to

Castle Heights Elementary School

New Family Handbook

Una versión en español está disponible en la oficina.

Welcome to Castle Heights Elementary School!

For new families, your child's first year in a new school can be as confusing as it is exciting. This handbook is designed to be a reference and a resource to help you and your child get the most out of his/her years here. This is a true community school where everyone is invested in making it the best it can be. There are plenty of opportunities to make a difference, and many parents find that getting involved is as rewarding for them as it is for their child.

Please use this as a guide to the contents most relevant to your interests:

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If you don't see the answers you're looking for in this handbook, please contact the **New Family Outreach** members via e-mail to chesNFO@gmail.com or contact any of the Board Members listed on the last page of the Handbook.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How Do I Stay Informed?

- Provide email addresses at the beginning of school on the provided form. At the beginning of each week, Friends of Castle Heights Elementary School will send an email, which will highlight many of the school wide activities and events of the upcoming week.
- Keep an eye out for emails from Room Parents
- Look for and read through the **"Thursday Folder**". Each week, your child will bring home a folder on Thursday. It will contain flyers, informational bulletins, and announcements pertaining to the upcoming week. The folder is due back to your child's teacher on Friday to be used for the following week.
- Calendar Events and other general information can also be found on the Castle Heights website at www.castleheightselementary.org.
- Join the Friends of Castle Heights Elementary School and Castle Heights Elementary PTA Group pages on Facebook.

How Do I Contact Other Families?

Room parents will develop and distribute a class roster, and each family will also receive a school phone book. The phone book contains not only the phone numbers of the families attending Castle Heights, but the name and phone numbers of school administrators, FRIENDS Board members, PTA leaders, committee chairs, parent council members, and local businesses.

When Will I Learn More About the Curriculum?

Each year, Castle Heights invites all parents to Back to School Night once the children have had a chance to get settled into their classrooms and begin their instruction. This event is a parent-only event that gives parents the opportunity to meet with their children's teachers, tour the classroom and discuss the academic goals set for the coming year. Each teacher will give a brief presentation about the curriculum and the class. There will be time for questions afterwards.

Will There be a Parent/Teacher Conference?

Just before the Thanksgiving break, your child's teacher will schedule a private conference to discuss your child's progress. You will also have the option to schedule a second conference in the Spring. If you have concerns, you are always welcome to work with the teacher to schedule a conference at any time during the year.

Is There Before or After School Care on Campus?

STAR (Science, Theater, Arts & Recreation) is a 501(C) (3) non-profit organization created to help schools reach their educational goals and to provide a "one-stop" full-service venue for students and families. STAR is located on the Castle Heights campus and offers both before- and after-school care, as well as a variety of enrichment activities and programs. STAR serves TK through 5th grade students. Hours are 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. If you are interested, reserve your spot(s) early, as this is a popular program.

For more information, look for STAR Program information in your Thursday folder, or contact **Leigh Cohen, Enrichment Director** at **(310) 836-1928**.

What if I Can't Walk My Child in Each Day (for Grades 2 to 5 only)?

If you're on the run and cannot park and walk your child to his or her line, Castle Heights offers a Kiss & Drop service. Kiss & Drop is a volunteer program where parent volunteers quickly help children from their car and ensure they safely arrive onto to the playground. This is only available in the morning at the Beverwil Drive school gate.

Kiss & Drop is not to be used for Kindergarteners and first grade students for the first month, unless accompanied by a responsible older sibling who will assist them to the line. Parents should NOT stop and drop students at the Cattaraugus gate. An LAPD officer will frequently ticket parents who do. **Parking on Cattaraugus (in front of the school) and in the staff parking lot is STRICTLY PROHIBITED**.

What is Homework Club?

Homework Club meets in the library after school and is a place where kids can come to do their homework and receive help in a quiet, focused environment. It is free of charge and run by our librarian Roz Gallet and parent volunteers and is available for grades 2-5 only.

