John G. Whittier Elementary School

2024-2025

Parent and Student Handbook



Let's go, Wildcats!

PAWS UP!

Problem Solver

Always Kind

Work Hard

Stay Safe

TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

Main Office	602-257-3925
Attendance Line	602-523-8679
Principal, Erin Freriks	602-257-3812
Nurse	602-257-3813
Social Worker, Annemarie O'Reilly	
Psychologist, Aurora Huber	602-523-8676
Transportation	602-257-3800
YMCA	602-523-8656
Cafeteria, Karina Rascon	602-257-3815

To contact your child's teacher, please call the main office and a message will be forwarded via email to your child's teacher. Please see *School Visits* and *Contacting Your Child's Teacher* for information on the best way to connect with the teacher.

VISION

Whittier Elementary is a safe, positive, productive environment where teachers love teaching and students love learning. Students, staff, and families work alongside one another as active learners. Students are engaged physically and mentally in the learning environment to develop the critical thinking skills needed to make a positive impact on their school, community, and world.

MISSION

Provide a high-quality academic and socialemotional foundation to push students to excel in school and in life

SCHOOL YEAR

The school year begins on Thursday, August 1, 2024 and ends Thursday, May 22, 2025

DAILY SCHEDULE

School begins at 8:30am and dismisses at 3:30pm. On Early Release Wednesdays, we dismiss at 1:30pm. Adult supervision begins at 8:10am and we ask that students **not** arrive on the campus prior to 8:10am. Likewise, students should exit the school grounds after their class has been dismissed in the afternoon. The exceptions to this are if your child is enrolled in the **YMCA** after school program or is involved in an approved supervised school sponsored activity, (i.e. band, choir, basketball team, tutoring, student council, etc.).

If a student must leave during school hours, the parent/guardian must report to the school office to sign the child out. A person picking up a student must be listed on the Enrollment and/or Student Release Form and must show valid picture ID. Students leaving campus as part of an educational activity must have a completed permission slip signed by the legal parent(s)/guardian(s) in order to attend.

Please remember that when students are taken out of school before dismissal that it is disruptive to the learning process of the student and the entire class. If excessive early dismissals are due to a chronic illness, the nurse and the office need to have documentation from the doctor on file. Also, please be reminded that student early release does affect your student's perfect attendance record.

DISMISSAL SCHEDULE

K-8 Regular Dismissal...... 3:30 p.m. K-8 Early Release Wednesdays...1:30 p.m.

In the last minutes of the day, teachers solidify learning and review homework. This is a critical time for children. Thank you for supporting student learning by keeping students in class until the final bell.

OFFICE HOURS

During the school year, the school office is open Monday – Friday from 8:10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Summer hours vary and will be posted on the school website, front entrance and phone recording.

VISITORS ON CAMPUS

Maintaining a safe, productive learning environment free of distractions is our top priority at Whittier. For that reason, classroom teachers are not available for phone calls or conferences during school hours so they are able to provide a high-quality education for your child.

CONTACTING YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

We encourage regular communication between parents and teachers! If you would like to talk to your child's teacher or arrange a conference, please call before or after school, send a note, or send an email. Once school begins at 8:30am, we protect instruction by limiting classroom distractions. Phone calls go directly to voicemail, and teachers will get back to you at their earliest convenience. If the teacher does not return your call within 48 hours, please contact Principal Freriks directly at 602-257-3812.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

It is necessary that we have your current phone number, address, and emergency contact in the event of an emergency. Please keep us informed of changes by calling the school office at 602-257-3925.

ONLINE UPDATES

We encourage all students and parents to view the Whittier Elementary website to retrieve school information. The website address is www.phxschools/whittier.org There is information and resources for parents and students. Under "News" parents can find electronic copies of flyers that are sent home with students. You can also like our Whittier Elementary Facebook page to get updates on current school events.

TRANSPORTATION

Phoenix Elementary School District provides transportation to all Whittier students within the school's boundaries that reside south of McDowell.

Students are expected to follow all school rules at the bus stop and on the bus. They are also expected to follow all rules set by the bus driver.

