



Irish Elementary
Escuela Bilingüe

Parent & Student Handbook

515 Irish Drive
Fort Collins, CO 80521

<https://iri.psdschools.org/>

Phone: 488-6900
Attendance: 488-6901
Fax: 488-6902



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Welcome to Irish Elementary Escuela Bilingüe *A Dual Language School!*

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information regarding Irish Elementary Escuela Bilingüe, as well as our school's rules and procedures. Poudre School District policies and regulations (including but not limited to those in the District's Student Rights & Code of Conduct booklet) apply at Irish Elementary and takes precedence over our rules and procedures if there is any inconsistency or conflict. Although this handbook may reference certain District policies and regulations, the actual language of the referenced policies and regulations takes precedence over the language in this handbook.

[District: Student Rights and Code of Conduct](#)

The staff and I are pleased to welcome you to our very special school. We are dedicated to ensuring that every family knows the valuable role they play in making Irish Elementary a community school. In order to work for the success of all students, the participation of everyone in the Irish community is needed. The doors of Irish Elementary and my office are always open to you.

Irish Elementary Escuela Bilingüe was built in 1968 and was named in honor of Mrs. Jean Powell Irish. Mrs. Irish served as teacher and principal for the Poudre School District for over thirty years. She always felt that it was important to work to the best of one's ability and always encouraged her students to find satisfaction in having done their best.

Our school motto is: 'Irish - A Place to Grow' and our school colors are blue and white. Our mascot is the jaguar, the largest feline of the Americas and a symbol for valor and wisdom in many Mesoamerican cultures. To learn more about and/or to donate to help protect this incredible animal visit: <https://www.panthera.org/>

A primary focus at Irish Elementary is to spark of greatness each day for every child. We want to prepare the children to be lifelong learners and productive members of a diverse, multilingual, and global society. We wish to actively involve all students in a process that will enable them to communicate and cooperate effectively in two languages. In addition, we guide them to become high level problem-solvers that see through the lens of learning different cultures and language. We are looking forward to providing your children with a variety of learning experiences designed to accomplish these goals. We believe each child is unique and the staff recognizes and respects the needs of each individual. We will help each child acquire and develop the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve academic excellence.

Irish Elementary Escuela Bilingüe is an amazing place for children to grow. It is our commitment to nurture growth and belonging. Our entire community is driven to support and help students realize their potential as productive citizens in the global community. It is only together that we can accomplish all our goals. Please call or visit the school any time. We look forward to working with all students and parents in realizing our vision for the school.

Sincerely,
Lindsey Walton
Principal Irish Elementary

Vision

Irish students will transition to middle school bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural with the 21st century learning skills to be successful in a diverse, multilingual global society.

Mission

We are here to nurture every Irish Elementary student to his/her full academic, social and emotional potential through diverse language and learning experiences that build 21st century skills.

Our Goals

- Every student at Irish will make adequate growth every year in both their first and second language according to the CELP standards and individual student goals.
- Every student at Irish will make adequate growth every year in mastery of grade level Colorado Academic Content Standards.
- All students will show competency in character development, self-regulation, and social skills that result in a rich understanding of their own heritage as well as empathy and understanding for others.

Our Beliefs About Student Learning

We believe that our students...

- learn best through opportunities for personal exploration and for communication with others.
- learn best, through explicit modeling of important concepts, with high quality instruction in an environment of high expectation and mutual respect.
- achieve their greatest potential in a safe, non-threatening environment where students' basic needs are met, and a positive relationship exists between students, instructors, family, and community.

- are intrinsically motivated to learn when concepts are presented within authentic contexts that respect the varied learning styles within a classroom.
- are academically successful when their native language is valued, developed, maintained and used as a bridge to access their second language.
- most effectively learn a second language when they are consistently provided quality instruction from educators who conscientiously employ strategies based on best practices research in the area of second language acquisition.
- will be motivated to learn when they are empowered to respect their heritage and the heritage of others while in an environment that prepares them to be lifelong learners in a multicultural world.
- benefit from a consistent implementation of a developmentally appropriate school-wide behavior plan that allows students and teachers to focus on learning.

General Information

SCHEDULES

Office Hours

8:00 am – 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday

Daily Schedule

Full Day Kindergarten through Fifth Grade:

8:30 am – Arrival Begins: Supervision outside begins/students may go to their playground and/or get their breakfast.

8:45 am – First bell: Students line up to enter the building

8:50 am – Second bell: Students enter building and begin classes, tardy after this bell

3:30 pm – Dismissal: All students are dismissed

Before and After School Supervision

Students should not arrive to school until 8:30 am. Supervision outside school areas does not start until 8:30 am. Parents and guardians are responsible for supervising their children if they choose to arrive with their child prior to 8:30am to use the park. After school supervision is present until all the students have been picked up. *All students must be picked up by 3:45 pm.*

Daily Classroom/Grade Schedules

Your child's classroom teacher will communicate what their classroom/grade level daily schedule and routines will be.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

COVID Attendance Considerations

The below attendance policies are in reference to normal yearly attendance policies and *are* applicable for all non-COVID absences. Please know that we understand that we continue to live and work in a pandemic and that absences related to COVID illness, exposures, isolation, and quarantines are always excused. **Please see the COVID information section for further information about when a student should be kept home from school and for when you might be asked to come pick up a student showing symptoms.**

Reporting student absences, late arrivals, and early releases

Please call the attendance line at 970-488-6901 to report in advance that your child will be absent as soon as you know. If it is before school hours, you can leave a voice mail message. Per district policy, all elementary students must be accounted for every day. Help us ensure that all students are safe and accounted for by calling and leaving a message regarding your child's absences. It is also critically important to keep the office informed of any new phone numbers and addresses so that the school can reach you in case of an emergency.

If a child arrives after 8:50 am, they are considered late and must check in at the office. They will need to have a 'Tardy Slip' filled out before they can go into the classroom.

If it is necessary for a student to leave school during the day, please come to the office to sign out your child. We can arrange for your child to meet you in the office. A child will be released only to a person listed on the Emergency Contact/Early Dismissal form that must be filled out at the beginning of each year. If you wish your child to be released to anyone else throughout the year, you must update this information in person in the front office **prior** to the day this change will take effect.

Please refer to district policy “Student Absences & Excuses” (JH) for more detailed information regarding what are considered excused and unexcused absences.

Our Attendance Philosophy

Education is an on-going process, which requires regular attendance. Participation in classroom activities is crucial to your child’s learning process. He/she is an important part of the learning community. Your child’s success in school depends on interaction with students and teachers. Makeup work cannot substitute for this interaction; therefore, it is critical for each child to attend school every day unless he or she is ill. Attendance in school is the responsibility of the student and the parent(s) or guardian(s). It is the student’s responsibility to see the instructor for make-up work when he or she returns to school.

State law requires that parents or guardians ensure that every child under their care and supervision receives adequate education and, if of compulsory attendance age, attends school. If you are struggling to support your student’s attendance for any reason, please communicate with the school staff. We want to help.

Our Attendance Policy

This policy has been developed for the safety and well-being of each child. The parents should notify the school of the reason for the absence(s). A telephone call on the day of the absence is required as early as possible. The attendance number is 970-488-6901. You can leave a voice mail message if it is before or after office hours.

Student attendance is a critical factor to successful academic achievement and our attendance systems are crucial for student safety. In addition to daily attendance, it is also important that students arrive at school on time and be prepared for learning. In order to support attendance and arriving at school on time, the following guidelines were established:

- Parents need to call each morning when their child is absent or tardy as early as possible.
- Parents will be called if the school has not been notified and their child is absent; this is for the child's safety.
- Parents will be notified of the school vacation times through the school/[district calendar](#). Family vacation times are discouraged while school is in session. Make-up work will be assigned at the discretion of the teacher. It is the parents' responsibility to discuss the academic standing of their child prior to vacation. Certain subjects are difficult to make up due to interaction with teacher and students.
- A child is tardy if they arrive at or after 8:50 am. Three tardies will be considered as one absence. A child that is late due to a late bus will not be marked tardy.
- Parents will receive official school communication once the student has accumulated 10 absences in the form of an attendance letter. A second attendance letter will be sent out if the student accumulates 12 or more absences. An attendance referral will also be filled out and submitted to the district truancy prevention officer. In addition, accumulating 4 absences and/or 4 tardies in a trimester will be recorded on the student's report card as "having significantly affected their academic achievement." (COVID related absences are exempt from this policy)
- After the 10th absence, you may be required to meet with counselors and administrators to make a plan to help the student attend more regularly. (COVID related absences are exempt from this policy)
- If a student attends less than one hour, no attendance can be counted, and the student will be recorded absent for the entire day.
- If a student attends from one hour up to 3 hours and 44 minutes, one-half day of attendance will be counted.
- If a student attends 3 hours and 45 minutes or more, a full day of attendance will be counted.

- Lunch breaks and lunch recesses adjoining the lunch break may not be counted as attendance.
- Attendance need not be consecutive. For example, a student might be present for a portion of the time at the beginning of the day, miss time during the middle of the day, and then return later. The total amount of time during which the student is in school determines the amount of attendance or absence for that day.

Absences

Please see the COVID section for updated information on what are the current rules, procedures, and regulations around students demonstrating symptoms of COVID or might have been exposed.

At the elementary level there are two different codes to record absences, excused or unexcused. According to School of Board policy the following shall be considered excused absences:

- A student that has a COVID related symptom or exposure.
- A student, who is ill, injured, or whose absence is approved by an authorized school administrator. Prearranged absences shall be approved for appointments or circumstances of a serious nature that cannot be taken care of outside of school hours.
- A student who is absent for an extended period due to physical, mental, or emotional disability.
- A student who is attending any district-sponsored activity with advance approval of the school administration.
- A student who is excused by a parent/guardian for observance of a religious holiday.
- A student who is in the custody of the court or law enforcement authorities.
- Absences due to illness, extended vacation, or medical appointments are considered excused under this policy.

All other absences not included under this policy will be considered unexcused absences. We are committed to helping families keep their

children at school the entire school day. We encourage parents to make medical appointments in the afternoon if possible. Chronic tardiness also creates a disruption in the classroom as well as for the child. Although occasional tardiness is understood, chronic tardiness will result in attendance letters and referrals being sent. We feel that learning how to arrive at school on time is a lifelong skill that can be transferred to arriving at 'work' on time.

