



Coalhurst
Elementary School
Parent Handbook
2024-2025

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[Welcome to CES!](#)

[Coalhurst Elementary School](#) delivers the Alberta Program of Studies for pre-Kindergarten to Grade Six. CES students work in safe, caring and inclusive environments where the use of effective and research-based strategies and resources are prioritized. Here, the opportunities for growth, and celebration of student progress in a rich learning environment, are ever expanding. We are

dedicated to progressive initiatives which effectively combine with our many teaching strategies to achieve excellence and success for your child(ren).

We value working cooperatively with parents to provide the best learning environment and opportunities for all students. We invite parents and family members to be active, engaged partners in the learning experience. Together we can make a difference for every child in the school community. Take a moment and review the handbook to help inform yourself on what Coalhurst Elementary School has to offer and to implement some strategies to help both you and your child have a successful school year. Thank you for sharing your children with the staff at CES. We look forward to working with you in the 2023-2024 school year.

Communication and Collaboration

Website [Coalhurst Elementary School](#)
 Facebook Coalhurst Elementary School
 School Phone (403) 381-3330

The research on effective schools is clear; students achieve better when parents and teachers work well together. Problems and concerns are more effectively resolved when communication occurs early. Regardless of the type of communication, (concern, information sharing, query etc.) it is crucial to remember that all parties have the same goal: **wanting the best for the student.**

If you have any concerns about your child please meet with the teacher involved. If a parent/guardian does not feel their needs are being met, the following appeal procedure should be followed:



Please phone the office to set up meeting times or to relay messages to your child. Throughout the day teachers are focused on classroom instruction so are not able to respond to Dojo messages, texts or emails.

School Information

Vision

Success for Every Child

Mission

Our connection is **community**

Our virtue is **kindness**

Our focus is **writing** and **mathematics**

Our strength is **diversity**

Calendar

A digital copy of the CES 2024-2025 calendar is located [here](#).

A digital copy of the CES Kindergarten 2024-2025 calendar is located [here](#).

School/Bell Times

Office Hours:

7:45 am to 3:45 pm Monday to Thursday

7:45 am to 12:15 pm Friday

A digital copy of our bell schedules is located [here](#).

Early Education Program

Monday-Thursday

8:30 - 11:30

12:20 - 3:20

Staff supervision assignments begin at 8:15 am. Please ensure students do not arrive prior to this time.

[Multi-age Philosophy](#)

Our classroom organization in grades 3-6 is grounded on our strong belief in multi-age philosophy. A multi-age class is formed by deliberately placing students together with differences in age and abilities in order to facilitate the overall development of each child within a family-like community of learners. We split our grade 1 and 2 classes and loop the teachers for two years.

To read more about our multi-age approach click [here](#) to go to our website.

[Absence Procedures](#)

Please notify the school of student absences or late arrivals as soon as possible. Punctuality and regular attendance are essential for your child's progress at school and the attendance procedure is a legal obligation of the school. Notice can be given through the Online Attendance link on our school webpage, by emailing Barbara.vos@pallisersd.ab.ca, or by phoning the school at 403-381-3330.

If absences are not reported prior to 8:45, an automated notification from our system will continue to alert all contacts listed until the absence has been confirmed. This is a safety procedure to ensure both the parents and the school that children have arrived at school safely or are at home and cannot be bypassed by staff. **Please make sure that you update the office with phone number or address changes.**

Students arriving on time experience a smooth transition to the school day, and demonstrate respect to the class; conversely, students arriving late disrupt the classroom activities. Children must report to the school office when late or returning for the day after an absence.

CES attendance policy mirrors that of Palliser Regional Schools, and follows the pertinent sections of the School Act (13, 14, 15, 60). Consequently, in cases of excessive absences (more than 15%), if necessary, the matter will be referred to the division's Attendance Officer and subsequently to the Attendance Board. For further information in this regard, please visit [Palliser Regional Schools Administrative Procedure 330 - Student Attendance](#).

Student Safety

Allergy Awareness at CES

CRITICAL NOTICE: CES HAS INSTITUTED A SCHOOL-WIDE BAN ON NUT PRODUCTS FOR THE 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR. AS PER OUR POLICY STATEMENT BELOW, A BAN ON (NUT) PRODUCTS IS ONLY INITIATED WHERE NECESSARY, THEREFORE, WE STRESS THAT ALL FOOD PRODUCTS MUST BE NUT FREE FOR THE SAFETY AND WELL BEING OF ALL STUDENTS.