Inappropriate behavior at the bus stop or on the bus will result in the loss of privileges and parents will be responsible for transporting students to and from school.

Should parents decide to pick up their children at dismissal time, they may do so by following dismissal procedures on 15th Street. We expect children to use the safest route possible walking to and from school. They are to cross at crosswalks and obey the crossing guards. This is to promote student safety and allow traffic to flow as smoothly as possible. Parents, we ask that you cooperate with the arrival and dismissal procedures on 15th Street. We recognize the limited parking space, which makes it most important to allow the traffic to flow smoothly before and after school for the safety of our children.

Please send a note to the teacher if there is any change from the way your child regularly gets home.

CAFETERIA

Whittier Elementary serves breakfast and lunch daily. Please complete the Food Application as this supports our school funding. There is no charge to students that attend the school. Breakfast is served between 8:10 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. each morning in the cafeteria. If your child will be bringing a sack lunch or snack to school, be certain that it is healthy. No snacks are to be eaten in the café during lunch.

DRESS CODE

Whittier Elementary requires students to follow a dress code. A student's appearance may not interfere with the educational process, cause a distraction to learning, or pose a health/safety hazard to any student or staff member. The dress code will be enforced by teachers and staff members, and it is important students come to school in compliance with the Dress Code and ready to learn. The school reserves the right to prohibit clothing or accessories as follows:

Obscene statements, pictures, and/or innuendos Statements advocating immoral and illegal behavior (Ads for tobacco, alcohol or drugs)

Bandanas or styles that are representative of a gang or gang affiliation

Clothing that is revealing, such as tube tops, spaghetti straps, short shorts, off the shoulder shirts, shorts, skirts, and dresses shorter than mid-thigh length, clothing that exposes the midriff or cleavage including transparent and mesh fabric, "skin tight" clothing and visible undergarments. Pants with holes are allowed but no skin or undergarments can be showing.

Caps and hats are NOT allowed inside the building unless there is a documented medical condition which the parent/guardian has communicated to the teacher. They can be worn during all recesses and outdoor P.E. classes to protect students from the sun/general weather.

Clothing that is excessively baggy and/or exposes one's underwear

Slide sandals with socks, crocs, slippers, "house shoes" or other inappropriate footwear. Students are to wear closed-toed shoes that are safe for playing and prevent student injury.

Should a student choose to violate this policy, they will be required to change clothes. Repeated violations will result in parental contact and additional consequences. The Principal or designee will make the final determination as to appropriate apparel in a questionable circumstance.

SCHOOL POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Our District and School policies and procedures

will apply to all students traveling to, attending, and returning from school, and while visiting another school or at a school-sanctioned activity and may include a wide range of interventions that may be imposed for violations. When suspension or expulsion is involved, notice, hearing, and appeal procedures shall conform to applicable legal requirements. Please consult the PESD Student Code of Conduct Guidelines and Interventions to see an outline of consequences that will result for given student discipline violations.

NO STUDENT HAS THE RIGHT TO INTERFERE OR DISRUPT ANOTHER STUDENT'S RIGHT TO LEARN AND THE TEACHER'S RIGHT TO TEACH.

Whittier Wildcats Expectations for Success:

At Whittier, all students are expected to model the following expectations in order to create a safe and productive learning environment.

Problem Solver Always Kind Work Hard Stay Safe

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports:

At Whittier, we believe it is our job to provide a safe, orderly environment in which all students are able to learn at high levels. In order to do so, we use research-based system of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), and Restorative Practices. Through PBIS, we establish school-wide behavior expectations and explicitly teach these expectations to students. Staff members are expected to be consistent in implementation of school-wide their expectations. All staff will positively reinforce students who display the desired behavior expectations and will redirect students who are not showing appropriate expectations. All expected to accept both students are reinforcement and redirection from any staff member on campus, even if it is not their classroom teacher.

Severe misbehaviors including fighting, vandalism, drugs, weapons, leaving school grounds without permission and threats will

bypass classroom discipline and face immediate administrative action.

