

## San Jose Administrator's Message for Open House 2014-2015

### Introduction

Good Evening San Jose Families, I am Monika Wolcott, principal of SJ and this is our assistant principal, Angela Heuman. We are fortunate to be sitting here this evening talking to all of you who took the time to invest in your child's academic success. It is our philosophy as the administrative team that all students who attend San Jose get the best education available. We support our teachers striving for excellence so that your children become highly skilled participants of the community. Please listen carefully to some important information necessary for the success of all students.

### Transportation

Buses begin loading at 2:35pm every day.

We currently have 4 school buses at San Jose. The safety of our students getting to and from school safely is our priority. Please remember that only students who are assigned the bus may ride the bus. Your child must be assigned by the District's transportation department to ride the bus. If you move to a new address, please stop by the front office with proof of residency of your new address so that we can get new transportation for you in a timely manner. Remember, if you live within 2 miles of the school, you are not eligible for a bus. Our bus circle is the same as it has been for years and is located in front of the office building. One way you can help us make sure students are safe on the bus is to discuss proper bus behavior with your child. Students should stay in their seats facing forward, keep their hands to themselves and use quiet voices when talking to their seatmate. Bus drivers should be watching the road, not children who are misbehaving. We also have bus assistants riding each of the four buses to help with our ESE students and with bus safety.

Please remember to be at the bus stop 10 minutes early and give a few minutes for a late bus before calling the school. We cannot control the traffic out there. Remember Kindergarteners will not be let out at the bus stop if there is not an adult there to meet them. They will be taken back to the school or to the bus compound and you will need to pick them up. Please see me if you have any safety concerns regarding your child's bus stop or bus ride. I will do whatever it takes to make sure your child is safe.

### Car Circle and Walkers and Bikers

Car Riders and Walkers/Bikers are dismissed at 2:35 every day. Please be patient in the first 2 weeks. The car circle always takes a few weeks to become efficient.

Please remember that children can ONLY be picked up and dropped off in the car circle. Having children walk off campus or in a spot not monitored by a school employee sends off safety flags as we cannot see and cannot control who picks up your child. We know the car circle is congested; here are 3 things you can do to make the procedure runs more smoothly. First, put the sign we provided with your child's name and grade printed large and neatly in the passenger, front window so we can call your child once we see you.

Second, when pulling in, alternate with the other drivers letting them in to the car circle. This will speed up dismissal. The last thing you can do is pull your car all the way down to the end of the car circle. This allows us to load 8-10 cars at a time. We will see your card in the window as you drive by and send your child to you. It is a great process when it gets going. 15 minutes after dismissal, we will walk your car-riding students to the front office and you will need to come inside to pick them up.

If you want to pick up your child by coming on campus in the afternoon, you can only park in the top 2 parking lots and walk across the sidewalk, wait for your child in the courtyard and escort them back to your car. We do not allow children to walk unescorted in any parking lot. This is for the safety of your children. Please do not park in the lower car circle parking lot and walk through car circle traffic to pick up your child. This is not safe. We will not let anyone drive your child home who is not on your child's emergency card. This is a safety feature to protect you and your family. Please have ID available when we ask. Please be careful in the upper parking lot. The lot itself is small and the parking spaces are tight. Please do not park on the Cul de Sac of San Rob, the neighborhood gets upset and it is not a safe practice.

Walkers are only allowed to cross at the designated crosswalks. We encourage students to walk in pairs or groups. If your child walks to and from school please make sure you have a talk with them about their safety. We will have many more students walking to and from school this year.

There are crossing guards on duty in the neighborhood. Biker Riders must wear a helmet per Florida State law. Bike riders should park in one of our bike enclosures. Please lock your bike and helmet at all times. Remember, you must walk your bike on school property.

### School Hours

Our school hours are from 8:35-2:35 Monday-Friday. Please do not bring your child to school before 8:05. Most mornings our teachers are in meetings or trainings and adults do not go on duty until 8:05. If these hours don't work for your schedule you will need to make child care arrangements. The Dunedin Recreation Center offers child care at San Jose. You may get information about the program in our front office. The first am bell will ring at 8:25 and the tardy bell will ring at 8:35. We are implementing a new policy at San Jose to protect the sanctity of the classroom. Once the tardy bell rings, children cannot be escorted by parents to the classroom. Please make sure your child is on time...daily. Office hours are 7:35-3:35.

### Discipline

We take children's behavior very seriously here at San Jose. One student who misbehaves might disrupt an entire class's right to learn and that is unacceptable. We need our parents help to ensure highest student achievement and the safety of all students. Each classroom teacher has a specific behavior plan that aligns to our school wide discipline plan. I urge you to listen carefully to your child's teacher when she/he goes over the classroom rules. The administration will support and enforce the individual classroom plans. We have a behavior Specialist, Mrs. Hemani who is very active with our school's behavior. Our guidance counselor, Mrs. Bickler is available for interventions and individual counseling of our students. If your child receives a behavior intervention or a referral, please sign and return the form to the teacher. We need children in school in order to learn. We will not tolerate bullying, aggressive or defiant behavior. Please make an effort to recognize our Commitment to Character traits at home with your child. They are Honesty, Motivation, Respect and Responsibility. As you walk through the campus this evening, you will see the school wide rules posted as well. We also have rules posted in the cafeteria and bathrooms. The home to school connection is very important. We use a Behavior Buck system at San Jose. Please help us make sure that your child is exhibiting positive behavior at all times.