Anaphylaxis is a severe and potentially life threatening allergic reaction. Coalhurst Elementary staff strive to maintain a safe environment for our students and staff by being allergy aware.

It was once believed that the best course of action was simply to ban all potential allergens. Automatic bans are not entirely effective because they do not assist with educating the greater community on the issues and actions needed in case of emergencies. It is also important to note that no school can ever claim to be allergen-free even where bans exist. Coalhurst Elementary School does not have a school-wide ban on any products though regional, classroom bans may exist and we will always be responsive to the changing needs of our students and staff. A flexible plan will be developed to support students and staff on a case-by-case basis each school year.

Role of Parents:

All parents of children with severe allergies shall complete a *Medical Alert Form*. This form will summarize the allergy, the appropriate avoidance strategies, and the emergency responses that are supported through the family physician. In the absence of this form the staff do not have the appropriate information to provide the appropriate level of service.

Role of the Principal:

Annually, or as needed, the principal or designate will:

1. Review school-wide allergy procedures with all staff including the profiles of all students with allergies.
2. Communicate the emergency protocol to staff for all students with allergies.
3. Communicate our school plan to stakeholders. This plan may include classroom bans on products, school-wide or classroom allergen safe zones, handwashing guidelines, and cleaning guidelines. Consideration will also be given to the strategic placement of students in homerooms so risk of anaphylaxis is reduced (ie. students with pet allergies not placed in the same classroom as students with guide dogs).

Role of Teachers:

Annually, or as needed, classroom teachers will:

1. Review and understand the *Medical Alert Forms* of all students under their care.
2. Where applicable, ensure that there is an appropriate plan in place to address emergency situations.
3. Develop a plan for communicating allergen awareness to all parents and students in the classroom being mindful of the right to privacy.

Role of All Staff:

All staff have a responsibility to respond in the event of an emergency.

1. The appropriate number of staff will have first aid training. Staff who respond to an emergency are protected under the *Alberta Emergency Medical Aid Act*.
2. All staff, whether trained in first aid or not, should have an understanding of how to use an EpiPen.
3. All staff will know the whereabouts of epi-pens for each student or know how to access this information.

Role of Students:

Students with allergies are their own best ambassadors and the level of personal responsibility shall increase with age and cognitive ability in partnership with parents.

Bicycle and Scooter Safety

Students riding bicycles and scooters to school must know and practice safety protocol. The following guidelines have been established to prevent accidents and to help in the development of good riding habits.

1. Bikes and scooters must be walked on school property during school hours
2. Bikes and scooters must be placed in the bike and scooter racks until the end of the school day
3. Every effort is made to provide a secure space for storage of bikes and scooters, however, these are still brought to school at the owner's risk. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen bikes or scooters.
4. Helmets are required under the law in Alberta for those under the age of 18.

CES Code of Conduct

The primary focus of the code of conduct is on helping students learn how to resolve issues peacefully, develop empathy, and contribute to welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments that respects diversity, fosters a sense of belonging and a positive sense of self. Student discipline is not judgmental, arbitrary, confusing or coercive. Rather, it shows individuals what they have done wrong; it gives them ownership for the problem; it provides a process for solving the issue they have created; and it leaves their dignity intact. The goal should be to instruct, teach, guide

and help students develop self-discipline so that learning can be maximized for all students.

For meaningful and lasting change to occur, students must be an integral part of the process. Students need to be part of preventing as well as solving problems. They need authentic opportunities to share their ideas regarding safety, inclusivity, leadership and responsibility to and within the school community. This involvement helps create a sense of ownership and encourages students to advocate for themselves and others, personally and collectively.

Click here for a digital copy of our [Bullying Protocol](#).

Basic Guidelines for Students at CES:

1. Everyone is expected to act respectfully to others in the school building.
2. Students should arrive at school no sooner than 8:15 am. Supervision is not available prior to this time.
3. Students must remain on the school grounds at all times throughout the day. Permission to leave the school grounds may only be given by the administration or classroom teacher after permission is obtained from the parent or guardian.
4. All students will play outdoors prior to school and at recess unless it is excessively cold. At these times, indoor supervision will be provided. We may also play outside even when the temperature is below -20C and children should dress appropriately.
5. Students require permission and/or a supervisor in order to be in the school during break periods, before school, or after school.
6. To avoid overcrowding at exits, students are required to use their assigned doorways.
7. Rough play, tackling or wrestling activities are unacceptable.
8. Bicycles and scooters are to be "walked" on the school grounds and locked at all times.
9. Students are encouraged to keep our school and playground areas clean as the environment we work and play in is important.
10. The telephones in the office are for school business. Students are to plan for a ride home or going to a friend's house prior to coming to school.
11. Students are encouraged to leave special toys and other valuable possessions at home to prevent damage or loss. Trading cards of any kind (ie. Pokemon) cause problems and are to be left at home.

