

# Meridian Ranch Elementary School



## Family Handbook 2023-2024

MRES has a relentless focus on *Learning* and doing *Whatever It Takes* to ensure success for all.

GO BULLDOGS!

## **Assessment**

A wide variety of assessment types are used throughout the year to form a “body of evidence” that indicates instructional growth. Assessment of student learning takes place for three reasons.

## **Instruction**

Assessments are used in the classroom to show how well a child understands classroom lessons and tasks. Both formal and informal assessments are used on a regular basis along with teacher observation.

## **Monitoring Student Learning**

Some tests help teachers learn about specific student needs so appropriate instructional decisions can be made. Screening instruments help teachers decide about a child’s readiness for advanced learning tasks or about a child’s need for remedial support.

## **Program Evaluation and Student Achievement**

Standardized and curriculum-based tests are used to consider school-wide and grade level strengths and areas of need in specific curricular areas. The results from norm-referenced tests are used to set school-wide and grade level goals each year. Selective information about individual student achievement is also available from norm-referenced tests.



## **Overview of CMAS- Developed Assessments**

Colorado’s state assessments are used to accurately assess student mastery of the updated Colorado Academic Standards. The standards support coherent and rigorous assessments with the Colorado Measures of Academic Success. In grade 3 ELA and Math are tested, in grade 4 ELA, Math, and Social Studies (once every three years) are tested, in grade 5 ELA, Math, and Science are given.

## **Assessment of Students’ Reading Ability**

Acadience Reading (DIBELS) is an effective screening tool that tests students in phonics, phonemic awareness, and fluency and allows teachers to evaluate students and monitor effectiveness of reading instruction.

## **Standards Based Report Card**

Falcon School District 49 utilizes a quarterly standards-based report card. Standards-based reporting gives parents a clear idea of what specific skills their child is learning in reading, writing, math, social studies, and science. Teachers will report how students are doing on each of the state standards. To understand what your student is learning each quarter, visit the district website for information on curriculum or have a discussion with your child’s teacher.

## **Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT):**

Third grade students participate in the Cognitive Abilities Test in the spring.

## Curriculum

Meridian Ranch Elementary follows the curriculum approved by the Board of Education of District #49 and the Colorado Department of Education. Copies of all District 49 curriculum guides and textbooks as well as the Colorado Academic Standards are available for parents to view at school online at [www.cde.state.co.us](http://www.cde.state.co.us). Please contact the school office for additional information.



Meridian Ranch serves preschool through 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Teacher's work together in Professional Learning Communities making sure all students learn. This is where teachers unpack state standards, develop common formative assessments, discuss best practices, analyze data, and provide support and enrichment to ensure learning for all students. Flexible groupings may be used during the day to provide instruction that closely matches each student's needs.

Music, physical education, art, technology, and library, and Project Based Learning programs supplement the academic curriculum. Our flexible library offers teachers the opportunity to bring students into the library to enhance instructional learning. Our counselor offers whole class instruction as well as small group and individual counseling as needed. Using the community as a classroom, students go on various field trips. Special Education classes, English as a Second Language, and a K-5 reading interventionist add to the educational programs and are available for eligible students.

## Promotion and Retention

Promotion and retention shall be based on all factors that contribute to the benefit of the student. The principal will take teacher and counselor recommendations into consideration when determining the need for retention of a student. Additional information regarding district policy on this subject can be found in the Student Code of Conduct Handbook.

## Standards and Proficiencies

Standards are defined as specific statements about what students should know and be able to do. They are the essential knowledge and skills needed to obtain mastery in a specific subject area, and give teachers a sense of direction within the curriculum. Standards focus on the "learning" instead of on the "teaching", helping students become more aware of what they are learning and why. Standards and Benchmarks are available from your child's teacher or on the Colorado Dept. of Education website.

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### School Hours:

**8:30 a.m. - 3:40 p.m.**

Preschool

8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

12:15 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.

Office

7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**PLEASE DO NOT BRING YOUR STUDENT TO SCHOOL BEFORE 8:15 A.M. AS THERE IS NO SUPERVISION!** Students are not permitted on school property before 8:15 a.m. unless they are in a supervised program with a staff member or eating breakfast. The first bell will ring at 8:25 a.m. and students are given 5 minutes to pass to their classroom before the second bell rings and school begins at 8:30 a.m. Students who arrive after 8:30 a.m. will be required to be signed in at the office and receive a tardy pass.

### **Morning and After-school Drop-Off/Pickup**

We request parents do not walk their student into the building. If a parent needs to be in the hallways for any reason they must sign-in at the office and received a badge.

We kindly request that parents do not go to classrooms or seek out teachers prior to school beginning in the morning without an appointment. This time is important for the teachers to prepare for the day without interruption. It is best to contact teachers through email or voicemail to relay a message or set a meeting time.

### **Preschool Drop Off/Pick-Up Times**

Morning Drop-off 8:00 – 8:05 A.M.

Afternoon Pick-up 3:15 – 3:20

### **Parking Lot and Drop-Off Zones**

If you drop your child off in the morning, please do not leave your vehicle unattended in the Kiss-n-Go lane. The Kiss-n-Go lane in front of the building is for dropping off or picking up students only. For safety reasons, please do not drop off or pick up your child on Rainbow Bridge in front of the school.

