

Cortina Elementary School

Parent/Student Handbook
2022-2023



Achieving Personal Excellence,
Once Child at a Time

Welcome to Cortina Elementary School

Dear Parents, Students and Community members:

It is a pleasure to welcome you to our school. At Cortina, we are committed to educate, guide, challenge and inspire your child to become a responsible learner in a safe, positive, and respectful environment. The Cortina Staff is dedicated to promoting lifelong learning through high expectations and shared goals with our parents and students. To achieve this objective, communication between the school and the home is essential. We know that each of you has a special contribution to make. It is our hope that you will work with us in the development and achievement of our goals. Research shows that children whose parents are involved in their child's education perform better in school. We would like to extend an invitation to each of you to become an active partner in your child's learning. There are many ways to become involved from volunteering in your child's classroom, becoming a member of the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), and attending school-sponsored events.

This handbook was created as a guide to help all members of our Cortina community learn about the school. Within its pages you will find information regarding school routines, general policies and procedures, office hours, and much more. An additional publication, the Higley Student Code of Conduct, clearly defines expectations for student behavior and will be provided to all families on our website. Your understanding and support of these policies and procedures helps us to establish a school environment that is respectful, conducive to learning, and ensures the safety and welfare of all students.

Thank you for partnering with us to maintain a tradition of excellence and for your continued support.

Kelly Papke
Principal

Chrissy DeBono
Assistant Principal

Table of Contents

School Day	5
Wednesday Early Dismissal	5
Health Office	5
Immunizations	5
Emergency Medical Information	6
Curriculum and Instruction	6
Instructional Minutes Guidelines	7
Textbooks	7
Promotion and Retention	7
Student Placement Procedure	8
Homework (Practice).....	8
Parent-Teacher Conferences	9
Report Cards and Progress Reports	9
ATTENDANCE	9
Leaving Early	10
Custody.....	11
CUTS Program	11
Make-up Work for Excused Absences	11
Behavior Management Plan.....	11
Bus Transportation	11
Classroom Expectations	11
Playground.....	12
Toys and Valuables	12
Cell Phones and Electronic Devices	12
Student Transportation	12
Lost and Found	12
Special Education Services.....	13
Gifted Program	13
Cluster Model with Academic Acceleration.....	13
Food Service Program	13
Instrumental Music Programs.....	14
Individual Attendance Awards	14
Honor Roll.....	14
Principal’s List.....	14
Principal’s Tiger Award	14
Character Awards	15
Birthdays and Other Celebrations.....	15

Pets	15
Messages/Dropping of Items	15
Talking to Strangers.....	16
Dress Code.....	16
Emergency Drills	17
Governing Board Meetings.....	17
Tax Credit Contributions	17
Visitors for Lunch.....	17
Volunteers.....	18
Questions, Concerns	18
Answers to Frequently Asked Questions	18

School Day

Office hours are from 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Cortina's main phone number is (480) 279-7800. The school day starts at 8:10 AM for all students. Students are dismissed at 3:05 PM. Kindergarten and 1st grade begins 8:10 AM and will be dismissed at 2:55 PM to avoid the foot traffic and crowds.

Students are **not to arrive** at the school **before 7:45 AM** as no supervision is provided for their safety until that time.

Wednesday Early Dismissal

Students will be dismissed at **1:00 every Wednesday (12:50 for K-1)**. This time will be utilized by teachers to collaborate and plan with other teachers, as well as participate in professional development opportunities.

Health Office

If a student has an illness or injury that requires more than our health office can provide, the parents will be notified and asked to seek medical help for their child. The school will notify the emergency contact persons indicated in Synergy if the parent cannot be reached. It is very important that the school be provided with current telephone numbers and an emergency contact such as grandparents or neighbor. Please contact the school health office at 279-7815 with updated information regarding your child's health/medical needs.

