



As a public school district, we believe that partnership and collaboration in your child's education are critical to the overall success of students. The Capistrano Unified School District values the input of parents and guardians and believes collaboration with parents and guardians is key to ensuring students maximize their potential. The District believes transparency in our work is critical to building relationships and increasing trust in our system.

Current District policies and protocols are aligned with the state Education Code, and it is our goal to prioritize parent and guardian communication in our work to support students. This document outlines the many ways we engage with parents and guardians as we navigate the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 educational journey together.

To stay connected with your teacher, school administrators, and the District, please make sure your contact information is updated in the Aeries Parent Portal by following these instructions:

1. Login to the Aeries Parent Portal:
<https://portal.capousd.org/ParentPortal/LoginParent.aspx>
2. In Aeries, click on "Student Info" on the horizontal navigation menu, then click "Contacts."
3. Click on the pencil icon next to the name of the contact you want to edit or the Add button to add a new contact.
4. Enter the appropriate contact information for this contact and click Save.

If you have any questions, please contact your teacher and/or school site administrator for assistance. Additionally, if you have suggestions or feedback regarding this document, please share your input with us [using the form located here](#).

Finally, please visit the [CUSD Family Resource Center](#) to access a variety of support resources for students and families.

Content Themes

Academics	Counseling	Health	Safety
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Academics

Academic Performance

There are a variety of ways that a teacher or administrator may contact parents and guardians when there are concerns about a student's academic performance. Below are assessments and tools we use to monitor student performance and communicate with parents and guardians.

Assessments:

- Classroom assessments such as quizzes, written assignments, performance tasks, and projects
- Local assessments such as i-Ready and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) for primary grades
- State assessments such as the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP)

Communication with families:

- Student Success Team (SST) process, such as the Family School Partnership Plan
- Section 504 Plans/Individualized Education Programs (IEP)
- Secondary Grades posted in Canvas throughout the year
- Progress Reports and Report Cards
 - Elementary-minimum of three times per year
 - Middle School-minimum of four times per year
 - High School-minimum of six times per year
- Parent/teacher conferences

Attendance

Attendance is an important factor in student success. Good attendance contributes not only to academic success but also to social and emotional health. Students who attend school regularly create important personal connections to the school community and have many more opportunities to be involved in campus activities and build relationships with their peers.

There are a number of ways attendance is reported to parents and guardians.

- Parent Portal - Parents can see attendance marks as they occur each day
- Canvas - Parents can track attendance via their parent account (24-hour delay)
- Daily School Messenger communication via phone and /or email
- Parents of students with school attendance problems will receive School Attendance Review Board (SARB) letters by mail. For more information, see the Safety and Student Services website at [SARB](#)
- Parents may receive text messages from school sites regarding their child's attendance

English Language Learners

California Education Code, Section 52164.1 (a) contains legal requirements that direct schools to determine the language(s) spoken in the home of each student. Upon registering their child for the first time in a California school, a parent is required to fill out the Home Language Survey (HLS). [Example of the HLS Form \(English\)](#)

Based on the information provided by parents, the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) is administered to determine the student's English language proficiency. ELPAC results are used to assist schools in determining the appropriate linguistic support for the student.

A student administered the Initial ELPAC is identified as an English Learner (EL) or Initially Fluent English Proficient (IFEP). If the student is identified as an EL, he/she is provided appropriate placement within a mainstream classroom (elementary) or within a section (secondary) and receives English Language Development instructional support. If the student is identified as IFEP, he/she is considered proficient in English and will not qualify for English learner (EL) services.

The District is required to provide an Annual Notification to parents of English Language Learners regarding the language level of their student.

More information on the English Language Learner program [is available here](#).

Permission Slips

Permission slips are required for:

- Field trips
- School dances
- Participate in athletic events or on teams
- School sponsored activities

Promotion and Retention

Notification of Potential Failure:

When it becomes evident to a student's teacher that the student is in danger of failing a course, the teacher shall arrange a conference with the student's parent/guardian, call the student's parent/guardian, and/or send the parent/guardian a written report. (Education Code § 49067)

In the event a teacher notifies a parent/guardian of the potential failure of a student over the telephone, the telephone call should be documented and a written failure notice should also be sent in the mail. Notices of students being in danger of failing should be mailed to any student in grades 6-12 who is earning a "D" or "F" grade during the progress reporting date of each grading period.