Early Departures

Parents are expected to sign out any student that is checked out early due to appointments or emergencies. The office will call down to the classroom to have the student sent to the office ready to go. Security protocols require that all students be picked up from the office only, please do not pick them up from their classroom or the playground.

Withdrawing from School

In the event you will be leaving Irish Elementary School, please notify your child's homeroom teacher and office staff ideally with two week's advance notice. This will provide time for all records and information to be ready at the time of withdrawal.

TRANSPORTATION

School Bus

Parents and guardians rightfully expect safe and efficient school bus service. Please know that riding the school bus is a privilege, not a right. This year the district is anticipating an even greater shortage of bus drivers thereby limiting the number of students that may receive bussing tremendously. Therefore, even if you have received transportation prior, this year, that might not be possible. **To ensure you have the best chances of receiving bus transportation, you must visit the following website as soon as possible:**

<https://www.psdschools.org/Transportation/Bus-Request>

If you are granted bus transportation, here are the expectations:

- Students **MUST** be accompanied by an adult over the age of 18 at the bus stop. If you are unable to accompany your child to the bus stop, please make arrangements for a friend, family member, or neighbor to supervise your child at the bus stop. Lack of supervision at the bus stop may result in a suspension of a student's bus privilege.
- Students should be at their bus stop about five minutes before the designated pick-up time, not earlier.
- All students are expected to behave in a safe and courteous manner while waiting at the bus stop and while riding the bus. All students learn the bus rules each fall. The rules should be read by both the student and parent, signed and returned to the bus driver. Inappropriate bus behavior may result in suspension of a student's bus privilege.
- All school buses are equipped with video cameras. Requests to see a video, or if you have questions about an incident on the bus, please write: transportation@psdschools.org or call 970-490-3232
- Students are not allowed to ride a different bus route or ride home with a friend without a bus pass. A bus pass can be obtained by sending a written note or calling the office before 2:00 pm with students' names, grade level, teacher's name and the bus number.
- Please notify the office if there is a change in bus transportation. If the office is not notified by 2:00 pm, then the student will be sent on his or her own bus.
- If you or your child are experiencing issues on the bus, here is the order in which communication should occur to ensure the best outcome:
 - Talk to the bus driver first.
 - If the bus driver is unable to solve the problem, contact the transportation supervisors: transportation@psdschools.org Include your child's name, the bus number, what was the attempted solution with the bus driver, your proposed solution, and your name and contact information. You may

also call them at: 970-490-3232 and give them that information over the phone.

- If you have been unable to solve any issues with transportation after attempting steps 1-2, please call us at Irish Elementary and we'll do our best to assist you, but please know that transportation is a totally separate department from Irish and we don't have any direct control in that department.

Parent Drop Off, Pick Up and Student Walkers' Procedures

When dropping off or picking up students, cars need to park in the parking lot or drive into the correct parent pick-up lane for your grade. In the pick-up/drop off lines, cars should not attempt to pass each other or do any other dangerous practices that could endanger the children, staff or other cars. Additionally, cars should not park in handicap spaces unless they have a handicap designation visible on their car. The speed limit around a school at any time of day is 20mph and in the parking lot it is 5mph. Any illegal or reckless driving practices on, or near, school property will be reported to police to ensure the safety of all children. If you are in a hurry, it is recommended that you come a few minutes before dismissal, park your car outside (not in the pickup or bus lanes) and check out your child from the main office. Reckless or aggressive driving anywhere on or near the school will not be tolerated. Additionally, you should follow all laws and regulations of safe child transport in your vehicles. Colorado law states: "Colorado law requires that children up to 15 years old riding in a motor vehicle be properly secured. Children under 8 years old must be restrained in the appropriate child restraint system. Older children must use a seat belt or a child restraint system." In addition, children should ride in the back seat of cars instead of the front seat.

Cars should not be parked on the east side of Irish Drive in order to allow traffic to flow smoother while students find their ride home. Children should not be dropped off in the lane near the dumpsters or in the bus lanes. In addition, no vehicles are allowed to make a U-turn on Irish Drive

to head in the opposite direction. Instead, please continue south on Irish Drive and turn right on Cherry. Vine Drive and LaPorte Ave. can both be accessed from Sunset Drive. This is both easier to navigate and safer for our students and their families. Day care vans should pick up students in the East pickup location, in front of the school, with the Kindergarten students.

We do our best to load students into their vehicles as efficiently as possible. We thank you for your patience as we load up to 200 students, supervise those not yet loaded, and ensure that all students are released only to the appropriate adult. It is expected that the instructions of school personnel are followed at all times at parent pickup to effectively direct traffic and maintain the safety of the students. If staff is directing traffic, you must obey their instructions.

Children picked up by car will exit the building at approximately 3:28 pm. Students who walk home will be accompanied to the corner (with assisting in crossing the street if necessary) by an adult. They are to wait for the adult to walk with them.



arrival.dismissal
map.pdf

Please see map for parent pick up locations.

Bicycles

Please note that the amount of car traffic (due to bus shortages) has increased by about 400% in the last two years; please take that information into account when deciding if your student or family feel comfortable riding to school. Irish Elementary discourages students that are younger than third grade from riding their bicycles to school without an adult escort. It is important that bicycle riders know and observe safety rules and have the physical ability and strength to control their bikes at all times. Bicycles must be walked, not ridden, on school grounds. When leaving school, bicycle riders must walk their bikes to Cherry Street accompanied by staff or an adult. Bicycles are to be parked in the designated parking areas. It is recommended that all bikes ridden

to school be parked in the bike rack and locked. Children should be at the bicycle racks only to park and retrieve their own bicycles. Irish Elementary highly recommends that bicycle riders wear safety helmets. Irish Elementary is not liable for lost, stolen, or broken bike equipment.

LUNCHROOM PROCEDURES

Lunch Procedures

Students are allowed to bring a cold lunch from home or buy a hot lunch from the cafeteria. Menus for hot lunches are located on the district website (<https://psdschools.nutrislice.com/menus-eula>). If the government says that we must start charging lunches again the procedure is as follows: Lunches may be paid weekly on the first day of each school week or daily as the child goes through the lunch line. This means that each child is responsible for his/her own money. Parents have the option of paying for their students' lunch via the parent portal located on the Poudre School District website <https://www.pdschools.org/schoolpay>. We recognize that students will occasionally forget their money, so they may charge for one day at a time. For families who need financial assistance in purchasing hot lunches, application may be made for free or reduced lunch rates through the office at any time. Applications are sent home during the weeks prior to the first day of school. Children may bring a lunch from home and purchase milk or juice. Children may leave campus with their parent/guardian for lunch. They will be excused from school when the rest of the class is taken to lunch (parents must sign out students and sign them back in at the office), and they will be expected back at school when the class resumes after lunch. We hope to eventually offer family members are to be able to join their students for lunch in the cafeteria. We will inform you once health code allows us to do this again. When we are able to do so, you will still need to register in our volunteer system for security reasons.

<https://www.pdschools.org/community/volunteers> Please do so online or stop by the office to get signed up. You must check in with

the office and every time you come in you must get a visitor's pass. For adults eating lunch, you pay as you go through the line.

Lunchroom Procedures

Due to time restrictions in getting over 350 students served lunch within a 65-minute time window, we have adopted certain rules and behavior that are expected of all students.

Some students will go out to recess before lunch, and some will go to lunch before going to recess depending on the grade level. Staff will line students up for lunch in a staggered schedule to avoid long lunchroom lines.

- Students must be responsible for putting on coats, hats, and gloves if the weather calls for it. Students will not be allowed to re-enter the building to retrieve these items.
- Students need to ask their playground supervisors permission to re-enter the building to use the restroom.
- As students enter the lunchroom, they will be directed by the lunchroom supervisors to line up to get their food.
- Students are encouraged to not take more food than they can eat.
- After they receive their food, students must input their ID number or show their ID card to the food clerk.
- All students are expected to eat lunch. They will be encouraged to eat all the food they chose.
- Students will all wash their hands prior to getting their food. Please reinforce proper handwashing routines at home so the students know how to do this independently.

We highly encourage parents **not** send unhealthy items to school for their child such as fried chips, candy, sugary snacks, or soft drinks and/or sports drinks. If you need more information around healthy food options for your child, please contact the office and our staff will be happy to help generate healthy ideas. If certain food items are deemed to be a detriment to a student (high sugar content or has caffeine, etc.) school personnel will contact parents/guardians to make a plan for lunch, food items, and/or the subsequent behavior of the student. Students are not allowed to share food at lunch. As part of our Wellness and Project Smile

programs, we find it critical that teachers and parents together teach and support good wellness and dental hygiene habits. This year, we probably will not be able to brush our teeth at school, so please have students do this at least twice daily at home. If you are in need of hygiene items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, etc. please let the office know and we will help you.

LOST AND FOUND

The school's lost and found is located in a closet by the teacher's workroom. Please label your students clothing items (coats, boots, mittens), so that they can be returned to the student rather than tossed in the Lost and Found pile. We encourage parents and students to stop by the lost and found area from time to time to check for misplaced articles. Small items such as jewelry, electronics, glasses, etc., are kept in the office. Items not claimed are given to charities.

VISITORS

Parents, family, and community members are welcome to visit anytime. Prior to your visit you must pass a COVID symptom screener and be ready to put on a mask upon request. To ensure that you get the most out of your visit, and to ensure the security of our school it is highly recommended you call in advance and set up an appointment with the teacher or administrator that you would like to visit with. This will help minimize the impact of your visit on instruction because when parents come to visit the classroom the teacher may feel like they have to stop instruction to conference with the visitor. It is required that you check in at the office when you arrive. You will be asked to sign in and wear a visitor's name tag. If you are not registered as a volunteer and coming to visit, you will be escorted to your destination to ensure you get what you need/want out of your visit, to adhere to district security standards, and to ensure that the visit does not interrupt instruction for the students. If your visit was not planned for and nobody is available to escort you, you

may be asked to wait or to make an appointment for a future visit so we can attend to your needs as you deserve. These district policies exist in order to help us to maintain security for our children and ensure uninterrupted learning environments. You may also access the website to look for a teacher's e-mail address so you may schedule an appointment with them.

