertising for drugs, alcohol, tobacco, gangs, violence, or illegal acts, or that advocate racial, ethnic, or religious prejudice.
- **Head Coverings:** Hats, caps, and other head coverings should not be worn indoors. However, students may wear sun-protective clothing, including hats, for outdoor use during the school day.
- **"Messy" Activities:** Please keep in mind that painting, gluing, gardening, and other "messy" activities are a vital part of our program. Choose outerwear that can handle a bit of creativity!
- **Label Everything:** Please label all outerwear (coats, jackets, sweaters) and backpacks with your child's **first and last name**. This helps us return lost items! Each year, we donate hundreds of unlabeled items to charity.

Cell Phone & Smart Watch Policy

“Off and Away for the Day”

To ensure a safe, focused, and distraction-free learning environment, Rio del Norte Elementary maintains an “Off and Away for the Day” policy for all students.

- **Cell phones must be turned OFF and kept in backpacks** from arrival to dismissal.

- **Cell phone watches / smart watches are not permitted** on campus, as they function as communication devices.
Devices may not be used at any time during the school day, including recess, lunch, or assemblies.

If a device is seen or used:

- The device will be confiscated and held in the office.
- A parent or guardian will be required to pick up the device.
- Repeated violations may result in additional consequences as outlined by school administration.

We appreciate your partnership in helping our Eagles stay engaged, respectful, and ready to learn every day.

Parent Participation

Research consistently shows a direct link between active parent participation and student success. At Rio del Norte, we deeply value your involvement and encourage all parents to play an active role in their children's education.

We welcome you to participate as partners in our school! There are many ways to get involved, whether it's volunteering in classrooms, assisting from home as your schedule allows, or becoming an active member of one of our committees.

Opportunities to sign up for classroom volunteering and join committees like the **Parent Teacher Association (PTA)**, **English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC)**, or **School Site Council (SSC)** will be available at **Back-to-School Night**.

Imagine the impact: If every parent volunteers just **one hour a week** to support our students, our Rio del Norte Eagles will truly soar! Thank you in advance for your active involvement.

Important Information & School Safety

Emergency Contact Information

- **New Card Every Year:** A new emergency card for your child **must be filled out each year**. When your child brings the emergency card home the first week of school, please complete both sides entirely and **return it to school immediately**.
- **Authorized Pick-Up:** Only individuals listed on this card are permitted to pick up your child from school.
- **Keep It Updated:** As the year progresses, please notify the main office of any changes to your address, phone numbers, or emergency contacts. You must have contact phone

numbers on the back of the emergency card that are different from the home number on the front.

School Safety & Security

Our priority is to provide a safe and secure environment for everyone on campus.

- **Gate Hours:** The cafeteria doors and gates are open from **7:45 a.m. - 8:15 a.m.** and will reopen for dismissal at the end of the school day.
- **Locked During School Hours:** During school hours (8:15 a.m. - 2:27 p.m.), all gates are locked. The **only entrance is through the main office**. This single point of entry allows us to monitor who is on campus at all times.
- **Visitors & Volunteers:** We require all volunteers to sign in and out at the office and wear a visitor badge at all times while on campus.
- **Morning Drop-off:** Please drop off your child(ren) at the front gate or the cafeteria doors each morning.

Emergency Procedures

The Rio del Norte staff is thoroughly trained to assist students in any emergency and is prepared to care for students for up to 72 hours if needed. We regularly practice emergency drills and are committed to continuously improving our emergency plan.

- **Evacuation Location:** In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation from classrooms, students will move to the **field area of our campus**.
- **Student Pick-Up During Emergency:** Parents or other individuals authorized on student emergency cards may sign out students at the **student gate on Quail Run Drive** in the aftermath of an emergency.
- **Off-Site Evacuation:** Si una emergencia requiere que los estudiantes sean evacuados a otro sitio, un autobús del distrito escolar transportará a los estudiantes a ese lugar. Se colocará un letrero con la dirección del lugar de evacuación en el Quail Run Gate.
- **Emergency Notifications:** If our telephones are working, an emergency message will be automatically sent to the preferred phone number you designated on your student's emergency card.

