# Melinda Heights Elementary

# **Parent/Student Handbook**

## Office Information

**Office Hours**: 8:00 am - 3:30 pm

**Phone Numbers:** Phone: (949) 888-7311 Fax: (949) 888-7429

**Absence Line:** (949) 888-7311

## Schedules

### **Daily Schedule:**

Kindergarten: 8:15 am - 2:15 pm

Grades 1-3: 8:30 am - 2:30 pm

Grades 4-6: 8:15 am - 2:30 pm

### Modified Day Schedule: Every Wednesday

Kindergarten: 8:15 am-1:00 pm

Grades 1-3: 8:30 am - 1:15 pm

Grades 4-6: 8:15 am - 1:15 pm

## Policies and Guidelines

### **Lunch Program**

Hot lunches and milk are available for students in grades K-6. Current menus, pricing for lunches, and information about buying lunches is available online by visiting the [Food Services website](http://www.schoolnutritionandfitness.com/index.php?sid=2907081811109008&page=prepaidacct). You can purchase lunches online at this site using a credit card, or in our school office. Make checks payable to SVUSD. Students may also choose to bring lunch from home. We ask that students do not bring anything from home in glass or breakable containers, and that all containers are clearly marked with the student's first and last name.Please do not pack soda in your child’s lunch, as it attracts ants.

### Illness / Absences / Tardy Policy

In order to keep students safe, we verify student absences as early as possible each day. If your child will be absent from school, please call our 24-hour attendance line at 888-7311 to report the absence by 9:00 a.m.It is important that children be in attendance whenever possible. In addition to missing important classroom instruction, students are often frustrated by feelings of trying to catch up after an absence. As important as punctuality and attendance are to student achievement, children should not be sent to school ill. Children who come to the office with a temperature of 100 degrees or above will be sent home. On the third consecutive day of absence, homework may be requested by calling our office.As important as punctuality and attendance are to student achievement, children should not be sent to school ill. Children who come to the office with a temperature of 100 degrees or above will be sent home.

 In order to foster student responsibility, minimize classroom interruptions, as well as avoid unnecessary embarrassment, students should arrive at school on time. If being late is unavoidable, please call the office and let us know that your child will be late. We have a formal tardy policy at Melinda Heights. A student is considered tardy if s/he arrives anytime after class begins. A tardy is unexcused for any reason other than illness, medical appointment, or a late school bus.

### Medication

The Education Code allows school personnel to administer medications only if the following steps are taken:

* Physician’s request form is completed and submitted to the office annually
* Parental release form is on file in the office
* The pharmacy container with the medicine is labeled with name of the child, name of the medicine, dosage requirements, and physician’s name
* Medicine is brought to school or taken home only by the parent

### Early Dismissal / Parental Custody

Children leaving campus early must be signed out by the parent, legal guardian, or other adults listed on the child’s Emergency Card. Photo I.D. is required. Please come to the office to sign out your child, rather than going directly to the classroom. After you have identified yourself and signed your child out, we will call the classroom and have your child sent to the office. If there are specific limitations related to the release of a child to the custodial parent, please be advised that the most recent legal custody documents must be on file in the office. The custodial mother or father can sign out their child from school at any time, unless a court order is on file indicating otherwise.If your child has a medical appointment, please be sure to bring a note from the doctor’s office the following day.

### **Classroom Interruptions**

The Melinda Heights staff makes a concerted effort to establish a learning environment that is conducive to the development of good study habits and uninterrupted academic learning time. We seek your cooperation and assistance in this effort. You can help us by:Sending the teacher a note should you need to pick up your child early.  Avoiding calling school and leaving messages for your child, unless it is an emergency. Bringing forgotten items (lunch, homework, books, instruments, etc.) to the school office. We will get it to your child at an appropriate time.

### **Campus Visitations**

Visitors are welcome at Melinda Heights. In order to limit disruptions to our instructional day, all classroom visits will be limited to 20 minutes in length, and must be scheduled 24 hours in advance with the administration. In the interest of safety, we require all visitors to report to the office to check in at the time of their appointment. **A current Driver License is required at check-in.** Visitors will be issued a sticker to wear, indicating to the students and staff that they are authorized to be on campus. The principal or principal’s designee may refuse to allow a visit from anyone whose behavior or presence is judged to be disruptive to the normal operation of the school, threatens the health and safety of students or staff, or causes property damage. (California Penal Code 627.4).

### **Parent Volunteers**

We ask our parent volunteers to sign in and out at the office upon arrival and departure from school each day. First time volunteers must bring a Driver License in order to check in through the Raptor system. Volunteers must also wear a sticker to identify them as authorized to be on campus.

At the beginning of each year all classroom volunteers must fill out a Saddleback Valley Unified School District Volunteer Form I, which includes a photocopy of their CA Driver License. This form may be picked up from our office or from the classroom teacher.

We ask that parent volunteers keep clear of the lunch tables and playgrounds during recess/lunch.