Kindergarten parents: *If COVID/health code allow*, kinder parents are allowed to go to classrooms to drop off and visit their students without making an appointment for only the first two weeks of school to help transition your child to the school day if you like. These visits are to be limited to a few minutes. After two weeks, it is best for child and the teacher that parents are not present for the beginning/end of school and therefore, after two weeks Kinder parents must also follow the appointment protocols to visit their child's classroom.

Note: Contact information for your teacher will also be sent via the year's first classroom newsletter and available on our website. <https://iri.psdschools.org/> We are also always looking for volunteers to help us in our mission and vision of educating every child every day. Please see the section on volunteering for more information.

HEALTH

Vision and Hearing Screening

Each fall (Oct-Nov) Health Services conducts a Vision and Hearing Screening for all K-5 students. Students new to the district are screened as they transfer in throughout the year. If your child experiences difficulties, you will be notified by the school nurse or district audiologist. If you have questions or concerns throughout the school year, please contact Health Services through the school office.

Emergency Care

School personnel will give first aid care to sick or injured students. Parents or the designated contact person will be called immediately if an accident or illness occurs. We depend on the student to report his or her injury. Since the school does not have the facilities to care for severely ill or injured children, parents need to make immediate arrangements if

the school staff feels it is necessary. For this reason, it is extremely important that the school have current telephone numbers and that you answer calls from the school immediately. We have a policy to contact parents when students have a fever, a head injury, or any serious injury. Students with a temperature of 100°F or higher, students who are vomiting, or students who have other signs of contagious illness will be sent home. Students who have toileting accidents at school and require a change in clothes will be provided clean clothes at school. If we do not have anything in the child's size, we will call home to have an adult bring some new clothes.

Ambulances: In the case of extreme injury or illness, 911 will be called while other staff simultaneously contact parents/guardians. If there is time, consent for ambulance transport will be given from the parent/guardian prior to a child being taken in an ambulance. If there is not time, or if parents/guardians cannot be reached, the emergency medical providers will make the best decision for the health and safety of the child in terms of ambulance transportation. In all cases, parents/guardians are responsible for the health care costs associated with ambulance transportation and subsequent hospital medical attention.

Health Services and Injuries

Limited health services are available through our school. Our health office is staffed every day from by a health technician or registered nurse. In their absence, our office staff supervises and assists with health care and first aid.

Medication at School

We would be happy to provide students with their medicine at school. However, school personnel are not legally allowed to administer the medication unless they are delegated by the nurse and have received training. **All** medications, whether over-the-counter or not, require a physician's signature. This includes things you might not commonly think of as medication such as cough drops, etc. It is critical that you not just give your child cough drops or pain medication to take themselves as needed, all this must be handled through the health office. Here are

some guidelines to follow in order for us to have permission to administer medication:

- Long term medications must be in the original bottle and accompanied by written permission from the physician and the parent/guardian. A form is available in the health office. Doctors' offices often have these forms as well.
- Short term prescription medications (10 days or less) must be in the original container and accompanied by a note signed by the parent/guardian and the child's physician.
- Over the counter medications (cough drops, Tylenol, etc.), whether long or short term, require a permission slip signed by a physician and a parent/guardian, and must be in the container in which they were purchased.
- All medications must be kept in a locked cabinet in the Health Office. Students may not keep medications and administer them to themselves. This helps alleviate a potential danger that medications are lost and/or accidentally ingested by another student or self-administered in the wrong dose. Students will go to the health office to receive their medication.
- Students with severe allergies and asthma are allowed to carry their own medication once a meeting has been held with the student, teacher, and nurse. Parents must contact the school nurse if they wish to use this option so that they understand the procedures and implications.

Physical Examinations and Immunizations

A routine physical examination is good preventive medicine and knowledge of your child's physical condition can assist us in educational planning. We recommend that a physical examination be obtained for all students entering Poudre schools. This report should be sent to the school health office when completed and it will become a part of the cumulative health record. The Colorado Department of Health requires a completed card of immunization for all students in Colorado schools. Any new or transfer student will be requested to show proof of

immunizations or written exemptions notification before beginning school.

Recess and Sickness

Recess is a time for the students to exercise, enjoy the fresh air, and have time to socialize with one another. It is an important part of a young child's day. We understand that students who have been sick should not be exposed to extreme temperatures. If you would like your child to not participate in recess, parents are encouraged to send a note to the teacher explaining why they cannot be outside. Otherwise, students are expected to be outside during recess time. Since the weather in Colorado can change in a matter of minutes, we encourage parents to make sure their child is adequately prepared for any inclement weather. We do not have the staff to supervise students that want to stay inside because they forgot their hat or gloves, so please make sure they have what they need for the outside weather.

Wellness and Nutrition

Irish Elementary is a strong supporter of helping children create and maintain a healthy lifestyle. We believe that a healthy lifestyle creates the foundation for a lifetime of wellness. Our program is designed to provide and identify opportunities for students to be more physically active daily both at school and at home. All students have Physical Education classes, as well as a daily lunch recess, and an additional grade level recess time. Food choices provided at school must include healthy options of fruits and vegetables. Likewise, in "healthy schools" only healthy snacks are allowed to be brought to school. Exceptions for parties will be allowed on a limited basis but healthy treats such as fruits and veggies are still encouraged. Food treats could also be replaced with non-food items such as pencils, crayons, balloons, etc. If you have questions or need ideas, please talk to your student's teacher. At Irish, we strive to model wellness through healthy choices in all aspects of living.

COVID

COVID Related Protocols and Regulations

The general rule to follow is that if your student shows any symptoms of illness not related to an already diagnosed condition (asthma, allergies) or if you believe they might have been exposed to someone with COVID, keep them home and call the office for more information and next steps: 488-6900.

The COVID section will be updated with the most recent COVID protocols and regulations throughout the school year. Please reference back to this section frequently as we are sure these regulations will change continuously throughout the school year to address the changing reality of the virus in our county and schools.

Symptom Screening and Obligatory Absences due to COVID Health Regulations:

Every day during the school year, you must monitor and specifically ask your child if they are experiencing any of the below mentioned symptoms. If they are, even if it is over the weekend, please call the front office as soon as possible to find out when your child could return to school.

If your child develops any of the following symptoms, they must stay home for at least 24 hours. (This does exclude however any unchanged and usual symptoms of a known chronic condition: e.g. asthma, allergies, etc.)

- Fever of 100.4 degrees F. or more, feels feverish, has chills, etc.
- New or worsening cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Runny nose or congestion

- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

If the child has any of these symptoms prior to coming to school (even over the weekend), please call the main office at 488-6900 to report and get further information on when the child will be able to return to classes. Also, please reference the district’s “Return to Learn” document



Return to Learn July
2021.pdf

Students Who Become Symptomatic at School:

Any student who shows or develops any of the above-mentioned symptoms in a way that is not consistent with an already documented chronic illness (asthma, allergies, etc.) will be escorted from the classroom, asked to wear a mask, and placed in a safe, comfortable, and supervised space that is isolated from other students. The parents or guardians of that student will be contacted to come pick up the child. For the safety of our students and staff, it is expected that the student be picked up as soon as possible, and within a maximum of 1 hour after contact. It is also expected that all phone numbers be updated in our system to be able to call parents and emergency contacts in a timely



manner. Addressing
Symptoms at School J

COVID Testing

It is never a requirement that a student or family member be tested for COVID. However, it is extremely helpful that both the family and the school know if there is an actual case of COVID that needs to be dealt with. For that reason, we highly recommend that when a student or family member (especially one who has not been vaccinated) has any

COVID symptoms, that they be tested for COVID with a PCR test. By getting a test, you are helping us keep our entire school community safe and it can speed your child's return to school in some cases.

Masks

Masks are now required in the school building at all times by all staff, students, volunteers, and visitors. Masks must be worn correctly over the nose and mouth. Parents are expected to provide their child with clean masks and send them with an extra mask in case the first one gets lost or dirty. If there is ever a student that does not have a mask or needs a clean one, the school will provide it.

Masks are not required outdoors, so students may feel free to take off their masks anytime they are outside.

No matter the current mask regulation, Irish is always a welcome environment for masks, so students may always wear a mask even if it is not required by the current regulations.

If you believe that your child has a medical condition that makes wearing a mask detrimental to their health or wellbeing, here are the steps to follow: First, you need to get a note signed by your child's doctor informing us of the condition and his/her recommendation. Then, with that note in hand, make an appointment through the main office with our principal or assistant principal to create a medical 504 health plan. Any student without such a plan, will need to wear a mask at all times in our school building.

Adults and COVID:

Symptom screening will still be required daily for all staff, parents, volunteers, and visitors to the school this year. If an individual presents any symptoms, they must stay home. If anyone in your family or living with your child becomes ill, please encourage them to get tested so we

can build the best plan of action. Call the office for more detailed information: 488-6900.

SAFETY

Child Abuse Reporting Policy

All Poudre School District employees are mandated by law to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services. This responsibility is used only when the employee observes conditions or situations that could possibly be as a result of abuse or neglect. Reports are kept confidential and persons creating the report are clear of any civil or criminal liability and their employment shall not be affected.

Closed Campus Policy

For the safety and security of all our students, Irish Elementary follows a closed campus policy. This policy is common amongst all elementary schools in Poudre School District. Exceptions are made when a student is picked up early and checked out through the office. Only legal guardians or designated emergency contacts will be allowed to pick up students. If there is a court order preventing individuals from contacting a child, please make sure the office has a copy of the court order. If a parent wants to take a child that is not their own, they must be on the approved 'contact list'.

Drug Inspection

Poudre School District recognizes that chemical dependency is an illness often preceded by misuse and abuse. The District is committed to assisting parents and school staff in their efforts to help students deal with drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and other related issues. The geographic area surrounding all elementary schools is a designated "Drug Free Zone" and is so posted on street signs and the legal consequences for any individual with drugs in the "Drug Free Zone" are severe.

