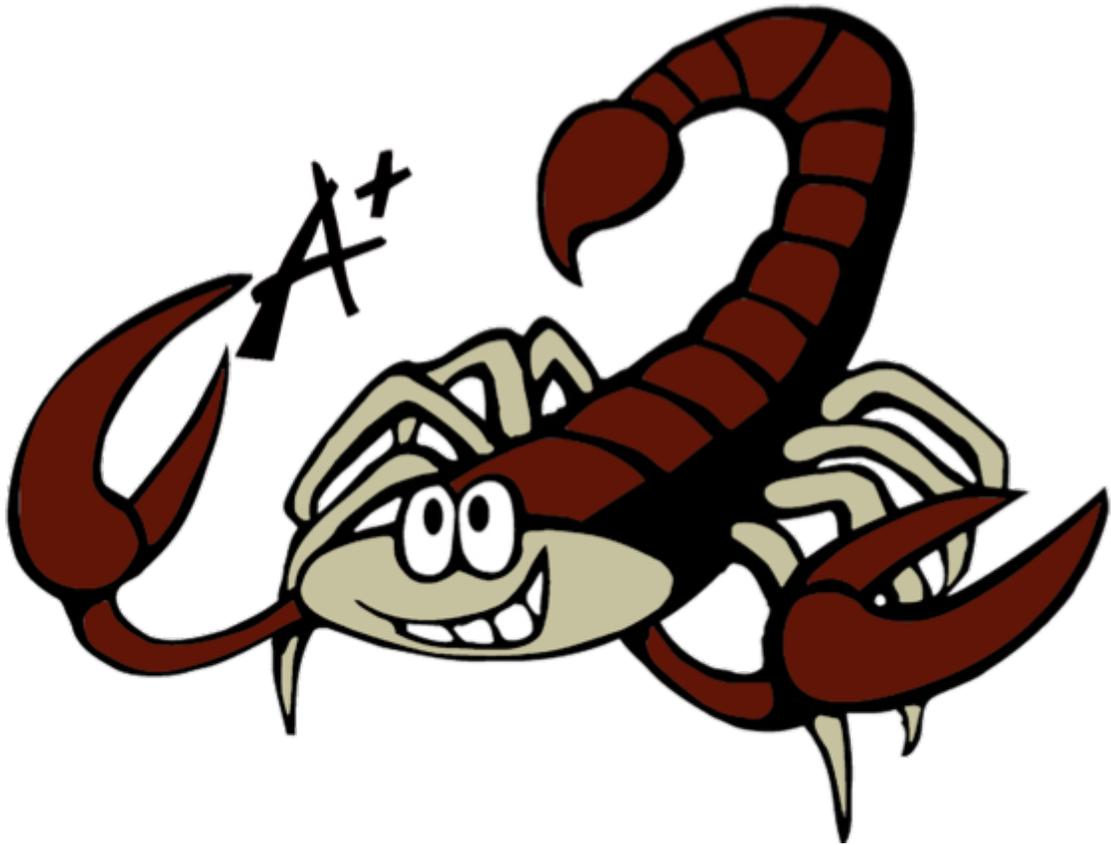


Family Handbook

Sycamore Elementary School



United through Community,
Dedicated to Learning

Revised June 27, 2016

In the Vail Schools We:

Are respectful and
trustworthy

Care about each
other

Take responsibility

Sycamore's Mission Statement:

Our mission is to provide a safe and caring learning environment designed to assess and meet the individual needs of all students and properly ensure mastery of State and Vail School District standards.

We believe uniting and engaging our community will strengthen our commitment to developing a professional learning environment and achieving our mission.

We envision a school where:

- Children obtain a quality education enhanced through digital instruction.
- High academic and character standards are maintained.
- Children are provided a safe and secure environment.
- Children have a sense of belonging.
- Balanced Literacy Reading and Math Programs meet each child's instructional level.
- We teach and practice the values of respect, personal, and social responsibility, honesty, and hard work through our ACT Statement.
- Each student's learning is monitored through on-going assessments.
- Individual effort and accountability are essential in successful learning.
- Parents, relatives, faculty, and community are involved in the school.
- Communication with parents is timely and consistent.
- Teams collaboratively plan instruction that meets or exceeds the State standards.
- Individual student needs are met through reteach and enrichment classes.
-

In the Vail Schools we Are respectful and trustworthy, we Care about each other, and we Take responsibility. We ACT!

Dear Students and Parents:

Welcome to another school year. We are a school that cares about children and encourages them to strive for excellence in their school experience. We are looking forward to a successful school year with your cooperation, assistance, and involvement.

Included in this handbook, you will find the general school information that will help you, your child, and the school as we work together as partners. Please review the material in this handbook and discuss it with your child. Keep it in a convenient place for future reference. The Sycamore Handbook is also available at syc.vail.k12.az.us.

The staff at Sycamore Elementary is pleased to open the doors for this school year. We want to welcome you to call or stop in at school anytime. If you have any questions or concerns, I encourage you to contact me at 879-2504 or graffk@vailschooldistrict.org.

Respectfully,

Ken Graff

Principal

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Vail School District #20

Sycamore Elementary School

16701 S. Houghton Road

Corona, AZ 85641

Front Office: (520) 879-2502

Fax: (520) 879-2501

School Hours

Our school day begins at 7:45 A.M. and ends at 2:20 P.M.

The school office is open each day from 7:00 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. Please feel free to call or come to the office if you have any questions or concerns.

Unless students are involved in a before or after school program, or the breakfast program, they should not arrive at school before 7:15 A.M. and are expected to leave campus at 2:20 P.M. Supervision on the campus begins at 7:15 A.M. and ends at 2:20 P.M.

Internet Information:

Home Page:

<http://syc.vail.k12.az.us>

<https://www.facebook.com/sycamore.elementary.vusd>

Lunch Accounts Connection:

<http://www.mymealtime.com>

PowerSchool Parent Connection:

<http://powerschool.vail.k12.az.us/public>

Sycamore Phone Numbers

16701 S. Houghton Road
Corona, Arizona 85641

Principal

Ken Graff.....879-2504

Office Support Staff

Office Manager.....879-2505
House Secretary.....879-2502
Health Office.....879-2510
Attendance879-2503
Volunteer Coordinator.....879-2515

Community Services

Director.....879-2579

Transportation

John Nunes, Director.....879-2054
Dispatch.....879-2497

Cafeteria

Manager.....879-2588

syckitchen@vailschooldistrict.org

Lunch Accounts: www.MyMealtime.com

Library

Librarian.....879-2508

Visit Sycamore Elementary's at website: syc.vail.k12.az.us

District Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Vail School District to provide parents with safe and nurturing school communities, where their children can obtain a quality education.