When it is necessary for a student to take medication during school hours the following conditions must be met:

1. If your child needs to take a prescription drug or an over-the-counter drug, the medication **must be in its original container and brought to the school by the parent or a responsible adult**. Also, when medications need to be taken home, they cannot be sent home with the student, they must be picked up by a parent or authorized adult.
2. The pharmaceutical label must be on the container of any prescription drug and must include dosage instructions and the student's name.
3. The parent must provide written direction to school personnel when the student's medication is to be administered.
4. To prevent medication overdose, Tylenol and over-the-counter-drugs will only be given between 9:00 AM and 1:00 PM.
5. All medications must be picked up by the parent at the end of the school year. Any medications not picked up will be destroyed.

Immunizations

The school health office maintains a health file on each student. An immunization record for school attendance must be completed and current before a student can be enrolled. Arizona Revised Statute §15-872 requires that a complete, up to date record, including month, day and year, of each immunization, be furnished by the parent/guardian *prior* to school attendance. The **immunization requirements** for each child entering school (K – 12) are as follows:

- **Diphtheria / Pertussis / Tetanus (DPT)** - 5 doses (4 doses acceptable if #4 dose given on or after 4th birthday)
- **Polio** - 4 doses (3 doses acceptable if #3 dose given on or after the 4th birthday)
- **Measles / Mumps / Rubella (MMR)** - 2 doses (must be given on or after the 1st birthday)
- **Hepatitis B** - 3 doses
- **Varicella (chicken pox)** – **1 dose or documented history of the disease up to age 12** (Students receiving the 1st dose of vaccine at 13 years or older need 2 doses of vaccine at least one month apart.)
- **Td or Tdap (Tetanus Booster)**–Required 5 years after the last dose of DTP/DtaP/Td Students 11 years of age and older are due for the Tdap booster once 5 years have passed since the last dose. This new requirement will be implemented during the 2007-08 school year. This booster will be required for school entry Fall 2008.

- **Meningococcal (MCV)** – 1 dose “recommended” for students 11 years of age or entering 7th grade, whichever comes first. This will be a REQUIREMENT for Fall 2008 for all students 11 years of age or entering 7th grade.

Parents/guardians are asked to inform the health office of any newly received immunizations with a copy of the immunization record in order to keep school records up to date.

Arizona Revised Statute §15-872 provides exemptions from immunization requirements for the following reasons:

- Medical Reasons – Permanent
- Medical Reasons – Temporary
- Personal Beliefs
- Documentation of Adequate Immunity to Disease

In the case of an outbreak of disease, an unimmunized child will need to be excluded from school for the duration of an outbreak.

Emergency Medical Information

Each student must have current emergency information on file in the nurse’s office. Please understand that anyone listed as an emergency contact will be permitted to pick up or check out your child. We ask that you please contact the school office at 480-279-7800 if your contact information or emergency medical information changes during the school year; therefore, if there is an emergency, we can contact you as quickly as possible.

Academics

Curriculum and Instruction

The instructional program at Cortina Elementary School is aligned to the Arizona Academic Standards. Instruction is centered around the core subjects: Language Arts (Reading/Writing), Phonics (primary grades), Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. We pride ourselves in providing rigorous and engaging learning experiences to meet the needs of all students. Programs in Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Leadership, Computer Education and Physical Education are also provided to students at different grade levels.

Instructional Minutes Guidelines

HUSD Recommended Instructional Minutes per week:

Subject	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Language Arts (Minimum)	750	750	750	750	420	420	420
Mathematics (Minimum)	300	420	420	420	420	420	420
Science (Minimum)	150	150	150	150	300	300	300
Social Studies (Minimum)	150	150	150	150	300	300	300
Specials (Fixed)	180	180	180	180	180	180	180
Lunch and Lunch Recess (Fixed)	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Site Program Time	270	150	150	150	180	180	180
Total	1950	1950	1950	1950	1950	1950	1950

Textbooks/1:1 Devices

Current textbooks and materials are used in the core subjects. HUSD uses Houghton-Mifflin to guide Language Arts instruction and McGraw-Hill My Math/Glencoe is used for math instruction. Additional materials and a variety of instructional strategies are used and are necessary to effectively prepare students for state mandated assessments and mastery of standards. Quality learning tools are used to promote continuous improvement throughout the school community. Students are responsible for lost/damaged books and technology and may need to pay for replacing the item.