School-wide Expectations Matrix:

As a school, we have outlined the expected student behaviors that will lead to a safe and productive learning environment. Please see these expectations outlined in the PBIS Behavior Matrix (see last page). Staff members will work with all students to teach, model, and practice the desired expectations so they become consistent across the campus. In addition, we have a PBIS team committed to collaborating with staff, students, and parents in order to continually enhance our positive behavior systems. They will work with stakeholders to revise the matrix as needed in order to best support positive student behavior.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Since general school conduct relates both to the individual classroom setting and to school in general, the responsibility for preventing and for addressing infractions of expected conduct rests with teachers, support personnel, with the final in-school responsibility resting with the Principal.

Categories of behavior considered in the area of general school conduct include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

Disrespectful behavior

- falsifying school records or forging signatures
- refusal to follow instructions of school personnel, talking back
- use of profane and/or abusive language and/or obscene gestures
- general sexual harassment
- threats toward others or their property
- · defacing, writing, damaging school property

Disruptive behavior:

- loud behavior in classrooms, cafeteria, hallways, etc.
- pranks
- possession of non-school related items

Bullying:

- intentional, repeated negative acts by a student who holds an imbalance of power over the other student
- physical (e.g. spitting, hitting, kicking,

pushing, tripping, shoving, stealing)

- verbal (e.g. name-calling, teasing, taunting, making threats)
- psychological (e.g. social exclusion, extortion, intimidation, spreading rumors, manipulating social relationship)

Illegal behavior (any behavior that is in violation of local, state, federal laws or Board policy):

- possession or distribution of pornography
- indecent exposure
- gambling
- theft or possession of stolen goods or property
- bribery
- vandalism
- burglary, robbery or extortion
- use of, possession of, or distribution of alcohol or other illegal drugs on school property or at school sponsored events
- inciting disturbances
- fights with or possession of weapons on school property or at school sponsored events
- graffiti

Students are expected to refrain from the behaviors listed above in order to create a safe and productive learning environment.

CONSEQUENCES

All choices bring either negative or positive consequences. At Whittier, we help students realize the consequences of their actions. When students make positive choices that coincide with our PBIS Behavior Matrix, they receive positive consequences. These could include but are not limited to verbal or written praise, prizes, awards recognition, Wiley Bucks (school currency that can be used to purchase prizes), and eligibility for class celebrations and field trips.

When students make negative choices that do not coincide with our PBIS Behavior Matrix, they receive interventions that follow our PBIS Behavior Consequence Flow Chart to help them get back on track. When a student's negative choices require administrative action, consequences follow the *PESD Handbook for Student Success*.

PERSONAL ARTICLES AND ELECTRONICS

Students are encouraged not to bring personal articles such as toys or electronic devices as these cause a distraction to the learning environment. We are not responsible for the safety of these

items, and will not extend any school time or resources in the event these items are lost or stolen. A search of a backpack, purse, pockets, jacket or similar item is permissible when school staff have a reasonable suspicion that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated school rules. School staff has the right to confiscate these items from students. These items may not be returned to students. Parents may need to conference with teacher and/or principal to have items returned. It is the parent's responsibility to retrieve confiscated items. Items not retrieved at the end of the year will be discarded or donated.

Other articles not allowed at school are as follows: aerosol cans, alcohol, balloons, spray colognes or deodorants, cigarettes, lighters, matches, drugs, glass containers, pornography, pepper spray, stink bombs, gum, water or toy guns, weapons of any type, toys that resemble weapons, snap caps or any item used to distract the learning environment or cause physical/emotional harm to another student or staff member.

Trading of personal property is not allowed under any circumstance. Students are NOT ALLOWED to sell any items at school for their own profit.