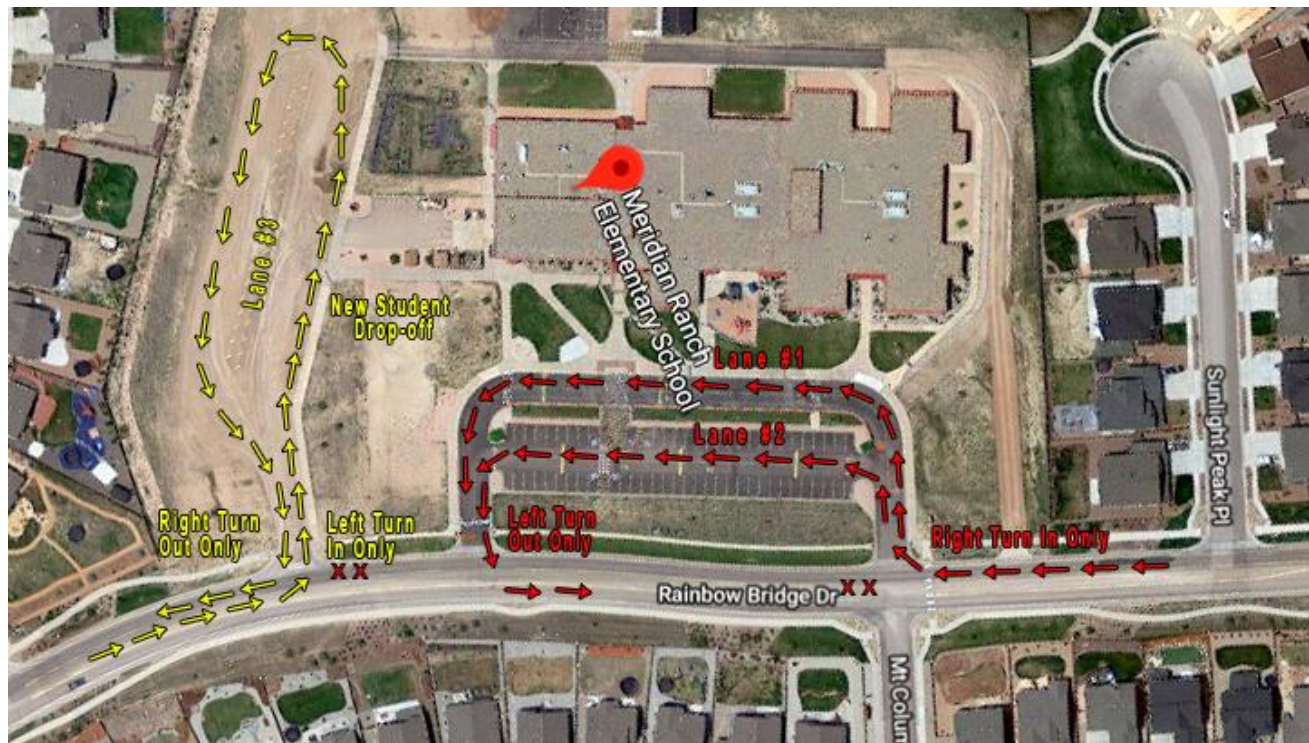
*Because of our Preschool Drop Off/Pick-Up we ask that non-Preschool parents please stay behind the orange cones until 8:10 in the A.M and 3:20 in the P.M.*

To enter Kiss-n-Go lanes 1 and 2 turn north onto Mount Princeton Dr., to Mount Evans Dr., to Mount Harvard Dr., to Rainbow Bridge. Form a line along the curb and wait until entering the parking lot to pick up your student(s). This prevents cars from trying to jump out of line into oncoming traffic and limits traffic in the pull through lanes, which improves safety. Once you drop off your family turn left only out of the parking lot onto Rainbow Bridge.

For Kiss-n-Go Lane 3 you may enter Bulldog Blvd. (south lot) by making a left only into the lot and dropping your child off curbside. You may only turn right when exiting Bulldog Blvd. If your student needs extra help or assistance getting in and/or out of the vehicle, please park in the parking lot (Bulldog Boulevard) and assist your student into the building. There are many cars utilizing Bulldog Boulevard and for safety reasons, please walk your child to and from the lot to the sidewalk or school entrance. Thank you for helping us keep our students safe at all times!

To watch a short video explaining the MRES traffic patterns click [here](#).

**NO LEFT turn into the main parking lot between the hours of 8:15-8:30 AM and 3:30-3:55 PM!! Exit Kiss-N-Go Lanes 1 & 2 by making a left onto Rainbow Bridge Dr.**



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### Field Trips

Field trips are educationally sound when they are planned within the objectives of the class. Such trips are encouraged as a means of expanding the educational opportunities of our students. All trips must be approved by the administration. Students participating in a field trip shall at all times be under the supervision of a teacher/chaperone and acceptable classroom conduct shall be expected of the students as well. All school regulations will be observed and enforced.

Parents are encouraged and welcome on field trips as chaperones, but we require that you leave siblings at home as they can interfere with your responsibility of supervising students.

All parents that chaperone on a field trip **MUST** have background checks done through D49 Human Resources dept. Please see the front office for more information [D49 Volunteer Process](#).