The district has the right to randomly use drug dogs on school premises during the school year without prior notice. Specific legal procedures are in place to provide for safety for all students and staff. All students will be given assistance, information, and encouragement to refuse the use of such dependent chemicals.

Items Prohibited by District's Code of Conduct

If a student is found to have an item prohibited by the code of conduct or school rules, that item will be confiscated, and it will only be released to the parent/guardian. Certain items being brought may require suspensions, and/or safety plan to be made.

Prohibited items include, but are not limited to:

- Toys unless authorized by teacher for a specific party, etc.
- Unhealthy snacks, or caffeinated beverages.
- Anything that could be construed as a weapon or a toy weapon
- Drugs/alcohol or drug paraphernalia
- Clothing that doesn't adhere to district's dress code or references gang affiliation.

Sex Offender Registry Information Available

State law (C.R.S. § 22-1-124) requires that all schools notify parents about how to access records on registered sex offenders. Following are ways to obtain information about registered offenders:

A list of offenders living inside city limits is available at City of Fort Collins Police Services. Information about sex offenders via Colorado Bureau of Investigations statewide sex offender list is available at <http://sor.state.co.us/> which will take you to the State of Colorado registry. Simply follow the steps and select the city or county of interest, for the information which is maintained by CBI. The local Fort Collins sex offender registration list can also be accessed by going to the police station at 2221 Timberline Road and filling out a request form (no charge to view list; \$7.50 to purchase copy).

A list of offenders living outside city limits in Larimer County is available from the Larimer County Sheriff. Residents can go to the Sheriff's Office administration building, 2501 Midpoint Drive, and view books with information and pictures of sex offenders at no charge. Residents can purchase a list for a fee of \$7.50 through the records department. A database is online at:

<http://www.larimer.org/sheriff/sexoffenders/index.htm>

Colorado sex offenders registry from the Colorado Bureau of Investigation and further information available at:

<https://apps.colorado.gov/apps/dps/sor/>

School Resource Officer

The district and our school are very committed to ensuring that our partnership with our school resource officer is a positive and productive experience for all stakeholders (students, teachers, admin, parents, and community). To that end, the district has built a rough draft of procedures that our school equity committee will be using to help guide our own policies and practices around our interaction and collaboration with our school resource officer. We will update this section as soon as we have more information. If you have ideas, questions, comments, or concerns about our school resource officer, please reach out to building administration for assistance. Equally, if you think you would like to serve on our equity committee, please inform David Autenrieth at 970-219-2972 or dautenri@psdschools.org.

Animals in School

All requests to have animals in the classroom or on school property must be submitted to the principal in writing. The principal has the discretion to permit or deny the presence of animals in the building. Animals may be allowed in classrooms only for a specified and appropriate educational purpose for the time necessary to achieve the educational goal. The written request must include a description of the activity, the type of animal, the educational benefit, the length of the visit and a plan for the care of the animal.

'Classroom pets' must comply with district policy. Teachers are responsible for implementing the Board of Education Policy IMG-R for any animals in their classroom by submitting a written request with the specific and appropriate educational purpose related to the education goals.

Asbestos Statement

The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act requires that workers and building occupants, or their legal guardians, are notified annually of the asbestos activities in the schools. Irish Elementary does contain asbestos materials. A copy of the district's Asbestos Management Plan is on file for review in the district's Risk Management Department at the Support Services Center. Copies of individual building inspection reports are on file at each school site. Questions pertaining to asbestos are to be directed to John Holcombe, district Safety/Environmental Coordinator at 490-3497.

Building Security

Irish Elementary will strictly enforce the security of our building. All outside doors will remain locked during the school day, except the front office double doors for beginning of the day and end of the day. All visitors need to register in the front office upon arrival. Every person that visits the school must have either a visitor's sticker pass, a volunteer badge, or a district issued ID (if a district employee). Anyone seen in the building without a nametag will be asked to report to the front office and will be escorted there by school staff. Please understand this is a precaution for the safety of our students.

Fire Drills, Lockdowns, and Evacuation Procedures

Schools are required to have safety drills for fire/evacuation (a minimum of twice a year) and lockdown (at least once a year). Fire drills are timed on how fast we exit the building as well as how fast we can account for every child and staff member. We have successfully developed a process to identify all students within 3 minutes and all adults within 5 minutes.

Lockdown drills are practiced primarily in the fall and repeated as needed. We have two levels of lockdown. The most serious lockdown level is the one we practice. This drill would occur if students/staff were perceived to be in imminent or potential danger. We expect students, under adult leadership, to find the nearest room where they can be locked safely inside. All external doors are locked immediately. We have communication systems in place that will allow us to find any child who may be in a location different from expected. We do not answer the door or telephone at this time. Students will not be able to answer their cell phones. Students are trained to be extremely quiet and out of sight during this drill. Students and staff have become more comfortable with this type of drill which is general enough to transfer to other public locations if ever needed.

The other level of lockdown would occur only when the external doors need to be locked and the safety of students/staff is not imminent (such as an incident in a nearby neighborhood, a mountain lion outside, etc.). At this time, all staff and students are secured inside the building, safe from external elements. Communication is given to staff so they can continue with teaching inside the school and with any safety measures that may be recommended.

In the unlikely event that we need to evacuate the school, we will have a designated location for students and staff to meet which will be communicated to all parents. Students and staff would walk to the designated location where parents and buses could pick up the students. We will carry all needed information to ensure that we can communicate with parents as needed.

Tornado drills are practiced by classrooms as well. While our area is not susceptible to tornados, we do have a plan that will relocate all students/staff to the safest areas of the building.

We have incorporated several systems to ensure safety and good communication. We have walkie-talkies that allow us to communicate with staff in different parts of the building at all times. We also use these

when students are outside at recess. We are prepared to give teachers more information as needed through different mechanisms. All adults and children in the building at the time of any drill are expected to participate. Any adult in the building at the time of an actual incident must obey the instructions of school staff during the situation.

Parent Communication with Students

If you need to leave a message for your child, please call the office and we will deliver the message or, if necessary, find your child and bring them to the office. Emergency messages need to go directly to the office to make sure it has been delivered. Please call the office and not your child's cell phone (if they have one). Please remember that the office becomes very busy at the end of the day, so messages received after 2:30 pm may be difficult to deliver before dismissal. We appreciate your understanding and support of our efforts.

Walking and Bike Safety

Please encourage your child to be a safe walker or bicycle rider. When children are given the privilege of walking or riding their bike, they are making a big step towards independence and positive self-esteem. It is necessary for each child to be well informed. Children should cross only at street intersections. Irish does not have crossing guards, so parents that allow their children to walk are aware that they need to train their child to cross roads safely. If you cannot yet trust your child to cross roads safely, then you should walk with your child or you must contact the school to set up an after-school safety plan. Bicycle riders should use bike lanes where they are provided. Please be careful as you drive near our school - watch for children and obey the 20-mph speed limit. At dismissal time please remind your child that they must wait for the adult to walk them to the corner (and cross the first street if required).

WEATHER

Inclement Weather Policy

Irish Elementary recommends that all students arrive at school prepared for the changing weather and climate of our area. The following guidelines may be used to help students and parents prepare for the weather.

Parents and students should plan to be outdoors for daily recess breaks and wear appropriate outdoor clothing for the day. The clothing would include coats, hats, gloves, and boots.

We will have indoor recess if the temperature is deemed too cold (generally around 15 degrees or colder), factoring wind chill, students will come into the building and remain in the building during recesses. The principal or designee will make the decision and an announcement will be made over the P.A. system.

An announcement will be made by the principal or designee if it is raining or snowing enough to get students too wet. They will come into the building and remain in the building during recesses.

Teachers will use their own judgment about morning and afternoon recesses based on the above criteria.

There are many opportunities for students to find snow and/or puddles with which to get wet at recess. We instruct students to make choices and anticipate the natural consequences of those choices. E.g. If they do not have snow boots, walking in the snow will lead to wet feet for many hours...is that what they want? We do not have enough supervision staff to ensure that students are not getting wet at recess and we don't want to rob students natural learning opportunities. We also do not have enough replacement clothing for students that do get wet and are wanting dry clothes later. Therefore, we do not enforce any rules around walking in snow without boots, or not making snow angels, etc. If you feel strongly that your child should not be getting wet, please tell your student your expectation and if necessary, tell your teacher as well. You may also feel free to pack a change of clothing in your student's backpack so they may change if they do get wet.

School Closure and Late Start

School closure and late starts are announced and updated by the district via email, phone, media outlets and available at <https://www.psdschools.org>.

STUDENT POLICIES

Personal items, and use of Cell Phones or Other Electronics at School

At Irish, we realize that cellphones, handheld game devices and e-readers or tablets are a part of our 21st Century culture as well as excellent learning tools. This is why many classrooms have class sets of such devices, as well as our library has access to iPods, e-readers, computers, and tablets. Therefore, we highly discourage bringing these items from home as we do not have the capacity to ensure the security of such devices during the school day. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal items (electronic or otherwise).

We also understand with our working parent community; many students need to be able to contact their parents via cellphone outside of school hours. If this is the case, we ask that the student turn the phone off and place in their backpack for the day. Cellphone use by students is not allowed during school hours, please see above under “Communication with Students” if you need to communicate with your child during the school day. Again, the school is not responsible for lost or stolen cell phones so consider carefully if bringing the cell phone to school is the right decision for your family.

Use of Phones at School

Students will not be allowed to use the school telephones unless they have permission from a staff member. Permission will be given based on the students’ individual situation. If you need a special communication

plan with your child, please contact your teacher. Students that wish to make after-school plans with their friends will not be allowed to use the phone. These arrangements should be made prior to the school day and communicated to the school office from by the parents.

Dress Code

Students will wear clothing that is appropriate, comfortable, and not distracting for all school activities. Clothing that is inappropriate distracts students from their primary goal of learning and/or might disrupt students' sense of safety. District policy states that apparel that is deemed disruptive to the classroom environment or to the maintenance of a safe and orderly school is prohibited. We expect adults and students to be responsible for their own clothing. The following clothing items are not allowed to be worn to school:

- Halter tops
- Swim wear
- Short shorts
- Bare midriff shirts
- Visible underwear
- Sagging pants
- Gang related items or clothing
- T-shirts with obscene, racial, sexually suggestive, drug or alcohol slogans.
- Hats, hoodies, and sunglasses are not to be worn in the building
- Shoes with wheels cannot be worn unless the wheel can be taken off.