### **Playground Supervision**

Playground supervision will begin at 8:00 a.m. After school supervision will end at 2:45 p.m. Students should not arrive on campus prior to 8:00 a.m., or stay later than 2:45 p.m. Students remaining on the sidewalks on Rancho Trabuco and Melinda Roads at 2:45 will be brought to the office. All students should leave campus at dismissal unless previous arrangements have been made with parents and teachers. No student will be kept after school without prior parent permission.

### **The Learning Connection**

The Learning Connection (TLC) is a positive alternative for working parents in need of child care. The Melinda Heights Learning Connection is located in the three buildings on the west side of the campus. Hours are from 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. If you would like additional information, including fees, please call 768-0981, Ext. 2

### **Bus Transportation**

Due to budget cutbacks, home to school bus transportation has been significantly reduced. If you would like information regarding eligibility, bus routes, or fees, please check the SVUSD Web Site for current information.

### **To and From School / Parking**

Due to our large enrollment, it is important that parents utilize all available entrances located on Rancho Trabuco, Melinda Road, and at Altisima Park. When using the parking lot, please park only in spaces marked "Visitor". Numbered spaces have been assigned to MHE staff. Students should be dropped off and picked up at the curb in the area in front of the kindergarten building. Students will NOT be allowed to walk through the parking lot without an adult. Parking is not allowed along any red or white curb in the parking lot, the bus loading zone, or on the streets adjacent to Melinda Heights. This means that parents may not leave their car next to any red or white curb, even for a short time. White curbs are for loading and unloading only. Violations can result in tickets from local law enforcement. If your child will be walking or riding his/her bicycle to school, please discuss the safest route with your child. Bicycles and pedestrians are not to walk or cycle up the driveway, as there is no sidewalk.To insure student safety, we ask that all parents use courtesy and caution when driving near our school campus. The posted speed limit when children are present is 25 MPH. Please keep cell phones put away while in the Melinda Heights parking lot.

### **Textbooks / Library Books/SVUSD Musical Instruments**

Textbooks and library books are school property and are loaned to students. Students are responsible for their safekeeping. All hardcover textbooks must be covered. Students are responsible to pay for lost or damaged books and musical instruments..

### Homework

Homework is provided to review and practice concepts which have been introduced in class. Homework is to be assigned as stated in the district policy on the following basis:

* Grades 1-3 20 minutes to 1 hour
* Grades 4-6 1 hour to 1 1/2 hours

Homework is intended to be an independent activity. Parents are encouraged to contact their child’s teacher if the amount of time typically spent on homework differs significantly from the above, or if your child requires a significant amount of assistance in order to complete his/her homework.

### **Positive Recognition Program**

The Melinda Heights staff wants to publicly affirm appropriate student behavior and positive character development. We have a school-wide Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) to encourage positive behavior on campus.  Students earn ROAR tickets for positive behaviors which can be redeemed for prizes at our “ROAR Store” throughout the year. We welcome the opportunity to assist our parents in helping our students become happy, responsible, and productive citizens.

### Ethics & Academic Dishonesty

Saddleback Valley Unified School District supports a strong Ethics Policy, which deals with students who cheat on tests or plagiarize on assignments. All tests, quizzes, reports, assignments and any school related test (STAR Writing Assessments, etc.) are subject to this policy. Cheating includes looking at or copying another student’s paper, talking during an exam, plagiarism, and using electronics to transmit images or information included on a test. Helping another student cheat on an exam or assignment is also a violation of the Ethics Policy if it has been made clear by the instructor that students are to work on their own. Violators of this policy are subject to the following consequences:

**1st Offense**

1. Teacher contacts parent with details of offense and explains consequences.

2. Student sent to the assistant principal and referral placed in student file.

3. Citizenship grade may be lowered for this term on report card.

**2nd Offense (same year as first offense)**

1. Student citizenship and work habits grade lowered again.

2. Referral placed in student discipline file.

3. Parent conference with administrator, student, and teacher.

4. Student removed from elected or appointed positions.

5. Student will be assigned to one day of in-school suspension.

**3rd Offense (same year)**

1. Referral placed in student discipline file.

2. Student suspended at home for 1 day.

3. Parent conference with administrator, student, and teacher. Additional consequences as deemed appropriate at the meeting.

### Behavior Management

The Melinda Heights staff believes that all children, with proper guidance and reinforcement, can behave appropriately at school. Thus, we have implemented some simple school rules to accomplish this. These rules are based on the following beliefs we hold regarding discipline and character development:

• Character development is as important as intellectual development.

• There are four universal character traits that form the core of the values we teach: “I am a Melinda Heights Mountain Lion. I am: Responsible, Own my Choices, Act with Integrity and Respect.”

• Self control and self discipline are learned behaviors. Thus, if a child violates a rule out of ignorance, it is our responsibility to teach the appropriate behavior. If a child violates a rule out of defiance, then it is our responsibility to discipline.

• Disciplining students should be done privately, whenever possible. We do not practice public humiliation.