Guiding Principles

Our schools are communities of learners. We define a community as a place where each individual is important and has something valuable to contribute to others in the community. We believe that learning is a lifelong activity. We are all learners. We expect parents, staff members and volunteers to model this belief for students.

We care about students. We believe that each student should be given the opportunity to be educated in a physically and emotionally safe, personalized, and caring environment.

One of our highest priorities is keeping class sizes small. Working with students in smaller groups increases opportunities for learning, personal attention, a sense of belonging and the development of a supportive classroom community.

We are committed to fiscal responsibility. We are entrusted with using public resources to provide a quality education for our students. We carefully develop priorities based on student needs, legal responsibilities and cost-effective methods.

We are responsible to our local community. Our schools are the centers of the community. We actively seek community involvement. And, we respond to community needs.

We respect parents and their values. We operate on the behalf of parents. It is our responsibility to assist parents in the education of their children. We value parental involvement, and make every reasonable effort to address and respond to parental concerns.

Small schools are the best places to develop caring communities of learners. We like the atmosphere of a small school that has been developed into a positive, healthy community. We

prefer small schools. We seek to create that small school atmosphere in all of our schools, regardless of the size that growth and economics may force them to become.

We believe learning extends well beyond the classroom. Our educational program is enriched and extended with opportunities such as: field trips, recreational activities, academic competitions, and club activities.

We uphold traditional values such as respect, personal and social responsibility, honesty, and hard work. We model socially responsible behavior, expect it from each student and make it part of our curriculum. We believe these traditional values have served our society well in the past, are cherished by our community, and are important to our future.

We are continually improving. We are never content with the status quo in our operations or in our curriculum methods. We recognize that we live in a changing world and we respond to those changes. And, we are constantly looking for better and more efficient ways to accomplish our mission.

We value our employees. We specifically and carefully select our staff on the basis of their ability to carry out the mission and guiding principles described above. We hire the best people suited for the task. We respect their expertise and depend on them to work with parents to make our vision for a community of learners a reality.

Sycamore's School Mascot: Stinger



School Colors:
Maroon and Sand

Motto:
United through Community
Dedicated to Learning

Sycamore's Attendance Policy

Regular attendance for each child is necessary for maximum growth and essential for success in school. Therefore, parents and the school assume the responsibility for regular attendance. In addition, regular school attendance of a child of school age is required by state law. State law mandates that the school record a reason for all student absences.

When a student is absent, it will be necessary for the parent to call the school on or before the day of the absence in order to advise the school as to the reason for the absence. Please notify the school office, **879-2503**, before **7:45 A.M.** on any day that your child will not be in attendance, and by **7:30 A.M.** if your child will be late. A message may be left on the office voice mail at any time. If you notify the school by phone, a note is not required upon the child's return. For absences greater than one (1) day in length, the school should be notified each day of the absence. **All absences not verified by parental or administrative authorization will remain unexcused.**

Sycamore Elementary School and the Vail School District participates in the Pima County Attorney's Office ACT Now (Abolish Chronic Truancy Now) Truancy Program. This program is designed to monitor those students who have chronic unexcused absences or tardiness. In the event of an unexcused absence, the parents must contact the school within 24 hours to inform school personnel of the reason for the absence. *The school determines if the excuse for an absence is valid and acceptable.* The school may require further documentation to substantiate the reason for absences. We will require a doctor's note for any student that is called in sick for more than five (5) consecutive days.

Students and parents must understand that school attendance is not a matter of choice, but a legal requirement.

I. Excused Absences: Schools know that there are times when a student won't be able to attend classes. They allow students to miss class for reasons such as:

- Illness
- Lice (Most schools allow one day excused. The lice must be treated during that day. The student usually can return the next day if the lice were treated.)
- Death of a family member.
- Medical appointments that cannot be scheduled after regular school hours.
- Religious Holidays

II. Call the school the day of the absence and report the reason for the absence. Mark down whom you spoke with and what time. If you leave a message, we suggest calling back later to ensure that the school received the message.

III. Call the school each day if there are multiple days in a row that your child is absent.

IV. If your child is out for more than five days sick, you **MUST** provide a doctor's note.
- If your child has a chronic illness, please ask the school for a "chronic illness" form. This can be provided by the school office or by the Truancy Center. A new chronic illness form must be filled out for each school year.

V. Appointments for doctors, dentists, etc., should be made for times other than school hours. If it is unavoidable, please make the appointment for the earliest or latest appointments available so that your child will only miss a minimal amount of school time.

- Inform the school prior to the absence.

- Get a note from the doctor or nurse before you leave the clinic so that you can provide it to the school when your child returns.

-

VI. Unexcused Absences: When children miss school for other reasons, the absence is unexcused. Schools define unexcused absences in different ways. At Sycamore Elementary School, unexcused absences include, but are not limited to:

- Staying home to take care of siblings.

- Waking up late.

- Refusing to go to school.

- Missing the school bus.

- Birthdays

- Attending medical appointments of siblings and parents.

VII. Please Remember:

- 3 Tardies will amass into one unexcused absence.

- Please make sure to call the morning of the absence to ensure that it is recorded.

- Please make sure your child's immunizations are up to date and do not wait until the last minute to get them done. To attend school, children need to have proper and up to date immunizations.

Sycamore Attendance Line: 879-2503

Lost & Found

Sycamore's lost and found is located right outside of the MPR.

Lunch Program

Welcome to Sycamore! First, and foremost I want to let you to know that we have a great lunch program. Each day the students have a choice from the Main Event, hot or cold sandwiches and pizza. Each lunch includes our made fresh daily salad and fruit bar and a choice of milk or juice. We follow the menu as supplies allow.

Pricing is as follows:

Breakfast	\$1.10
Student lunch	\$2.35
Adult lunch	\$3.00
Milk only	.50
Reduced lunch	.40

*** Pricing may be subject to change**

A Free and Reduced lunch application can be picked up at either the front office or the kitchen and should be filled out and turned in to the kitchen. It usually takes ten days to process.

Please make sure that students maintain a positive balance in their accounts. On occasion that lunch money is lost or forgotten the student may charge up to three lunches. If that limit is surpassed, the student will receive a plain peanut butter sandwich and white milk only (no salad bar items). A negative balance statement will be sent home and a prompt payment would be appreciated.

Payment Information

To view your child's account via the internet go to www.MyMealtime.com. To create a user account, enter your child's first name and their six-digit student number. Each child knows his/her number with the exception of Kindergarten and First grade. Please call if that number is needed. Payments may be made via the internet, cash, cashier's check or personal check. When paying by check, make check payable to Sodexo and please reference your child's name and student number to ensure proper credit.