Each classroom is equipped with a laptop cart to enhance instruction. Students are assigned a laptop to use in class. Laptops stay in the classroom and do not go back and forth from home to school. Students are responsible for caring for their device and reporting any damage or concerns to their teacher immediately. Students are expected to adhere to HUSD guidelines on technology use, as found in the HUSD Code of Conduct.

Promotion and Retention

Students who satisfactorily meet the requirements at their grade level will be promoted to the next grade. Parents and teachers work closely together during the school year to ensure students are progressing and mastering the grade level standards. The school administration is here to support the teacher and the parent in making decisions that are in the best interest of the student. 3rd grade students who do not pass the ELA portion of AASA will not be

promoted to the 4th grade per the Move on When Reading Law in Arizona.

If a student is not progressing satisfactorily, the teacher will contact the parent or guardian as soon as possible to discuss the concerns. Teachers will notify parents of a possible retention well in advance of the end of the school year and a plan of support for the student's academic needs will be created.

Student Placement Procedure

The classroom placement process begins in the spring and many different factors are taken into account. Teachers place students based on their academic, social and emotional needs. The placement process works to balance classes with a range of ability levels in order to broaden the educational experience for all learners. Parent input and participation in this process is valued. Parents have the option of obtaining an environmental request form from the front office and completing information regarding preferred teaching style and classroom environment. This information is reviewed during the placement process and taken into consideration as assignments are made for the following school year. Final notification regarding student placement is communicated prior to the beginning of the school year. Class changes will not be made within the first month of school. Any decisions to change classes are made per administrative approval only.

Homework (Practice)

Homework is a component of learning at Cortina as a way to support the instructional program. It helps deepen student learning and understanding and helps develop independent study skills. K-6 students at Cortina will participate in homework practice that is meaningful, appropriate and purposeful. It will support skills taught in class.

Time spent on homework should be balanced with the importance of both personal and family well-being and the wide variety of family obligations experienced in our society today. Parents and teachers are responsible for helping students know that learning occurs in the world all around them. Practicing these newly acquired skills at home without penalty helps to reinforce this learning. Practice (homework) should be the result of collaborative, thoughtful and coordinated efforts. It should be consistent within the other classes in the same grade level of the child at Cortina. Grade levels will provide more specific details and communicate with parents with regards to practice given to students each year.

Assigning homework over holidays and on weekends is discouraged, with the exception of certain units of study and make-up work. Practice will reflect accommodations and modifications of curriculum as stated in a student's IEP/504 plan. Reading is a key building block of learning and will be a consistent part of the nightly program.

At the primary grades, practice will reinforce basic skills previously taught by the teacher. At the intermediate level, practice will consist of completing, practicing, preparing and extending core academic skills. Long term projects should be limited in amount and duration and not require costly materials or significant assistance from parents. Teachers should establish checkpoints along the way to guide the students. The majority of the project work should be done at school and in class.

Practice done at home will not be assigned a grade but will be checked for completion. At appropriate times, teachers will provide feedback to the student on the skills practiced and will track for accountability. Homework will emphasize quality over quantity.

Parent's Role : Show interest. Check for accuracy nightly. Assist student when needed. Assist with organization of folder and backpack. Request homework a week prior for students for planned absences. Ensure that your child reads nightly. Contact the teacher if you have questions or concerns. Provide a suitable and consistent place to complete work.

Student's Role: Be accountable to complete and return practice to teacher. Seek help from teacher or parent when needed. Return any books and materials to school.

Teacher's Role: Guide students to establish good study habits. Plan and assign relevant work to practice. Contact parents when work is not consistently returned or is incorrect. Communicate with parents in a timely manner.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

We must work together in order for your child to be most successful in school. Ongoing communication between home and school is critical. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher to address concerns as soon as possible.

There will be regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences at the end of the first and third grading periods. Teachers will notify you in a timely manner if your child is experiencing challenges and/or doing unsatisfactory work, and a conference should be scheduled as soon as possible to plan a strategy for assisting your child in becoming successful. Teachers are available for conferences before and after school. Thursdays are reserved for late-night conferences until 7:00 p.m. Your child's teacher will notify you of times available during scheduled Parent-Teacher Conference days.