Attendance

Regular attendance is a cornerstone of student success. Being present at school every day allows your child to receive consistent instruction and make academic progress. Our goal this year is to increase our school attendance rate to **97%**.

We understand that absences can occur, but we encourage you to send your child to school unless they are truly too ill to learn. If you are unsure if your child is well enough, please send

them to school and check in with our health office staff; they can help you make that determination. Once your child reports to school, they will receive credit for being here.

Excused absences include:

- **Illness** of the student
- **Doctor/Dental appointments**
- **Death in the immediate family**
- **Quarantine**

For all absences, parents are required to:

- **Call the school at (805) 604-1412** or send a note to the office.
- Provide the **date, child's name, teacher's name, parent's name**, and the **reason for the absence**.
- This notification must be provided within **72 hours** of the absence.

Unexcused absences, such as those for travel, sibling/parent illness, childcare issues, or very minor health concerns (like a runny nose or minor stomach ache without fever), significantly impact your child's learning.

- **Excessive absences or tardiness** may result in a referral to the **School Attendance Review Board (SARB)**.
- More than three tardies per year are considered excessive. For the first tardy, your child will receive a warning within one week. Two tardies in a week may result in a recess detention or other consequence.

Independent Study

We strongly discourage planning family vacations during the school year. If your child will be absent for **three or more days** for reasons other than illness or emergencies, an **Independent Study Contract** may be an option.

- Please contact the main office **five days prior** to the scheduled leave to arrange the contract and verify eligibility.
- Upon your child's return to school, all completed work should be turned in immediately to receive credit. It is also your child's responsibility to check in with their teachers for any additional missed assignments.

Withdrawal from Attendance

If you plan to withdraw your child from Rio del Norte, please notify the school office in advance. Please provide information about where you are moving and the address of the new school, if known. Your child's records and report card will be sent to the new school upon their request. Kindly return all school books and materials before moving.

Limiting Disruptions to the Classroom

We make every effort to maximize instructional time for all students. Your support in limiting classroom disruptions is greatly appreciated! Here's how you can help:

- **Coordinate Class Visits:** Please coordinate any classroom visits with our office and the teacher at least **24 hours in advance**.
- **Avoid Early Pick-Ups:** Please refrain from picking up your child even a few minutes early unless absolutely necessary. If you must pick your child up early, our office staff will call your child to the office once you arrive on campus.
- **No Food or Homework Deliveries:** We cannot interrupt classrooms to deliver food or homework during school hours. Please make arrangements for these items outside of instructional time. If you deliver fast food lunch to school, the student will be required to eat lunch in the office.
- **Goodie Bags:** If you plan to bring any "goodie bags" for celebrations, please make arrangements with teachers beforehand.

Title I School-Level Parental Involvement Policy

Rio del Norte Elementary has developed a written Title I parental involvement policy with valuable input from our Title I parents. This document is reviewed annually at our Title I, ELAC, and SSC meetings, where parents have the opportunity to provide input and suggest modifications. This policy is available to all parents and outlines how we meet the Title I parental involvement requirements.

Involvement of Parents in the Title I Program

To involve parents in our Title I program, we have established the following practices:

- **Annual Meetings:** We convene an annual meeting to inform parents of Title I students about program requirements and their right to be involved. At Rio del Norte, parents are invited to "Coffee with the Principal" meetings, with one dedicated exclusively to Title I information.
- **Flexible Meetings:** We offer a flexible number of meetings for Title I parents, including morning and evening options. In addition to morning opportunities, Rio del Norte hosts opportunities to meet with the Principal directly after school on select afternoons. ELAC and SSC meetings are also scheduled in the evenings. Our Back-to-School Night is divided into three distinct sessions (5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.) to accommodate as many working families as possible.
- **Ongoing Involvement:** We involve parents of Title I students in an organized, ongoing, and timely manner in the planning, review, and improvement of the school's Title I programs and the parental involvement policy. All parents are invited to participate in ELAC and SSC meetings.