We have a great staff in our kitchen that take pride in their work and look forward to serving your children. Please do not hesitate to call if you have any questions or concerns. I can be reached at 879-2588 or email syckitchen@vailschooldistrict.org.

Dismissal Expectations

1. Walkers are to leave the school grounds promptly.
2. Bus riders will be escorted to buses by teachers.
3. Students who are to be picked up by parents are to wait in designated pickup areas.
4. There is no skateboarding, bike/scooter riding or roller-blading within the campus or in the bus bay area.

Sycamore's Parking Lot Procedures

Sycamore's parking lot can be quite an adventure in the morning and afternoon. Listed below are suggestions that we feel will help the parking lot operate more smoothly:

Morning Drop Off:

- Students are allowed on campus at 7:15 a.m. School begins at 7:45 a.m. **Please do not drop students off in the office prior to 7:15 a.m.**
- Parents will drop their children off at the front loop of the school and at the drop off lane which extends along the front of the Administration Building. Children will then walk from the front of the campus to the playground.
- Have children prepared to exit vehicle quickly and walk to class or the playground.
- Parents who wish to walk their children into the campus must park their vehicle in a designated parking space. **Please do not leave vehicles unattended.**
- Corona Foothills parking lot provides additional parking spaces.
- If you have children at Corona and Sycamore, siblings may be dropped off with Corona students and use the crosswalk and sidewalk to enter Sycamore.
- Parents of preschool and kindergarten students are asked to personally pick up and drop off their child unless other arrangements have been made with the teacher.
- A preschool parking lot is available. This parking lot is for preschool and kindergarten parents only. Please do not drop off students to the playground at this location.**
- Buses will drop off and pick up at the back of the Sycamore campus.
- Only buses and district vehicles are allowed in this area.

PM Parking Lot:

The front parking lot is much more congested in the afternoon than it is in the morning. As the year continues, the flow of the parking lot **will** get better. Due to the high volume of students that are parent pick-up, we are doing the best to make the pick-up process as smooth as possible. Student safety is our number one priority, so we must make sure that we drive safely in our parking lots at all times.

- Enter from the top of the parking lot by the Sycamore marquee.
- Remind your children to be prepared to enter the vehicle quickly.
- Pull all the way forward to allow more vehicles in line.
- Use a parking space if you need to walk into the school. Never leave your vehicle unattended in the drop off area.
- Follow directions of the parking lot monitors. Traffic needs to flow in a circle. If you do not see your child, drive toward the back of the parking lot and circle back in line to pick-up your child.
- Please do not block handicapped parking spaces.
- If parking at Corona, please use the established crosswalks in the parking lot to enter the Sycamore campus.
- Please follow the directions of our parking lot monitors.
- Drive slowly. Watch for children walking with parents to their parked car.
- Please exit the main parking lot through the preschool parking lot.** This is critical to avoid a bottleneck at the school entrance.
- **Most importantly, be kind and patient with each other and the people assigned to help in the parking lot!**

Sycamore thanks you in advance for your understanding and continued cooperation!

Bus Rules

To ensure safe and orderly transportation for all students these rules must be consistently followed:

Students will comply with directions from the driver or any adult assisting the driver. Students will conduct themselves in a manner which will not distract the driver's concentration or endanger the safety of anyone riding the bus.

Prohibited Behavior

- obscene language and gestures
- loud talking/yelling
- switching seats
- gum chewing
- hitting/fighting

Items and Behavior Prohibited on the Bus

Prohibited Items

- large or glass objects
- knives, sharp objects
- animals
- rubber bands/ paper clips
- drugs, alcohol, tobacco products

Behavior and Discipline Guidelines

Philosophy

The staff at Sycamore believes that our primary objective is to educate children. We believe that in order for your child to meet the challenges that he or she will face in our society, the development of self-discipline and individual responsibility is essential. Our intention is to have a successful philosophy that supports the right of each student to be educated in a calm, safe, and secure environment.

It is important that parents, school staff and students work together to maintain a positive educational atmosphere. The rules and discipline procedures at Sycamore have been established for the protection of our students. Students are expected to respect these rules as well as the people responsible for carrying them out. Because you, as parents, are the most important people in your child's life, the staff needs your support in promoting acceptable behavior. Our goal is for each student to learn to be responsible for his or her own actions.

During the first week of school, classroom teachers introduce, define and discuss individual classroom rules with their students. From one classroom to another, rules may vary somewhat depending on the individual teachers, but the basic rules are the same from room to room.

School expectations are supported through our school wide Positive Behavioral Interventions Supports system. PBIS is School-wide system of support that includes proactive strategies for identifying, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create a positive school environment. PBIS posters are posted in all areas of our campus.

Classroom Standards

1. Respect others with language and actions.
2. Listen and follow directions.
3. Work safely.
4. Work quietly.
5. Be prepared to learn.

****Children and teacher will discuss specific and detailed school procedures in class.****

Prohibited Items

- Electronic games
- iPods
- Trading cards/toys
- CD's
- *Cell Phones

*Cell phones must be kept in backpack or given to classroom teachers.
Cell phones may not be used during school hours.*

Playground Standards

1. Play safely and use equipment wisely.
2. Stay in playground area. Do not retrieve balls outside of playground fences unless you have received permission from a playground monitor.
3. Throw balls appropriately.
4. Leave rocks on the ground.
5. Fighting is not allowed.
6. Be considerate of others' games.
7. Line up on assigned class line as soon as the bell rings.
8. Tackling is not allowed in games!
9. Be respectful and listen to all staff the first time.
10. Walk bikes/scooters on school grounds.
11. Skating is not allowed on campus.
12. Students will use appropriate language and behavior among each other.
13. Students will keep hands, feet, and objects to themselves.
14. Keep all food and drink inside the cafeteria.
15. Have a pass to leave the playground.
16. Keep cell phones secured in their backpack or with a teacher to hold. Cell phone use is not permitted during the school day.

Teachers and monitors arrive on the playground at 7:10 A.M. If a student needs to be dropped off at school prior to 7:10 A.M., parents should use the before-school daycare program. Sycamore's paraprofessionals will monitor students during lunch time recesses.

Severe Violations and Consequences

Any of the following are termed “severe violations”:

1. Destruction of property
2. Verbal abuse
3. Defiance
4. Loss of self control
5. Profanity
6. Aggressive, intimidation, harassing and threatening behavior (written or verbal)
7. Physical violence (fighting and throwing punches)
8. Hazing
9. Possession of drugs, tobacco, alcohol or synthetic substances
10. Possession of weapons, explosives or other dangerous objects (real or simulated)
11. Bullying

Student Conduct

Conflict Definition: is a natural part of development. It may be defined as a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals.