Cell phones are not intended for personal use while a student is on campus. This includes but is not limited to talking, texting, listening to music, playing games, using data/internet services, etc. During school hours, 8:30am-3:30pm, any cell phone in a student's possession must be turned off and not be visible. In addition, cell phone expectations apply to students who come on campus before the bell (between 8:10-8:30am) or students who stay after school hours for detention, tutoring, and/or club activities. Visible cell phones or phones that are heard during the school day will be confiscated. On a first offense, a confiscated cell phone will be returned to the student at the end of the school day. Parents will be notified of the violation. On a second offense, parents must meet with the teacher and/or principal to retrieve the confiscated cell phone. Repeated offenses beyond this point may result in escalating consequences according to the PESD Handbook for Student Success and the cell phone may be

held for the duration of the school year. If a student chooses to bring a cell phone to school, the school assumes no financial responsibility in the event it is lost or stolen and will extend no efforts to recover the item.

Firearm Safety

Parent/Guardian: Phoenix #1 is a studentcentered community where together we prioritize having a safe educational environment. Research shows that gun violence has increased and that guns used with unintentional tragedies usually belong to family members or exist in households with unlocked firearms. Several studies of school-based gun violence or unintentional tragedies are due to households with unlocked firearms. The intervention is to prevent unauthorized access to guns in the home. Unsecured guns in the home pose a risk to students beyond gun violence in schools. Storing firearms securely protects any child in the home as well as students throughout the school district and our community.

Phoenix #1 provides prevention measures to increase student safety by raising awareness of the importance of secure gun storage to protect our community and their students. The district communicates directly to parents and guardians with information and resources to learn more and download helpful resources, including a secure storage fact sheet, talking to your children about guns, and facts and resources on child firearm suicide, at BeSMARTforKids.org/resource.

Phoenix #1 also educates and empowers our students through proven prevention programs to connect with each other, minimize social isolation, and create an inclusive school community. By having trained trusted adults, students are taught to recognize warning signs of someone in crisis and immediately "say something" to our adult staff. When trusted adults and students connect and know the warning signs of pending violence, then the school community is engaged and school safety, and academic learning increases. For more information, please reference specific Safer Schools proven prevention programs at Sandyhookpromise.org.

Students are expected to connect and "say something" to a staff member/trusted adult when they see or hear warning signs of potential violence or danger. Our school community is strengthened when we work together with our adult staff and pay attention to taught warning signs that can signal a crisis or need for help.

SUPPORT STAFF

We are committed to doing all we can to support students in making positive behavioral choices. For that reason, we employ several key staff members to assist in this process.

Social Worker — We have a full time social worker on campus. Their role is to support the social and emotional needs of students so they can be successful in the classroom. The social worker runs both individual and group support sessions. She also helps identify students and families for programs that provide food and clothing assistance. We understand that student misbehaviors can often stem from social and emotional stresses, and we do our best to provide support in these areas whenever possible.

Suicide Prevention

Protecting the health and well being of all students is of utmost importance to Phoenix #1. The school board has adopted a suicide prevention policy ,IHAMD © INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING IN SUICIDE PREVENTION, which will help to protect students through the following steps:

- Staff will learn about recognizing and responding to warning signs of suicide in students, accessing and utilizing systems of support and seeking help for students. Staff that work with students grades 6-8 will attend an evidenced based professional development at minimum every three years.
- Phoenix #1 has designated a suicide prevention coordinator, the Coordinator of Social Services & Wellness as a point of contact for district coordination. The school social worker/counselor and psychologist serve as a point of contact for students in crisis and refer students to appropriate resources.
- When a student is identified as being at-risk, a risk assessment will be completed by a trained mental health district staff member, a

school social worker/ counselor or psychologist. As soon as safety is established with the student the parent/guardian/ caretaker will be contacted. The school social worker/ counselor or psychologist will work with the student and family to ensure a safety plan is in place as well as help connect them to appropriate local resources.

- Students and families will have access to national and local resources that they can contact for additional support, such as:
 - o 988, Suicide and Crisis Lifeline
 - Crisis Text Line: Text TALK to 741-741
 - Teen Lifeline, 602-248-8336 (TEEN), text or call
 - Local Crisis Response Hotline, 602-222-9444

All school staff and students will be expected to help create a school culture of respect and support, in which students feel comfortable seeking help for themselves or friends. Students are encouraged to tell any staff member if they or a friend are feeling suicidal, or are in need of help.