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### MRES Inclement Weather Plan

This is **ONLY** when the weather is a safety issue for students. This includes **severe lightning** in our direct area, a **downpour of rain**, **blizzard like conditions**, **hail**, and



**extreme cold (well below zero).** We dismiss with safety in mind, based on the most updated weather information, and in the most timely and efficient manner possible.

If we decide that we need to use the inclement weather dismissal procedures, we will do the following:

- **Bus Riders** will remain in the classrooms instead of standing outside. They will be called out to the buses when the buses arrive at the school, or once it is deemed safe for students and staff to exit the building.
- **Kiss-n-Go Car Riders** will **not** be let outside to wait as they usually do. They will remain in the classroom until it is determined that it is safe for parents/guardians to enter the building and sign out students in the classroom. Please be sure that anyone picking up your child is listed in the student information system (Power School), as a parent or emergency contact.
- **Walkers and Bike Riders** will remain in classrooms and phone calls will be made to parents/guardians for approval to either walk or wait until the weather passes.

Please be patient and flexible during these times. We want to provide the safest and best care possible when dealing with our unpredictable Colorado weather. Thank you again for your support and partnership if we do find it necessary to use our inclement weather dismissal plan.

### **Procedures for Early Dismissal, Absences, or Tardiness**

If a student must leave class early, please come to the front office and check your child out **and bring a photo ID**. For security reasons, all staff members have been instructed NOT to release students from the classroom without notification from the office. The student **must be signed out at the office** by the parent/guardian or emergency contact on file. The office will then notify the classroom teacher to send the child to the office. The staff at Meridian Ranch requests that parents make appointments and schedule trips out of town during non-school hours and in accordance with the D49 Calendar which indicates several two-week breaks.

If your child has been (or will be) **absent**, please call the school office (719-494-2909). Parents may access this number before, during, and after school hours.

If your child is **tardy**, please walk them into the school because they must be signed into the office by an adult prior to going to their classroom. They must obtain a tardy pass to get into class. If they do not, they will be sent back to the office to check-in.

Students are expected to complete all work missed when they have been absent from school. Academic work may be made up for excused absences through the requests communicated to the office. Please do not drop by the classroom for makeup work because instructional time cannot be lost. Unexcused absences may affect a child's report card grades. Although regular attendance is essential to school success, please do not send a child showing symptoms of an illness (fever, vomiting, fatigue). All district policies related to student attendance may be reviewed in their entirety in the STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE CODE HANDBOOK, available at [www.d49.org](http://www.d49.org) or a hard copy can be obtained in the school office.

It is extremely important that students be in attendance on a regular basis. Students that are not in school miss out on valuable educational instruction that often cannot be made up. School attendance is required by law; therefore, a child's absence must be excused by the parent or guardian either in writing or by telephone to the school office. Missing more than 17 days of school has been shown to create learning loss.

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### **Student Attendance/Tardy Regulations—Board of Education Policy**

One criterion of a student's success in school is regular and punctual attendance. Frequent absences may lead to poor academic work, lack of social development, and possible academic failure. Regular attendance is of utmost importance for school interest, social adjustment, and scholastic achievement. No single factor may interfere with a student's progress more quickly than frequent tardiness or absence.

According to state law, it is the obligation of every parent/guardian to ensure that every child under his/her care and supervision receives adequate education and training and, if of compulsory attendance age, attends school.

Each year the Board establishes the school attendance period by adopting a school calendar. Students are expected to be in attendance in accordance with the district adopted calendar.

Parents will be expected to take the responsibility for determining whether it is safe to send their child to school due to severe weather.

Continuity in the learning process and social adaptation are seriously disrupted by excessive absences. In most situations, the work missed cannot be made up adequately. Students who have good attendance generally achieve higher grades, enjoy school more, and are more employable after leaving school. For at least these reasons, the Board believes that a student must satisfy two basic requirements in order to earn full class credit: 1) satisfy all academic requirements and 2) exhibit good attendance habits as stated in this policy.

Absences occur any time a student misses a class, is more than five minutes late to class without permission, is truant or fails to follow correct check-out/in procedures. In order to deliver the quality education expected by the community, students must attend classes on a regular basis and remain for the entire school day.

### **Excused absences are defined as:**

1. Absences because of temporary illness or injury.
2. A student who is absent for an extended period due to physical, mental, or emotional disability.
3. A student who is pursuing a work-study program under the supervision of the school.
4. A student who is attending any school-sponsored activity or activities of an educational nature with advance approval by the administration.
5. Absences by those who are in the custody of court or law enforcement authorities.
6. Those determined by school administration to be excusable, such as doctor's appointments or juvenile court appearances.