- **Timely Information:** We provide parents of Title I students with timely information about Title I programs. For example, SES tutoring opportunities are advertised via mailings and calendars.
- **Curriculum & Assessments:** We provide parents of Title I students with an explanation of the curriculum used, the assessments used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet. This information is shared during Rio del Norte's annual Title I meeting, ELAC, and SSC meetings.

School-Parent Compact

Rio del Norte Elementary distributes a School-Parent Compact to parents of Title I students. This compact, developed jointly with parents, outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement. It describes specific ways the school and families will partner to help children achieve the State's high academic standards. It addresses:

- The school's responsibility is to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction.
- The ways parents will be responsible for supporting their children's learning.
- The importance of ongoing communication between parents and teachers through, at a minimum:
 - Annual parent-teacher conferences.
 - Frequent reports on student progress.
 - Access to staff.
 - Opportunities for parents to volunteer and participate in their child's class.
 - Opportunities to observe classroom activities.

Building Capacity for Involvement

Rio del Norte engages Title I parents in meaningful interactions with the school, fostering a partnership among staff, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement. To help reach these goals, the school has established the following practices:

- **Understanding Standards & Assessments:** We provide Title I parents with assistance in understanding the State's academic content standards, assessments, and how to monitor and improve their children's achievement. Rio del Norte schedules individual conferences with all students at the end of the first trimester, with additional opportunities available upon parent or teacher request throughout the school year.
- **Materials & Training:** We provide Title I parents with materials and training to help them work with their children to improve their achievement. Rio del Norte hosts events like Math Literacy Nights and Positive Parenting seminars, which are open to all families.
- **Accessible Information:** We distribute information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities to Title I parents in a format and language they understand. All school-home communication is distributed in both English and Spanish.

Accessibility

Rio del Norte is committed to providing opportunities for the participation of all Title I parents, including those who speak a language other than English, parents with disabilities, and parents of students who meet the criteria for the Migrant program. Translation services, accessibility accommodations for individuals with disabilities, and childcare are provided to parents at events.

General Provisions: Important Information for All Families

This handbook is designed as a helpful guide for our students, parents, and staff, outlining the general rules, regulations, and information about Rio del Norte Elementary. We encourage both students and parents to become familiar with its contents.

While this handbook is detailed, it's not intended to cover every possible situation. The administration reserves the right to make decisions and revise rules at any time to support our educational program and ensure the well-being of all students. Any situation not specifically covered will be decided based on applicable School District policies, State and Federal statutes and regulations, and the Parents Rights and Responsibilities Annual Notice. Please note, this handbook does **not** create a contract.

Preschool Program

The Rio School District partners with various preschool programs at some of its elementary schools, including the Ventura County Office of Education, the Rio Neighborhoods for Learning, Child Development Resources, and Catalyst. These programs serve children ages 3-5 who meet specific eligibility criteria.

Transitional Kindergarten (TK)

Our Transitional Kindergarten program is designed for children turning 5 years old between September 2nd and April 2nd of the current school year. TK acts as a bridge, giving children the "gift of time" to develop essential skills. It allows them to absorb and express ideas, build friendships, assert independence, and explore the world, ultimately becoming more confident as they prepare for traditional kindergarten.

School Climate and Environment

The Rio School District believes in providing every student with a foundation where they feel valued, safe, respected, and emotionally healthy. We achieve this through the adoption of the **"40 Developmental Assets"** framework, which guides our positive school environment. Our discipline philosophy, **"Judicious Discipline,"** teaches students about their rights and

responsibilities within a democratic society. We also utilize a **Positive Behavior Support** approach, encouraging adults to find alternative solutions to student issues through character education curriculums that teach tolerance and problem-solving skills.