While confidentiality and privacy are important, students should know when there is a risk of suicide, safety comes first. While family and parental rights are important, student safety will take priority when a risk has been identified. Once a student's safety is secure the family/ parent will be immediately contacted. For a detailed review of policy changes, please see the district's full suicide prevention policy.

ATTENDANCE AND TARDIES

Attendance Requirements (Ref: Board Policy JE, JHB)

The Governing Board believes that the attainment of academic excellence requires attendance on a regular basis. Attendance is the responsibility of the students and parents; students may fail classes or promotion may be withheld if this requirement is not met.

Legal Requirements

Arizona law requires students to attend school from the ages of 6 to 16.

Attendance is Essential

Regular attendance is the key to much of the success a student may gain from his/her school program. Students should remain out of school only when absolutely necessary, as much of the classroom activity cannot be made up; the benefit of lectures, discussion and participation is lost forever to those who are absent.

To protect your child's learning, please schedule appointments before or after the school day! Early release Wednesdays are a convenient time to schedule appointments.

Tardiness to Class (Ref: Board Policy JH-R)

Tardies are viewed as a disruption to the classroom environment. Coming in late not only deprives the tardy student of full learning time, but also disrupts the education of other students. Please be sure students arrive at school between 8:10-8:25am every day so they are prepared to begin instruction at 8:30am.

Tardy students must sign in at the front office and explain the reason for tardiness prior to obtaining a pass. Students arriving after 9:00am must be accompanied to the office by a parent or guardian!

Family Responsibilities

Any absence due to illness, death in the family, religious observance or other extraneous circumstances will be excused. Parents of absent students are expected to call our <u>Attendance</u> <u>Line at 602-523-8679</u> on the day of the absence, preferably no later than one hour after the start of school. If no contact is made with the school within 24 hours of the start of the absence, the absence may be considered unexcused.

Permission to Leave School During School Hours

For K-8 students – A person picking up a student must be listed on the Enrollment and/or Student Release Form (see Part VIII-District Forms, Student Release, page 56) and must show valid picture ID. A legal parent/guardian or authorized person, listed on the Student Release Form, is required to come into the office and sign out the student prior to his/her departure. Students leaving campus as part of an educational activity must have a completed permission slip signed by the legal parent(s)/guardian(s).

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Philosophy

It is the philosophy of the Whittier Elementary School that all students are capable of success, no exceptions. We hold all students to high academic and behavioral expectations. All Whittier staff members are committed to working strategically to support the learning of each child and to push Whittier to become a high performing school.

Exceptional Educational Features

Every classroom has a Newline Board and 1:1 student technology using Chromebooks, and many of our classrooms utilize Google Classroom to promote student learning.

ALPS (Gifted Program) is a pull out program for those students that test at an 88% or higher on the district gifted assessment. If a parent or student is interested in testing for ALPS, please notify the homeroom teacher. When ALPS students miss regular classes, they are responsible for the homework but not the class work.

HOMEWORK POLICY

Phoenix Elementary School District #1 encourages a school-student-parent partnership to help teach students responsibility and raise student achievement. Homework can be important part of the student experience as it helps reinforce content that is covered in the classroom. Teachers communicate will classroom homework policies in their introductory letter.

Please encourage your child to read or is read to for a minimum of 20 to 30 minutes each evening.

Unfinished classwork may be sent home to be completed.

GRADES

At Whittier, our grading scale reflects mastery of academic content. The following grading system is used to measure mastery level of academic standards:

Letter Grade	Percentage Correct
A	90-100%

В	80-89%
С	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	0-59%

If a student scores below 50%, it shows they have not mastered the content. The student may be required to complete additional assignments before, during, or after school in order to ensure mastery of the standard.

CONFERENCES

Parent/teacher conferences are held during each school year. Check the school calendar annually for these dates. Student progress is discussed during parent teacher conferences and we believe it is important that parents attend; therefore, all conferences are mandatory. Teachers utilize both individual and group conferences as they deem appropriate in order to best support student learning.