**Extensive excused absences may require verification from the appropriate doctor/dentist/ agency/etc. Parents should notify the appropriate attendance office within 48 hours (excluding weekends) when their child will not be in school.**

Students are expected to make up work and will be allowed 2 school days to make up work for each day of absence. (i.e. if a student is absent for 2 days, s/he will be allowed 4 days to make up work). All major projects are due on the day specified. Out-of-school suspensions will not count as absences and work may be made up for 50% credit only unless the building administrator has determined otherwise. **Family vacations during school time are strongly discouraged, as they may result in the total student absences exceeding the specified limit.**

### **Prearranged Absences**

Absences because of doctor's appointments, juvenile court appearances, or family trips scheduled during the year MUST be prearranged through the main office whenever possible. **Parents should plan vacation for times when school is NOT in session.** A written note from the parent/guardian must accompany the student. It should include the length and reason for the absence. A request for a prearranged absence [form](#) should be made at least a period of time equal to the length of time the student will miss school (i.e. one day absent = one day notice). All assignments are due prior to the period of absence unless otherwise specified by a teacher. **Excused/prearranged absences in excess of district designated number of allowable absences may become unexcused.**

### **Unexcused Absences**

An unexcused absence is defined as an absence that is not covered by one of the foregoing exceptions. Each unexcused absence shall be entered on the student's record. The parents/guardians of the student receiving an unexcused absence will be notified orally or in writing by the district of the unexcused absence whenever possible.

In accordance with the law, the district may impose academic penalties which relate directly to classes missed while unexcused. The administration shall develop regulations to implement appropriate penalties. Student and parents/guardians may petition the Board of Education for exceptions to this policy or the accompanying regulations provided that no exception shall be sustained if the student fails to abide by all requirements imposed by the Board as conditions for granting such exception.

### **Absence Regulations**

Elementary students will not be allowed excessive excused/unexcused absences per semester. Absences will be documented in half or full day increments. Once students have exceeded the number of excused absences, a doctor's, dentist's, etc. excuse may be required for subsequent absences or the absence may be considered unexcused. After an accumulation of 4-7 days of absence for elementary students, parents will receive a letter notifying them of the district's attendance concerns, and an administrative review of the student's attendance record and IEP (if applicable) will occur. Students accumulating 10 unexcused absences or 14 (total absences including excused absences) during any school year may be referred for truancy. Elementary students may be considered for retention.



### **Tardiness/Early Check outs**

Tardiness is defined as the appearance of a student without proper excuse after the scheduled time that a class begins. Because of the disruptive nature of tardiness and detrimental effect upon the rights of the non-tardy student to uninterrupted learning, penalties shall be imposed for excessive tardiness. Parents/guardians shall be notified of all penalties regarding tardiness.

Elementary students with excessive tardiness to class or who habitually leave school early for reasons other than those listed under reasons for excused absence, may be placed on an attendance contract or referred for truancy proceedings. Mandatory attendance laws in Colorado State: Elementary students shall attend public school for at least 968 hours during each school year C.R.S. 22-33-104.

Early check-outs are necessary at times, please limit these interruptions to your child's learning as much as possible.

### **Withdrawing and Enrolling**

D-49 has a central registration for all new students enrolling in the district. Once enrolled, the Meridian Ranch Elementary School staff will place the student in a classroom and arrange a start date. If you must withdraw your child from the school, please send a note or call as soon as you know you are leaving and complete a disenroll form. Records may be brought up-to-date and sent upon request to the new school. On the day your child will withdraw, a parent/guardian should come to the office for final processing. Should you move out of the Meridian Ranch attendance neighborhood, we hope that you will remember your experiences at Meridian Ranch Elementary School as being positive and rewarding for both you and your child!

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### **Communication Between School & Parents**

It is important for the school and parents to keep lines of communication open at all times. Parents are encouraged to visit the school at any time and to contact teachers with concerns or questions. Please make an appointment to visit with a classroom teacher so that instructional time is not interrupted.

### **Thursday Folders**

Students will bring home reminders, school communications, and class work in folders every Thursday. Parents are asked to sign them and return the folder each Friday with their child. If this folder is not coming home with your students, please feel free to notify your child's teacher to clear up the miscommunication.

### **Website**

The Meridian Ranch Elementary School [Highlights & Updates](http://www.d49.org) will be posted online at the school's website at: [www.d49.org](http://www.d49.org). If you do not have computer access, you can request a hard copy from the school by calling the school office. School activities are announced in advance in the newsletter. Other special notices will be sent home as needed by the office. Anyone who has information that should be shared with the community through the school newsletter may submit the information to the office for principal approval and

possible publication in the newsletter. The information will be placed in the newsletter on a space-available basis.

Please check out our school website at [www.d49.org](http://www.d49.org) or our Facebook page for the most up to date information.

### **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Two conferences will be held during the school year. The first set of conferences (teacher led conferences) will be held in October; and the second set of conferences will be in February (student led conferences). These conferences provide an individual opportunity to discuss your child's progress with the classroom teacher. **All parents are requested to attend.** Feel free to call the school and make an appointment with the teacher, counselor, assistant principal, or principal any time the need arises. Only when a child feels that there is understanding, appreciation, and active cooperation between home and school can he/she do his/her best work.



### **Report Cards**

Report cards are available to view via the Parent Portal. Please ensure you have registered for Parent Portal access with the front office.

Please review them with your child and make goals for achievement for the upcoming grading period. Any time you have questions about your child's progress we will be happy to schedule a conference.

### **Student Placement Information**

If you would like to provide student information for class placement next school year, be sure to complete the parent information letter addressing the teaching style or academic setting that works best for your child. **Teacher requests by name will not be granted and letters naming a teacher will be discarded.** Your input will help us make the most appropriate placement for your student. However, there is no guarantee that all requests will be fulfilled. Assignment of students is the responsibility of the principal, with the support and input of staff members.

