

**Walnut Acres Elementary School
Mt. Diablo Unified School District**

**Positive Climate Handbook
and
Parent Safety Procedures
2017-2018**

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Walnut Creek, CA 94598
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www.mdusd.k12.ca.us/walnutacres

Colleen Dowd, Principal

**Please read and discuss this handbook with your child. Sign
and return the last page to your child's teacher.**

OUR POSITIVE BEHAVIOR PHILOSOPHY

Teachers, school staff, families, and students form the community of Walnut Acres Elementary School. Together we support the development of the whole child. Each child's progress depends on the support, communication, and collaboration between home and school. Walnut Acres has established procedures to create a safe learning community to protect the rights of all. We help students learn the value of procedures, honor the dignity of each community member, and celebrate our diversity and connections. Our objective is to develop a strong sense of personal worth, responsibility, respect for others, concern for the common good, and self-discipline in every child. Discipline should be fair and supportive, firm with clear expectations, and consistently focused on learning to promote that objective.

6 C's

Collaboration Communication, Critical and Creative thinking, global Citizenship, and Content mastery are the focus of our academic curricular and instructional efforts, and they are also foundational as we promote social and emotional learning. At Walnut Acres we focus on life-skills to teach prosocial thinking.

Life-skills

Walnut Acres Elementary participates in the Walnut Creek citywide Character Counts program. The Six Pillars of Character are the life-skills we teach each year. They are:

Citizenship Respect Fairness Caring Trustworthiness Responsibility

We teach and model these life-skills throughout the year and choose one to focus on each month. We conclude each month with a school-wide Sing Out event at which members of the Walnut Acres community come together to sing and celebrate each targeted life skill.

Four Rules that Guide Life-skill Success

The life-skills are rather abstract for young children, so we have created four basic expectations to promote positive, pro-social behavior in each classroom and all around the school. They are:

Be Safe Be Respectful Be Responsible Be Kind

Classroom teachers and staff routinely spend time specifying and discussing examples for each of these rules so that expectations are understood by all. These four basic rules are also posted around the school as a visual reminder.

Celebrating Good Choices

Students who model life-skills will be recognized monthly with a ROAR award posted on our ROAR Board for a month and then presented by the principal to each child.

Students who exemplify the life-skills may also earn PAWS. Ten PAWS may be exchanged in the office on PAW Thursday for a PAWpsicle. All staff members will be watching for opportunities to give out PAWs.

Students who model a life-skill in the classroom may earn a Positive Office Referral and be sent to the principal for congratulations.

Problem-solving and Promoting Social Skills

Our goal is to create a school environment full of peace, empathy, and respect, but problems are a part of life. We work with students to develop strong problem-solving strategies when challenges arise at school, whether in the classroom or on the playground. With this effort we work to avoid, reduce, and redirect bullying behavior.

On the Playground

The Peace Paths on our playground offer concrete scaffolding for student to walk and talk through the conflict resolution process. The structure provides students with a common language that scripts the process of a problem-solving conversation. Third, fourth and fifth grade leaders become Peacemakers who may guide peers through the process.

All first through fifth grade students are invited to the Chill Out Zone during lunch recess which offers semi-structured creative play and additional adult support with the school counselor. Held once per week, students have support to form new friendships, play and create with current friends and try new games, crafts and sensory-based play activities.

In the Classroom

As a staff we are continually learning new strategies for creating and strengthening a positive classroom environment. Some of these strategies include celebration circles, class problem-solving meetings, social skill-based assemblies, mindfulness and bucket-filling activities.

Learning from Poor Choices

Within the classroom: Behavior and consequence policy will be determined by the classroom teacher. Students will use the peace path process for problem solving.

Outside the classroom: Noon supervisors use the peace path process or provide a logical consequence for misbehaviors as appropriate. Serious misbehaviors are referred to the principal.

Consequences/New behavior strategies may include:

Discipline Referral

School community service – eg. trash pick-up, supporting other students

Time out in principal's office

Letter of apology / Using a "Clean Up" apology

Written reflection on the poor choice made and brainstorming of alternative choices

Research and presentation related to why selected behavior was a poor choice

Loss of privileges: recess, game day, reward-based field trip etc.