Report Cards and Progress Reports

Report cards are issued to students four times a year, at the conclusion of each grading period. A schedule of the grading periods and parent-teacher conferences is listed on the school calendar. Progress reports are available mid-quarter. Parents can view grades at any time on ParentVue (<https://parentvue.husd.org/pxp/>). Please see the front office for log-in information.

Attendance

Pursuant to School Board Policy J-1550 Student Absences & Excuses

Regular school attendance is required by state law. Teachers in grades K-6 will take attendance each morning between 8:10 and 8:20 AM. Afternoon attendance will be taken after lunch.

Regular school attendance is essential for success in school. If a student is going to be absent, parents must notify the office by phone, note or in person regarding the nature of the absence (illness or personal). On the morning of the absence, parents are to call the school attendance line before 8:55 a.m. or record the absence in ParentVUE, to report an excused absence. Any absence not verified by the attendance office during the school day will be classified as unexcused. Unexcused absences can be changed if verified by the attendance office during the school day. Changes to an unexcused absence will only be accepted within 24 hours of the date of the absence.

Unexcused absences may result in disciplinary action. The attendance line can be reached by calling 480-279-7800, pressing 2 and following the prompts. Contact the school in advance when possible, or as soon as possible on the day of the absence and each subsequent absence, but no later than 8:55 AM. When the absence is caused by an emergency, and contact cannot be made please notify the school the day the student returns to school. If no contact is made staff members may contact the home and/or work place to determine why the student is not in school. Please be aware that 10 consecutive days of unexcused absence is an automatic withdrawal for your student.

Absences have a negative impact on student learning. It is essential for the student to be present for daily learning in order to gain the necessary skills/instruction required for success. If excessive absences occur, letters will be sent to parents or phone calls will be made to parents. In these circumstances site administrators will work with parents to create a plan to aide in getting the student to school consistently. Excessive tardies and/or absences may result in a referral to the CUTS program. This may result in a meeting with a representative of the Arizona Superior Court and/or possible citation.

Leaving Early

When a student is going to be dismissed early from school, the parent must come to the office and sign out the student, stating the date, time, student's name, the name of person taking the student, and the reason for the dismissal. If the student returns the same day, parents must sign the student back in. The student will receive an admission slip before returning to class.

Anyone checking out a student early **MUST** have a photo identification and must be listed in Synergy. For the safety of our students there will be **NO EXCEPTIONS**. Students will not be called from class until the authorized adult has arrived on campus. This policy minimizes loss of instructional time.

Custody

For the safety of our students, we ask that you provide us with copies of any relevant court documents, if there are custody concerns. Without proper documentation on file, we do not have the authority to enforce those legal agreements. In addition, if you will be unavailable and are leaving your child in the care of someone else, please notify the school so that necessary paperwork can be completed to allow this person access to your child during your absence. Without proper documentation, we are unable to release your child to and/or release information about your child to anyone who is not authorized.

CUTS Program

Excessive tardies and/or absences may result in a referral to the CUTS program. This may result in a meeting with a representative of the Arizona Superior Court and/or possible citation. If children are late to school, they must report to the office before going to the classroom. Parents must come in to the office (when dropping students off) or call prior to the child arriving at school to report the tardy student in order for it to be excused. The student will be given a pass to take to the classroom teacher.

Make-up Work for Excused Absences

When students have an excused absence, they will be allowed two days of make-up time for each day missed. This deadline can be extended, when there is adequate need, by contacting the child's teacher. There will be no penalty if the "made-up" assignment is turned in within the allotted time. **It is the responsibility of the student to obtain and complete the missed assignments.**

Discipline

Behavior Management Plan

All members of Cortina's school staff care about students' rights and safety. As such, we want to provide a pleasant environment in which to learn. It is our goal to teach and help students learn appropriate behavior in classrooms, in hallways, on the playground, in the lunchroom, on the bus, and during performances and presentations. A Behavior Matrix is utilized at Cortina to help communicate consistent expectations of students while on our campus. A Cortina Tiger Always ROARS ([see matrix](#)). The Higley Unified School District "Student Code of Conduct" provides detailed information regarding student discipline and consequences. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the Code of Conduct. It can be found at <https://www.husd.org/cms/lib/AZ01001450/Centricity/Domain/734/CodeofConduct.pdf>