If there is a question regarding a student's apparel, the classroom teacher, office personnel, or principal will rectify it with the student and notify the parent as the situation warrants. Typically, wearing a shirt inside-out will resolve the problem for the day.

Gum

Students are not allowed to chew gum at any point during the school day.

Toys

Irish Elementary provides students with ample equipment and toys for recess and play time that are developmentally appropriate for each grade-level. Therefore, it is not necessary, nor is it recommended, that students bring toys or stuffed animals to school. However, it is difficult to monitor this expectation for over 400 students, therefore, we count on the support of parents to ensure that students are not bringing toys to school. Distracting toys found may be confiscated and either returned at the end of the day or if habitual, it might be stored in the front office for parents to retrieve at their convenience. If there is a special day that students have earned that they are allowed to bring a stuffed animal, etc. the teacher will let you know this in advanced. Even on these days we recommend that students not bring their favorite toys/items as if they get lost, dirty, broken, or confiscated it can be a very sad moment for the students. Irish Elementary is not liable for lost, stolen, or broken items that are brought from home, so please have your child think carefully about what they might bring to school. If toys are ever a repeated issue with a student, we will contact parents to make a plan.

HOMEWORK

Homework Rationale

We believe in the practice of assigning homework for the following reasons:

- Research shows a correlation between homework and academic achievement. Homework involving focused practice enables a student to master the targeted skill. It also improves a students' understanding of their schoolwork.
- Homework helps a student develop good study habits and teaches responsibility and organizational skills.
- Homework is the link between school and home regarding learning. It shows what a student is studying and enables a child to integrate independent learning skills into his/her life beyond school.

Homework Philosophy

- The purpose of homework is to allow students to practice and review skills introduced during the school day. The purpose and expectation of the specific assignment should be stated for students by the teacher.
- Homework is assigned in a way that allows students time to complete quality work. The timeframes on which homework is assigned is left to the teacher's discretion but will have clear communication to students and parents.
- Students should be given some choice regarding what they read at home. The enjoyment of reading is increased when students are able to choose the reading materials.
- Learning happens at home by means other than homework. This learning is a vital part of the home to school link. Through teacher/parent/student communication, this learning can be integrated into the concept of homework. Ask your teacher if you have questions on how you can best link home and school learning.
- Daily routines are critical for student success at homework.
- Homework should be sent at a student's independent level allowing them to work/struggle with the problem by themselves. If you feel that the homework is too far from your child's independent level, please inform the teacher.
- Students should feel confident in their homework completion regardless of the language it is assigned in. Parents do not need to know the language of the homework. If you feel that the language is outside of the student's independent level, please inform the teacher.
- Homework is not included as part of a student's final grade. This allows them to explore, struggle, and advocate for help and/or express any frustrations in a note to their teacher without having to worry about their grade being affected. Also, homework has never been a good indication of students' actual mastery of standards which is why they aren't included in the final grade.

- Homework support from parents should be limited to the following activities (as to avoid parents doing too much of the work and thereby taking away the child’s learning)
 - Give accountability for homework and help the student set goals based on teacher feedback of the homework completion and quality.
 - Providing time and a quiet space to do the homework.
 - Give the child positive feedback on perseverance, problem solving strategies, etc.
 - Encourage the child to write the teacher a letter or note if problems arose during the homework. (If too young to write, the child could tell you what to write as you scribe the note for them).
 - Coach on coping strategies if the student gets frustrated and allow for brain breaks if needed. Also, help keep track of the time to help ensure that students don’t go too far beyond the time guidelines.
 - If no specific homework was assigned that evening, participate in the following with the child:
 - Ask them what they learned that day (don’t accept nothing as an answer).
 - Make sure they read (see grid below for time guidelines).
 - If television time is allowed, make some of the television time be in their second language.
 - Make sure the child is getting plenty of exercise and fun!

Homework Communication and Time Guidelines

Teachers will communicate clearly with students and parents/guardians what the homework assignments for that evening/week are. Teachers will make homework a predictable routine for the students and their families as to make navigating homework time easier. If you have not heard from the teacher about homework, or if there is confusion or an issue, please contact the teacher.

Time spent on homework and reading (reading can also be an adult reading to a child or vice-versa) should follow these guidelines approximately. (If a child wants to read longer, great!! 😊)

Grade	Reading Time (can be read to the child)	Other Homework Time	Total Homework Time
Kindergarten	10-20 minutes	0-10 minutes	20 minutes
1st Grade	20 minutes	10 minutes	30 minutes
2nd Grade	20-25 minutes	10-15 minutes	35-40 minutes
3rd Grade	30 minutes	15-20 minutes	45-50 minutes
4th Grade	30-45 minutes	20-30 minutes	50-75 minutes
5th Grade	30-45 minutes	20-30 minutes	50-75 minutes

It is the expectation that all students complete (or do their best to complete) the homework and reading requirement to the best of their ability. If the homework is taking longer than the time guidelines for that evening, the parent may sign the homework and indicate to the teacher that the student ran out of time (only if the child was truly engaged and trying to accomplish the homework during that time). Also, as the guideline time approaches, the parent can encourage the student to write the teacher a note as to why they feel they didn't finish in time or what further help they might need. If the child is frequently not finishing the homework within the guidelines, then parents are encouraged to contact the teacher to come up with a collaborative plan on how to make the homework more manageable for the student.

STUDENT RECORDS

It is essential for the school to maintain up-to-date family records. If any of the following items change during the year, please notify the school office immediately.

- person to contact in an emergency, people allowed to pick up your child in an emergency, etc.
- change of doctor
- change of custody or guardianship and/or restraining orders
- change of address and/or telephone (home, cell phone or work)

STUDENT CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENT

During the third trimester, the staff completes a collaborative student placement protocol to determine a child's placement for the following year. If parents wish to request a specific teacher, they must do so in writing and submit the request by May 1 to the front office. These letters must be written in a positive, informational manner, and supported by rationale. The teams' goals are the following:

- To assign the student to the class where he/she will be the most productive and the full potential of the learner will be developed.
- To keep classes at each grade level balanced in terms of number, gender ratios, language program, and first language dominance.
- To have in each classroom various math and reading ability levels represented

We try to honor parent requests as often as possible, however, we do not guarantee that we will be able to place the student in the requested classroom due to one of the above reasons.

Lost Textbooks, Damaged Laptops/Technology and School Materials

District policy requires parents to pay for any lost or damaged district books or computers. Examples include but are not limited to library books, textbook, or media resources. The cost of the material(s) will be determined according to the district fee schedule.

PROGRAMS

DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM

What is a Dual Language Immersion Program?

- Dual Language is an instructional program in which students learn to read, write, listen, and speak two languages through content subjects and direct language instruction.
- 50% of the instructional minutes are in English, and 50% are in Spanish.
- Content subjects, such as math, science, social studies, and the arts change language to balance the time in both languages.
- Daily “bridging” time is taught bilingually to allow students to make connections and comprehension between languages. In addition, the “bridging” time increases students understanding of how both languages work linguistically and how bilingual individuals actually think about learning languages (metalinguistics).
- Students receive daily instruction in reading and writing in both English and Spanish.
- Teachers differentiate at all times, using visuals, gestures, vocabulary instruction, graphic organizers, and diagrams to ensure that students understand all content, whether it is in their first language or their second.

What are the Benefits of a Dual Language Immersion Program?

- Learning bilingually helps children learn language, grammar, and vocabulary more completely. It allows them to use information in new ways, develop good listening skills, and increase problem solving and categorizing skills.
- Bilingual children have been proven to be better with high-demand cognitive tasks. They activate more areas of their brain through

difficult tasks, and have better memory skills than monolingual children.

- Studies show that students who learn to speak, read, and write two languages at an early age have greater success in high school.
- Dual Language students develop problem solving skills and coping strategies that then allows for greater success when presented with difficult problems later in their academic careers. In essence, they develop greater growth-mindset and resilience than students that did not go through dual language programs.
- Dual Language prepares them for foreign language requirements in high school and college.
- With a global economy, English is no longer the primary language in the world; 64% percent of the highest paid business executives in the United States speak more than one language.
- Speaking two languages can give students advantages with broader employment opportunities later in life; and employees who speak two languages typically make between 5-20 percent more than their monolingual peers.
- Students get to experience different cultures, customs and dialects that give them a worldly base. This encourages empathy and greater cultural sensitivity that they can then draw upon later in their lives.
- Speaking two languages opens doors of community, connection, opportunity, and success. *

Dual Language FAQ's

- **Q: How does the English/Spanish instruction work?**
 - A: **The 50/50 model:** Students receive 50% of their instructional minutes in English, and 50% in Spanish. All specials classes (Art, Music, PE) are taught in English. To make up for the English minutes in specials, students will have longer periods of Spanish in Math, Science and/or Social studies.
 - **Biliteracy:** Students receive two literacy blocks per day one in Spanish and one in English. One literacy block consisting of shared reading, read aloud and writing, and the other with

guided reading and independent practice. The literacy components change languages after every unit. For example, for unit one, a student may receive shared reading and writing in Spanish, but guided reading and independent practice time in English. For Unit 2, they would switch— Shared reading and writing would be in English, guided reading and independent practice would be in Spanish. Standards and learning targets are **not** translated or repeated, but rather they are reinforced in both languages.