Fire Drills

Evacuation drills are an essential component of the school safety program. To ensure students receive proper guidance in coping with emergencies, District policy requires six practice evacuation drills throughout the school year.

Inclement Weather

Students are expected to be outside until 8:25 and during recess breaks. However, in the event of extremely cold weather, students may stay inside. During such weather, students should arrive just before school starts and be dressed appropriately for the temperatures. Students choosing to arrive unprepared for the weather may borrow winter clothing from the office staff on a limited basis.

Lockdown

Safety and security are essential in order to ensure an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. To that end, we understand the societal realities and possibilities that major incidents might occur. Ensuring the safety and security of students in the least intrusive fashion guides our practice lockdown procedures. A practice lockdown occurs twice per year in order to avoid desensitization and therefore the potential for under-reaction to a serious event.

Student Drop-Off and Pick-Up/Visitors

Visitors are always welcome at CES, however, it is the school's responsibility to ensure that the security and well-being of our students is uncompromised at all times. In order to ensure school safety and security, and to limit the disruption of instruction which occurs when hallways are congested, all exterior doors will stay locked until 8:20 am. Once school begins exterior doors will be relocked for the remainder of the school day. Prior to the end-of-day dismissal bell, students and staff are not able to open doors for any person. **Parent/guardian/visitor access during the day will only be through the main entrance.** Preschool parents may enter through the preschool doors via a staff member.

Should parents, or other previously authorized adults, need to take their children out of school during regular school hours, please come to the office and complete the sign-out information. We will call the classroom so that your child can come and meet you in the office. If you are returning your child to school after an appointment, please sign them back in at the office.

Students enter the building using designated entryways and are led into the school by their teachers. They are dismissed outside by the teachers.

Threat Assessment Protocol

Palliser Regional Schools' Threat Assessment Protocol is used when responding to high-risk and worrisome student behaviours. In order to enhance a sense of safety and security for everyone in our schools, Palliser Regional Schools has zero tolerance for high-risk behaviours. Should any student engage in behaviour which threatens or

appears to threaten the safety of others, our protocol for dealing with high-risk behaviours will be activated. (Should you wish to review Administrative Procedure #317 — Threat Assessment Protocol, please check out our website at www.pallisersd.ab.ca.) You might also contact Shane Cranston, Director of Learning, at the above address and phone number for more information as well. It would be helpful if you would discuss this policy with your child(ren). We appreciate your support in ensuring our schools are safe environments for your child(ren).

Student Programming

Student Assessment and Reporting

Staff at Coalhurst Elementary School use a variety of assessment strategies to gather authentic and on-going evidence of a child's growth and learning. The report card is a formal summary of the student's current academic achievement, work habits and citizenship. The information reflects the student's development of demonstrated understanding, skills and knowledge relative to outcomes contained in the Program of Studies. In addition to academic achievement, development of attributes critical to success as a contributing, caring citizen is also shared. Through the process of reporting, teachers, parents and students are encouraged to discuss a student's performance and identify strategies for future progress and achievement.

There are three formal reporting periods during the school year. These occur in November, March and June. Parent-student-teacher conferences provide opportunities to review student progress and set goals for future learning. Requests for additional meetings with your child's teacher are welcome and may also be scheduled at any time throughout the year.

Digital Device Procedure: “Away for the Day”

Digital Device Definition:

A “digital device” is any handheld device (smartphone, iPod, iWatch, gaming device, etc.) that has internet access, texting, music or gaming capabilities.

It does not include personal laptops, iPads, and tablets brought to school for educational purposes.

Away for the Day:

Digital devices are not to be used or visible at any time during the school day. This includes recesses.

All digital devices must be placed in student backpacks or in a teacher-approved classroom storage immediately upon entering the building.

At the end of the school day students are free to use their devices within the school.

Messages To and From Students:

Urgent messages from parents should be called into the main office. School office personnel will forward these to our students.