- [Board Policy 5122, Promotion/Acceleration/Retention](#)

Section 504 Plan

What is Section 504?

Section 504 is a part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that prohibits discrimination based on disability. Section 504 is an anti-discrimination, civil rights statute that requires the needs of students with disabilities to be met as adequately as the needs of the non-disabled are met.

As a parent or legal guardian, you have the right to:

1. Receive notice regarding the identification, evaluation and/or placement of your child;
2. Examine relevant records pertaining to your child;
3. Request an impartial hearing with respect to the district's actions regarding the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child, with an opportunity for the parent/guardian to participate in the hearing, to have representation by an attorney, and have a review procedure.
4. File a complaint with your school district Section 504 Coordinator, who will investigate the allegations regarding Section 504 matters.
5. File a complaint with the appropriate regional Office for Civil Rights. For additional information contact: Office for Civil Rights U.S. Department of Education 50 United Nations Plaza, San Francisco, CA 94102

Who do I contact to inquire about a Section 504 plan for my child? Each school has a Section 504 Coordinator designated. Consult your school's Section 504 Coordinator or your child's Principal for more information about Section 504.

More information on Section 504 Plans [can be found here](#).

Special Education: Individualized Education Program (IEP)

An IEP is an Individualized Education Program specially designed to meet your child's Special Education needs. It will include present level of educational performances, annual goals, and objectives, and indicate what services and/or special programs are needed to achieve the goals. An IEP is reviewed at least annually and can be changed or modified at the request of any member of the IEP Team.

Before the school can begin an individual assessment for a child, the parent/guardian must be informed about the purpose for which it is being done and the methods or techniques that will be used. The parent/guardian must sign the assessment plan before the assessment can begin. You will be provided with a written assessment report(s) at the IEP meeting. The report will state the basis for making a determination of eligibility for special education.

More information on CUSD Special Education Programs [can be found here](#).

Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process

The Board believes that parent/guardian involvement plays an important role in the resolution of campus and classroom behavior problems. The Board expects that teachers will communicate with parents/guardians when behavior problems arise.

A student's parent/guardian shall be notified as soon as possible when there is an escalating pattern of misbehavior that could lead to on-campus or off-campus suspension.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide for the fair and equitable treatment of students facing suspension and expulsion by affording them their due process rights under the law. The Superintendent or designee shall comply with procedures for notices and appeals as specified in administrative regulation and law. (Education Code §§ 48911, 48915, 48915.5)

- [Board Policy 5152, *Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process*](#)

Withholding Grades, Diplomas, and Transcripts

Prior to withholding the student's grades, diploma or transcripts due to the student's misconduct, the parent/guardian will be given written notification of the student's misconduct and of the District's requirement for restitution.

- [Board Policy 5133, *Withholding Grades, Diploma, or Transcripts*](#)

Counseling

The District's comprehensive well-being plan for students is intended to positively impact student academic performance, create meaningful connections at school, and celebrate successes along the student's educational journey. You can find more information on our [well-being plan here](#).

District school-site counselors work to prioritize student/family communication and will work with students, to the maximum extent possible, to help them with disclosure of information between students and their families.

If a District employee has concerns regarding the mental health of a student, they will contact the parent/guardian. Our parent/guardian communication protocol is aligned with state education code, specifically Education Code § 49602, as it relates to information shared by students or families with school counselors.

California Education Code states that personal information disclosed by a student who is 12 years or older when receiving counseling from a credentialed school counselor is confidential. That is, permission to share the information requires the written consent of the student who disclosed the confidential information.

This law does not apply to students under twelve years of age, nor does this requirement of confidentiality apply to routine objective information related to academic and career counseling. Confidential information provided by students 12 years of age and older is not disclosed to others except in the following instances:

- To health care providers, when referring a pupil for treatment;
- When child abuse is suspected;
- When the counselor has reasonable cause to believe that nondisclosure may present a clear and present danger; or
- When the pupil indicates that a crime has been or will be committed.

School counselors will contact a parent/guardian when a student is exhibiting symptoms of depression, anxiety, a dramatic shift in academic performance, social withdrawal or other significant changes affecting a student’s well-being.