School and Parent Groups

What is Friends of Castle Heights Elementary School (FRIENDS)?

MISSION STATEMENT: Friends of Castle Heights Elementary School (FRIENDS) is a parent-run, non-profit organization, with the purpose to raise funds, garner volunteers, and collaboratively and responsibly deploy resources toward student-centered enrichment and educational programs aimed at advancing and diversifying the learning experiences of children enrolled at CHES.

Did you know that our school has a small LAUSD discretionary budget of less than $50,000 after salaries are paid? Without a mechanism to raise funds, our children wouldn't have the experience they have at our great school. What makes our school different is the willingness of families to invest their time and money. This year, the FRIENDS budget includes over $345,000 directly benefitting Castle Heights Elementary School. This is why we work so hard to raise the funds needed to provide the extra learning experiences for our kids.

FRIENDS is overseen by a volunteer Board of Directors that consists of two Co-Presidents, a Treasurer, a Secretary and 8 Directors. Each seat is held for a term of two years. Elections are held each year to fill the seats of outgoing members. The opportunity to run for a seat is open to any parent and all are encouraged to vote. New participants are always valued and embraced. It also serves as a forum to share ideas and opinions. The group is open to everyone and meets the first Monday evening at 7pm each month in the school library.

What does Friends of Castle Heights Elementary School do?

You are all "Friends of Castle Heights Elementary School". The objective of FRIENDS is to raise supplemental funds and volunteer time to enhance the academic offerings and facilities at our school. All proceeds from fundraising activities (described below) by FRIENDS, go directly to our School programs, or beautification efforts, and are administered by the FRIENDS Board.

What does Friends of Castle Heights Elementary School Pay For?

Based on input from teachers, the principal and other campus stakeholders, volunteer time and donated money to "FRIENDS" pays for the following:

- Art Teachers
- Certificated Teachers for tutoring
- Classroom Supplies
- Computer Lab
- Copiers
- Gardening Curriculum
- GATE/Gifted Program
- Literacy Nights
- Homework Club
- Kindergarten Welcome Party
- Library and Librarian
- P.E. Program/STAR P.E.
- School and Campus Beautification
- Science Teachers
- Teachers' Aides
- Teachers' laptop computers

Are my Donations Tax Deductible? Yes!

Friends of Castle Heights Elementary School is a not-for-profit 501(c)3, and pure cash/money donations to FRIENDS are tax deductible. Tax ID # is 95-3972768. Please check with your employer to see if they will match your donations.

What Does the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Do?

The PTA handles community involvement activities such as One Warm Coat, Big Red Bucket, Talent Show, service learning such as the Heifer Project, two Book Fairs, and Spirit Week, which culminates with the Dash For Dudley event raising all the funds for class field trips. PTA also enables Castle Heights to participate in a National Arts competition, called Reflections. They are also responsible for additional events including: Ice Cream Fridays, Talent Show, and the Box Tops Drive.

What is ELAC (English Learner Advisory Committee)?

The ELAC committee oversees the Education Program for English Language Learners, which is designed to provide eligible students with the opportunity to acquire language skills in English necessary for their successful participation in an English-only instructional program. This is accomplished through various structured immersion models and primary language support. Students are reclassified as English Proficient when they meet established criteria.

What is Governance?

The Governance Council is a collaborative group made up of the school's stakeholders including teachers, staff, the principal and six parent representatives. This council discusses student activities, school environment, general fund school budgets, student discipline and behavior, curriculum and instruction, selection of certificated staff and school wide classified staff, along with parent education and involvement. Any parent at the school is welcome to run for a position on the Governance Council. This year will be a transition year to a new Local School Leadership Council. More details to come.

What is School Site Council (SSC)?

SSC is responsible for preparing and revising the Single Plan for Student Achievement, including the proposed expenditure of "categorical funds" that the school receives. Any parent at the school is encouraged to run for a position on the SSC.

How Can I Get Involved?