- **Bridging:** Each day, students have a block of time that is language neutral. This means it's taught in both languages at the same time. During this time, students learn how English and Spanish work together and how they compare/contrast with each other. They will learn how to identify cognates (like intelligent and inteligente), learn grammar and phonics unique to each language, and how to identify formal and informal register, purpose, and strategies for using both languages for greater comprehension.
- **Q: Won't learning Spanish hurt my child's growth in English?**
 - A: The short answer is no. There is no research that supports that learning a second language for native English speakers or learning in Spanish for native Spanish speakers is detrimental to students' English language development. There is A LOT of research that supports that native Spanish speakers make the greatest growth in a dual language model than any other English language development model; and that native English speakers that come from a dual language program outperform their peers in high school and college. So, research shows that students in dual language programs make incredible growth in English in the long run (with best outcomes shown in middle and high school). The same research shows us that students' English growth might "start a little slower" in early grades to ultimately "go fast" in later grades. *
- **Q: Is there anything unique about Irish's Dual Language Program?**

- A: Irish modified and updated its dual language model to match the newest research in dual language practice. Our first year of implementation of this model was the 16-17 school year. The highlight of the change is that we shifted to a biliteracy model. This means we teach literacy in both languages starting in Kindergarten (prior this wasn't done until 3rd or 4th grade). This shift has had incredible benefits. Our data shows that students are becoming more proficient in both languages. Students are in mixed language groups all day long allowing them to make connections and friendships with a beautiful diversity of children. Please let us know if you'd like more information about this change and/or its benefits.
- **Q: What if my child is getting frustrated or confused in their second language?**
 - A: As anyone who has ever attempted learning a second language knows, this feeling is normal, albeit uncomfortable. At Irish, we talk about these feelings every day with kids, and teach them how to cope with their uncomfortable feelings and persevere when things get tough. This kind of character building not only helps kids academically and with their language growth, but it also helps give them 21st Century skills to problem-solve, collaborate, innovate, persevere, and follow through. The short-term additional stress of learning a second language is far outweighed by the great advantage of becoming bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural global citizens. Also, by having to find strategies for the additional demands of learning a second language, our students always come out strong in social emotional skills like: Growth-mindset, setting reasonable and achievable goals vs. perfectionism, resiliency, advocating for help, supporting peers, collaboration, and critical thinking skills.
- **Q: How can I help my child if I don't speak the other language?**
 - A: First of all, know that you are not alone. The majority of our parents are not yet bilingual, and all of our parents can (and do) support their students effectively every day. Here

are a few suggestions of things that you can do. 1) Support and encourage language development (talk, debate, tell stories, ask questions, etc.) in your home language. Building a strong foundation in a students' first language is very predictive of how easily/quickly they will pick up the second language. 2) Make sure they read every day. It doesn't matter which language, or if they read with you or independently. Giving them time and space for enjoyable reading will greatly benefit their academic growth. 3) Stay in close contact with the teacher. Always contact the teacher if you have questions or concerns about your child's academic growth. 4) Model language learning—ask your child about the new language they are learning. Let them be the teacher!

- **Q: I still don't understand, how can I get more information?**

- A: No problem! Most of us did not attend a dual language school as a child, nor did we grow up in an era of standardized testing and common core standards. If you still have questions, please feel free to contact your child's teacher, our instructional coach, the assistant principal, or the principal. In addition, please continue to read our regular newsletters, website updates, and Facebook posts. Finally, come to our Padres en Acción meetings! They are announced in the newsletter and we'd love to have you! There you can learn more about how our school operates and what we are doing to continually improve. Also, it is a great place to meet other amazing parents and find out how the parent community can support us in our work. We hope to see you there!
- *Please ask us if you are interested in a list of references or further reading to learn more about dual language instruction.

Title I School

Irish Elementary is a school-wide Title I school. According to the U.S. Department of Education the purpose of a school acquiring Title I status is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant

opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments. If you have questions on how we are utilizing our Title I federal funds, please let us know.

Integrated Services

Integrated Services (Special Education) is offered at every grade level at Irish Elementary. Students on an Individual Education Plan (IEP) are placed in the least restrictive school environment in order to meet their academic and social needs. There are two Integrated Services teachers as well as a School Psychologist, Speech-Language Pathologist and Occupational Therapist on staff working as an integrated team along with the general education teachers to meet the needs of all students. If you have any questions about this program or your students Individualized Education Plan, please contact us.

Gifted and Talented

The Gifted and Talented program at Irish Elementary is responsive to student needs and varies from year to year.

Curriculum enrichment and acceleration/compacting are used to meet the needs of students who may benefit from additional challenge in the areas of math, language arts, science, leadership, and creativity. We've also found that learning content in a second language offers challenge and excitement for our students who are Gifted and Talented. Our dual language program pushes them to even greater heights. One way our program supports them is that students learn it is impossible to be "perfect" and they learn coping strategies. Research shows that perfectionism is one of the biggest obstacles for students that are gifted and talented and that it is critical that they find material that challenges them at an early age. What better way to provide all of that than through the learning of a second language?

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

The MTSS is a process that ensures that all students are progressing toward their goals and that individual student instructional needs are being met. At Irish, we have developed standards of practice that are Tier 1, or universal instruction, which is based on standards and on each student's individual needs, interests, and goals. For students that do not progress as expected at this level, we provide Tier 2 instruction which is above and beyond what is provided in Tier 1. This could be a double dose of instruction or instruction that targets a certain academic or behavioral difficulty. Tier 3 instruction is for students that are not yet successful at the Tier 1 or 2 levels. This instruction can include curriculum replacement or intensive time and frequency of instruction. To change a child's instructional program, the staff uses a decision-making process to ensure that all decisions are made collaboratively with the parents and all teachers that work with the child. These decisions are always based on data and a body of evidence. The process begins with weekly Professional Learning Community meetings in which teachers collaborate to discuss and improve on instructional practice and discuss classroom solutions for when students have not yet made their goals. After multiple meetings and strategies, and a student is still not making progress, the child may be referred to our Student Success Team (SST). These SST meetings consist of classroom teachers, interventionists, an integrated services team member, the parent, and an administrator. The Student Success Team makes decisions on the proper intervention for the student's instructional needs and will monitor the progress of the student closely to ensure effectiveness.

Project Smile

It is unknown what Project Smile will look like this year due to the pandemic. In the meantime, the best thing you can do for the oral health of your child is encourage proper tooth brushing twice daily.

Project Smile is a community dental program developed by the North Fort Collins Business Association in partnership with other Fort Collins

area businesses, Irish Elementary School, PSD Partnership Center, the Health District of Northern Larimer County, area dentists and the Community Foundation of Northern Colorado. The program provides an opportunity for area businesses, organizations and individuals to sponsor children in serious need of dental care. Students with a signed permission form will receive a free dental screening. Parents of students identified as needing immediate dental care will be contacted and, if the student qualifies, the family will be offered some financial/logistical assistance in getting the follow up dental care.

Book Trust

Book Trust enriches the literacy culture of families in need by providing children the opportunity to choose, own, and delight in books. Through donations and community partnerships, Book Trust establishes funds for designated schools, enabling qualifying children to choose and purchase books each month through Scholastic Book Clubs. Each student at Irish Elementary, that has parent permission, receives \$7.00 per month to spend on books of his or her choice.

Book Trust and Irish Elementary know that the desire to read is one of the greatest assets a child can have to succeed in school and beyond. Long-term access to a great selection of books is key to developing a love of reading. If you'd like to learn more about Book Trust and/or how to donate, please visit www.booktrust.org.

Finally, as you and your family outgrow certain books, please bring them in to donate as we can find new families to enjoy those books.

Universal Breakfast

All students at Irish Elementary are eligible to receive free breakfast. This year the format has changed to where students will not be eating in their classrooms. Instead, they will go through the cafeteria to pick up their food and either eat there or they can choose to eat outside. For more

information about universal breakfast, please visit our website at: www.psdschools.org/irish.

Family Outreach

The Family Outreach program is here to serve the Irish Elementary community. The goal of this program is to increase family/school communication and collaboration as well as find ways to overcome any obstacles that a family or student might face in their education. For any assistance you might need, please call Ana Ordonez-Velasco on her direct line at 488-6906 or on her cell phone at 218-4476. MaryLou Velez also helps with family outreach and serves families that might be having financial hardships that have led to qualifying for our McKinney-Vento program. You can reach her at 488-6912 or her work cell phone 970-889-3791: You can also stop by to receive any assistance you might need in the Irish Elementary office during office hours 8am to 4:30pm.

PSD After 3 (Formally Known as Club TRES)

PSD after 3 is a program that provides students with engaging academic enrichment, and/or sports/exercise related programs that occur after school. Students can receive one-to-one assistance, small group learning, and meaningful academic enrichment. The programs offered in PSD After 3 are a lot of fun and benefit all students that participate academically, socially, emotionally, and artistically.

We will keep you updated on PSD After 3 information as it evolves during the pandemic.

For more information, contact the Irish office at 970-488-6900.

AlphaBEST

AlphaBEST is a program available to supervise students before and after school. Please call 972-632-6573 or write to

poudreco@alphabest.org for more information. You can also visit this website for more information:

<https://www.psdschools.org/AlphaBest>

BEHAVIOR

PBIS

PBIS stands for Positive Behavior Intervention Support. It is a program designed to explicitly teach the positive academic behaviors and social skills that students need to be successful learners. It is based on the understanding that this type of explicit teaching is the most important and successful part of comprehensive behavior support. There is more intense small group and one-on-one support available for students that need extra help in showing successful learning behaviors. Another cornerstone of PBIS is that all teachers and staff at Irish continually look for the good behaviors that students demonstrate throughout the day. Our educators constantly praise and reinforce the amazing good that we see students doing daily.

Irish Agreements

We are respectful.

We are responsible.

We are safe and healthy.

We teach these school agreements as they should look and sound in each area and situation in the school: the lunchroom, the hallways, the playground, the bus, the office, the gym, the media center, and in different situations in the classroom. Parents are encouraged to familiarize themselves with those positive behavior expectations and reinforce them at home. To see our teaching

matrix that explains the behavior expectations for each setting please see: <https://sites.google.com/psdschools.org/Irish-teaching-matrix/home>

Student Behavioral Mistakes and Learning Opportunities

Making mistakes is part of life, and certainly it's a part of growing up. When a student inevitably makes a mistake, teachers and/or staff have a conversation with that student in private to reflect on that behavior and to make a plan on how to make it right. When behaviors are minor in nature and if the student is able to correct the behavior, there is no documentation or parent communication about the incident (unless otherwise requested by the parent). This allows students the time and space to become more independent and responsible for their own social-emotional learning and growth.

If a student's behavior becomes repetitive, and/or if the student does not seem able yet to fix the behavior with reasonable support from teachers/staff, then the adult working with the child on this behavior will contact parents for assistance in making a plan to help the student.