Bully Definition: is aggressive behavior that is intentional, repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength.

Bullying is wrong and will not be tolerated at school or school sponsored events.

Bullying takes place over time and in many forms, and can include, but is not limited to:

- physical intimidation, threats, and attacks

- verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs
- gender, race and /or ethnic comments
- gossip and rumor spreading
- extortion or stealing money and possessions
- exclusion from the peer group

When it is deemed necessary for a student to leave school early because of a severe violation, parents will be notified. It is expected that the parent will come and get their child for the remainder of the day. A conference with the parent, student, teacher, and principal will occur before the child is allowed to return to school. Any of the above severe violations will be dealt with directly by the principal, his designee, or the student services coordinator. Severe violations may result in suspension or expulsion from school. **For further information on conduct and consequences, please refer to the Sycamore Code of Conduct.**

Student Conduct

(Gang Activity Or Association)

For the well-being and safety of everyone at Sycamore, it is the District's position that groups which initiate, advocate, or promote activities that threaten people or property, or disrupt the school environment will not be permitted. Further, the use of hand signals or graffiti, or the presence of any apparel, jewelry, accessory, or manner of dress or grooming that indicates or implies membership or affiliation with a gang is also prohibited. The District's Gang Policy is detailed in the current Vail School District Governing Board Policy Manual.

Drug Warning

Student non-medical use, possession, distribution or sale of chemical substances (alcohol, tobacco, inhalants, or drugs) is prohibited in the buildings of Sycamore Elementary School, on school grounds, at school sanctioned activities or when students are being transported in vehicles dispatched by the district.

It is unlawful:

1. For a person to intentionally be present within 300 feet of a school or its accompanying grounds, or to be present on any public property within 1,000 feet of a school or its accompanying grounds or a school bus stop, to possess, use, or sell marijuana.
2. For a person to intentionally be present within 300 feet of a school or its accompanying grounds or to be present on any public property within 1,000 feet of a school or its accompanying grounds, or a school bus stop, to possess, use, or sell a dangerous drug or narcotic drug.

Sycamore is a drug free/tobacco free campus.

Smoking is strictly prohibited at all times.

School Dress Code

The Vail School 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.

Footwear:

- Because of safety concerns regarding Physical Education and recess, backless shoes (for example - flip-flops and other sandals without heel straps) are not allowed.

Pants:

- Must be anchored or fitted at the waist, and hemmed or tailored.
- No rips, tears, excessive bagging, sagging, or ill fitting (must be size appropriate).
- May not be worn with vulgar and/or violent messages or pictures, gang oriented insignias, or satanic/negative symbols, illegal substances, beer/alcohol, cigarettes, or other inappropriate design.
- Underwear and boxer shorts should not be visible.

Shorts/Skirts:

- Must be anchored or fitted at the waist and hemmed or tailored.
- No shorter than mid-thigh.
- No rips, tears, excessive bagging, sagging, or ill fitting (must be size appropriate).
- Must be visible and not completely covered by a shirt/jacket.
- Spandex/leggings are not allowed unless worn underneath shorts/skirts.

- Underwear and boxer shorts should not be visible.

Tops/Shirts/Sweatshirts:

- Must be no longer than finger tip length and must be long enough to tuck into pants, shorts, skirts.
- No spaghetti straps, midriffs, half shirts, fishnet, see through, strapless, halter tops, muscle (undershirt) shirts, or other bare, skimpy and distracting clothing.
- Sleeveless tops must have straps that are at least two inches in width.
- Jerseys must be worn with a tee-shirt underneath.
- May not be worn with vulgar and/or violent messages or pictures, gang oriented insignias, or satanic/negative symbols, illegal substances, beer/alcohol, cigarettes, or other inappropriate design.

Accessories:

- Hats are not allowed to be worn indoors. They must be worn with brim facing forward. They may not be worn with vulgar and/or violent messages or pictures, gang oriented insignias, or satanic/negative symbols, illegal substances, beer/alcohol, cigarettes, or other inappropriate design.
- Belts must be entirely looped (no part of belt may dangle).
- No wallet chains.
- Sunglasses may not be worn indoors (must be stored away).
- Make-up may not be worn or brought to school.
- Body piercing is not allowed with the exception of pierced ears (dangling earrings are not allowed for safety reasons).
- Tattoos are not allowed.
- Chains and pet collars may not be worn as jewelry.
- Distracting hair colors are not allowed (i.e. blue, green, orange, etc.).
- Extreme hair styles that cause a distraction/disruption are not allowed.

Student attire should not present health or safety concerns and should not disrupt the educational process. We rely upon your good judgment and discretion as to what your child should wear to school. However, Faculty and Administration of Sycamore reserve the right to make the final decision as to the suitability of any attire and to decide when attire violates the school dress code.

Curriculum

The Vail Curriculum

The Vail School District has a core curriculum that is used in all schools. It is aligned to the Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards. The curriculum stresses that students will actively engage in the learning process and critical thinking. You can access the K-8 curriculum on the Vail Independent School District website at www.vail.k12.az.us/district-services/curriculum

Vail's staff stays current with the research on teaching techniques. They are skilled at helping all students reach their potential by finding the teaching strategies that best fit each learner.

Assessment

Assessments for Arizona's Career and College Ready Standards will be administered to students in grades 3-5. District Formative and Benchmark assessments quarterly and weekly measure students' mastery of Essential Grade Level Standards.

Specialist Classes

Art, Music, SUMS and Physical Education

These four programs are essential to our total curriculum. All students are involved in art, music, SUMS and physical education programs taught by special area teachers.

Computers

Sycamore has a fully equipped mobile computer lab and several computers available for student use in each classroom and the library. Students will need to agree to the districts policy for technology prior to using the computers. Students have an individual login account which enables them to access their files from any computer at Sycamore. Students may also perform Internet research on topics being studied in class.

Homework

Sycamore recognizes the value of homework as a key component of instruction and as a meaningful part of a total school program. In addition, homework is intended to reinforce and extend classroom instruction, help develop good study habits, and teach personal responsibility and time-management skills.

Homework is work accomplished at home that augments and enriches the school experience in a way that is academically meaningful for the child. Furthermore, it communicates to parents what is going on in the classroom. Parents should provide support and encouragement. The decision on the kind, extent, and frequency of all homework assigned shall be that of the teacher.

Sycamore Homework Guidelines

Encouragement. Give your child praise for efforts and for completing assignments.