You will receive a folder of information from your child's teacher at the beginning of the year. Included in that is a volunteer form where you can indicate your interest in a variety of opportunities – from baking to chairing a committee to helping to beautify the school.

You can also come to a FRIENDS or PTA meeting and speak to other parents about what special skills or interests you have that can help the school.

FRIEND Meetings are held the FIRST school Monday of every month at 7pm in the school library. FREE babysitting is provided by STAR!

PTA Meetings are held the third Friday of the month at 8:20 AM in the Teacher's Lounge.

Fundraising, Donations & Volunteer Opportunities

Our great school thrives because of our dedicated parents. We have many ways to contribute to the school. While we try to limit our fundraising to those events that generate the most money, some of the smaller events offer a sense of community and fun first, and funds second. The high level of parental involvement ensures that our students get everything they need to become well-rounded, enthusiastic learners. Whether you are a stay-at-home parent or have a demanding full-time job, there are plenty of opportunities to get involved.

1) Donation Drive: Fall – Dudley Donor Drive

The Donation Drive is a direct request for money from the families attending the school to supplement the budget received from LAUSD. It is our largest income producer of the year. All funds are invested right back into Castle Heights School. We ask that everyone does their best to help. **Your donation is tax deductible**.

2) Spring Auction: Spring

The Spring Auction is Castle Heights' second biggest fundraiser. The parents only event includes: dinner, drinks, silent auction, live auction, pay-to-go-to parties, raffle, and teacher dates. The Spring Auction is a popular event for parents, teachers and administrators. The proceeds go to help fund the school via FRIENDS. You can help with planning the event, donating items, assisting with set up, working at the event, and helping to tear down.

3) Amazon: Ongoing

CHES has a relationship with Amazon where a percentage of our purchases will be paid out to FRIENDS to support our school's needs. The process is simple. Bookmark this URL, share with family members and shop away! There is a direct link at our website, castleheightselementary.org.
Or go directly to Amazon.

4) Baking: All Year

There is always a need for baked goods – Halloween, Winter Festival, Valentine Rock, Teacher Appreciation, etc. If you like to bake, we need you!! Our bakers help our school bring in some extra money during various events.

5) Book Fair: Fall & Spring – and Grand Lunch

The library is converted into a showcase of books and other items for sale. Children also can eat lunch with their family members and friends during this time (Grand Lunch). Profits go to buy new library books and for upkeep of the library. Help is needed to set up, help with the Grand Lunches, work the cash register, help children find books, and to tear down after the event.

6) Business Sponsorships: Ongoing

We are fortunate in that many of our local businesses are proud to support our school. Either through signage or donation of services and goods to offset the costs for the various events. Our sponsors include realtors, restaurants, shops, food industry, and other neighborhood businesses. We are always looking for corporate sponsorship to help fund our various activities.

7) Campus Campout: Fall

No other school in LAUSD invites families to pop a tent, grab a sleeping bag, eat dinner, watch a movie and sleep out under the stars! It's one of the most fun events of the year and we encourage everyone to experience it and to help out with organizing it!

8) Dash For Dudley: September

Each year, the grass field at Castle Heights School is transformed into a track where parents and friends pledge to support students with a monetary donation for each lap students complete during the Dash For Dudley event. This event typically funds all of the field trips for the upcoming year. Ice cream is served. Help is needed to plan the event, setup and operate various stations, count and supervise the race, and to hand out water and prizes earned by students, etc.

9) Dine-out Nights & Food Truck Nights: Ongoing

Through partnerships with local restaurants, Castle Heights families gather on a designated night to dine and socialize. Typically, 10-20% of your bill is donated back to benefit our students. We look for volunteers to help organize, communicate and follow up with restaurants to receive the funds. We also have several Food Truck Nights throughout the year at our school.

10) Grants: Ongoing

Parents and teachers work together to identify and write grant proposals to bring additional money to the school for specific projects. In the past, grants have been awarded for field trips, beautification and technology.
We are always looking for people to help us research and write grants that enable us to go beyond our normal expenditures so that we can expand our ability to reach students with new tools.