Major Behavior Office Referrals

If a problem or behavior becomes a pattern, or the student was not able to independently problem-solve how to remedy any harm done, parents will be informed and included in the problem-solving process. "Major Office Referrals" are serious violations of the Poudre School District code of conduct, and usually require administrator response. Parents will always be contacted if a Major Code of Conduct Violation occurs. If the code of conduct violation results in suspension, the parents or care givers will be required to pick up the student as soon as possible and no longer than 1 hour after contact is made. In addition, parents/guardians will need to attend a "re-entry" meeting prior to the student being able to return to classes. At this meeting a plan for addressing any behavioral or safety issues will be made with the parents, staff, and student. If determined that a student may need Tier 2 or 3 behavior supports, the staff and parents will convene for a Behavior Student Success Team

Meeting to build a formal intervention plan along with a progress monitoring plan.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Standardized testing is used throughout the year to assess student performance and growth. The district and state require several different types of standardized tests throughout the year. As a data-driven school, we use this information to make important decisions about the students' education. In addition, we also rely on the teachers' frequent evaluation of class performance through varied formative assessment.

As a partner in your child's education, we encourage you to ensure that the students get adequate exercise, sleep, and a well-balanced breakfast during assessment windows (and really throughout the year). As a staff, we will not impose undue pressure on the students. Over emphasis on the importance of standardized testing can result in anxiety for the students and may negatively impact the student's performance and mental wellbeing. Together with parents, we want to message that simply doing their best and using their problem-solving skills for when they encounter hard questions is the best strategy and that they shouldn't worry about the test. The results of these assessments are used as part of our Response to Intervention Program which focuses on specific skills with which the child may need extra support.

Results from CMAS tests are sent home in the fall. ACCESS results are sent in late spring. Results for all other types of assessments can be obtained from the student's teacher and will also be shared at parent teacher conferences.

MAP (Measures of Academic Progress)

MAP tests in reading and mathematics are administered electronically three times a year. Typically, students are assessed in August/September, January and May. This assessment is used to assess performance and growth. At the end of the year, we can determine if the student made a year's growth in each subject.

Star Reading

Star Reading is a reading assessment given up to five times a year to assess a student's reading level. It is an electronic assessment with immediate results. It is typically administered at the beginning of the year, and then at the end of each quarter. The results of this assessment are used to determine the student's reading level as well as set appropriate reading targets for that student.

Accelerated Reader

Accelerated Reader (A.R.) is a component of the Renaissance Learning programs. At Irish Elementary we use this program to help make essential reading practice more effective for students. After students read a book at their reading level, they take a short quiz (usually 5 to 10 questions) about the book to assess reading comprehension. The program also keeps track of how many books the student has read, the percentage of questions the student answers correctly, the average book level the student is testing at, and much more. We use this program in both English and Spanish.

Acadience Reading Assessments (Formally DIBELS/IDEL):

The Colorado READ Act requires that students in kindergarten through third grade be assessed on their reading ability. The assessment chosen by Poudre School District is Acadience. The Spanish version is the IDEL. All kindergarten through third graders are assessed in the fall, winter and spring. Students that do not meet benchmarks will have a READ plan to monitor progress and ensure effective instructional interventions for growth. Students in fourth and fifth grade are assessed in the fall and spring if they have a READ plan from a previous grade, are new to the district, or are not proficient on both the previous year's reading CMAS and the current year's reading MAPs. Acadience is used not only to assess if a student is on grade level in reading, but also to diagnose the areas that may be preventing the student from performing at grade level.

Further testing can then be done with the DIBELS DEEP and other screeners to indicate areas a teacher can target for intervention.

CMAS (Colorado Measurement of Academic Success) and PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers)

During the months of March and April the state of Colorado, in order to comply with the requirements of the ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act), requires every student in third grade through tenth grade take comprehensive standardized tests. Students in third grade through fifth grade take an English Language Arts (ELA), and Math test. Students in fourth grade take an additional social studies test (on alternating years), and fifth graders take an additional science test. Results from these exams are distributed at the beginning of the following school year. Each February, we hold a “town hall meeting” at Irish to go through what parents and students can expect from these assessments and how to prepare for them. For more information on these assessments, please visit <http://www.parcconline.org/> or you can visit our website at <https://iri.psdschools.org/>. Know that in 19-20 CMAS was canceled and last year it was given one subject only, therefore we will not have as much information from this assessment as in prior years.

W-APT

All students new to Poudre Schools fill out a Home Language survey as part of their registration. If the survey indicates that another language is spoken in the home, the student is given the W-APT test. The W-APT is an initial screener for students K-12. They are assessed in the four domains of the English language: listening, speaking, reading and writing. If the results of the test indicate that the student does speak a language other than English parents are notified and the student is placed in the English Language Acquisition Program. Please inquire with the office for further information of what this means for your child’s education.

ACCESS

ACCESS is an annual test that is administered in January statewide to students who are in an English Acquisition program. The test is designed to provide a picture of the students' English Language Development in the four domains. The results identify and track individual student's progress in the acquisition of English. Teachers are able to use this information to target instruction. Spanish learners are given a Spanish version of this assessment while English learners are taking the state version. Parents are given a report of their child's progress in their second language at report card and conference times.

SPECIAL EVENTS

School Pictures

School pictures are taken by Tom Skillman, a local photographer. An individual picture is taken in the fall and a group picture is taken in the spring. Students are occasionally photographed or videotaped at school for television or newspaper articles. A non-permission form will be available to parents if they do not wish their child to participate.

Field Trips

Please note: The status of if field trips will be allowed this year is unknown and could change at any moment. If field trips are allowed this year, they will follow these guidelines, and may include further health and safety requirements.

Your child may participate with his/her class on an excursion to a destination beyond the immediate school campus. In order for him/her to be allowed to do this, parent/guardians must sign a required permission slip which the child will bring home and return to school. If the student does not bring back the permission form, the child will remain in school doing schoolwork. If the child is absent from school because they were not allowed to go on the field trip, it will be considered an unexcused absence. Parents may not give verbal permission over the phone to substitute the permission form.

- Student responsibilities include returning the signed permission slip and demonstrating appropriate behavior both on the bus and at the field trip destination. All students are required to ride the bus.
- Chaperone responsibilities include riding the designated school bus with the students and keeping track of your students at all times. All chaperones must have been approved as a volunteer prior to

the field trip. Please see contact the office 2 weeks prior to fill out the volunteer registration form.

- Staff responsibilities include providing the bus driver and themselves with a student roster and chaperone names, providing chaperones with a list of students for which they are responsible and accounting for all students and chaperones before departure time.
- To maintain an educational focus for field trips, we ask that students and chaperones not bring additional money for gift shop purchases.
- **Due to liability reasons, we cannot bring younger siblings on field trips.**

Parties, Invitations, and Staff Gifts

If children want to bring a treat on their birthday, the parents should confer with the teacher beforehand. Please support our academic time by providing only a short celebration and very simple and healthy treats. By request of the Larimer County Health Department, no homemade foods are allowed at school during parties/celebrations due to potential known or unknown allergies of the students. Party invitations will not be passed out in school. This is not fair to children not invited. Please take care of your invitations from home. Students giving gifts to teachers and other school staff is not encouraged by the school staff. We do not wish to place anyone in a situation where he/she feels he/she must give the teacher or other school staff a gift. At times, students may want to give a gift, and it will be accepted in an understanding way, however, every effort will be made to encourage the child not to give a gift and that they know this is not necessary.

After School Events

Please note that all events are subject to modification due to COVID requirements.

Back to School Night

Back to School Night is Irish's first family event of the school year, typically occurring within the first month of school. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet your child's teacher and learn about the different topics that they will learn throughout the school year. Expectations for student behavior are also explained. In addition, thanks to the wonderful congregation of Redeemer Lutheran Church, we are able to provide food and entertainment throughout the evening for all members of the family. (This plan will be modified and adapted to meet all current health code and COVID requirements at the time of Back-to-School Night. Know that regardless of COVID conditions, we will have an event (virtual or in person) to ensure you have a chance to meet your teacher, ask questions, and make community connections with other parents in your child's classroom).

Holiday Night

Each year in December, we come together as a community to simply celebrate our school, our families, and the diversity of our cultures during the holiday season. Come enjoy a community dinner, an optional visit from Santa, free books, a gift shop, and family games and activities.

Día del Niño (Day of the Child)

Children's Day is an international tradition celebrated by many cultures. Each April, we celebrate our students' individual talents, spirit, and academic success. Students audition to perform in a school-wide talent show (performed at the end of the school day), families sell cultural foods, and our parent organization raises funds through a silent auction.

PARENT-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

At Irish we welcome and encourage open communication between parents, teachers and students. If you need to reach a teacher, feel free to call and leave a message, and your call will be returned. We are not able to interrupt teachers during class time for phone calls and messages but your messages will be returned in a timely fashion. If urgent information needs to be given to the teacher during school hours, that information must be given to the main office so we can let the teacher know as they do not have time to check phone messages during the school day. Conferences can be scheduled at a time that suits both parents and teachers. We encourage parents to review the work their children bring home. Occasionally, teachers will send home a note with your child. Please feel welcome to respond with a note or phone call. In an effort to conserve paper, the bulk of our communication will now be virtual. Also, Thursdays is our “Thursday Folder” day (again, primarily virtual), where you can expect extra communication from the school and your teacher on this day.

Communication and in Person Meeting Norms

In the spirit of open, respectful, effective, and professional communication, we ask that all Irish community members abide by the following norms around communication.

- Maintain open and frequent communication. Only through open and timely communication can school staff and parents have all the information to best meet the needs of the child.
 - Voicemails, emails, notes, and other messages will be responded to within 2 business days. If a message needs a more immediate response, you must give that message directly to a staff member in the office.
- Make an appointment for a meeting. Except for emergencies that involve the safety or well-being of a child, we ask that you please

make an appointment beforehand with whomever you want to meet with. Educators are incredibly busy professionals, and it is hard for them to get ready for a day of instruction when they are presented with unexpected meetings.