### **Telephone System**

In order to speak with a staff member at Meridian Ranch Elementary School, we ask that you call the school office. When a teacher is in class or otherwise unable to take your call, you may ask to be transferred to that person's voicemail. All staff members are

expected to regularly check their messages and return phone calls/emails within 24 hours.

### **Telephone Use by Students**

Students may use a school telephone to contact parents/guardians in case of an emergency. Please help by seeing that your child has homework, books, supplies, lunch, and special activity money, and has made after school plans before coming to school. In the event of early dismissal because of weather or other emergencies, the plans parents/guardians have designated for their child and which have been placed on file in the school will be followed. **Arrangements for such emergency situations should be reviewed regularly at home with all children as phone lines are often unavailable or malfunction during storms.**

### **Cell Phones, Electronic Devices, and Personal items**

Students are discouraged from bringing electronic devices from home. If it is necessary to bring a cell phone to school, the phone should be turned off and in the student's backpack, and only used before and after school, unless used for medical monitoring. This includes on school buses, at school-sponsored activities, and on field trips.



*Smart watches* are also considered a device and should be powered off and stored in backpacks during the day, just like phones/personal devices. **Students should keep all tablets at home as computers and iPADS (if needed) are available during school hours.**

If you need to get a message to your student during the day, please call the school office 719-494-2909

Students should not bring toys or other personal items to school. Items will be confiscated if they cause problems or distractions and disrupt the overall educational process. These items will be held by the teacher, or sent to the main office, until picked up by a parent.

Electronic devices may be used only during emergencies. Students who knowingly use an electronic device such as a cell phone on school grounds or on school buses, at school sponsored activities, and/or on field trips in a manner which constitutes an interference with school purposes or an educational function or use an electronic device in a manner that is profane, indecent, or obscene or constitutes an invasion of privacy, will be subject to disciplinary action.

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### **Visiting the School**

Parents are an important part of our school. We invite you to visit school at any time. When you arrive at Meridian Ranch, you will notice that doors are locked. This is to keep our students safe at all times. Please ring our doorbell on the side of the wall by the door and we will be happy to greet you and invite you inside. You must provide a photo ID if you are volunteering or spending time at the school. If you would like to see a specific

activity or discuss a specific aspect of the school program, the principal or other staff members will be happy to meet with you. **However, classroom teachers are unable to discuss your child's progress during instructional time.** Please make an appointment during non-instructional time should you want to confer with the teacher. Children not enrolled at Meridian Ranch Elementary School may not visit the school unless accompanied by an adult. **ALL VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL MUST CHECK IN AT THE OFFICE.**

#### **MRES SAFETY-**

**Please do not hold the front door for people walking up. Please allow them to buzz into the school, so that the school can control who has access to the building. We have additional security doors within the building to limit access to the office. MRES and D49 have support from armed security and Sheriff's deputies employed by the district. Regular drills are practiced to support appropriate responses to emergency situations. We encourage Watch D.O.G.S (Dad's of Great Students) to volunteer to have additional support for safety protocols around the building.**

#### **Lunch with Students**

We have had many requests to come eat lunch with your child at school. This school year we have a new "Bulldog Family Bistro Table". If you would like to come to school and have lunch with your child during their lunch time, please contact the front office at 719-494-2909 to make a reservation. We can accommodate one family per grade level lunch daily. If you plan on purchasing school lunch, please indicate when making a reservation. Children not enrolled at Meridian Ranch Elementary may not visit the school unless accompanied by an adult. All visitors to the school must check in at the office with a valid ID before going to out lunchroom area and wear their "visitor or volunteer badge" at all times.

#### **Grade Level Lunch Times:**

Kindergarten 10:40-11:00AM

First Grade 11:05-11:27AM

Second Grade. 11:30AM-11:52AM

Third Grade 11:55-12:17PM

Fourth Grade 12:20-12:42PM

Fifth Grade 12:45-1:05PM

#### **Open House/Back to School Night**

These events are planned early in the year to give parents/guardians an opportunity to meet their child's new teacher. Teachers make presentations and provide information about curriculum, teaching materials, and expectations for the year.

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#### **Health/Wellness Policy Guidelines-**

##### **District 49 Wellness Policy Guidelines for Parents**

The district wellness policy focuses on improving the health of students.

### **Nutrition in the classroom**

- All food items must be **store-bought** with the nutrition information showing the product is **100 calories or less, 0 grams of trans fat.**
- **No candy or sodas will be allowed.**
- **Birthday celebrations with treats must follow Wellness Policy Guidelines.**

<b>10 Healthy Snack Ideas under 100 Calories</b>	<b>10 Non-Food Celebration Ideas</b>
Cascadian Farm Kid Sized Oatmeal Raisin Bar	Smencils (smell good pencils)
Pepperidge Farm Whole Grain Goldfish 100 Calorie Pack	Glow Sticks
Angie's Boom Chicka Pop Sea Salt Popcorn	Stickers
6" Banana decorated with Sharpie and/or stickers	Books
Stretch Island Fruit Leather	Chapstick
Applesauce on the Go	Post its in fun shapes
Fruit cups in 100% juice	Play dough
Brothers All Natural Fruit Crisps	Stress balls
Minute Maid Kids + Minis 100% Juice Box	Seeds for planting
Trader Joe's Apple + Banana Fruit Bar	Lead a Dance Break