Availability. Encourage your child to do the work independently, but be available to discuss the concepts. Ask your child what the purpose of the homework is, and to share his/her understanding of the objective. Ask him/her what steps are easy and difficult. If your child is unable to complete the assignment independently please contact me.

Scheduling. Establish a time to do homework that fits with the week's activities. It can be a set time each day or can change depending on the week's schedule. Homework should take between 30 and 40 minutes a night and should be scheduled so it won't interfere with bedtime. You may want to use a calendar to keep track of assignments and due dates.

Space. Provide a space for homework, stocked with necessary supplies, such as pencils, pens, paper, dictionaries, a computer, and other reference materials. Help your child focus on homework by removing distractions, such as television, radio, telephone, and interruptions from siblings and friends. A quiet place will help with concentration.

Modeling. Consider doing some of your work, such as paying bills or writing letters, during your child's homework time.

Forms of Homework

Reinforcement and completion of class work

- finishing daily assignments
- drill activities, including practice which reinforces skills/concepts taught in class

Study Time

- a reading assignment
- studying for tests and evaluations

Research assignment or project

Preparation for classroom activities

Extra credit and/or enrichment

Home/School Communications Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences are the time for parents to discuss with the teacher their child's performance and special needs. Sycamore Elementary School hopes that each parent or guardian will take the opportunity to attend these conferences. Conferences are the time to build mutual understanding of the child and to further the home/school partnership.

While parents and teachers are encouraged to initiate a conference at any time when there appears to be a need, formal conferences are scheduled twice a year.

For specific dates for Parent-Teacher conferences, please refer to the student calendar.

Parent-Teacher Communication

At Sycamore, we believe that maintaining consistent communication between parents and teachers is a vital element in the success of a child. In order to maintain communication, classroom teachers will either update their blogs and/or send out nightly emails to parents informing them on what occurred during the school day as well as important school and classroom reminders.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued four times a year at the end of a 9-week grading period. In addition, midterm progress reports are issued halfway between the beginning and end of each grading period.

The fourth and fifth grades have a traditional report cards that include letter grades of A, B, C, D, and F's. Our kinder through third grades have a standards based report card which identifies the mastery level of each individual skill or concept in the subject areas of reading and math. Other subjects such as Science and Social Studies are assigned grades of E= Excellent, S+= Above Average, S= Average, S- = Below Average, and N= Failing. Third grade also has the standards based report card for subject areas of reading and math. The other subject areas will incorporate the letter grades of A, B, C, D, and F's.

The Standards Based reporting system (K-3) will include short summaries of the actual standard being taught as well as the descriptors of performance. These descriptors are identified as exceeds the standard (E), meets the standard (M), approaches the standards (A), and falls below the standard (F).

An explanation of each performance descriptor is as follows:

E Shows outstanding and consistent application that exceeds the required level of performance.

M Shows consistent application of both basic and complex knowledge that meets the required level of performance.

A Shows understanding of basic knowledge that is approaching the required level of performance.

F Shows limited and/or inconsistent knowledge that is a beginning towards the required level of performance and needs additional assistance

Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)

Sycamore is grateful for its supportive Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). Members of the PTA are actively involved in our school. They help organize school-wide projects, organize family and community functions, and raise funds for additional items needed by the school. They bring in activities to supplement our regular curriculum, and offer programs of interest to families. They are a most welcome and appreciated part of our community!

Some of the projects which may be undertaken by the Sycamore PTA include: book fairs, fine arts projects, and family activities and programs.

Belonging to the Sycamore PTA allows you to vote on issues and grants and to attend seminars and classes sponsored by the PTA. Everyone is welcome to attend the monthly PTA Board meetings. Notification of meetings are found in the Sycamore Stinger.

The Sycamore Stinger

The Sycamore Stinger is our monthly newsletter. It provides students and parents with information about upcoming events and important dates. It is sent home with students. You can also view it on our home page at: <http://syc.vail.k12.az.us>.

The homepage is updated monthly. **Watch for it!**

School Messenger

At times, school messages will be sent out electronically to all of our parents through email and/or automative phone calls. These messages will provide important information on school events or in case of a school emergency.

Facebook and Twitter

Parents can sign up up Facebook and Twitter messages through our school website at syc.vail.k12.az.us

Special Services

Extended Learning Program (E.L.P.) for the Gifted and Talented

The E.L.P. program in the Vail School District is a special education program designed to provide enrichment and extended activities to students who qualify. This program offers a variety of options based on the individual needs of each student and information gained from testing, teacher / parent referral, and the recommendation of a multidisciplinary team.

Special Education

Resource, Speech, Inclusion, and other related services are provided for students with an Individual Education Plan. Sycamore utilizes the Response to Intervention model to identify if special education services are necessary. Students who may be experiencing learning or behavior difficulties may be referred to the student solutions team for recommendations to provide social or academic support. If a student qualifies for special education, services are provided.

Community Education

The Vail Children's Center is dedicated to the fundamental needs of young children and their families. The program is designed to provide a wide variety of enriching experiences which will help children learn about themselves and the world in which they live. Services include the following features:

- Extended hours - 7 A.M. to 6 P.M.
- Preschool enrichment program
- Free speech/language and hearing screening
- D.E.S. approved
- Free special education services for eligible 3 and 4-year olds.
- Kinder Plus Program (complements Kindergarten)

The primary goal of the Center's program is to work hand-in-hand with parents to reinforce and extend the positive behaviors acquired by the children in their total surroundings, both at school and at home.

Community Education also coordinates the use of rooms, playing fields, and school facilities. For more information call 879-2457.

Stinger City

Sycamore's micro-society, "Stinger City," debuted in the fall of 2007. Stinger City has all of the components of a real society and operates as a "mini city" within our campus. Sycamore students learn responsibility, work ethics, consumer practices, contribution to an organization, and other key societal values. Sycamore's teachers sponsor businesses and organizations that create the economy of Stinger City. Students apply, interview, and are hired for "jobs." They are then trained in an area of expertise and receive payment in "Stinger Bucks" for their work. Community members from the surrounding area volunteer their time to assist with the training process, and the teachers advise the students with their jobs and duties.

Following is a list and a brief description of each Stinger City Organization:

The Broadcast Club is where students in grades 3 to 5 will create a monthly broadcast that showcases students' achievements and events around the school.

The Peace Patrol is a service club that helps monitor hallways, cafeteria and the playground during lunches to enforce Sycamore's Positive Behavior Support (PBS) Guidelines. The Peace Patrol Officers' role is to reinforce positive behavior by giving out compliments to those students who are abiding by the rules, and by giving our verbal reminders of PBS guidelines and writing citations for specific offenses.

