



Top of the World Elementary School

21601 Treetop Lane, Laguna Beach, CA 92651

949-497-7790 phone, 949-494-5397 fax

## TOW PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

Welcome to the 2018-2019 school year at Top of the World Elementary School!

### **Top of the World Vision/Mission Vision**

*"We take ownership of each child's learning in our schools, accepting no limits on potential."*

### **Mission**

*"Our mission is to provide our students with a rigorous 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning environment which focuses on the uniqueness of each child, promoting a growth mindset, having a community perspective, and developing the skills needed to become lifelong learners."*

Top of the World Elementary School seeks to create a challenging learning environment that encourages high expectations for success through developmentally-appropriate instruction that allows for individual differences and learning styles. Our school promotes a safe, orderly, caring and supportive environment. Each student's self esteem is fostered by positive relationships with students and staff. We strive to have our parents, teachers, and community members actively involved in our students' learning.

Our collective goal is to raise successful kids. Our students' self-efficacy is grown when one's own actions leads to outcomes not one's parents' actions on their behalf. For this reason, we are dedicated to support all students' independence and resilience. We are not looking for perfection, we are looking for growth and chances to learn from mistakes. This will lead to long-term success and stronger mental health. So, please do not save your children from teachable moments, but allow them to learn and foster their problem-solving skills and increase in their self-efficacy.

### **Student Item Drop-off**

For the sake of fostering student independence, please help your child plan ahead for the school day and if things are forgotten, allow the natural consequences of the situation to occur. These teachable moments may be minor set-backs for you and your child; but at TOW, we celebrate mistakes as an opportunity to grow. Please consider this before employing a temporary fix by "saving the day" and dropping off the missing item like homework or an instrument. We ask for your cooperation and assistance in maintaining a classroom environment conducive to the development of good study habits and uninterrupted academic instruction.

## Change of Plans

If you have a change of after school plans for your child:

- Send your child to school with a **written note** to give to the teacher.
- Do not email the teacher if change of plans. If they have a substitute, the child would not get the change.
- If there is an emergency after the school day begins and you need to change your child's plans, call the office **before 12:00 pm**. Doing this on a daily basis disrupts the learning environment and negatively impacts a child's emotional state.
- For the safety and security of your child, please minimize the frequency of changes made after the school day begins.

If your child will be riding home on a bus home other than their usual bus, a note **must** be presented to the teacher and bus driver the same day. Any change other than the designated bus stop on student's bus pass **must** have written permission from the parent.

## Parking Lot Safety

We encourage you to utilize buses for home to school transportation. Drop off and pick up is well monitored and safety rules are enforced. In an effort to create a safe experience we have established simple traffic rules. We would like to request that you do not talk on your cell phone or text while driving in our parking lot area. Students must be dropped off in front of the handicapped parking area by the kindergarten wing. Students will then proceed directly to the playground for supervision. **Students may not arrive before 7:40 a.m., as no supervision is available until that time.** Parents entering the parking lot to drop off students must realize that there is only one lane of traffic and there is absolutely no passing of cars in the parking lot. **Students must always exit the car on the passenger side, not the driver's side.** Students should have belongings in their laps ready to exit as soon as it is appropriate to do so. This is a tremendous help in keeping traffic flowing quickly and efficiently. Thank you for being patient while waiting to drop off. THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO DROPPING OFF OF STUDENTS ON MOUNTAIN VIEW STREET OR ALPINE WAY. Please help us be good neighbors.

### **Please assist us in keeping our parking lot safe and efficient by:**

- Dropping off in the appropriate area.
- Picking up children at the curbside by the exit driveway where the staff is supervising.  
**Do not allow your child(ren) to cross in front of traffic.**
- Helping to set a good example for our children by modeling respect, patience, courtesy, and cooperation.

## **Bicycles**

California law requires all children below the age of 18 to wear a bicycle helmet. Bicycle helmets may be stored in the classrooms. Children are expected to follow all traffic laws when going to and from school. Riding a bicycle to school is a “privilege” which may be taken away by parents and the school if safety rules are not followed. Students may not ride skateboards, roller skates including wheels in shoes, scooters, or roller blades to school. Bicycles must be locked in the bicycle stand.