### **Physical Activity**

- Physical education is provided in elementary, middle and high school.
- Strenuous physical activity is not used (e.g. running laps, pushups) as punishment.
- **Generally, students should not be required to "sit out" any part of recess as punishment unless there is a safety concern.**
- **Elementary school students will have a minimum of 30-minutes daily of physical activity. Recess for 1/2 day Kindergarten will be determined at those individual buildings. Physical activity can include recess, physical education classes, fitness breaks, active classroom activities, exercise programs, or active field trips.**

**We are a peanut free school – please do not bring in snacks with peanuts**

- Energy drinks are not allowed

**Health Assistant**

Each elementary school has a health assistant in the office during the school day. In addition to their secretarial duties, school secretaries provide first aid and care to sick and injured students when the health assistant is not available. Health assistants are not nurses. They have received training in basic first aid, CPR, and medication administration only.

**Registered Nurse**

Due to the increase in enrollment and the number of schools in the district, nursing services will become more consultative. They will only be in the buildings to provide health services mandated by the State of Colorado such as immunizations, special education assessments, and special education staffing's. They will coordinate the vision and hearing screenings and be available to teachers, parents, and students when there are specific health concerns that require assistance.

**Medications**

If your child must have medication of any type, including over the counter medicine, given during school hours, you have a few choices:

1. You may come to the school and give the medicine to your child at the appropriate time.
2. You may get a medicine form from the school and have your doctor indicate on the form the drug, dose, and time to be given. The doctor's signature is also required. We also need a  
Pharmacy-labeled bottle containing the medication and instructions on how the medication should be given.
3. Parent permission is also required for medications to be administered. A space is provided for your signature on the school medication form.
4. You may discuss with your doctor, an alternative schedule for medication so that it may be given outside of school hours.

Students are not allowed to carry any type of medication on their person or in their backpack at any time.

Remember: the only way we can dispense medication at school is with a school medication form filled out and signed by your physician. The medication must come to school in a prescription-labeled container.

Cough drops must be kept in the health room with a note on file from parents before they can be distributed to your student.



### **School Accountability Committee (SAC)**

Our SAC is a group of parents, staff members, and community members who represent the community's point of view at large. The SAC concerns itself with the improvement of education in general, studies the educational needs of our school, monitors the implementation of our Unified Improvement Plan (UIP), and advises the principal. The SAC works with the principal and staff members to achieve excellence in education for all our children. Meridian Ranch Elementary School's SAC meets quarterly following the PTA meeting. Your involvement is welcomed and encouraged. For more information call the school office.

### **Parent/Teacher Association (PTA)**

The MRES PTA promotes parent/guardian involvement in the education of children and a close relationship between parent/guardians and the school. Your membership supports not only the school but also your own children. The PTA meets quarterly and sponsors many fund-raising activities and special events. For membership information, please come by the school office. Look for additional information that will come home with your children throughout the school year about the many wonderful PTA activities for parents as well as students.

### **Come Grow With Us!...in the Meridian Ranch Community Garden**

The Meridian Ranch Community Garden sprouted up at our school in 2013. Filled with both hardy & annual plants, it gives interested teachers the opportunity to explore science lessons outdoors with students. Kids get a first-hand look at the types of plants that live in our high prairie conditions and the pollinators they attract (hummingbirds, butterflies). In Fall, kids can earn rewards from the garden as part of the Bulldog Rewards program (pumpkins, bouquets, starter plants). The school garden is part of the MRES PTA and relies on volunteers to keep it going. Want to help? Please contact our PTA. We always need volunteers for plant clean up in Fall & Spring and light maintenance for summer.

### **Volunteer Program**

We welcome and appreciate volunteers at MRES. You can be a source of special skills, personal attention, or an extra pair of hands if you become a school volunteer. If you are interested, we have a spot for you. Please contact your child's teacher or school office if you can share some time with us. The job and hours are up to you. We ask that all volunteers sign in at the office by showing a photo ID, wearing a badge, and logging in your time upon leaving and follow the D49 volunteer process listed above. If you would like to tutor a child in reading, we will provide you with all of the necessary materials. Just leave your name and number with the front office staff. We will keep you hard at work so please do not bring in siblings when you volunteer.

### **Watch DOGS (Dads of Great Students) sponsored by PTA**

Each school year thousands of men volunteer to work at least one day in their child's school as Watch DOGS. These men work alongside the educators to help as crossing guards, car/bus rider facilitators, hallway monitors, library assistants, lunchroom helpers, classroom and homework tutors and playground/gymnasium coaches. The possibilities are endless. Every school year these men have a positive impact on the lives of hundreds of thousands of kids.

## Program benefits

- Students gain a positive male role model. Some students do not have a father-figure present in their home and the number of male teachers has been steadily declining in recent years. More positive male role models are needed in the school setting.
- Schools gain an extra set of eyes and ears. The presence of WatchDOGS (**Dads Of Great Students**) can increase a sense of security at the building for students and staff, and it helps create an environment conducive to learning.
- Fathers and father-figures can spend meaningful time with their students in the school setting and gain a greater awareness of the positive impact they can have on their student's life, just by being a 'dad'.