The Stinger City Bank is in charge of the currency and economic exchange system of Stinger City. Students will learn the value of money and the importance of keeping track of it, whether spending wisely or saving.

The Stinger City Store allows students to spend their earned Stinger Bucks on merchandise. Students will also have the opportunity to open their own business. Students can use their Stinger Bucks to purchase items from individually owned student businesses. All grade levels will participate in the Stinger Store.

Students who earn Stinger Bucks are able to purchase items at **Stinger Store**. The store is held twice per month. The club meets eight days per month to set up and run Stinger Store for the entire student body. **Stinger Bucks** are the StingerCity currency. Students can make money in the classroom for academics, behavior, and extra duties. They can work in a number of jobs

throughout the school and get paid an additional salary. Students can even become entrepreneurs and open their own business. Stinger Bucks can be spent on goods and services throughout StingerCity.

Student Council is the core government of the city. Our president is considered to be the mayor of Stinger City and aids the principal with overseeing events, speaking at assemblies, and providing student input about decisions made at school. Officers are elected in a school-wide election in the fall and must campaign and give a speech to the entire school preceding voting. Their fellow classmates in fourth and fifth grade vote two classroom representatives into the council. These meetings are student-led and are run just like a city council meeting. It is the essence of Student Council to serve as a student voice for the Sycamore student body and to be actively involved in all school events. Members of student council learn the value of teamwork, communication, and generosity towards others through participation in many philanthropical events throughout the year. They also serve as peer role models and character models in their positions as leaders of the school. In 2008, the Sycamore Student Council earned the Arizona Educational Foundation's "Promising Practice Award," for its character education practices and exemplary program structure.

Student Activities and Clubs

We also have a wide variety of clubs for students to be a part of at Sycamore. These all encourage student involvement in extra-curricular activities as wells as incorporating State curriculum into the program structure. A detailed list and description can be read below.

Art and Vail Pride Day: This plan will allow for a large student art display at Vail Pride Day 2016, as well as smaller art displays throughout the year at the Pima County Fair, District office and at Sycamore tied to our year-long theme "To Infinity & Beyond": Connecting Core Standards and Creativity through Space and Math-inspired art projects." The purpose of this plan is to provide Sycamore students an opportunity to explore physical science content in an alternative way, and connect to key concepts learned within our SUMS program, and regular classroom setting. Students will interpret what they read, discuss, research and discover about various aspects of space, including planets, nebulae, stars, etc., as well as various math/spacial concepts through exciting art projects. For this year's theme, myself and our SUMS (Students Understanding Math and Science) teacher will continually collaborate throughout the year, creating lessons that

Art Makes a Difference Club: This plan will allow for selected students to participate in an after school enrichment program that promotes both extended exploration in art, and community service/involvement: The Art Makes A Difference Club (ArtMAD) at Sycamore Elementary should draw students who are 'mad' about art, but who are also passionate about making a difference around our campus and within our community. Our agenda includes brainstorming and executing art projects that will help beautify our Sycamore campus, raise money for local causes or organizations, and also promote and bring awareness to the values we hold at Sycamore, and embody within our Vail-wide motto ACT: Acting responsible, Caring about each other, and Taking Responsibility.

Enrichment Writing is a program that will enrich students in the writing process through genre based writing. The program will incorporate exploration of quality literature, setting research, enriching of both appropriate and academic vocabulary and by creating exemplary writing model.

The Engineering Club will be a weekly activity to enhance the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) curriculum for students in third through fifth grades. As this will be an after school club, students will be asked to bring a family member to some meetings to help with the hands on activities, and lessons. The students will have the opportunity to spend extra, quality time with their peers and family once a week from 2:30-4:00pm while engaging in hands-on science, technology, engineering, and math activities. This club will be held for approximately twenty-five students in grades 3-5. This club will allow the parents of our students to become acquainted with the STEM objectives, become involved in their child's education, and participate in academic exploration. The engineering tasks and activities will correlate with performance objectives that are being taught in the class throughout the year.

Drama Club (K-2) - Fairytales, Folklore and Fun is to provide an opportunity for young students that are interested in theatre to learn and develop skills in all aspects of theatre production in a fun nonthreatening environment. The club will work with the A.C.T Sycamore Assembly Committee in order to achieve film experiences as well as stage experiences. We will attend an age appropriate theater productions from local theater groups as appropriate school age productions become available. We will study aspects of and perform skits from the folklore and/or fairytale genres, learn theater games and acting techniques that help them with voice, memorization, body movement, as well as learn basic theater terms and stage directions. During the first month of each session we will begin learning four elements of propaganda and begin our session with creating, directing and filming our own 30-60 second commercials using iMovie.

First Grade Curriculum Nights provides students in first grade with the opportunity to participate in math standards in action as students strengthen their mathematical application, problem solving and communication skills through the power of family interaction. **Reading Nights** will provide students in first grade with the opportunity to participate in reading standards in action as students strengthen their reading comprehension through interactive activities with the family. **Writing Nights will** provides students in first grade with the opportunity to participate in writing standards in action as students strengthen their writing skills through family interactions.

Stinger Kitchen provides fifth grade students the ability to execute healthy, kid-friendly recipes in a cooking show format. Along with learning how to prepare snacks, students become familiar with the recording and editing process of their videos, with the final product being shared with the entire school via the Sycamore Broadcast.

Creative Writing Club is a club that focuses on the mechanics of writing. Students will work on different genres and create a book focusing on that genre. The students will also be able to participate in the Writer's Cafe which allows the students the ability to present their books to their family.

Signing is Fun provides the student the opportunity of learning to communicate in sign language. It will also promote memory skills by memorizing location and placement of different signs, social skills by learning the correct etiquette when signing, strengthen fine motor skills, and it will help build and reinforce creativity.

ACT Assembly/Promotion is a program that recognizes and encourages students and staff to follow the ACT statement. This program reinforces the Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports already in place at Sycamore through scheduled assemblies, modeling and teaching students the pillars of character.

Be Kind Club helps build students' self esteem and leadership skills. Students will be given opportunities to lead their peers during different functions and events that benefit the Sycamore community.

Character Building Club: The Character Building Club's main purpose is to build self-esteem and leadership skills in the members of the group. The students will be able to lead their peers in the organization of functions and events that benefit Sycamore and the community around us.

Family Curriculum Reading Night is a monthly school activity to enhance the reading curriculum for all grade levels, kindergarten through fifth grade and their families. Parents will become acquainted with basic reading strategies and comprehension skills to help their child(ren) become successful readers.