If a parent fails to attend a scheduled conference for unforeseen reasons, please contact the teacher to reschedule. Regularly communicating with your child's teacher is critical to his/her academic and behavioral success.

STUDENT PROMOTION

In order to celebrate with students on their academic journey, we hold two promotion ceremonies at the end of each academic year: Kindergarten and Eighth Grade.

All students will promote from 8th grade; however, in order to participate in promotion related class celebrations/field trips, a student must be in good academic and behavioral standing. Excessive tardies, absences, missing assignments and/or discipline referrals may cause ineligibility from these events.

SAFETY

Closed Campus

School campuses are closed for all students throughout their scheduled day, including lunchtime. Per Arizona Law, all visitors must report directly to the office, sign in, and receive a visitor's badge.

Hall Passes

Any time a student is not accompanied by a teacher or school personnel, they are required to carry a pass. There are two reasons for requiring hall passes. First and foremost is for safety as we are responsible for providing a system that accounts for all students at all times. Secondly, at a quick glance we can determine that the student has permission to be out of the classroom.

Students are responsible for acquiring passes when leaving a room. Students should have the pass visible for all staff members to see. Students without a pass will be marked tardy.

Emergency Drills

Emergency drills are held monthly to teach students the safest, quickest, route to exit from school buildings. A fire evacuation plan is posted in each room. Students and staff should study the plan and become familiar with it. It is important for students to follow teacher's instructions quickly and quietly whenever such an emergency situation exists. When the first alarm sounds, students will immediately exit the classroom in an orderly manner as outlined by the teacher. Since safety in an evacuation is of utmost concern, no one will be allowed to run. Students are not permitted to talk during a fire drill and are to remain with their teacher in the designated area away from the building. No one is to return to the building until instructed by administration.

Lock-down drills are regularly conducted at each school in Phoenix Elementary School District. The purpose of a lock-down drill is to practice safe procedures should an emergency occur in the community surrounding the school. During a lock-down drill, students stay in their classroom under the supervision of their teacher. Lock-down drills prepare students and staff for the time when the police department and/or the principal request a lock-down of the building.

Please schedule an appointment with Principal Freriks if you have questions regarding the school safety plan.

HEALTH INFORMATION

Wellness Policy

The district has a wellness policy in place and follows the Arizona Nutrition Standards by

restricting foods of minimal nutritional value (FMNV) from being served or available on campus during the school day. For more information regarding Nutrition & Wellness, including the Arizona Nutrition Standards, please visit their web site at http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/nutrition-standards/

Student Health

In case of illness during school hours, the student will be brought to the school office. Parents will be notified by phone to pick up a sick or injured child. If a parent cannot be reached, the office will call the alternate emergency contact/s on the enrollment form. PLEASE KEEP ALL **EMERGENCY INFORMATION CURRENT** BY GOING TO THE OFFICE TO MAKE ANY **CHANGES** IN ADDRESSES, **TELEPHONE NUMBERS** OR **EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION** ON THE FORMS PROVIDED IN THE **OFFICE.** Please keep in mind that if your child was to have an accident and the information on your form is not accurate, we would have no way to contact you and may need to call the police.

School Nurse

Our school is staffed with a Registered Nurse. The health team periodically conducts vision, hearing, dental, growth and scoliosis screenings. The school nurse serves as a resource person for the classroom teacher on a variety of health topics. Individual health counseling and neurodevelopment assessments are provided as needed. In addition, the school nurse administers care and/or emergency first aid for ill/injured students. If your child has any prescribed medications that need to be administered during the school day, please contact the nurse's office for assistance. Students may not carry any medications (including inhalers) during the

school day without written consent from the nurse.

Allergies

Make sure that you note any and all allergies on your child's enrollment form. Also make sure that your child's teacher is aware of all allergies.

Sick Children

Sick children should be picked up promptly. Please notify the school immediately if your child is diagnosed with a contagious disease. Children who are sent home from school with a fever should not return to school until they have been fever-free for 24 hours.