To do any volunteer work in District 49 you must first have a background check. For details to apply for background check click [here](#)

- When WatchDOGS invest a day at school, they can learn how better to partner with the school to meet educational goals of students. Sign-up [here](#).

Find out more about the Watch DOGS program at [Watch D.O.G.S.](#)

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## Board of Education

The District 49 Board of Education meets on a monthly basis. Please call the MRES office if you would like information regarding dates, times and locations or see the [d49.org](#) website.

## Child Abuse

Any school employee who has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect must report this immediately. The school principal or counselor must report the suspected abuse to the El Paso County Department of Human Services. The school is barred from contacting the parents before the authorities are called.



**Inclement Weather:** Parents may receive an email at home and/or work regarding school closures and delays. Log on to [www.d49.org](#) and click on the [school closure button](#) to register.

**School Cancellation:** If the decision is made to cancel school, local radio stations will be asked to announce that the district will be closed. Local radio stations will be informed of this decision by 5 a.m.

**Two-hour Delayed Start:** If adverse weather conditions appear to be developing during the 5:30 a.m. decision time frame, the CEO may delay the start of school for two hours. The procedure will be as follows: Local stations will be informed by 6:00 a.m. that the starting time for schools will be delayed by two hours. The decision relative to whether school will be open or closed will be made prior to 8:00 a.m. If the decision is to hold school, the two-hour delayed starts will be honored and no additional radio announcements will be made. If the decision is to cancel school, local radio stations will be informed by 8:00 a.m. There will be no a.m. preschool on delayed start days. The lunch schedule will run as usual.

**Early Release:** If school is in session and a storm develops during the day, a decision may be made to send students home early. Colorado Springs radio stations will broadcast early dismissals and D49 will post a notice on their website. Please make prior arrangements for your child's care if you will not be at home. Students will be released at any time to parents who feel the weather conditions warrant that child be taken home.

### **Non-Discrimination**

The Board of Education is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in relation to race, religion, national background, age, marital status, and disability. Respect for the dignity and worth of each individual shall be paramount in the establishment of all policies by the Board and in the administration of those policies by the administration. See [revised board policy](#).

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### **School Supplies**

A list of [school supplies](#) for students is available in the school office or on our website.

### **School Records**

Records for each student enrolled at MRES are maintained in the school office. These confidential records contain test data, and are open to a child's parents and are regularly updated. **It is critical that we have correct home, work, and emergency contact telephone numbers on file as well as an up to date email address.**

### **Transportation**

Safety is the primary concern of the Falcon School District Transportation 49 Department. When an incident occurs on the bus and distracts a driver's attention from the road, the safety of the driver and each student is jeopardized. Rules of conduct for students in transit minimize the risk of harm or injury to them and their driver.

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### **Fire Drills/Tornado Drills/Lockdown Drills**

Fire drills, tornado drills and lockdown drills will be conducted throughout the school year. Please remind your student that the purpose of these drills is to ensure the safety of all students, staff, and visitors, and appropriate behavior is expected at all times.

### **Injuries**

If a student is injured, it shall be his/her responsibility to inform a teacher or the office of the injury as soon as it occurs. All head injuries and illnesses at school will be reported to parents. An attempt to contact parents/guardians will be made first. If there is no response, the emergency number will be called, followed by a call to 911 if necessary. Please ensure expedient and proper care for your child by keeping your work, cell, and home telephone numbers current in the school office.

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## Behavior Standards

In developing self-responsibility, we aim to give students the following: (a) a clear understanding of what is expected of them, (b) specific feedback when behavior is and is not appropriate, (c) an opportunity to apply problem solving skills and correct an unwise choice related to a specific situation, and (d) a clear understanding of the consequences of a given choice.

Clear expectations serve as “anchors” in guiding students in developing self-responsibility. The Meridian Ranch Elementary School acronym for student expectations is MRES:



**Manners      Responsibility      Excellence      Safety**

MRES students will review the expectations throughout the first weeks of school. We ask parents to review the expectations as well at home.

As part of our Positive Behavior Interventions Support (PBIS) program, positive student behavior will be reinforced via Bulldog Bones, Top Dog Awards, and Excellence Awards. Quarterly Bulldog Pride Assemblies will celebrate Top Dog Awards and Excellence Awards recipients!

The staff of MRES is dedicated to positive and consistent discipline. Behavior problems are handled with dignity and tact and in a manner, which does not create problems for others in the school. Most behavioral problems, which develop, are minor in nature and can be dealt with best by the classroom teacher. Consequences are imposed in order to teach students self-discipline and problem solving skills. There is a strong connection between appropriate school behavior and the quality of the partnership between staff members, students, and parents/guardians. Thus, staff members will involve parents/guardians immediately if a student's behavioral problems either in or out of the classroom begin escalating or are continuously troublesome. Students will be referred to the administrative team if a pattern of misbehavior or classroom disruption is demonstrated despite the best ongoing, cooperative efforts of the teacher and parents/guardians. Students will also be referred to the administrative team for further action should a sudden serious infraction occur. We ask that every parent/guardian review in detail the Falcon Student Conduct and Discipline Code found on the D49 website, or available in hard copy from the MRES office.

## Technology and Computer Use

As a staff, we continue to develop ways to implement technology to enhance the learning of all our students. Parents and students will be asked to sign an Acceptable Use Agreement for each school when a student is registered. These privileges, if abused, can be rescinded by the administration.