• The primary responsibility for teaching children strong character and positive behavior lies with the parent. It is the school’s responsibility to reinforce those positive traits and behaviors that parents work so diligently to teach.

The Melinda Heights Behavior Expectations, which are posted in every classroom, are based on our core values of respect, responsibility, and integrity, as well as safety.

### Melinda Heights Behavior Expectations (ROAR)

I am Responsible. I Own by choices. I Act with integrity. I show Respect.

Types of conduct which are **prohibited** at school and which may constitute harassment or bullying include, but are not limited to:

1. Direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving.
2. Threats to harm another person.
3. Oral or written assaults, such as teasing or name-calling.
4. Social isolation or manipulation.
5. Posting harassing messages, direct threats, social cruelty or other harmful texts, sounds or images on the Internet, including social networking sites.
6. Posting or sharing information about another person that is private.
7. Pretending to be another person on a social networking site or other electronic communication in order to damage that person’s reputation or friendships.
8. Posting or sharing photographs of other people without their permission.
9. Spreading hurtful or demeaning materials created by another person (e.g. forwarding offensive emails or text messages).

Retaliating against someone for complaining that they have been bullied.

1. Possible consequences for infractions of these Melinda Heights School Rules may include a verbal warning, recess restriction, loss of privileges, alternative service, parent contact, parent conference, suspension from class and/or suspension from school.

### Dress Code

We have found that there is a correlation between a student’s behavior and attitude, and his/her manner of dress. There is a wide range of available clothing styles that reflect a positive attitude and appearance. We ask that students attending Melinda Heights wear clothing that is comfortable, clean, and appropriate for an elementary school. Because our instructional program includes active play, students must wear clothing that allows them to run and jump, including closed-toed shoes. Clothing and other items our students wear must not disrupt the educational process, create safety concerns, nor create any distraction. All popular fashions may not be appropriate for an elementary school.

Inappropriate dress includes but is not limited to:

* Clothing that does not fit reasonably
* Clothing with logos, slogans, words, or pictures promoting or depicting alcohol, tobacco, drugs, vandalism, bigotry, violence, sexual connotations, or profanity. This includes clothing with phrases or pictures that have double meanings.
* Clothing that is revealing or immodest or tops that expose bare midriff or undergarments. Examples include halter tops, bathing suits, sports bras, tube tops, razor back tops, spaghetti straps, and low cut tops.
* Shorts, skirts, and dresses must be long enough that they reach the same point on the thigh as the bottom of a student’s closed fist when the arm is extended and resting on the thigh.
* Earrings, chains, jewelry that dangles and could be dangerous when playing
* Any make-up or adornment that causes a distraction in the classroom or on the playground
* Hair that is distracting or extreme
* Shoes with open toes or excessive heels
* Hats worn indoors or incorrectly

School personnel reserve the right to determine the appropriateness of hair, clothing, and make-up. With the support and cooperation of our students, parents, and staff, Melinda Heights will be a positive and productive learning environment.

### **Cell Phone, Smart Watch and Electronic Device Policy**

Student possession and use of cell phones or electronic devices on school grounds, at school sponsored activities, and while under supervision of school district employees is permitted under the specific circumstances listed below:

• These devices must be turned off and kept out of sight during the school day, unless the student is otherwise directed by the teacher.

• This includes smart watches with texting-features and data plans. Texting and data must be off during the school day. If it is not possible to turn off these features, smart watches should be left at home.

• Unauthorized use will result in confiscation of the device by the staff. Items will be secured in the office and must be picked up from the office at the end of the day. Any subsequent offenses will require a parent to pick up the item from school.

### **Bicycles, Skateboards,** Scooters, **etc.**

Children in grades 3-6 may ride their bicycles to school. Each bicycle must be in safe working order and be equipped with a lock and be parked in the bike racks. California law requires that all children wear safety helmets when riding a bicycle or any other non-motorized vehicle with wheels. Children are expected to follow all traffic safety laws when going to and from school. School rules include walking bicycles when they are on school grounds. Riding a bicycle to school is a “privilege” which may be taken away if safety rules are not followed. A Bicycle Parent Consent Form must be picked up in the school office. The signed consent form for cyclists must be returned in September and kept on file in the office.

Students are not allowed to ride skateboards, “Heelies,” or roller blades to school or on the school grounds before, during, or after school, or at school-sponsored events.

**Helmets are mandatory**

### **Personal Toys and Electronic Devices**

Personal play equipment, including toys, balls, games, and devices, such as iPads, MP3 players, hand-held games, etc. should not be brought to school unless special permission has been granted by the teacher or principal. These items will be collected and held in the office until after school.

### **Pets**

Pets may not be on campus unless special permission has been granted by the administration. Once permission has been granted, all pets must remain in an appropriate cage or enclosure so that both the pets and our students are kept safe from injury or allergic reactions. Please be aware that, pursuant to Orange County Ordinance 41.46, dogs, except service animals, are not to be on school grounds at any time. Should you choose to bring your dog when walking your child to and from school, please wait for your child outside the gate, off school grounds.

We ROAR!