11) Logo Wear & Art Wear:

Each year we offer clothing sales events to showcase your Castle Heights Pride. We need help in designing logo wear, advertising and manning the cashier tables to sell logo shirts before and after school.

12) Trunk or Treat - Halloween:

Trunk or Treat is new this year. It will be held on the Friday before Halloween in the teacher parking lot. Parking spots will be available for a donation to come and deck out your car or van with decorations and to give candy out to our students. Proceeds go to FRIENDS programs.

13) Valentine Rock: The Friday Night before Valentine's Day

Near Valentine's Day, we have an annual school dance where funds are raised through the sale of food and drink during the night. The students love the event and it has become a Castle Heights tradition. The kids get to dance and play games; a DJ spins the hottest tunes; there is pizza and salad and dessert is served. We need people to set up, coordinate the event and sell pizza.

Volunteer Opportunities

In addition to volunteers needed for our important fundraising activities mentioned above, Castle Heights Elementary School also needs volunteers to support many of our ongoing programs that are so important to our school and our community.

The following is a list of some of the ways that you can help.

1) ***Beautification Day(s)*** **–** Once or twice a year parents and students help clean up and beautify our school. Do you like to paint? Have access to building supplies and materials? Know a way to secure dirt for the garden or perhaps have access to a truck to help haul? Maybe you have other ideas on how to improve our campus. Please share them and lead the charge!

2) ***Big Red Bucket Drive*** **– (Build up to Thanksgiving)** This is a several week long drive in which people donate food to create Thanksgiving dinners for people in need. Help is required to categorize and arrange the food into boxes containing roughly an equivalent distribution of items.

3) ***Graphic Design*** **– (All Year for various events)** Help design shirts for events and the Castle Heights logo for the year, invitations to Spring Event, brochures for the school, etc. Also, help in negotiating prices and printing. This job can be done from home.

4) ***Homework Club*** **– (All Year)** The Homework Club is an after-school program that provides a place where students can study and get help with their homework. This is the place to see that sparkle in students' eyes when they finally understand a concept. Several parents are needed throughout the year to serve as tutors. Contact the Director of Volunteers to learn more.

5) ***Kiss 'N Drop*** **– (All Year Early Mornings**) This program significantly simplifies and speeds up the process of dropping kids off in the morning. Adult supervision and enforcement of these dropping off procedures are critical to the success of this program.

6) ***Library*** **– (All Year)** Throughout the school day, parents go to the library to read to and tutor students. The library can always use people to organize books, teach students how to use the library and find what they need, and clean and vacuum periodically.

7) ***One Warm Coat – (October)*** Gently worn warm clothes in good shape are collected on behalf of a local shelter. Our unwanted coats, sweaters, blankets, etc. can provide much-needed warmth to our most vulnerable community members.

8) ***Talent Show*** **– (Spring)** The talent show is open to all students and help is needed to encourage the kids, refine their acts and ensure everything goes smoothly. We also need people to set up and help tear down. Help advertising the show is also necessary.

9) ***Teacher Appreciation*** **– (May)** A lunch is organized each year to honor our teachers. A small group is necessary to plan the event, bring in food and drink, set up and clean up.

10) ***Translation (English to Spanish)*** – (All Year) Homework often needs to be translated to Spanish so that copies can be made for our Spanish-speaking students. Fliers and other notices often need to be translated as well. If you are bilingual and can accurately translate, we would love the help. This is a job that can be done from home.

11) ***Website Maintenance*** **– (All Year)** We have a wonderful Friends of Castle Heights Elementary School Facebook page. Web savvy people are encouraged to help with site updates and to bring innovation to the school.

12) ***Yearbook – (All year, but especially April through May)*** *This major undertaking requires lots of good pictures, creative ways of arranging them, negotiating with the printers, and selling yearbooks to the students.*

13) ***5th Grade Activities*** - Parents of 5th Grade students will have the opportunity to take leadership and support roles in a variety of activities, throughout the year.