Bus Transportation

Riding a bus is a privilege. Arizona law does not require school districts to transport students. Riding a bus is not a right. This privilege can be revoked if behavior is inappropriate and/or endangers the safety of others. Parents are responsible for transporting students to school if they lose bus privileges. School rules apply at the bus stop. Additional bus stop rules are as follows:

- Be on time for the bus before and after school
- Stand a safe distance back from the curb or street
- Always listen to the bus driver for instructions

Classroom Expectations

At our school, every child is expected to maintain community standards of expected behavior. These standards include the six pillars of character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. No student may interfere with the learning of others. We have a school-wide behavior expectation matrix which outlines student behavioral expectations and provides a common language for those expectations while on campus.

The Cortina Classroom Behavioral Expectations is available [here](#).

Additionally, each teacher/class will develop their own discipline plan based on the following guidelines:

- The discipline plan will always allow the student to retain his/her dignity while addressing behaviors.
- The discipline plan will allow instruction to continue with minimal interruption.
- The discipline plan will include levels of parental communication.
- The discipline plan will address disruptive student behavior.

Playground

Student safety is the number one rule on our playground. Students will be expected to follow the instructions the first time they are given by adult staff. Consequences for unsafe behavior will range from an informal conference, lunch detention, to suspension from school, as per the Code of Conduct.

Toys and Valuables

Students are discouraged from bringing toys, or other valuable items to school. If students choose to bring such items or athletic equipment to school, they will assume all responsibility. If the item is lost, stolen, or damaged there will be no investigation by school administration or teachers to retrieve it.

Cell Phones and Electronic Devices

To keep the learning environment free from distraction, cell phones are not permitted for use during the school day (this includes Apple watches). We encourage students to leave electronic devices at home. If a device is brought to school, it must be turned off and kept in backpacks during school hours on campus, including lunch and recess. **Taking pictures of others or recording them is strictly prohibited.**

The District/School Staff may temporarily confiscate a cell phone and/or other electronic equipment if the student's possession or use of the item is causing a disruption to the educational environment and the student has failed to comply with verbal direction from an adult to cease the disruption. Generally, the item will be returned to the student or the parent at the conclusion of the school day.

Students who need to contact a parent or guardian during the day, may do so by using the school's front office phones or, with teacher permission, phones located in the classrooms. Parents can also leave messages for students during the school day, by calling the school's front office.

Student Transportation

Students should always lock their bicycles and/or non-motorized scooters inside the bike rack. Skateboards will not be allowed on campus. Heelys (shoes with wheels) are prohibited on campus. If a student's bicycle is stolen or vandalized it is the parent's responsibility to notify the police and file a report.

Lost and Found

Students may check for lost and found items in the PE Hallway. Please be sure that your child's clothing and other items brought to school are clearly marked with his/her name. Items that are not claimed will be donated to a local

charitable organization at the end of each grading period. The school cannot be responsible for personal belongings brought to school by students.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Special Education Services

Cortina Elementary School has special education programs on campus designed to help students who may have specific needs beyond what is offered in the general education classroom. Some of these programs include: speech, SLD, Self-Contained Cross Categorical. Additional programs are available within the district for qualifying students.

Gifted Program

The Gifted program is available in grades 3 through 6. The program is designed to meet the needs of students who are academically advanced in mathematics and language arts. Students in grades 3 through 6, who qualify, will receive services through qualified teachers within the general education classroom, push in support, and resources during the school day. The gifted coach will work with teachers in kindergarten through 2nd grade to provide resources to support enrichment needs within the classroom. For information on the referral process and testing, please speak to your child's teacher.

Cluster Model with Academic Acceleration

Students identified as gifted or talented in grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 are clustered together with a classroom teacher who has or is working toward a gifted endorsement. Students are ability grouped for math and ELA instruction. Curriculum compacting allows for students to work at and above grade level. In math, students learn math concepts and skills at an accelerated pace. In English Language Arts, students read from the adopted curriculum as well as read novels that are at a Lexile level commensurate with their reading level. Students engage in discussion, critical reading and book clubs to develop their reading comprehension and further their passion for reading. The site gifted coach provides daily push-in support for math acceleration. The site gifted coach is a resource for ELA curriculum and instruction.