- **Sown to Grow:** To assist District employees in monitoring student mental health, the District is currently piloting **Sown to Grow**, a weekly well-being “check-in” that helps schools identify students who may be struggling. By offering a standardized “check-in,” Sown to Grow affords the opportunity to provide early intervention and timely and appropriate support for students. The weekly check-in takes an average of 1-2 minutes for students. **Contact your site administrator (school principal) to request to view your student’s “check-ins”.**

As of December 2023, Sown to Grow is being piloted in the following schools:

- **Elementary Schools:**
 - Don Juan Avila ES
 - Kinoshita ES
 - Oak Grove ES
- **Middle Schools:**
 - Esencia K-8
 - Niguel Hills MS
- **High Schools:**
 - Freshman AVID classes at all High Schools
 - Freshman Intervention Class at Tesoro HS
- **Wellness Rooms/Student Centers:** Wellness rooms (student centers) in several (not all) middle and high schools serve as spaces dedicated to providing emotional regulation, stress relief, and mental well-being for students. The District partners with the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) and Children’s Hospital of Orange County (CHOC) in the planning and implementation of the rooms. By providing a calming environment with opportunities to self-regulate, wellness rooms aim to nurture students’ emotional resilience and overall well-being within the school community.

The rooms are accessible during the school day for students who need a brief break to calm themselves. Students sign in and out, and a staff member is present to monitor the room. Administrators and counselors are notified if the student requires additional assistance. Contact your site administrator (school principal) to learn whether your student has attended the room.

Suicide Prevention

The District has a suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention protocol to support District employees when responding to a student who is expressing or exhibiting suicidal behaviors or tendencies. The protocol includes communication with parent/guardian to support the development of an action plan to support the student.

Communication with the parent/guardian includes:

- Communicating concerns and making recommendations for safety in the home (e.g., securing firearms, medications, cleaning supplies, cutlery, razor blades, etc.).
 - Providing school and/or local community mental health resources. Students with private health insurance should be referred to their provider.
 - Facilitating contact with community agencies and following up to ensure access to services.
 - Providing a copy of the [Prevention & Intervention Protocol](#)
 - Obtaining parent/guardian permission to release and exchange information with community agency staff using the parent/guardian Authorization for Release/Exchange of Medical Information form.
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- [Board Policy 5141.52, Suicide Prevention](#)

Health

Accidents

Although the District makes every reasonable effort to prevent student accidents and injuries, accidents occur. The Executive Director, Compliance/Health Services, shall, in cooperation with the District nurse, principals, and health technicians, develop procedures to ensure that first aid and/or medical attention is provided as quickly as possible in such events and that parents/guardians are notified of accidents.

- [Board Policy 5161, Accidents](#)

Health Care, Accidents, and Emergencies

To facilitate immediate contact with parents/guardians when an accident or illness occurs, parents/guardians must complete an Emergency Data Card with the current information specified below:

1. Home address and telephone number.
2. Parent/guardian's business address and telephone number.
3. Name, address, and telephone number of a relative or friend who is authorized by the parent/guardian to care for the student when the parent/guardian cannot be reached in an emergency.
4. Local physician to call in case of emergency.

Although the District makes every reasonable effort to prevent student accidents, when an accident does occur, first aid and/or medical attention and parental/guardian notice will be provided as quickly as possible. Where medical care appears necessary, the wishes of the parent/guardian regarding treatment will be followed. In the event that the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the principal or their designee will make a judgment based on the nature of the injury, the student's statements of his/her feelings, and observations of appearance and behavior to determine if paramedic services are needed. (Education Code § 49407)

In the event of extreme emergency, including an anaphylactic reaction, school staff will call 911 for assistance, stating the nature of the problem and the name of the school, prior to notifying the parents/guardians.

- [Board Policy 5160. Health Care and Emergencies](#)
- [Board Policy 5161. Accidents](#)
- [Administrative Regulation 5.9. Accidents/Emergencies/Illness](#)

Head Lice

When an active infestation is found, the student shall be removed from class and parents/guardians informed about recommended treatment procedures, ways to check the hair, and sources of further information.

The principal shall send home the notification required by law for excluded students. (Education Code § 48213) If there is more than one student affected in any one classroom, all students in the class shall be examined and information about head lice shall be sent home to all parents/guardians of students in the class.

- [Board Policy 5141.33. Head Lice](#)

Infectious Disease Control and Prevention

In determining whether to exclude a child with a suspected or diagnosed infectious disease, District staff shall consult the child's parent/guardian and the student's physician and/or the County Health Department, as required by law. District staff may also refer to State Department of Health Services documents and/or American Academy of Pediatrics documents.