Closed Campus Policy

For the safety of all students, our school operates as a **closed campus**. Students are expected to remain on campus from the time they arrive in the morning until they are dismissed in the afternoon.

The School Day

- **Arrival & Dismissal:** Students are not permitted on campus until **15 minutes prior to class starting** (or 30 minutes for students eating breakfast in the cafeteria). Students should leave promptly after school unless participating in a school-sponsored activity.
- **Leaving Campus Early:** If a student needs to leave campus for any reason during the school day, they **must be signed out through the office** by a parent, guardian, or an emergency contact person (who must be 18 years of age or older). Only persons designated on the emergency card are authorized to sign out students, and they should be prepared to show **proof of identity**.
- **Returning to School:** Students returning to school after leaving campus must check back in at the office to get a pass to return to class.

Visitors

All visitors must have **permission from the office to be on campus**. They must be adults, sign "in" and "out" at the office, and wear a **visitor's badge** at all times while on campus. Student friends or relatives may not attend classes with students without prior approval from the principal. Please arrange any classroom visits at least **24 hours in advance** with the classroom teacher.

Child Custody

In most cases of divorce, both parents retain parental rights. If you have a court order that limits the rights of one parent regarding custody or visitation, please provide a copy to the office. Unless a court order is on file with us, we must provide the rights concerning records, visitation, and information about the child that the law allows to parents.

School Phones

Our school office phones are very busy. Students are only permitted to call home in case of an emergency. Please avoid leaving phone messages for your children during the school day, as it is difficult to ensure they receive them. Parents and children are encouraged to make pick-up

and after-school arrangements at home. Parent phone calls will not be transferred to classrooms during school hours.

Tobacco-Free and Drug-Free Campus

Rio del Norte is a **drug-free and tobacco-free campus**.

- **Medication:** Students who require physician-prescribed medications during the school day may be assisted by the school nurse or other designated personnel, provided the procedures outlined in the "Medication" section are followed. Students may **not** carry any medication with them on campus, including over-the-counter medication or asthma pumps/inhalers.
- **Smoking/Tobacco Use:** Smoking or the use of any tobacco products by district employees or any other person is prohibited on school grounds or in district vehicles (BP 3513).

Academics

Homework

The Rio Elementary School District Board Policy (BP6154) recognizes that homework is crucial for building responsibility, self-discipline, and lifelong learning habits. We believe that the time spent on homework directly influences a student's ability to meet District academic standards. We expect students, parents, and staff to view homework as a routine and important part of daily life.

Recommended Amount of Time: Homework assignments will vary in length and difficulty based on the individual student. In addition to homework, all students are expected to **read nightly** for a minimum of:

- **Kindergarten – Grade 1:** 20 minutes
- **Grades 2nd – 3rd:** 30 minutes
- **Grades 4th – 8th:** 40 minutes

Nature and Purpose of Homework: Homework at Rio del Norte serves to:

- Provide additional practice and reinforcement of fundamental skills.
- Allow students to prepare for upcoming lessons.
- Help students develop independent study habits.
- Foster a connection between school and home learning.

Communication

Effective communication between home and school is vital for your child's success!

- **Back to School Night:** All parents are strongly encouraged to attend our annual **Back-To-School Night**. Teachers will provide valuable information regarding academic expectations for the school year. Please note: Back to School Night is a school site minimum day.
- **Calendars and Newsletters:** Monthly calendars and newsletters are sent home at the beginning of each month, along with the cafeteria menu. Please post these at home for easy reference!
- **Parent-Teacher Conferences:** Parent-Teacher conference dates are listed on your Yearly School Calendar. Your child's teacher will schedule a time for you. Our goal is to work together to provide the best education possible for your child. We look forward to seeing you at conferences and other school activities this year!
- **Technology:** The Rio del Norte website (which will be further developed this year) hosts pages of information regarding school events and activities. Links can be found on the website. To get important information to you quickly, we use an automated phone calling system and **Parent Square**. Please ensure your telephone number and email address are always up to date with the school office so you receive all communications.