## **Campus Supervision**

Campus supervision begins at 7:40 a.m. Students may not be on the campus before that time. Campus supervision ends after the school day is over. All children must leave campus at that time unless participating in afterschool programs. **Please understand that the school cannot assume responsibility for children on campus during unsupervised times.** Children participating in community sports leagues may not remain on campus waiting for practice or games. There is no staff supervision at that time.

## **Counseling**

A School Counselor is available 5 days a week at TOW. The Counselor is able to assist parents, students and teachers with strategies, interventions and referrals for issues that may be impeding a student’s academic achievement. The Counselor is also focused on providing additional assistance for students, by referral and with permission, in the area of social and emotional well being by providing small group instruction on social skills. The Counselor also trains students in the PALS, peer mentor program, to assist other students with conflict resolution.

## **Visiting School/Leaving Early**

All visitors/volunteers must come to the school office to check in and out. All visitors/volunteers must provide driver’s license to receive a visitor sticker/badge prior to entering campus, so we can ensure the safety of all students on campus. Please wear your volunteer badge for security and easy identification. Parents are welcome to visit our school and individual classrooms. We ask, however, that you arrange your visitation in advance with the classroom teacher. It is not possible for a teacher to conference with you during class time. If a conference is needed, we ask that you request a conference to be arranged with the teacher at a mutually convenient time.

There will be times during the school year when you will want to check your child out early. Please plan on extra time for checking out. In order for all of us at school to work together, it is important that you:

- Come to the office sign your child out on the “sign-out” sheet at the front desk

- We will then call the classroom and have the student come to office to meet you.
- Please do not go directly to your child's classroom and do not ask for your child to wait by the parking lot or in the office, all students need to remain in class until you arrive.

### **Cell Phones**

We encourage students to leave cell phones at home. If they are brought to campus they must be turned off and safely stored in backpacks during the school day. Students should use the classroom or office phone to call parents to avoid miscommunications. The school cannot be responsible for lost or stolen cell phones. Please take a minute to review our policies regarding cell phones with your children.

### **Attendance/Absences**

When a child is absent from school; the office is responsible for verifying the child's absence. We ask that you call our **absence line number 949-497-7790** prior to 9:00 a.m. on the day of absence each and every day your child is not in school. It is necessary to leave your name, your relationship to the child, the child's name, the date, the teacher name and the reason for absence. If your child will be coming in late, please provide the same information but specify, "Coming in late." Homework may be requested after the 3rd day of absence.

### **Tardy Policy**

In order to minimize classroom interruptions, maximize instructional time, and reinforce the concept of responsibility with our students, a formal tardy policy is in effect at TOW. A student is considered "tardy" if he/she arrives after the second bell at 8:00 am. After any tardy, the student is responsible for making up lost instructional time. After 5 tardies, a letter will be sent home to remind parents of the importance of being on time. Excessive tardies may result in a parent conference or, if necessary, referral to the district's Child Welfare and Attendance Officer.

### **Child Custody**

It is most important that we be made aware of, and keep on file at school, any legal papers that deal with unique circumstances concerning your child. Simply noting on the emergency card a statement such as "Do not release my child to....." is not sufficient. We must have a copy of legal documents concerning custody on file. Please be advised that the natural mother or father can obtain their child or information from school at any time unless a court order is on file indicating otherwise.

### **School Supplies**

It is our intent to provide students with the basic instructional materials necessary to participate in our instructional program.

**Lost and Found**

Please clearly label all lunch boxes, sacks, backpacks, personal books, records, articles of clothing, etc., with your child's name. Your help is needed in teaching children to care for their own belongings. Many items, often brand new, go unclaimed in our lost and found box. Please check in our MPR for missing items frequently. Unclaimed articles will be given to a charitable organization periodically throughout the year (after notification and a reasonable wait time) and in June, after school closes.

**Reporting of Grades**

Our District will be reporting grades for all elementary students three times during the school year. Teachers will communicate with parents throughout the year regarding concerns and grades, which fall two marks below, previously reported grades or grades of "C-" or below.

**Extracurricular Eligibility**

Students' participation in extracurricular activities at the elementary level is subject to Board Policy. Students who fall below an overall "C" average, or receive a "U" (unsatisfactory) on either citizenship or work habits become ineligible to participate in after school activities such as music performances, Student Council activities, etc. We anticipate that by enforcing eligibility standards, your child will develop an understanding of the responsibilities that must be met in order to participate in extracurricular activities. Establishing good work habits and a responsible attitude toward school at an early age will help to insure a successful school career.