Food Service Program

The Higley Unified School District, in partnership with Chartwells Food Service, provides a balanced and nutritious lunch for its students. A la Carte snack options are available to students each Wednesday. Eligible students may qualify for the free or reduced-price lunch program. Students may purchase milk or juice if they bring their own lunch. For the past two school years, all students were able to have a lunch free of charge. This program will no longer be available for the 2022-2023 school year.

Forms for the Free/Reduced Lunch Program will be available online at www.husd.org. Forms will also be sent home with every child at the beginning of the year for parents to complete in the event they are eligible for free or reduced priced lunches.

Students who will be buying lunches and/or milk will be asked to deposit money into their accounts. At this time, deposits can be made on-line (www.mymealtime.com) or in the cafeteria. Please place your payment in a sealed envelope clearly marked with your child's name, student ID number, teacher, and room number. *Deposits of \$10 or more each time are suggested.* Breakfast is \$2.00. The cost for lunch is \$2.90 per day. Deposits may be made between the hours of 7:45 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. The cost of each day's lunch or milk will be deducted from his/her account. You are strongly encouraged to keep a balance in your child's account. Contact the cafeteria manager with any questions 480-279-7820.

Instrumental Music Programs

Band and Orchestra are curricular programs with extra-curricular performance requirements offered at our school for students in grades 5 and 6. Although participation in these programs is optional, it is expected that students who join Band or Orchestra will commit to their chosen ensemble for at least one full school year. Students will also be required to obtain the class method book, a musical instrument, and supplies to use for the class.

Although Cortina does own a few instruments which can be rented for \$50.00 per year based on need, instrument rental programs offered through several different music stores in the surrounding area are a good way to take care of this requirement. Please contact the school for more information about these programs.

STUDENT RECOGNITION AWARDS

Individual Attendance Awards

Regular school attendance is vital to student learning. Students are expected to arrive on time and attend school daily. Certificates are issued at the end of each school year in recognition of those students who have maintained exemplary attendance throughout the year. Exemplary attendance means that students have not missed any school days, they have zero tardies, nor have they been signed out early.

Honor Roll

Honor Roll eligibility **begins in fourth grade**. To qualify for Honor Roll a student must:

- Receive all 4's and/or 3's in reading, writing, math, science and social studies. In 6th grade all A's and/or B's should be earned.
- Receive a satisfactory (S) grade in all non-letter graded areas
- Exceptions include any extra-curricular coursework.

Principal's List

Principal's list eligibility **begins in fourth grade**. To qualify for the Principal's List a student must:

- Receive all 4's in reading, writing, math, science and social studies. In 6th grade all A's must be earned.
- Receive a satisfactory (S) grade in all non-letter graded areas
- **Extra-curricular coursework grades are included in consideration for Principal's List.**

Principal's Tiger Award

This is an award available for all 5th and 6th grade students. The award can be earned each year in those grades. The award will be based on a system of students meeting the following requirements, having them signed off by the appropriate staff member/parent and submitted to the principal.

Requirements:

- Principal's List/Honor Roll first 3 quarters
- Attendance: No more than 8 total absences during the year.
- 10 hours of service to the school, community, and/or church group.
- Demonstrate 6 pillars of character consistently:
 - Responsibility
 - Respect
 - Citizenship
 - Trustworthiness
 - Fairness

- Caring
- (No office referrals)
- Participation in an extracurricular activity such as Band, athletics, clubs, Ambassadors, NJHS, Student Council, etc.
- Spend a one-on-one lunch interview with the principal during the year
- Complete the required reading for your grade level by April 1: Please see your Language Arts teacher for the list. (School library availability is limited, and you may need to purchase or rent book from local library)

Character Awards

Each month a specific character trait will be featured as a focus for all students. Students will be nominated for student of the month based on the focus character trait of the month. Each quarter, these students will be recognized at an awards assembly for helping to contribute to a positive school culture.