Nature and Purpose of Homework

Homework assignments will vary in length and difficulty based on the individual student and class. Some classes may offer optional or mandatory homework. Homework at Rio del Norte serves to:

- Provide additional practice and reinforcement of fundamental skills.
- Allow for completion of unfinished classwork or assignments missed during absences.
- Support and encourage consistent daily reading habits.
- May include research or projects in assigned subject areas when there isn't sufficient time in class.
- Keep parents informed of current learning in class.

Teacher's Responsibilities

Our teachers are committed to making homework a positive and effective part of learning. They will:

- Communicate homework procedures and expectations to all parents at the beginning of each school year (e.g., at Back to School Night, through introductory letters).
- Clarify whether parents are expected to review homework before it's turned in.
- Assign homework that is appropriate for students' abilities, ensuring it's neither too challenging nor not challenging enough, and can be completed independently.
- Provide legible homework copies with clear, understandable directions for students and parents.
- Ensure homework is meaningful and relevant to classwork.
- Help parents understand the objectives of the school curriculum at Back to School Night, parent conferences, and through student progress reports.

- Notify parents when a student repeatedly fails to turn in homework on time.
- Guide students and parents to available homework support services as needed.

Student's Responsibilities

Students play a key role in their homework success. They are expected to:

- Complete assigned homework **independently and on time**.
- Turn in neat and legible homework.
- Ask the teacher for clarification if an assignment is unclear.
- Talk with teachers if homework assignments feel too difficult or too easy.
- Show parents any checked or corrected homework returned by the teacher.

Parent's Responsibilities

Parents are essential partners in supporting homework success. We encourage you to:

- Provide a regular study and/or reading time in a suitable setting with appropriate materials.
- Offer guidance but **avoid doing the assignment for your child**.
- Provide a balance between homework and your child's free time. If your child consistently struggles to complete assignments within the recommended time frame (e.g., homework is too challenging/not challenging enough), please contact their teacher.
- Understand the objectives of the school curriculum and how homework relates to these objectives.
- Ask your child to show and discuss checked or corrected homework.

If you have questions or concerns about homework at any time, please contact your child's teacher.

Report Cards

Report cards will be sent home in **November, March, and June**. Please refer to your Rio School District Calendar for exact dates. The November report card will be discussed with you during the fall parent-teacher conferences.

Student Recognition

Our school is proud to recognize students throughout the year for their academic success and improvement. We also celebrate regular, on-time attendance, which is crucial for students to continuously progress toward mastering grade-level expectations. Students who achieve perfect attendance (including no tardies) will be recognized throughout the year.

Textbooks

Students are issued textbooks at the beginning of the school year. They are responsible for any **lost or damaged textbooks**. Non-payment of costs for replacement materials may result in a delay in the release of school records.

Physical Education (PE)

All students are required to participate in physical education activities.

- If a student is unable to participate due to illness or injury for up to three days, they must bring a **written excuse from a parent or legal guardian** and present it to their teacher.
- If your child needs to be excused from PE for **more than three days**, a **doctor's note is required**.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and the Intervention Progress Team (IPT)

The Rio School District believes that a child's ability to learn is influenced by social, emotional, behavioral, health, and economic factors outside the classroom. Our **Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)** provides a framework that helps students access a range of programs and services designed to support their individual needs and those of their families.

Both academic and social/emotional/behavioral interventions are made available through our site **Intervention Progress Teams (IPT)**. The MTSS process acts as an organizing tool to ensure all district services and interventions are accessible at appropriate levels. The IPT is a regular education process that uses a positive problem-solving approach to help students succeed. Parents of referred students are an important part of this process.