**Medication/Health Problems**

In order to assist our parents, the California Education Code allows school personnel to administer medication only if we have a physician's request form and a parental release form on file in the school office. A separate form is needed for each prescription medication, AS WELL AS OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATION. All medicines must be brought to school by the parent and must be kept in the school office. Medicine must be in its original container and labeled with the name of the child, name of the medication, dosage requirements, and the physician's name. The information on the form must match the information on the bottle. California Education Code states that students may not bring any medication, including aspirin or vitamins, to school to keep in their possession.

**Homework Policy**

Homework is provided to review and practice concepts introduced in class. Homework is generally assigned Monday through Thursday. LBUSD's homework policy guidelines are as follows: Grade 1 = 10 minutes per day, Grade 2 = 20 minutes per day, Grade 3 = 30 minutes per day, Grade 4 = 40 minutes per day, and Grade 5 = 50 minutes per day. To review a more detailed district policy, please go to our website [www.lbusd.org](http://www.lbusd.org).

Parents should monitor the amount of time their child spends on homework and communicate with the teacher if their child is having difficulty regularly completing the assignments in the recommended time periods. Parents can greatly assist their child by setting up a special place in the home, away from distractions, where homework is to be done. Specific times, which do not conflict with other planned activities, provide structure to the homework routine. It helps to turn off the television. Some parents find it helpful for all members of the family to have a routine quiet time nightly for this purpose.

### **It Pays to be Prepared**

Top of the World Elementary School has a formal Earthquake/Disaster Plan in effect. We have emergency cards on file in our school office to be used in an event of this nature. In the event of a disaster, a command post will be activated, along with a first aid station. A search and rescue team will thoroughly check every room on campus. A student assembly area will be organized. Staff members involved with specific tasks will have “buddy” teachers who will supervise their students. It will be necessary for all parents to check with the student dismissal station at the front of the school to pick up any student(s), so we can keep accurate accounting of all persons on campus.

In the event of an actual emergency during school hours, many parents will be unable to leave their other responsibilities and/or travel the roads to reach their children. All of the office and support staff will be assigned outside. Please understand we will be unavailable to answer phones. Rest assured in knowing that the TOW staff will be doing everything possible to provide for the safety of your child(ren) until you safely arrive.

### **School Choice**

Intra-District Transfers will be placed on a waiting list. Students will be accepted or denied according to district criteria and current enrollment figures. Please note that School Choice applications are valid and in effect on a year to year basis. New applications must be submitted by parents each year.

### **School Lunches**

School lunches may be purchased daily. The cost of hot lunch is \$3.90. Snacks cost \$0.50 - \$1.00.

LBUSD takes part in the National School Lunch Program. Eligible students may receive meals free or at a reduced rate for lunch. Applications are available at the school or district office or on our district website at [www.lbusd.org](http://www.lbusd.org).

## **Guidelines for Birthday and Other Celebrations**

Federal law requires every school district to have a local Wellness Policy. These policies must address nutrition education, physical activity, school meals and all other foods and beverages available at school. From birthday parties to holiday celebrations, there are many celebrations in elementary schools. Along with fun, usually comes the food. Just one school party can include pizza, sugary juice drinks, chips, cake, ice cream and candy. Offering so many treats so often can contribute to unhealthy eating habits. Keep in mind that each student's birthday can mean multiple celebrations: one at home with family, a party with friends and then another at school. However, with a few easy changes, parents, teachers and school administrators can shift the focus of school parties from unhealthy food to healthy fun! Food does not always need to be a part of school parties. Instead find ways to recognize the child, celebrate them, and make them feel special. ***This is not a ban on cupcakes.*** We are simply asking parents and teachers to strongly consider alternatives to celebrating birthdays with food that is high in sugar and fat. Experts recommend limiting school celebrations that involve food to no more than one party per class per month. Too many classroom celebrations take away from our school's principle mission of maximizing instructional time and providing our students with a world class education.

