

*Tardy Policy: Please check in at the office if arriving after
8:45.*

Caring for our Kids

Dear Kaiser Families,

Every once in a while someone will ask me the reason behind a school policy or rule. The look on the person's face shows that they cannot think of any purpose, so they finally ask me. Sometimes their tone is one of annoyance or frustration. Inevitably the rules we have at school come down to caring about the kids. In an effort to increase understanding and positive cooperation I offer a few explanations for some of our policies.

1. Cell phones: **Kids don't need cell phones here.** If they have an important need to call home, they can come to the office and use our phone. This past week there were several prank calls made to harass a child, made by children here, using cell phones. So, if we see a cell phone it will be taken and returned to a parent. **We ask that adults do not use their phones in the building.** All adults should help out with all the kids, so we ask that while in the building, or on field trips, you give your undivided attention to the kids. They deserve it.
2. Unattended kids: **Unsupervised kids are unsafe kids.** We ask the kids not to be in rooms during the day without adults because children can do unsafe things without thinking about the dangers or risks. We ask that you supervise your children on the playground before 8:30 and after 3:00, and not send them to play alone. **There is no OUSD supervision before 8:30 or after 3:00.** Would you leave your child in a park alone? Just because there are other people around doesn't mean there are other *responsible* people around. Some children are left after school until 4:00 or 4:30.
3. Sharing food: We spend lots of time teaching kids the value of sharing. In the cafeteria, however, **kids should not share food because of allergies.** Parents are careful to read labels for allergic ingredients, but kids don't always know what's in their food. It's better not to share food.
4. Timeliness: **Please arrive on time and don't leave early.** The school day is not like a drop-in party. The beginning and ending matter a lot. At the beginning the teacher gives lots of directions and sets up the mental framing of the day. At the end there are announcements, debriefing and last-minute information. Plus it teaches children to disrespect and devalue what we do.
5. Following rules: Doing the same things as others, following the same rules, sharing in the same expectations, **these help develop group identity and belongingness.** Expecting special favors, rationalizing misbehavior, blaming others for one's actions, these may produce feeling of uniqueness in the short run, but ultimately lead to feelings of being outside the group and not belonging. GATE kids have the highest drop-out rate of any group; many educators feel it's because too much emphasis is put on their special talents and not enough on belonging to the group.
6. Boundaries: Just because a child is articulate and intelligent doesn't mean they can handle adult issues. Emotional development does not parallel language development. **Keep adult issues between adults.** Too often parents discuss and evaluate teacher decisions with their children. Elementary children are just too young to understand the complexities of what is involved with teaching. It's much better to listen to the child and bring the concerns to the teacher to hear a more complete context, rather than discuss the situation with the child as a peer. Also, such

discussions often leave the children feeling conflicted because they love their parents and their teacher and cannot separate caring for an individual from disagreeing with their decisions. You may know some adults who also cannot separate the two.

7. Importance of play. “All work and no play make Jack a dull boy,” or so the saying goes. We’ve learned in the last hundred years that **children need to play**. They need to have periods of unstructured play, creative play, fantasy play, and competitive play. These types of play help different parts of a child’s personality to grow in healthy ways, and it is the adult’s responsibility to provide opportunities for these.
8. Child development. **Children are not small adults. Our children are not younger versions of ourselves.** We are often frustrated because kids don’t comprehend some of the things we tell them. They can’t. They’re kids and their brains are not operating in the same way ours are. They don’t think things through. They’re impulsive. They’re not stupid, they’re just kids.

Sometimes it’s disappointing or frustrating to adults that we need to spend so much time looking over our shoulders, watching. It often seems to me as a father, that if I’ve explained something once or twice, my son should understand (meaning, he should do it my way!). I would offer that we need to take a logical step back and observe our children for who *they are*, *not for who we want them to be*. When we do that, we may see a different child. And we may meet a wonderful person.

Mel Stenger, Principal

Somewhere else add:

Announcements:

The main building is closed at 4:30 daily. Please do not ask to be let in because something was forgotten.
--

Upcoming events:

- SSC Wednesday April 13, 4:00
- Math and Science night. Wednesday April 13, 6:30-8:00
- April 18-22 Spring Break!