Student progress is monitored frequently to determine if interventions are sufficient. If a student does not show significantly improved skills despite several well-designed and implemented interventions, this may indicate underlying issues that could lead to an assessment for possible special education services.

Library

Our school library services are available to all students. Students visit the library regularly and can check out books to read at home and at school.

- Students are responsible for returning their library books within the designated time period. Failure to do so will result in the loss of check-out privileges.
- Lost or stolen library books are the responsibility of the student's family. Written notification for the replacement cost of lost books will be provided to parents.
- Parents will have the opportunity to opt-out of allowing their child(ren) to check out books during the year if they choose.

Field Trips

Field trips are an integral part of the learning experience and school curriculum. They are planned and supervised by the classroom teacher.

- A **permission slip must be signed by a parent prior to the trip**. No child may attend any trip if their permission slip has not been returned.
- Field trips are an extension of the school program, and **all school rules, including the dress code policy, apply**.

Code of Conduct

A. Anti-Racism and Non-Discrimination Policy

Rio del Norte Elementary School has a zero-tolerance stance toward racism and hate speech. We are committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment where every student feels valued and accepted. Racism, racial slurs, discriminatory language, or racist behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. Any student who engages in racist comments or actions will be subject to a structured disciplinary response, which may include restorative practices, parent conferences, counseling support, and progressive consequences in accordance with district policies. We expect all members of our school community to treat one another with dignity, kindness, and respect, recognizing that our differences make us stronger.

B. Sexual Harassment

The Rio School District strictly **prohibits student sexual harassment**, whether it is student-to-student or adult-to-student harassment. Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome sexual behavior from another person, such as sexual comments, jokes, rumors, graffiti, touching, or sexual staring.

Students who sexually harass others at school, at a school-related activity, or while traveling to or from school, will be disciplined. Appropriate discipline may include suspension and/or expulsion.

If you believe you or your child has been sexually harassed by an adult or another student, please immediately tell the school principal, a teacher, or a school counselor so the District can take action to stop the harassment and protect the student.

California Education Code Section 231.5:

- **(a) Policy:** It is the policy of California that all persons, regardless of sex, should be free from discrimination in educational institutions. This section aims to notify about the prohibition against sexual harassment as a form of sexual discrimination and available remedies.
- **(b) Written Policy:** Each California educational institution must have a written sexual harassment policy. This policy should be part of the regular policy statement, not a separate document.
- **(c) Reporting & Remedies:** The policy must include information on where to find specific rules and procedures for reporting sexual harassment charges and pursuing remedies.
- **(d) Prominent Display:** A copy of the policy must be displayed in a prominent location in the main administrative building or other area of the campus where notices regarding institutional rules are posted.
- **(e) New Student Orientation:** A copy of the policy, as it pertains to students, must be provided during any orientation program for new students at the beginning of each academic period.
- **(f) Staff Distribution:** A copy of the policy must be provided to all faculty members, administrative staff, and support staff at the beginning of the school year or upon hiring.
- **(g) Publications:** The policy must appear in any institution publication that sets forth comprehensive rules, regulations, procedures, and standards of conduct.

C. Bus Conduct (BP 5131.1)

To help ensure the safety and well-being of students, bus drivers, and others, students are expected to exhibit **appropriate and orderly conduct at all times** when using school transportation, including while preparing to ride, riding, or leaving the bus. The Superintendent or designee may deny a student the privilege of using school transportation if they continue disorderly conduct or persistently refuse to submit to the driver's authority.

D. Playground Behavior

Rio del Norte students are expected to:

1. Follow instructions and playground rules.
2. Stay in assigned areas.
3. Keep hands, feet, and objects to themselves.
4. Treat others with respect (no teasing, insulting, provoking).
5. Use equipment appropriately.
6. Follow school procedures as set by the administration and teachers.

E. Consequences for Misbehavior

School staff will follow the district discipline matrix for inappropriate behavior. Inappropriate incidents are reported to the Principal or their designee, who will then:

1. Hold a conference with the child(ren) to ensure due process.
2. Contact the child's teacher and/or parents/guardian to report the incident.
3. Determine an outcome appropriate to the incident that helps the child correct their future actions.