Here are some ideas and suggestions for healthy classroom celebrations:

- Have a scavenger hunt for items around the classroom or school
- Allow students to pick a book of their choice and ask the principal or a parent to come in and read it
- Make a sign, sash, crown, button or badge for the birthday child
- Have the birthday child be the teacher's assistant for the day; they can do special tasks like make deliveries to the office or be the line leader
- Allow the birthday child choose an activity or game for the class

These are just a few suggestions. For more ideas and a list of Healthy Food Ideas, go to our website at [www.lbusd.org](http://www.lbusd.org) and review the Healthy Celebrations document posted on the right side of the page.

If you are planning a home birthday party and wish to invite students from your child's class, *please distribute invitations off school grounds* (ie: mail, E-vite, etc.). This will help alleviate conflicts that arise in the classroom when children feel excluded.

## **Bus Transportation**

The LBUSD offers a home-to-school "parent pay" transportation program during the school year. Bus passes may be purchased through the district business office. Reduced/free bus passes are available for those that qualify. Applications are available in the school office upon request or online at [www.lbusd.org](http://www.lbusd.org). Special Education students will be provided with free

transportation if stipulated in their IEP (Individual Education Program) and approved by the District in accordance with State and Federal law.

Bus service is provided by Durham School Services 949-376- 0376. Please visit the district web site at [www.lbusd.org](http://www.lbusd.org) for more information.

### **School wide Discipline Policy**

We believe the most important responsibility that we have to our students and their parents is to provide students with a safe, orderly, and successful learning environment. Students must feel that they are safe; safe from physical, as well as emotional harm. In addition, students must understand that school is a place for learning. The entire TOW community; students, parents, and staff members, take learning seriously. Teachers have a right to teach and all students have the right to learn. No individual has the right to deny others of these rights.

We believe that discipline is an act of love. Also, we believe that most behaviors should naturally result in consequences. Thus, we try to reinforce behavior with both positive and negative consequences. We believe that all students, once familiar with our expectations through the Positive Behavior Support Program, can behave in an appropriate manner. It is our responsibility to recognize our students' positive behavior and reshape negative behavior, so that all students can experience the best possible learning environment. The manner in which these consequences are applied is based on the following concept:

At TOW we have formulated a few basic rules in order to provide our students with a safe and orderly learning environment. We teach our students that our school rules are based on a few simple concepts; safety, respect, responsibility, and cooperation. These rules are stated in the first person to increase children's awareness of the importance of these rules. We base all of our expected behaviors on the ABC's of school behavior.

- A** Act Responsibly
- B** Be Prepared to Learn
- C** Care for Yourself and Others

Our Effective Behavior Support Program will address more specific examples of expected behaviors. You may request a copy of the Behavior Plan with your Thursday envelope the second week of school. In an effort to be environmentally friendly our [Parent/Student handbook](#) may also be viewed online at our district website [www.lbusd.org](http://www.lbusd.org).

Should students choose to violate any of the above rules they are also choosing to experience one or more of the following consequences:

- Loss of playground privileges

- Parent contact
- Principal conference
- Parent/teacher/principal/student conference
- In-School Suspension or possible suspension from school
- Expulsion from school

### **Dress Code**

It is our opinion that student dress directly relates to attitude and behavior. Our experience tells us children who dress like students tend to behave like students. There are many different styles and colors of clothing, which reflect a positive appearance. TOW students must wear clothing that is, modest, comfortable, clean, in good repair, and appropriate for elementary school. Students must be able to actively play in the clothes they wear to school. Our P.E. program includes running, jumping, and other physical exercise, all of which must be accomplished in the clothing worn to school. Clothing and other items that students wear to school must not disrupt the educational process nor create any form of school disturbance. Please remember, TOW is an elementary school and certain fashions, which students may wish to wear, may not be appropriate for an elementary school setting. Our ultimate goal is to educate your child. Unnatural hair colors and styles, which attract unnecessary attention, detract from our educational program. Please support us in ensuring a proper learning environment for all children here at TOW school by supporting our dress code.