Muppet Club teaches students how to write and perform character education skits using muppets. Students use the 6-Traits of Writing as a guide when writing their scripts. They perform their skits at various school activities and at Vail Pride Day.

Higher Level Thinking Club is an activity that allows members to play logic games and develop higher level thinking skills. The students learn to cooperate with each other through the different learning activities and games. They also learn problem-solving skills that require them to extend their thinking and perfect team building skills.

Sycamore Girls on the Run is a transformational physical activity based positive youth development program for girls in 3rd-5th grade. We teach life skills through dynamic, interactive lessons and running games. The program culminates with the girls being physically and emotionally prepared to complete a celebratory 5k running event. The foal of the program is to unleash confidence through accomplishments while establishing a lifetime appreciation of health and fitness.

The **Community Service Club** works with the community and Student Council to serve others who are in need. The Community Service club members are seen as positive role models on campus. They must maintain good grades, display excellent citizenship, and demonstrate what it means to be a positive and respectful citizen and volunteer in their community.

Intramurals: Intramural program will not only focus on improving a student's sports skills, but also on improving their character. Respect, sportsmanship, honesty, and cooperation will be the fundamental pillars of this activity.

Hands-On! Algebra Club is a before school club that teaches 4th and 5th grade students Algebra and how Algebra can relate to their current and future standards. Students will meet weekly Wednesday mornings for approximately 30 minutes to discuss and learn about Algebraic Expressions and how to balance equations, work with positive and negative numbers, as well as working with different essential properties.

Spanish Club will provide academic enrichment in the form of language, history and culture as well as a fun experience to all first through fifth grade students. Students will explore a variety of topics, from art, music, language, family, celebrations, food, and key figures in Hispanic History. They will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in cultural traditions.

Technology Club: The goal is to provide enrichment opportunities in technology to students grades third through fifth. We will be providing critical thinking opportunities through hands-on use of multiple types of technology. The students will work in groups and use technology cooperatively to better prepare themselves for their futures. Students will also gain an advantage during normal school sessions, now that the majority of testing is done via technology.

Wright Flight: The Wright Flight program enables students to achieve academic success in the classroom as well as outside of the classroom by addressing specific standards and learning objectives. Students set goals for themselves, that are academically based, and if these SMART goals are met they are rewarded with an awesome real life

The music teacher at Sycamore leads a **Band, Strings and Choir program** where participants learn to read music, play different musical instruments, learn music appreciation, and perform in front of public audiences. Choir is open to fourth and fifth grade students. **Band and Strings** and is open to fifth grade students at Sycamore. The band performs each year at Vail Pride Day and holds two school concerts.

Sycamore has established a **Mentor Program**, which is a partnership with our neighboring middle school, Corona Foothills. The middle school leadership students provide academic, social, and behavioral support to at-risk students at Sycamore. The middle school mentors spend one-on-one time with their Sycamore friends and provide support, friendship, and encouragement to their mentor buddies. In 2008, this program was awarded the Arizona Educational Foundation's "Promising Practice Award" for its exemplary program structure.

Wellness Policy

Sycamore participates in the Vail District's Wellness Policy. We continually work to promote a healthy lifestyle and environment for your child. We are requesting that parents eliminate cookies, cake, candy, cupcakes, brownies, and other unhealthy food choices from their child's menu at school.

If you choose to bring in a food item to share for a celebration it must be store bought. In addition, please make sure that food items are healthy. Suggested celebration foods include: fruit trays, vegetables, cheese, crackers, yogurt, etc. Non-food items are also a wonderful way to celebrate a birthday or success. These could include games, sports, reading favorite books, extra playground time, stickers, pencils, erasers, bookmarks, art activities, etc. Please make arrangements with the classroom teacher prior to bringing to school any item in for a celebration.

Thank you for your support and cooperation in maintaining a healthy lifestyle for our Sycamore students. The complete Wellness Policy can be viewed on the district website at, <http://www.vail.k12.az.us/schools/wellness.htm>.

Volunteers

At Sycamore, we appreciate parents, grandparents, and neighborhood volunteers. There are opportunities for volunteering in classrooms, on the playground, in the library, tutoring, on field trips, and with the PTA. Please let us know of your special talents so that we can best utilize them. All volunteers are required to complete an online application and sign a Criminal Affidavit. When you volunteer, please sign in at the front office and obtain a volunteer badge. We also have opportunities for helping at home for those who are unable to come to school during regular school hours.

We are committed to providing quality educational opportunities and your help is needed and appreciated. Please call our Volunteer Coordinator at 879-2515.

Visitors

Sycamore encourages visitation by parents and other adults. However, Sycamore does not allow children to bring friends or relatives to spend the day as a classroom participant. In all cases, visitors should contact the teachers to make advance arrangements for classroom visitations. All visitors must sign in and obtain a visitor's badge in the office before visiting the campus.

Site Council

The site council serves in an advisory capacity to the principal at Sycamore. Site councils provide parents and community members the opportunity to provide input into the decision-making process. In addition, school employees are given representation on the site council. Sycamore's Site Council is comprised of two parents, two community members, two certified staff members, and one classified staff member. Meetings are conducted once a month.

Parents' Right To Know Regarding Teacher Qualifications

Your child is attending a school receiving Title 1 federal funds through the No Child Left Behind Act (in English, referred to as NCLB). This Federal law requires that parents be notified of their right to know the professional qualifications of their child's teacher(s) in core academic subject areas, including the following:

1. The type of state credential or license that the teacher holds. Some teachers will have a credential in a particular subject area, such as English or Mathematics, and others will have a multiple subject credential, which allows them to teach a variety of subjects, such as in elementary schools.
2. The education level and subject area of the teacher's college degree(s). All teachers have a bachelor's degree, and many teachers have graduate degrees beyond the bachelor's, such as a masters or doctoral degree.

In addition to the qualifications of the teacher, if a paraprofessional (teacher's aide) provides your child services, you may also request information about his or her qualifications. Many paraprofessionals have two years of college, and others have passed a test that verifies their qualifications.

If you would like this information, please contact Ken Graff at 879-2504 or graffk@vailschooldistrict.org.

School Meal Account Information

- Prices for school meals are set by the Vail School District in accordance with federal and state regulations.
- Families may obtain information about the district's school lunch and breakfast program and apply for free or reduced price meals at www.vailschooldistrict.org or by contacting the student's school or the district's school food service office at vailfoodservice@vailschooldistrict.org or call Cynthia Griego at 520-879-2015 or Linda Millman at 520-879-2072
- It is the parent's / guardian's responsibility to ensure the student has money in his or her student meal account. A student meal account is delinquent if the account balance has a negative balance.
- Because the district cares about the well-being of our students, students in grades K-8 will not be refused a meal, even if their student meal account has a negative balance. K-8 students with a negative balance student meal account will receive an alternate healthy meal. The alternative healthy meal will be charged to the student's meal account that will affect the negative balance.
- Students in high school will not be permitted to charge a meal if the student meal account has a negative balance.
- Families may apply for free or reduced price meals at any time during the school year. Families are responsible for student meal account charges made before the free or reduced price meal application is approved – the approval is not retroactive to the beginning of the school year.