- Speak to the person most immediately involved (or most immediately able to assist) with whatever issue may have arisen. (E.g. If you are confused with an assignment a teacher gave, contact that teacher vs. contacting the principal. If you believe your child was not given due process before a consequence was given, talk with the person that gave your child the consequence vs. contacting the principal).
 - If you have had conversations with the staff member that was most immediately involved and were not able to come to a solution, please feel free to contact building administration and we will be happy to assist.
- Problem-solving in person whenever possible. If not possible, please call. Avoid problem-solving over electronic communication. Phone calls and in-person meetings always have better outcomes, especially when there is a problem needing to be solved.
- Initiate concerns with inquiry. We, as human beings, almost never have all the information or all the perspectives of a given situation. Ask the person involved about what happened and why they think it happened that way. Gaining more information almost always brings clarity to the conversation.
- Keep in mind that we all want what is best for your child and when we work collaboratively with each other to educate and problem-solve, it leads to the best outcome for your child and our school.

How to Communicate a Problem

At Irish Elementary we strive to educate our students into being problem solvers. As part of conflict-resolution, we teach them strategies that can help them solve a problem. We have developed some guidelines that

you may follow (hopefully in the order listed as to best address the problem in the most efficient way possible).

Problems with other students

- Whenever appropriate, we like students to solve problems with other students themselves in person using their conflict resolution skills. If that doesn't work...
- Contact child's teacher (first)
- Contact the counselor (second)
- Contact the assistant principal or principal (lastly if problem has not been resolved)
- Do not contact other students' parents directly unless you know the parent or if the problem happens outside of school grounds. If communication with another child's parent needs to happen, the school will facilitate that communication.

Concerns with a staff member

- Contact that staff member (first)
- Contact the principal or assistant principal (only if after conversation with that staff member the problem is not resolved)

Concerns with building policies and procedures

- Contact the principal
- Contact a School Accountability Committee representative
- Contact the Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Schools (only if after conversation with the principal the issue is not resolved)

Concerns about district policies and procedures

- Contact the principal (first)
- Contact the Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Schools (only if after conversation with the principal the issue is not resolved)

Concerns with the principal

- Contact the principal (first)

- Contact the Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Schools (only if after conversation with principal the issue is not resolved).

Newsletters

School newsletters are sent home with every student the last Thursday of the month. They include a letter from the principal as well as important school activities that are coming up. A calendar of important dates for the month is also published. The newsletter provides highlights and accomplishments that have occurred in the previous month. This publication will be electronic as to save resources and the environment, however, you may request a printed version of any school communications at any time by calling the office.

Classroom to Home Communication

You can expect home communication via SeeSaw. If you need more information about anything, please contact your teacher. If you need a particular communication style, frequency, or specific requests for information, please let your teacher know. You may reach your teacher via email, SeeSaw, or telephone for anything you need. Teacher contact information and learning pages are available here: <https://iri.pedschools.org/learning-pages> You may also call the office at 488-6900 and they can always transfer you to who you need to talk to.

Handbook

This handbook is to be updated every three years. We will distribute the handbook to every student every time it is updated. Information contained in the handbook will also be available on the website. New students will receive the handbook with their registration packets.

Webpage

The school website is <https://iri.psdschools.org/> . This website is maintained by staff at Irish Elementary. We encourage parents to submit requests for items to be placed on the webpage. Currently, one can find information regarding school programs, newsletters, schedules, activities, and much more.

Thursday Folders

Irish Elementary has adopted a system for organizing important papers that need parent attention. We are in the process of transitioning to ever more digital communication systems, so much of the “Thursday Folder” communication will now be done electronically. Regardless, you can either count on a blue folder or a virtual communication every Thursday. This folder and/or electronic communication might include information such as field trip permission forms, school assembly flyers, all school activities, fundraising opportunities, newsletters, information about community activities, and often you’ll find your child’s graded work. The Thursday following the end of the semester, you will find your child’s report card. Inside the front cover of the folder, there is a form for parents to sign each week signifying that they have indeed seen the Thursday Folder. Parents also have room to write any comments or questions to the teacher. If ever you feel like you are not receiving these important pieces of information, please contact your teacher or the office.

Parent Teacher Conferences

We strongly value the relationship with parents where we can create a constructive learning environment both at school and at home in order to better meet the child’s academic needs. The fall conferences are typically scheduled in October, prior to the end of the first trimester. Our objective is to meet with every parent during this conference time. However, communication between the home and school is a two-way

continuous process. During fall conferences parents and teachers will talk about how the child has been doing and the possible grade they will receive at the end of the semester. Spring conferences typically occur around February – March and are less formal than the fall conferences. Teachers are required to make a parent contact either by phone or in person to discuss the educational needs and achievements of their students.

Parents can request a conference with a teacher at any point during the school year. Parents should feel free to schedule a conference whenever a concern arises. At the same time, teachers appreciate good news/feedback as well.

Report Cards

Report cards for kinder through fifth grades are given out the Thursday following the last day of the first semester and at the last day of school. You can also access report cards via ParentVue <https://www.psdschools.org/ParentVUE>.

you have questions about your son/daughter's report card, please contact your teacher.

SECOND LANGUAGE RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

Websites to Learn Spanish

Academic Vocabulary Quizzes

<http://freerice.com/#/spanish/16062>

Free Online Spanish Stories

<http://www.childrensbooksforever.com/childrenpages/Spanish.html>

A Learning Spanish Website Hub:

<https://www.spanish.academy/blog/11-best-free-spanish-language-learning-websites/>

Sitios para aprender inglés

Sitio bilingüe con juegos y vocabulario

<https://www.colorincolorado.org/>

Juegos de palabras

<http://www.vocabulary.co.il/>

Vocabulario académico

Tons of great resources from home:

<https://www.psdschools.org/academics/academic-resources/library-search-online-databases>

(Access from home: username is poudre (username), password is poudre (password))

<http://freerice.com>

Juegos de palabras famosas, ortografía y rompecabezas

<http://www.abcya.com/>

Juegos de ingles

www.manythings.org

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

“The Poudre School District is committed to the policy that no otherwise qualified person shall be denied access to, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to unlawful discrimination under, any District program or activity on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status, age or disability. District compliance

with this policy shall be the responsibility of, and reports and complaints of discrimination based on these protected classifications should be directed to: For District students and community members: Director of Student Services, 1630 South Stover Street, Fort Collins, Colorado 80525, phone: 970-490-3033; For District employees: Executive Director of Human Resources, 2407 La Porte Avenue, Fort Collins, Colorado 80521, phone: 970-490-3620.”

ACADEMIC GROWTH

School Performance Framework (SPF)

Every year the Colorado Department of Education creates a report for each school that highlights their overall academic performance and academic growth of students according to their PARCC scores. To determine academic performance for elementary schools the ELA, and Math PARCC scores; as well as ACCESS are used. Ratings are Performance, Improving, Priority Improvement, and Turnaround. The growth measure compares each student’s performance to students in the same grade throughout Colorado who had similar PARCC and ACCESS scores in past years and calculates a growth percentile. A school can be categorized as Exceeding, Meeting, Approaching, or “Does not Meet” expectations in growth. You can learn more about Irish’s School Performance Framework on the state website, by attending Padres en Acción meetings or by contacting school administration. <https://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/performanceframeworks>

Individual Student Growth

Your child’s teachers will be informing you of his/her growth during conferences. You will be presented with their summative assessment data in the form of graphs and your teacher will inform you of their growth and progress in the other many programs and subjects that your child is working on. It is important to reinforce your child’s goals, how

they can achieve them, and what steps can be taken if the child is not yet meeting their goals.

PARENT ORGANIZATIONS

Padres en Acción

[See our introductory video!:](#)

All parents at Irish Elementary are encouraged to join the Padres en Acción. This group combines the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), with the School Accountability Committee (SAC). Parents, teachers, and the principal will meet at least quarterly, and the exact time and dates will be in the newsletter. The meetings run from 5:00 pm to 7:30 pm. The PTO portion of the meeting is responsible for organizing all-school activities such as the family nights, sponsoring scholarships for students for field trips, as well as providing funding for special classroom projects. We also will provide parent trainings in areas of interest on how parents can best support the academic and social/emotional success of their children.

In addition, according to Colorado law, all schools are required to have a School Accountability Committee made up of a diverse representation of parents, community members, and teachers. The purpose of this committee is to advise the principal on school improvement efforts, budget, staffing, and school policy. While not a decision-making entity, this group is an important voice in decisions that affect the school and student achievement.

Volunteers in Poudre School District (VIPS)

The VIPS program provides support to the staff and students of Irish Elementary. Volunteers help in many different and exciting capacities, such as helping in your child's classroom, reading with students, serving as a chaperone on field trips, helping in the office, or being a friendly face in the lunchroom or playground. All volunteers are required to fill out a district volunteer application.

<https://www.psdschools.org/community/volunteers> This application

is available on the internet or a paper copy can be filled out in the office and we will upload it for parents without internet access. There is a two-week waiting period between when the application is submitted and reviewed, and when we are notified if it's been approved. Please check the Irish Newsletter for details. Volunteers are required to log in at the entrance and wear a volunteer nametag to identify themselves to the staff and students. We also ask our volunteers to keep a record of their hours spent at Irish. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please call Irish Elementary (488-6900) or visit Cindy Baca in our front office for assistance. Thank you for considering being an Irish Volunteer!

Need for Irish Volunteers

- PSD After 3 enrichment classes
- classroom support
- office support
- media support

We would like to see more volunteers in other areas

- website maintenance
- social media presence
- computer-lab support (A.R. testing)
- fund raising or grant writing

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU

Thank you so much for the time and hard work that you devote to the education of your children. Parents are a child's first teachers, and we greatly appreciate everything that you do to support your child's educational journey. At Irish, we firmly believe in building a strong community with parents, students, and staff for the benefit of all our children. Raising a child truly does take a village, and by working together we can help all of Irish's students reach their true potential. We have a saying that reflects our belief about us all coming together

to form a big family in service of our children. It says, "The importance of family is not to live together but to be united." Thank you for uniting with us. Your loyalty makes us family. Together we will watch the wonders of seeing our children grow empowered to pursue their dreams. Thank you, and I look forward to a wonderful year of collaboration with you.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Walton
Principal
Irish Elementary