- [Board Policy 5163. Infectious Disease Control and Prevention](#)

Vision, Hearing, and Scoliosis Screenings

To determine the health status of students, facilitate the removal of impediments to learning, and determine whether special adaptations of the school program may be necessary, periodic tests for vision, hearing, and scoliosis will be conducted.

Examination results will be provided to parents/guardians but will otherwise be kept confidential. (Education Code § 49450)

A parent/guardian may annually file a statement with the principal withholding consent to any physical examination of their child. The child shall be exempt but may be subject to exclusion due to a suspected contagious or infectious disease. (Education Code § 49451)

- [Board Policy 5165, Health Examinations](#)

Safety

Bullying

The Superintendent or designee shall notify the parent/guardian of victims and perpetrators of severe or pervasive bullying and may contact law enforcement.

- [CUSD's "What to do about bullying" document](#)
- [Board Policy 5131.2, Bullying](#)
- [Administrative Regulation 5.25, Bullying](#)
- [Board Policy 1312.3, Uniform Complaint Procedure](#)
- [Administrative Regulation 1312.3, Uniform Complaint Procedure](#)

Bus Conduct

At the beginning of the school year, all K-8 students will be given classroom instruction at the school site on safe and proper student passenger conduct at bus stops, while boarding and disembarking, and when on the bus. Rules and regulations relating to bus conduct, bus driver authority, and the suspension of riding privileges are made available to parents/guardians and students and are outlined in policy.

- [Board Policy 5141.1, Bus Conduct](#)

In all instances of rider misconduct, the rider and the rider's parent/guardian shall be given notice and warning, as follows

- Confer with the student on Bus Conduct Reports. Advise the student and, as needed, their parent/guardian, that persistence in irresponsible behavior will result in denial of the privilege of riding District buses.
- Make direct parental/guardian contact on the first report as necessary, and contact parents/guardians on each subsequent report.

Surveillance may occur on any school bus, and the contents of a video or digital recording may become a student record that may be used in student disciplinary proceedings or referred to local law enforcement, as appropriate. As a confidential student record, images of other students may not be shared.

California Healthy Kids Survey

The California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) is a comprehensive youth health risk and resilience behavior data collection service available to all California districts, sponsored by the California Department of Education (CDE).

It consists of a comprehensive survey instrument that assesses all major areas of health-related behavior, as well as a full-service survey support system to help districts collect and use CHKS data to improve prevention and health programs.

In Capistrano Unified School District the survey is administered to 5, 7, 9, and 11 grade students in January-February. In addition, parents/guardians and staff are also asked to complete a survey to evaluate the school site.

Parents/guardians of students in grade 5 must opt-in to have their child take the survey. Prior to the survey window, parent/guardian will receive communication from the District that explains the purpose of the survey, details of upcoming parent/guardian information sessions, and a link to view the survey along with the opt-in form.

- [Example of Grade 5 letter to parents/guardians](#)

Parents/guardians of students in grades 7, 9, and 11 can withdraw their students from the survey (opt-out). Prior to the survey window, parents/guardians will receive communication from the District that explains the purpose of the survey, details of upcoming parent/guardian information sessions, and a link to view the survey along with the withdrawal form.

- [Example of Grade 7, 9, and 11 letter to parents/guardians](#)

Gangs

Any student wearing or displaying gang paraphernalia or making gestures that symbolize gang affiliation shall be referred to the principal or designee. The student's parent/guardian shall be contacted and the student sent home to change clothes if necessary.

- [Board Policy 5144. Gangs](#)

Immigration Enforcement

State and Federal laws provide that every child has the right to a free public education regardless of immigration status or religious beliefs.

District personnel must receive consent from the student's parent/guardian before a student can be interviewed or searched by any officer seeking to enforce the civil immigration laws at the school, unless the officer presents a valid, effective warrant signed by a judge, or presents a valid, effective court order.

District personnel shall immediately notify the student's parents/guardians if a law enforcement officer requests or gains access to a student for immigration-enforcement purposes unless such access was in compliance with a judicial warrant or subpoena that restricts the disclosure of the information to the parent/guardian.