#### Inappropriate Clothing Includes:

- Any item symbolic of gang attire
- Pants or shirts which are oversized and baggy and which can be dangerous when a child runs, jumps, and participates in other physical activities
- Pants or shorts that are not the proper size and which do not fit securely at the waist
- Undergarments must not be visible; short shorts are not appropriate school attire
- Any top that reveals bare midriffs or has spaghetti straps; this includes tank tops with spaghetti straps, cut-off tops, tube tops, halter-tops, bathing suits, and bare midriffs
- Clothing with slogans or words promoting inappropriate or unhealthy lifestyle
- Necklaces or earrings that dangle, which could become dangerous when playing
- Any make-up, lipstick, hairdo, or adornment that causes a distraction in the classroom, this includes unnatural hair colors and styles
- Open toe or heel shoes, such as thongs and sandals, and platform shoes; such shoes are not safe and are not conducive to an active physical program

### **Positive Behavior Support Program**

The TOW staff believes that we have a responsibility to assist parents in establishing behavioral traits in our students, which will help them to learn to work cooperatively with others and to make positive contributions to our democratic society. The Positive Behavior Support program at all of the LBUSD schools and is designed to reward and reinforce exemplary behaviors at school. Students are “caught” being good and given Dolphin cards which can be turned in for rewards. We are working collaboratively with our parents and community to actively teach the characteristics of “Respect, Responsibility, Kindness and Compassion.” “Dolphin” reward cards are used by classroom teachers and campus staff to encourage good behavior. These cards may be turned in for a variety of rewards both in the classroom and in school-wide drawings.

### **Scholastic Reading Counts**

Reading Counts is an independent program for Grades 2-5 which combines reading practice and software-based reading assessment. The program serves to develop reading skills, help raise test scores, and motivate students to achieve reading success.

### **Moving**

If you are planning on moving from our school area, please let us know which day will be your child’s last day of attendance. This will enable us to complete the necessary transfer forms and help the teacher prepare your child for a successful last day. Any change of address must be reported to the school office along with completing a District Residency Declaration as well.

### **Lost/Damaged Library and Textbooks**

If a textbook or library book is lost or damaged, it will be necessary for the student to purchase a replacement book or to reimburse the school for the cost of the book.

### **Conflict Resolution**

The TOW staff understands that conflict between wants and needs - can occur between countries, cultures, races, corporations, individuals, and even within an individual. While we all wish that conflicts on our playground and in our world did not exist, history and daily experiences tell us that conflicts between people are an unfortunate fact of life, and often part of the natural process of growing and learning about society. We do believe, however, that conflicts can and must be resolved in a safe and peaceful manner. Thus, at Top of the World we actively teach our students strategies, which will assist them in resolving conflicts peacefully. One such strategy is Stop, Walk and Talk. Students are taught to tell another student to stop if they are bothering them. Next, walk away if the problem persists. If it continues, talk to an adult for assistance.

The counselor trains students in conflict resolution through the PAL Peer Mentor program. Students must apply and have good teacher recommendation to become Peer Mentors. After the 12 week after school training class is complete, students wear visible t-shirts and work in pairs on the ground at recess and lunch and are available to assist students in resolving conflict. Peer Mentors also assist teachers in classrooms with students having difficulties or in orienting new students to the campus.

### **Parent/Community Involvement**

One of TOW's greatest assets is the tremendous support we receive from our parents and community. Volunteers are always welcome! We have a need for volunteers in the classrooms, gardens, Library Media Research Center, or any other place you would like to work! If you are interested in getting involved, please contact your child's teacher or call the PTA volunteer coordinator. Please do not bring siblings along when volunteering as this can be a disruption to the instructional program.

Top of the World Elementary School has a very active and supportive PTA group. Our PTA provides many needed instructional supplies, equipment, educational programs, as well as fun family activities. We would like to encourage all of our parents to become members and get involved in the Top of the World PTA. PTA general meetings are scheduled for the second Monday of the month at 8:15 a.m., in our multipurpose room (MPR).

### **Nondiscrimination Statement**

The Laguna Beach Unified School District Governing Board is committed to providing equal opportunity for all individuals in education. District programs, activities, practices, and employment shall be free from discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying based on race, color, ancestry, national origin, ethnic group identification, age, religion, marital or parental status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression; the perception of one or more of such characteristics, or association with a person or a group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics. This policy applies to all acts related to school activity or school attendance within a school under the jurisdiction of the Superintendent. Any school employee who witnesses an incident of unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, retaliation, or bullying, shall immediately intervene to stop the incident when it is safe to do so.

*We trust that your year at TOW will be both positive and memorable!*