Any talent or time you can offer is very much appreciated!

To learn more about any of these programs or to get involved, please contact any board member of Friends of Castle Heights Elementary School. (see last page for contact info)

FRIENDS Monday evening meeting schedule for 2019-2020:

August 26	**December 2**	**April 13**
September 9	**January 13**	**May 4**
October 7	**February 3**	**June 1**
November 4	**March 2**	

General School Policies

SCHOOL HOURS:

REGULAR DAYS: A regular school day is from 8:15am-2:38pm. All students should be on campus by 8:10am so they are in class ready to begin by 8:15am.

EARLY TUESDAYS: Students will be dismissed at 1:38pm every Tuesday so that teachers can participate in professional development training.

MORNING BELLS: The morning bell rings at 8:10. All visitors must leave school grounds. The second bell rings at 8:15 signaling the start of school. Parents may access the yard before and after the instructional day, but may not be on campus after 8:15 unless they have signed in as a visitor or volunteer at the front desk.

ABSENCES: A note from a parent or guardian must accompany every child on his/her return to school after an absence. A child who has been ill for 5 days or more should report to the nurse's office for re-admittance upon arrival at school.

AFTER SCHOOL PLAYGROUND: Our school playground is open Monday - Friday from 2:38pm – 6:00pm for resident children, Grades 2-5 (1:38pm - 6:00pm on Tuesdays or other early dismissal days.) You need to complete a permission slip if you wish your child to remain after school.

CAFETERIA: Breakfast is served in the classroom. Lunch is available for purchase at $3.00. **You can apply and manage your child's meal account online at** https://www.mypaymentsplus.com/welcome.
Students may also bring lunch from home. Liquids in cans or glass bottles are not permitted and soda is not allowed. Parents are not allowed in the cafeteria or lunch area while students are eating. While the total lunch period is 40 minutes, the first 20 minutes are designated for eating and the second 20 minutes are for play.

Lunch schedules are as follows:

Kindergarten……..	11:20 – 12:00
Grade 1…….……..	11:50 – 12:30
Grades 2 and 3……	12:10 – 12:50
Grades 4 and 5……..	12:30 – 1:10

DRESS CODE: While there is no formal dress code/uniform policy, students must adhere to the following rules:

- Closed toe shoes and socks **must** be worn at all times, no sandals of any kind
- Gang-like attire (i.e. baggy pants, lowered waistbands, inappropriate t-shirts) is not permitted
- Expensive jewelry and/or dangling/hoop earrings are not permitted
- School Board policy allows for students to wear hats and/or dark glasses for outdoor sun protection, but these must be removed in the classroom

OFFICE: The school office is open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

HOMEWORK POLICY [ABBREVIATED]: (A detailed policy statement is available in the front office) Purposeful homework is a necessary part of each student's educational program. Homework is based on the needs of the class or individual student and is directly related to the content and objectives being taught. While homework may be scheduled over an extended period that may include weekends and vacations, homework will be assigned for a minimum of four days a week (Monday through Thursday).

The average time needed for completion of homework assignments per day varies per grade level.

- Kindergarten….. 10 minutes
- Grades 1 & 2 …. 20 minutes
- Grades 3……. 30 minutes
- Grade 4…… 40 minutes
- Grade 5…….... 50 minutes

In addition, students at Castle Heights are expected to read or be read to for a minimum of 15 minutes daily.

SCHOOL ADDRESS:

Castle Heights Elementary School
9755 Cattaraugus Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90034
Phone: 310-839-4528

SCHOOL WEBSITE:

www.castleheightselementary.org

Thank you so much for reading through this information! We are very glad you have chosen Castle Heights for your child's school. If you need anything, don't hesitate to contact any of the Board Members or send an e-mail to chesNFO@gmail.com.

2019-2020 Board of Directors

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