District staff shall provide parent/guardian with Notification related to Rights, including:

- Your Child has the Right to a Free Public Education
- All children in the United States have a Constitutional right to equal access to free public education, regardless of the immigration status or religious beliefs of the student or the student's parents/guardians. (Education Code § 234.7)

In California:

- All children have the right to a free public education.
 - All children age 6 to 18 years must be enrolled in school.
 - All students and staff have the right to attend safe, secure, and peaceful schools.
 - All students have a right to be in a public school learning environment free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, violence, and intimidation.
 - All students have the right to participate in any program or activity offered by the school, and cannot be discriminated against based on their race, nationality, gender, religion, or immigration status, among other characteristics.
- [Board Policy 5145.13, Immigration Enforcement](#)

School Lockdown and Shelter-in-Place

The District strives to provide timely information regarding emergencies at our schools. When a lockdown or shelter-in-place is necessary, the number one priority is for site administrators, teachers, and classified staff to ensure the safety of students and staff.

Information regarding a shelter-in-place or a lockdown will be sent to families through School Messenger and will, in most cases, be distributed via a recorded phone call and an email message. You may also receive a text message.

Prior to sending any communication to families, we review messaging with our local law enforcement partners, to ensure accuracy. In the event of a shelter-in-place or a lockdown, we ask that parents/guardians **DO NOT REPORT TO THE SCHOOL SITE AS THIS IMPEDES THE WORK OF OUR LAW ENFORCEMENT PARTNERS AND CREATES ADDITIONAL CHALLENGES IN MAINTAINING THE SAFETY OF OUR CAMPUSES.**

Shelter in Place and Lockdown definitions and procedures are [explained in further detail here](#).

Search and Seizure

School officials may search individual students and their property and District property under the students' control when there is a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence that the student is violating the law, the rules of the District, or the school. Staff may use a metal detector when searching an individual for weapons. The parent/guardian of a student subjected to an individualized search shall be notified by the District as soon after the search as possible.

- [Board Policy 5154, Search and Seizure](#)

Student Responsibility/Liability for Property Damage, Theft, or Injury

Students and parents/guardians shall be informed that they are held financially responsible for District-owned property assigned to them.

In the event that an investigation of facts causes the principal or designee to conclude that a student's willful misconduct has resulted in injury to another person, damaged real or personal property belonging to the District or to another student or an employee/volunteer, or failed to return school property, the principal or designee shall, as appropriate, hold a conference with the student and the student's parent/guardian to review the evidence of the misconduct.

- [Board Policy 5151, Student Responsibility/Liability for Property Damage, Theft, or Injury](#)

If the principal or designee knows, observes, or suspects that the student may be under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances, they shall notify the parent/guardian. (Education Code § 44049)

In severe cases, if the parents/guardians or the school medical personnel are not immediately available, and unless the student's parent/guardian previously filed with the District a written objection to any medical treatment other than first aid, the principal or designee may call an ambulance to transport a student suspected of being under the influence of a controlled substance to a hospital.

Parents/guardians will be notified of this action and shall be responsible for the incurred expenses. (Education Code § 49407)

- [Board Policy 5131.62, Tobacco, Smoking, Vaping](#)
- [Board Policy 5143, Controlled Substances](#)
- [Board Policy 5143.2, Alcohol and Other Drugs](#)

Questioning of a Student by Law Enforcement

When a law enforcement officer requests an interview with a student, the principal or designee shall ascertain the officer's identity, official capacity, and the authority under which the officer acts.

If the officer needs to interview the student immediately, the principal or designee shall accommodate the questioning in a way that causes the least possible disruption to the educational process, gives the student appropriate privacy, and demonstrates cooperation with community law enforcement authorities. Except in cases of suspected child abuse or neglect, the principal or designee shall notify the student's parent/guardian as soon as practicable after the law enforcement officer interviews a student on school premises.

If a minor student is removed from school into the custody of law enforcement, the principal or designee shall immediately notify the parent/guardian regarding the student's release and the place to which he/she is reportedly being taken, except when the minor has been taken into custody as a victim of suspected child abuse. (Education Code § 48906)

- [Board Policy 5153. Questioning of Students By Law Enforcement](#)

Voluntary Drug Testing

Each high school or middle school may establish and maintain a voluntary drug testing program. Funding for the voluntary drug testing program shall come from sponsorships, site funds, or at the expense of the participants. Participation in this program shall require the written consent of the student and his/her parents/guardians.

- [Board Policy 5143.4, Voluntary Drug Testing](#)

END OF DOCUMENT