## Cafeteria Procedures

Hot lunch, milk, and juice are available to all students, or children may bring lunch from home, purchasing milk or juice at school if desired. Menus are published and sent home each month. For the 2021-22 school year breakfast and lunch are free.

Free and reduced-price lunches are provided to children whose families meet federal guidelines, while meals are free this year, other benefits are associated with this program such as waived bussing fees. Children who receive free/reduced lunches are not identified, and all information provided is confidential.

We are excited to bring online meal application to our families this year. If you go to the link below starting July 14<sup>th</sup> you will be able to set up an account and complete the meal application. Once you have completed the application you will receive immediate notice of your approval letter and be able to print it out at your leisure. We encourage all to use this feature as it cuts your wait time for approval down to minutes. You will also be able to select the option to release your status information in Power School for waiving of any fees.

<https://falcon.sdms2.com/>

Families have to reapply each year. Children in grades K-2 who qualify for a reduced lunch will receive it for free.



## Dress Code

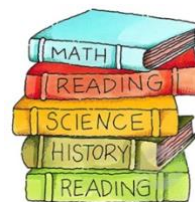
We encourage our students to dress in a clean and neat manner that reflects pride in themselves and their school. We feel that the primary responsibility in dress belongs with parents/guardians and children. We do ask your cooperation in compliance with a few student dress guidelines:

- ~ Weather conditions should determine a child's apparel. Please be sure your child dresses appropriately for cold weather.
- ~ Apparel that is excessively short, tight, or low/high cut may not be worn.
- ~ Apparel that has writing or pictures that display alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, suggestive or obscene language or violent acts, or is suggestive of gang affiliation may not be worn.
- ~ Shorts/skirts should be as long as the student's middle finger when standing with their arms by their sides. Spaghetti straps are not allowed.
- ~ No hats are allowed in the classroom, hallways, or cafeteria except on certain spirit days or if a student has purchased a hat day with bulldog bones.
- ~ No hoods are allowed to be worn in the classroom, hallways, or cafeteria.

We encourage our little Bulldogs to show their school spirit by wearing their MRES "gear" on Fridays.

## Homework

Homework is an integral part of the school experience. Regular homework assignments help students learn good study habits such as responsibility, perseverance, self-discipline, and time management. Through frequent and successful participation in homework, children discover that learning takes place all the time, in school and at home. Homework also supports our emphasis on community collaboration and partnership. A general rule of thumb as a homework guideline is 10 minutes per grade. This would mean that a general rule of thumb for a 4<sup>th</sup> grade student would be to have  $10 \times 4 = 40$  minutes of homework.



There are three basic types of homework:

- ~ Daily reading – may include silent, oral, or shared family reading
- ~ Daily practice and review – may include drill, practice and review in spelling, math, or other content area
- ~ Assignments and projects – may include a variety of assignments by the classroom teacher in addition to the completion of unfinished regular classroom work.

When a child is home ill more than one day, we will be happy to provide make up work on the second day. Parents may call the office **before 10:00 a.m.** requesting homework. It can be ready for pick up after **3:40 p.m.** that same day.

## Lost And Found

Please clearly label all items of clothing, lunch boxes, backpacks, and school supplies. Shelving and containers are located by the rear playground doors. If you cannot find an item, please check the lost and found area. Unclaimed items are donated to a charitable organization at the end of each quarter.



## Pets

For safety reasons, personal pets are not permitted in the school building. Dogs and other small animals may be gentle at home but unpredictable at school when confronted by a large number of unfamiliar children. **Parents are asked to refrain from bringing dogs to school when walking children to and from school as well.** Service Dogs must fill out paper work and get permission at the district level.

## [D49 Board Policy regarding animals on campus](#)

## Library Books, Textbooks and School Supplies

Library books and textbooks are furnished by the school district. It is the responsibility of the student to take good care of these books. A fine will be assessed for lost or unreasonably damaged books.



A list of suggested school supplies by grade level is available in the school office or on the school web site at [www.d49.org](http://www.d49.org). Individual teachers may have additional items needed throughout the school year.

### **Toys and Personal Items**

Toys or other personal items should not be brought to school by students. Toys will be taken from students at school, as will other items causing a problem or distracting students from their educational program. These items will be held by the teacher or principal until picked up by a parent. Playground balls will be provided, but students may bring balls from home as long as they are used appropriately.

### **Bikes and Other Items Commonly Brought to School**

Students will be allowed to ride their bikes to school since a storage area on school grounds is designated for that purpose. However, students will need to dismount their bikes and walk them on school property. Roller blades or skates, and “heelies” (shoes with wheels on the bottom) will not be allowed on school property since storage is not available for these items and they present safety problems. Skateboards and scooters may be ridden to school but not on school property and may have to be locked to the bike racks for storage.

### **Hover-Boards**

Hover-boards may not be ridden on school grounds and students will not be allowed to charge hover-boards while at school.

MRES has a relentless focus on learning and doing whatever it takes to ensure success for all. Thank you for your partnership in your child’s education. We strive to hold ourselves to high standards as well as our students. If you should have any questions and/or concerns, please feel free to contact the school at 494-2909.

Sincerely,

MRES Staff