Students can earn “Kindness Recognitions” by any staff member at any time for demonstrating kindness towards others. The student’s name and their good deed will be read on the announcements. We hope to recognize at least 2 students each day (a total of 10 a week). A paper with the student’s name will go up on the “Kindness Board” by the front office. Every Friday, 2 names from the 10 will be randomly selected. Those two selected students will be able to come to the office for a prize following the announcements.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Birthdays and Other Celebrations

The District discourages the delivery of gifts (i.e. balloons, flowers) to students during the school day. The office will not be able to accept deliveries that do not support the educational process. This includes items such as gifts, flowers, and balloons. Exceptions to this policy may be made at the discretion of the Principal for certain holidays or in special circumstances. The school does not assume responsibility for damage to or loss of such items. If items that do not support the educational process are brought to school, they will be given to students at the end of the school day.

Pets

For the safety of all students, please do not bring pets on campus. This includes dogs coming onto campus with a leash. An adult may bring pets to the classroom for educational purposes only. Animals must be transported in a proper enclosure and/or cage. Written permission must have been received from the site administration. Animals cannot be transported on school buses. If a pet follows a student to school, the office will contact the student’s home to arrange for pick up.

Messages/Dropping of Items

We will make every effort to ensure that messages are given to students during school hours. Please try to refrain from calling in messages the last 30 minutes of the school day. It makes it extremely difficult to make sure your student receives the message due to all the activity at the end of the day. Please communicate transportation plans to your child(ren) before they come to school. **If there is a change in transportation methods, please contact the school by 2:30 so that the message can be relayed in time.**

In the busy rush of the morning, we understand that sometimes students leave home forgetting certain items. The office will accept the following items which will be left on a cart in the lobby for the student to come and pick up before the end of the school day.

- Glasses
- Medication (Health Office)
- Replacement shoes or change of clothes (due to accidents or broken shoes)
- Personal Hygiene Products
- Water bottles
- Backpacks or educational materials

Items are placed on the cart at the risk of the person dropping them off. The office/school will not assume responsibility of lost or stolen items.

Talking to Strangers

Any problems with strangers are to be immediately reported. Students are not to get into an automobile or any form of transportation with a stranger. They are not to accept gifts, food, or anything else from a stranger. Students are not to follow a stranger anywhere, no matter what he or she says or what sort of treat or incentive is promised. Students are not to talk to strangers.

Dress Code

The District encourages students to take pride in their attire as it relates to the school setting. Students should dress in a manner that, in addition to the following guidelines, takes into consideration the educational environment, safety, health, and welfare of self and others. To that end, students are expected to adhere to the following dress standards: Clothing that immodestly exposes the chest, abdomen, midriff, genital area or buttocks is not permitted. Shirts and tops may not expose the bare midriff while standing or sitting, nor be deeply/narrowly cut in the front, back, or under the arms. Shirts and tops must not be halter-tops or have spaghetti straps. Shirt and top straps must be at least 1.5 inches wide. Bra straps must not be showing. Clothing may not be made of see-through fabric. **Clothing must cover the entire buttocks and a modest area of the legs.** Shorts and skirts must be fingertip length when hands are held straight down at their sides. Clothing that exposes underwear will not be tolerated. Pajamas are not considered appropriate clothing to wear to school.

- Clothing items may not create an atmosphere of threat, intimidation or undue pressure.
- Safe footwear must be worn at all times. Safety requirements for specific classes such as industrial technology, life management, physical education and chemistry must be followed.
- Jewelry shall not be worn if it presents a safety hazard to self and/or others. Chains, spiked collars, spiked wristbands, body pierced jewelry and other similar accessories may fall into this category.
- Clothing may not display or suggests obscene, sexual, or violent language or symbols.
- Clothing may not display or advertise alcohol, drugs, tobacco or any illegal or controlled substance or item.
- The only acceptable headwear allowed that may be worn at school are hats and visors in their original unaltered condition. Students shall remove their headwear when in a building or when requested to do so by faculty or staff. Bandannas, hairnets, knit stocking caps and so forth, are not to be worn at school.

To minimize loss of instructional time, students who are dress coded will not be allowed to call home and wait for a change of clothes. Instead, he/she will need to change into appropriate clothing given by the nurse. Student's will be given back their confiscated item upon returning the item that was given to them. Any clothing held for more than 30 days might be donated to a non-profit organization.