Walking the track/benching

Lunch detention

Suspension in the office/ Suspension from school

Sensory-movement strategies

Calm down strategies such as "Four Ways to Stop and Breathe"

Practicing the Peace Path and "I messages"

Walnut Acres ‘Safe at School’ Procedures:

1. Respect others’ feelings, rights, and property. A student shall not intimidate or harass another student through words or actions.
2. Keep hands and feet to oneself. No hitting, kicking, fighting or biting. No throwing of inappropriate objects.
3. Use appropriate language and gestures. No spitting, swearing, use of offensive language or gestures. No threats – verbal or non-verbal.
4. Walk quietly in the classroom and in corridors.
5. Respect all school property both inside and outside the classroom.
6. Play safely in designated areas. Stay off the field and play structure when they are wet. Kick balls only in kickball games or on the field. No kicking on the blacktop. Use flags when playing any tag-type games. Eat snacks in snack areas only.
7. Walk bicycles or scooters on campus and across crosswalks. Lock bikes and scooters in bike racks.
8. Stop all playground activity when the bell rings. Grades 1-3: Students freeze when the bell rings and walk to lines at the sound of the whistle. Grades 4-5: Students walk to class lines when bell rings.
9. Keep toys and equipment from home, at home. Footwear, including skateboards, roller blades, razors, roller skates, and shoes with wheels are not allowed on campus.
10. Respect staff and follow directions of those in charge.

Walnut Acres Dress Code

All students are expected to dress appropriately at school. Student dress must be safe for the student and those around them. It must not be disruptive of school operations or the educational process. It must not be contrary to the law.

More specifically, students:

1. Must wear shoes at all times. No backless sandals or flip-flops. If wearing sandals, student must bring a pair of tennis shoes for PE.
2. Will not wear t-shirts with objectionable or obscene words or pictures.
3. Will not wear low-cut tank tops or shirts that allow the chest to be seen through the armhole. Mesh shirts, spaghetti straps or straps that untie, and halter tops are not appropriate for school.
4. Will not wear strapless tops or tops that show bare backs or midriffs except under a blouse or shirt.
5. Will not wear short shorts. Shorts must cover bottoms when students bend over.
6. Will not wear hoods, caps or hats inside any of the buildings on campus. Students will also not wear caps at an angle or backwards.
7. Will not wear saggy pants or any other apparel with implicit or explicit gang, drug, alcohol, tobacco, or sexual messages.

Any student who dresses inappropriately for school will be asked to call home for a change of clothes. The Walnut Acres staff makes the determination of appropriate dress for school. Those students who repeatedly violate the dress code will be sent to the principal.

Walnut Acres Pick-up and Drop-off Rules for Student Safety

To keep our students safe while being dropped off and picked up at our busy site, the following rules are in place:

Parents will **drop off and pick-up students only at the yellow, unloading zone curb**. There is no parking at this curb. *(This rule is designed to maintain the flow of traffic at busy times of day.)*

Children are to **exit vehicles on the curbside**. *(This rule is designed to keep children safe and car doors attached to cars.)*

Children will wait at picnic tables in front of office before school begins until the yard duty blows whistle to indicate students may play on playground. *(This rule is designed to protect children before a yard duty supervisor is in place.)*

Parents **will not double-park in turn-about**. *(This rule is designed to maintain traffic flow and ensure students are not walking between unloading vehicles to get to sidewalk.)*

Parents **will not drop-off or pick-up students in the staff parking area**. *(This rule is designed to ensure that students are not walking across a busy pathway and between unloading vehicles to get to the school sidewalk.)*

Parents **will not park in teacher-designated parking spots and avoid handicapped spots, unless handicapped**. *(This rule is designed to ensure that teachers have a place to park and vehicle access in our very confined parking lot. It will also ensure that we remain handicapped-accessible.)*

Parents or a designated adult **will supervise play after school**. *(This rule is designed to protect children from harm or abduction.)*

Parents **will observe that children play on blacktop, field, and play structures, NOT behind classrooms or sheds**. *(This rule is designed to keep children viewable to keep them safe and avoid high noise levels and distractions to classes in session.)*

Walnut Acres Elementary School Conduct Acknowledgment

Please read and discuss the expectations, incentives, and consequences in this handbook with your child. Then sign and have your child sign this page. Explain to your child that signing the page indicates that you and your child understand and agree to follow school rules. Then return this page to your child's teacher. Thank you for your support!

I have read and discussed with my child the rules and procedures that have been established at Walnut Acres Elementary School and will support staff efforts to maintain a safe, pleasant, orderly learning environment for my child and all other students.

If my participation is needed to help my child be successful, I will make sure an adult family member is available for a problem solving session.

Student Name: _____

Teacher: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

I have read and discussed these rules, incentives, and consequences with my parent/guardian. I know I am expected to follow these rules. I understand the consequences that will be administered should I choose to disobey the rules.

Student Signature

Date