### Cell Phones

Student cell phones are only allowed on campus for safety purposes. If you allow your child to have a cell phone, they must be kept in the child's backpack and turned off during school hours. The cell phones are the responsibility of the student. We are not liable for lost or broken phones. If we confiscate cell phones for breaking these rules we will call the parent to come and pick up the cell phone.

### Signing In

Please do not forget that every person who comes on campus must sign-in in the office. Our district mandates that every visitor must wear a nametag every time they come on any school campus during school hours. The first time you visit your id will be run through our BadgePass system, which screens for adults who should not be around children. Once in the BadgePass system this process moves quickly. If we see anyone on campus during school hours without a name tag, we will ask you to return to the office.

### Cafeteria

New this year, every child at San Jose receives FREE breakfast and FREE lunch. Yes, I said every child at San Jose receives free breakfast and free lunch! Ala carte items are still available at an extra charge. Payment can be made online or in the cafeteria. We welcome you to eat with your child in the cafeteria or outside during your child's designated lunchtime. You may only eat with your child and are not permitted to bring any other student outside with you unless you have prior written consent from that child's parent. If you bring younger siblings with you for lunch they need to be kept with you at all times.

We allow children to go outside to walk and talk (modified recess) for the last 15 minutes of their lunchtime. They must have eaten half of their lunch and followed lunchroom rules. This year when children purchase ice cream they will receive an ice-cream ticket. Once children have eaten at least half of their lunch they can get ice cream with their ticket. This will be the case for K-5<sup>th</sup> grade.

### Clinic Cards

This is very important! Please make sure you have an up to date clinic card in the office. It is so important for us to be able to reach you during the day. If your child is ill we need to reach you or a family member to get your child home. We have had children with temperatures over 101 in our clinic with no way to reach parents and have been forced to call for EMT's because no parents were reachable. Please update your informational cards when your phone numbers change. Remember...only the people you list on your clinic card can take your child from our school. If your child has health issues please make sure you work with our school nurse.

### Parent Connect

There will be times this year when we call your home via a taped message alerting parents on upcoming events, late buses, scheduling changes, testing dates, or other school related reminders. We are excited about this district wide communication tool and plan to use it to stay connected to our San Jose families. When sending this automated phone call I can also choose an email option. Please make sure the office has an email address for you if you would like to receive information in that form.

### Attendance and Tardiness

The morning bell rings at 8:35 and the students are expected to be in class at that time. 5 tardies in a month will result in a meeting with an administrator. Continued tardies will result in a referral to the school social worker. Students whom have 5 unexcused absences in one month or 10 unexcused absences in a 90-day period will be referred to the Truancy Intervention Program and a specific process that requires parent meetings will be put in place. I have attended hearings with the Pinellas County District Attorney regarding individual student's excessive absences. We need our students in school on time, every day. Please do not pick up your child early because it is convenient for you. If your child has different arrangements to go home you need to alert the office before 2:00. We will not take calls after 2:00 as we prepare for 500 children to leave the school. You should always try to schedule doctor's appointments after school hours. Please do not keep one child home because the other one is sick. Attendance is important and we need your help. If you value school, your children will as well.

### Student Planners and Parent Communication

Parents please be diligent about signing your child's planner EVERY night. This is a teacher's best form of communication with parents. Each teacher will go over their specific classroom communication plan later this evening. If you need to speak to a teacher either email them or call the school and we will put a message in their mailboxes. Our policy is that a teacher responds to you within 24 hours. If you have a concern, please go to the teacher first. Mrs. Heuman and I are available to help as well, but will always ask you to see the teacher first.

### Birthdays and Parties

The last thing we would like to go over is something that comes up every year. Birthdays! It is district policy that we are only allowed to have 2 parties a year at school. We do not celebrate birthdays in the classroom. Please do not bring in cupcakes, cookies or other items to celebrate your child's birthday. Please do not bring in a cake to be shared by the class at lunch. These items are simply NOT allowed. It is not our favorite role, to be the cupcake police, however, to follow district policy it is a role we must embrace. Children's birthdays are recognized on the Hawk News each month. You are welcome to pack a special lunch for your child or better yet, come for lunch on your child's birthday. Please help us enforce these rules consistently in our school. We truly do understand that things are not the same as when we were in school. As for birthday parties out of school...party away! However, please do not hand out party invitations to individual students at school unless you have invited the whole class.

### Closing

In closing, I would like to remind you that teachers have a conference sign-up sheet in their room. If you would like to speak one on one with your child's teacher that would be the appropriate time to do so. Please make sure you send all the documents that need to be signed and returned back with your child as soon as possible.

Before we turn you over to the classroom teachers we would like to introduce you to the specialists at our school,

We have a highly energetic and active SAC and PTA. Our meetings are held the second Tuesday of every month. SAC begins at 3:05 and PTA immediately follows at 4:05. Free child care is provided for all children by our teachers on staff. All families are invited to attend our meetings. It's important to be involved and this is the best way to share your ideas. Please join us.

Mrs. Heuman and I really appreciate the great turn out this evening.

We look forward to working with your children in order to make this the best elementary school in Pinellas County. We have a strong school community with a deep commitment to the success of all children. Let's have a great year. And now, your teacher will begin his/her presentation. Thank you!

---