The Board, the Superintendent and/or school administrators may revise student dress standards as is necessary to minimize disruption and increase student safety. School administrators will make the final decision regarding the appropriateness of a student's appearance while the student is at school.

Emergency Drills

Fire and other emergency drills are held on a periodic basis to teach students the safest, quickest route from the school buildings. As a district and school, we are always evaluating processes to ensure that we are taking all possible measures to maintain student and staff safety. All students, volunteers, and guests must follow the emergency procedures.

- Follow teacher directions
- Leave all work and line up immediately.
- Know the emergency exit route from each room. Routes will be posted.
- Without talking, walk in a line until reaching designated areas.
- Remain in line facing away from the building and wait until the teacher directs the students to return to class.

Visitors who arrive at the school during an emergency drill will be asked to wait in the parking lot until the drill is concluded.

Governing Board Meetings

The Higley Unified School District #60 Governing Board has one to two scheduled meetings a month. Public notices are posted at each school site and the district office at least twenty-four hours before the meeting is scheduled to occur. The notice will state the date, time, and location of the meeting, as well as a meeting agenda.

Tax Credit Contributions

Arizona law (ARS 43-1089.01) allows taxpayers a tax credit for contributions paid during the taxable year to a public school for the support of extracurricular activities or character education programs.

This tax credit is 100% deductible from your taxes and is available to Arizona individual taxpayers. There is no requirement that the taxpayer have a child enrolled in a public school to get the credit.

Contributions made by single, or head of household taxpayers cannot exceed **\$200**. For married taxpayers that file a joint return, the credit cannot exceed **\$400**. The amount of the tax credit does not have to be for the total allowable amount, any amount can make a difference.

You may indicate where you would like your contribution to go. Contributions may be split between schools and/or between different activities. Contributions can be made to music, for field trips, character education, athletics (you may specify the sport or activity), sports participation fees, and clubs. If no preference is made, the schools will use the contribution where it is needed the most. Contributions can be made at any time during the calendar year but must be made in the calendar year that you wish to claim the deduction. Contributions can also be accepted at any of the schools or can be mailed to the district office.

Visitors for Lunch

Cortina administration and our safety committee continuously seek ways to implement best practices to ensure student safety. We are all committed to ensuring the safety of your children and would like to ask for your support in abiding by the following procedures:

- Sign in and get a visitor's pass.
- Meet your child in the cafeteria.
- We ask that you not share/bring food for other students.
- Please refrain from taking photos or videos of students other than your own.
- Understand that our lunch aides are required to monitor student behavior at all times and for this reason, we need for the lunch aides to be able to guarantee student location and safety.
- When done eating, **please allow your child to go to the playground independently.**

Volunteers

Parents who volunteer their time and services to the school are appreciated. Help is needed in the classrooms, library, office, school programs and school grounds. Volunteers must sign in at the school office and must get a visitor's pass. **Other children or guests are not permitted to accompany volunteers. In addition, only authorized volunteers will be permitted to attend field trips. Anyone choosing to drive themselves to a public field trip site will not be allowed to participate with the students/classes, as this is a private activity and only authorized individuals who have been cleared through our volunteer screening process may participate.** Parents interested in volunteering should contact the front office at 480-279-7800 to fill out the appropriate paperwork.

Questions, Concerns

We are here to serve our community and will do our best to meet your needs. However, if issues do arise, parents are encouraged to keep the school informed of their concerns and questions. The usual line of communication in a school is to first contact the teacher, then the assistant principal or principal, if necessary. Depending on meeting schedules, professional development, or other professional responsibilities, immediate responses are not always possible. **Please allow at least 24 hours** to receive a response when calling or emailing teachers or administrators. We will make every effort to ensure that we respond in a timely fashion. If immediate assistance is required, please contact the front office at 480-279-7800. Joint efforts between parents, teachers, and school administration will frequently solve most problems and answer most questions. We appreciate your support and understanding.

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

- Messages for teachers or students should be left on the teacher's voice mail or e-mail. Please contact the office if you have an emergency.
- Please call **279-7800 option #2** to report absences.
- Please do not hesitate to call the school office at 279-7800 if you have any other questions.