We encourage all parents to ensure that after-school plans and early-dismissal pick-ups are well communicated to your child before the school day.

Students who need to contact a parent during the day can do so from the student phone in the front entry with teacher permission.

Music and Headphones: These procedures apply to headphones and digital devices used for playing music. Students who have music as an accommodation specifically identified in their Individualized Program Plan will be exempt from this rule for the playing of music only. These students will keep their device on airplane mode to negate incoming texts, emails and notifications.

Special Situations: There may be certain learning situations where the use of digital devices is deemed appropriate by staff. In this case, the use of the device will be under direct teacher supervision. Students who may need to use the device throughout the school and therefore are not under direct teacher supervision (e.g. for digital photography, filming) may be given teacher permission to use their devices.

Digital No Use Zones: At absolutely no time (including after school hours) are digital devices to be used in the washroom or change room areas.

How will teachers handle inappropriate use?

Teachers may choose to work through the following sequence of responses:

1. The digital device must be stored away in the designated classroom location or a backpack. Teachers will remind students and parents of this offense.
2. The digital device must be stored away in the designated classroom location or a backpack. Teachers will remind students and parents of this second offense and the student will be asked to keep their device at home.
3. The digital device must be stored away in the designated classroom location or a backpack. Teachers will report the offense to school administration and the matter will be discussed between the student, the parents, and the administration.
4. Should there be further offenses involving digital devices the result may include increasing disciplinary action due to defiance with regards to Coalhurst Elementary School procedures.

Please note: The school does not take responsibility for the theft of any digital devices brought to the school.

Field Trips

Throughout the year teachers extend and enrich the educational experiences of students by going out into the community. Field trips are carefully planned by the classroom teacher to support the Alberta curriculum.

To give students as many quality extra experiences as possible, parents are asked to help out by assisting with supervision on field trips, filling out and returning digital permission forms ([School Cash Online](#)) promptly and helping children in preparing for their field trip experiences (gathering the necessary resources). Written permission is required for all field trips. It is expected that students will attend field trips with their class, or remain at school under the supervision of another teacher. Staying at home for the day is not considered an alternative. Parents are encouraged to call the teacher if they have any questions. Students must observe the same behaviour guidelines as they would in their classroom as they are representatives of the school when they are in the larger community. Students who choose not to follow behaviour guidelines, both at school and while on field trips may lose the privilege of participating in future field trip experiences and will instead remain at school. Parents will be informed if this situation occurs.

Note that CES uses a general field trip form for all in-town excursions (Terry Fox Run, trips to the water park etc). This field trip form is located in [School Cash Online](#).

General Information

Lost and Found

Lost and found articles are placed on the lost and found rack in the front entrance of the school. Although many attempts are made to get items back to the rightful owner, children often don't recognize their belongings. If names are not clearly marked on all of their items, it makes it very difficult to match them to their rightful owners. You can help by labelling ALL of the articles that your child brings to school. The school is not responsible for replacing lost items. Parents, when you visit the school, please make it a habit to check the lost and found area for family belongings. Unclaimed items are donated to a thrift store approximately every two months.

Recess

Recess is a regular part of the elementary school day and students are expected to participate. Recess benefits every aspect of childhood development: physical, social, emotional and intellectual. Young children don't tend to process information as effectively as older children (due to the immaturity of their nervous systems and their lack of experience), so benefit the most from taking a break for unstructured play.

Benefits for all students include:

- **Increased focus.**
- **Improved wellness.** Natural light stimulates the part of the brain that helps regulate our biological clock. It is vital to the immune system, and simply makes us feel better. Outside light also triggers the synthesis of vitamin D, which a number of studies have demonstrated increases academic learning and productivity.
- **Reduced stress.** Unstructured physical play is a developmentally appropriate means of reducing stress—a valuable benefit given that stress has a negative impact on learning and health. For many children recess is an opportunity to expend energy in a healthy, suitable manner. Outside, they can engage in behavior—loud, messy and boisterous—considered unacceptable indoors. And because recess is a break from structure and expectations, children have an opportunity to take control of their world, which is often a rarity in their lives.
- **Develops social skills.** Recess may be the only time during the day when children have an opportunity to experience socialization and real communication.
- **Physical activity feeds the brain.** Most of the brain is activated during physical activity. Studies have shown that students who are physically active improve their academic performance, achieve higher test scores and demonstrate a better attitude toward school.