Reimbursable Meals and Other Meal Purchases

For students with free lunch status

- A qualifying student will receive one free school lunch every day that meets the USDA Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA) guidelines.
- Second meals, a la carte and snack bar items are available to be purchased only if the student's meal account has a positive account balance.
- Families are responsible for student meal account balance and charges that were incurred prior to approval of free school meal status.

For students with reduced price lunch status

- A qualifying student, with a positive student meal account balance, will receive one reduced price lunch every day that meets the USDA HHFKA guidelines.
- If a K-8 student's meal account has a negative balance, they will receive an alternate reimbursable meal and the student's meal account will be charged.

- A high school student will only receive a meal if their meal account has a positive balance or if the student pays with cash.
- Second meals, a la carte and snack bar items are available to be purchased only if the student's meal account has a positive account balance.
- Families are responsible for student meal account balances and charges that were incurred prior to approval of reduced price meal status.

For students with full price lunch status

- If a K-8 student's meal account has a negative balance, they will receive an alternate reimbursable meal and the student meal account will be charged.
- A high school student will only receive a meal if their student meal account has a positive balance or if they pay with cash.
- Second meals, a la carte and snack bar items are available to be purchased only if the student's meal account has a positive account balance.

Student Meal Account Payments

- We encourage families to make payments for school meals through MealTime Online or at the school with cash or check. There is a nominal fee for using the MealTime Online payment option. This fee is a processing fee and does not benefit the District. Payments through MealTime Online may take 1-2 business days to reflect the credit.
- By using MealTime Online, you can review the student's purchase history and school meal account balance and make payments. You can also apply for free or reduced price meal status.
- The District will send out low balance and negative account balance reminders using an automated telephone call through School Messenger and by email.
- Parents/guardians can request a restriction on the student's meal account by emailing Vailfoodservice@vailschooldistrict.org. You can restrict or deny the purchase of a la carte items, limit the daily transactions, or set a dollar cap on the student's daily school meal purchases.
- Payments for elementary and middle school students will be accepted at school. Payments for high school students will be accepted either by the kitchen manager or at the point of sale. Payments should clearly indicate the account to which the funds should be credited, e.g., if a parent/guardian has multiple children at one school the payment must indicate which student's account should be credited and the amount to be credited to that student's account.
- The school will credit meal payments to student's accounts before the meal period. Schools will apply payments to the purchase of the current day's meal first, and payment to the negative or delinquent account balance second.

- Personal checks will not be accepted from parents/guardians who have previously provided a check that was returned from their bank for any reason, including insufficient funds. If the parent/guardian with a returned check does not provide reimbursement in cash or by money order within seven (7) business days from the date of notice, the matter will be referred to District Administration.
- The district's school meal program is subject to federally mandated cost principles which state that bad debts, including losses arising from uncollectable accounts and related collection and legal costs are unallowed, meaning the school district is prohibited from extending a line of credit for a negative student meal account.
- Accordingly, the district must use all reasonable collection efforts, including the use of a collection agency, in order to ensure that parents/guardians pay for their students' school meals.

Identification and Notification of Delinquent Student Meal Accounts

- Schools will identify student meal accounts that do not have adequate balances to pay for student meals. Before the end of each school day, the school's kitchen manager will run a negative account balance report and provide a copy to the school principal.
- Parents/guardians will be notified with the District's in-house email notification system, School Messenger, when their students' meal account has a low balance and/or when the student meal account has a negative balance.
- The district will also personally call the parent(s) or guardian(s) and/or send letters when the student's meal account becomes delinquent (has a negative balance), the parent/guardian must respond to the phone call and/or letter within seven (7) business days.
- Accounts that are delinquent by \$35.00 or more and/or the parent(s) or guardian(s) have not responded to the district's phone calls and/or letters, will be sent a final written notice to bring the student's meal account current. The final notice will inform the parent/guardian that if the student's meal account balance is not brought current, the account will be sent to a collection agency.
- If the student's meal account is sent to a collection agency, the parent(s) or guardian(s) will be responsible for the collection costs, including but not limited to, the delinquent student's meal account amount, collection agency fees, attorney fees, and court costs.
- If an account is delinquent at the end of the school year the delinquent amount will be rolled over to the next school year. The district may withhold a student's grade or report card, at the principal's discretion, until a negative student meal account balance is brought current.
- If a student repeatedly does not have money in his or her student meal account, and no meals are sent from home for the student, school administration will consider

circumstances in the home and may contact the district's student services staff and/or the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS).

- For any questions concerning negative balances, delinquent student meal accounts, or for assistance with the free or reduced price meal application please contact Vail School District Food Services at Vailfoodservice@vailschooldistrict.org or call Cynthia Griego at 520-879-2015 or Linda Millman at 520-879-2072.

School Procedures for Students with Insufficient or Negative Account Balances

- Kitchen staff and school employees will exercise sensitivity and confidentiality in serving students who have low or negative balance student meal accounts. No district employee will subject a student to embarrassment or humiliation based on the balance of his or her student meal account.
- If a student's meal account balance is inadequate to pay for the entire meal, the school will provide K-8 students with a healthy alternative to the menued school lunch and the meal account will be charged. High school students will not be permitted to charge any part of a student meal if the charge will result in a negative balance.

Requesting a Refund

- If a student has withdrawn from school, parents/guardians may submit a written request to the district' food service department for a refund of any money remaining in their child's meal account. Please email [Vail foodservice@vailschooldistrict.org](mailto:Vailfoodservice@vailschooldistrict.org).
- If a student is graduating or leaving the district, parents/guardians may contact the district's food service department for meal account balances, and to request a refund. Any unused balance can also be transferred to a sibling's meal account upon request.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

- No person shall, on the basis of race, color national origin, age, gender, disability, sex, religion, reprisal, or income, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any child nutrition program or activity.
- There will be no physical segregation of, nor any discrimination against, any student because of his or her inability to pay the full price of the student meal, or due to his or her eligibility for free or reduced price meals.
- The names of students eligible to receive free or reduced price meals shall not be published, posted, or announced in any manner, and there shall be no overt identification of any such students by any means.
- No district employee may deny a meal benefit to any child as a disciplinary action.