The goal of this process is to help students understand the relationship between their rights (like free play time on the playground) and their responsibilities (maintaining appropriate behavior). Ongoing referrals for misbehavior may be addressed through an Intervention Progress Team (IPT) meeting, including playground personnel, parents, teachers, and the principal.

F. Unacceptable Behavior and Suspensions

The following behaviors are **UNACCEPTABLE** and will result in consistently applied discipline (according to Education Code 48900, 48260, 31583):

- School sites will follow the Rio School District's Progressive Discipline Matrix for unacceptable behaviors.
- Threatening, bullying, fighting, assault and battery.
- Extortion (taking or attempting to take money or property from another person by threat).
- Truancy: excessive absences and/or tardiness.
- Causing or attempting to cause damage to school or private property.
- Disturbing class or student activities.
- Use of profanity, vulgarity, or obscenity.
- Disobedience, defiance, or disrespect to school employees.
- Inappropriate mode of dress.
- Possession of personal radios, tapes, CD Players.
- **Electronic devices:** Students are permitted to carry a cell phone; however, **all cell phones must remain turned off and in student backpacks when at school.** If a student is seen with a cell phone or earbuds/AirPods/headphones during school hours, the item(s) will be confiscated, and a parent will need to come to the office to retrieve it.

Severe disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students may be suspended from school, and a conference will be held with their parents. As an alternative to suspension, a parent may be required to spend a day at school with their child.

F. Bicycles, Skateboards, and Scooters

- Children riding bicycles to school must **park and lock them in the designated area immediately upon arrival.**
- Bikes must be **walked** on school property and sidewalks.
- Skateboards, bikes, and scooters are **not to be ridden on campus at any time.**
- Skateboards and scooters should be held and put away while on school property.

California Vehicle Code Section 21212: (a) Helmet Requirement: A person under 18 years of age shall not operate a bicycle, a non-motorized scooter, or a skateboard, nor wear inline or roller skates, nor ride upon a bicycle, non-motorized scooter, or skateboard as a passenger, upon a street, bikeway, or any other public bicycle path or trail **unless that person is wearing a properly fitted and fastened bicycle helmet** that meets specific safety standards (ASTM or CPSC). This requirement also applies to a person who rides upon a bicycle while in a restraining seat attached to the bicycle or in a trailer towed by the bicycle.

Student Discipline Concerns: Parent Chain of Communication

At our school, we believe in open communication and working together to support every student. If you have a concern or complaint regarding student discipline, please follow this chain of communication:

Step 1: Discuss with the Teacher

Your child's **teacher** is the first and most direct point of contact for any classroom-level discipline concerns. They are best equipped to address issues that occur in their classroom and can provide immediate insight into the situation.

- **Action:** Please reach out to your child's teacher directly to discuss your concern.
- **Outcome:** The teacher will arrange a meeting with you to talk through the issue and explore solutions.

Step 2: Contact the Principal

If your concern is not resolved after communicating and meeting with the teacher, or if the issue is school-wide in nature, the **Principal** is the next step in the chain.

- **Action:** Contact the school office to share your concern with the Principal.
- **Outcome:** The Principal will review the situation and arrange a meeting that typically includes you, the Principal, and the teacher to discuss the concern and work towards a resolution.

Step 3: Escalate to the School District

If, after engaging with both the teacher and the Principal, your concern or complaint cannot be adequately remedied at the school site level, you may then escalate the matter to the **School District**.

- **Action:** Contact the relevant department or administrator at the School District office. The school office can provide you with the appropriate contact information.
- **Outcome:** The District will review the concern and determine the next steps for resolution.

We encourage you to follow these steps to ensure your concerns are addressed efficiently and effectively. Our goal is always to partner with you for your child's success and well-being.