

Welcome to Casterlin School

Dear Parents,

Welcome to our beautiful school located between and serving the communities of Alderpoint, Blocksburg and Ft. Seward. This handbook will help you understand our school community by giving you information on our programs, services, staff, policies, and regulations. Please call us if you have any questions.

Our school is part of its surrounding communities. Please join us in our efforts to provide a safe learning environment with a high quality of education for all of our students. We need YOU!

Please call us directly at (707) 926-5402 if you have ideas, concerns, or needs. We are here to help.

Our School Staff

Principal

Stephanie Steffano-Davis

Teaching Staff

Dakotah Parson
Michelle Faulk
Susan O'Hara
Beth Maloney
Josephine Finen

TK/Kindergarten-Second Grades
Third-Fifth Grades, and Teacher in Charge
Sixth-Eighth Grades
Speech and Language Pathologist
Resource Specialist

Classroom Aides

Marnie Minarcin
Debbie Rodas
Amanda Coleman
Bonnie Coleman

After School Education and Safety

Debbie Rodas
Bonnie Coleman

Support Staff

Theresa Craig
Amanda Coleman

Custodian
Cook and Secretary

Bus Driver

Cheryl Humphrey

School Information

School Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday	8:20 – 2:35
Wednesday	8:20 – 1:35
Minimum Day	8:20 – 1:20

Teachers are at school from 8:15 a.m. until at least 3:15 p.m., and at other times by appointment.

Students who are registered for our After School Education and Safety Program (ASES) are also under staff supervision from dismissal times until 6:00 p.m. Monday-Friday through ASES.

Children should arrive at school no earlier than 8:15 a.m. They are required to go directly home from school, except when participating in supervised school activities, when other arrangements have been made with the teacher or principal, or when enrolled in the After School Program.

Attendance

California state law requires every child to attend school. Good attendance is very important to your child's progress in academic subjects. In addition, state funding to support school programs is dependent upon attendance of our students. The following three rules are essential:

- 1. Please have your child arrive at school on time. If a student arrives late, please check in with the teacher, and emphasize to the child to be quiet and respectful of the class activities as he/she enters the room.**
- 2. After returning to school after an absence, a student must bring a note from home verifying the reason for the absence.**
- 3. Excused absences are allowed for illness, dental, medical or legal appointments, or funerals. Excused absences do not count toward Average Daily Attendance (ADA), and therefore the school does not earn state funding regardless of the reason for the absence.**
- 4. If at all possible, schedule dentist or doctor appointments so that children do not miss school, or so that the children leave after the morning classes. In all classrooms, most of the instruction in Language Arts and Math classes takes place before lunch; therefore it is best for the student's progress in those subjects to minimize morning absences.**

Parents will be contacted when students are absent without excuses, are repeatedly tardy, or have excessive absences of any kind, and may be referred to the School Attendance Review Board (SARB) to seek solutions to the attendance issues.

Free and Reduced Breakfast and Lunch

Our school participates in the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch and Breakfast Program (FRL). If there is any possibility that your family is income-eligible and so qualifies for the program, please fill out an application. If your family qualifies, you may allow your child to eat school breakfast and lunch for free or at a reduced price. In addition, our school's FRL percentage makes Casterlin School eligible for many grant opportunities. In order to qualify our school for these grants, we need our families to apply for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program.

Independent Study Contracts

If your child will be out of school for five or more consecutive school days, we urge you to let your child's teacher know at least one week in advance so an Independent Study contract can be developed. This will allow your child to keep up with schoolwork and receive credit for school attendance. Both the child's parent (or legal guardian) and the child must sign the contract. It must be turned in to the classroom teacher, with the work completed, upon the child's return to school. If this work is completed on time, your child will be given full credit for attendance. If the work is not completed or only partially completed, your child will receive partial or no credit for attendance, and may not be eligible for Independent Study in the future. Independent Study attendance does count toward the school's Average Daily Attendance with the state. If you know in advance that your child will miss school, but it will be less than five days, please check in with his/her teacher and you may be able to pick up work so that your child will be able to keep up with the class. Please consider scheduling vacations that coincide with the school holidays. Classroom discussions, activities, and interactions cannot be duplicated in an Independent Study packet, and are a valuable part of your child's schooling.

Picking Up Your Child During School Hours

If you need to pick up your child before school is dismissed, please stop by the office first to sign the Early Release log.

If no one is in the office, you may sign out your child using the Early Release log in your child's classroom.

Bus Transportation

We provide many students with transportation to and from school. **If your child is going to a different destination after school, please send a note with your child.** Without this note, the transportation department is required by law to let your child off at his/her regular stop.

Dropping Off and Picking Up Students

For safety reasons, it is essential that no one drive on the blacktop area in front of the school since this is a play area for the students. Parking is available on the cement area adjacent to the blacktop play area.

Messages to Students/Using the Telephone After School

If all staff members are working with students, you may reach the answering machine when you call the school. Please leave a message, including your name, the child's name and a contact phone number. The machine is checked frequently during the day. The school telephone is busy and can only be used for school business and emergencies. Students who want to stay after school or go home with a friend must make arrangements beforehand.

Parent Conferences

The dates for parent conferences (called "minimum days") can be found on the school calendar. Report cards are given out at the end of each trimester. Each student will be scheduled for a parent conference at the end of the first trimester. Grades, progress and test results will be discussed at that time. At the end of the second trimester, teachers will schedule conferences for students as needed, or if requested by a parent or guardian. During parent conference weeks, students are dismissed at 1:10 p.m.

Lost and Found

Found items are located in the school office. Please ask Delores from time to time if you have lost something. It would be helpful if student names were on all clothing and lunch containers.

Student Discipline

Our school staff accepts the responsibility for keeping your children safe while at school, and for providing a positive learning environment with high standards for academic work and behavior. **Our goal is to allow students to learn and teachers to teach.** Harassment of any kind, fighting, or defiance will not be tolerated.

A discipline matrix is attached at the end of this section. Teachers will outline their classroom discipline guidelines for you.

Parent Volunteers and Classroom Visits

Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit our school and to participate at all grade levels as parent volunteers. Please use the Visitor Log to sign in and out at the office, or in the event that no one is in the office when you arrive, please check in at Room 3. We ask that you make arrangements with the classroom teacher ahead of time, and that you do not bring other children with you without special arrangements.

If you want to visit your child's classroom, please contact the teacher prior to the visit. All visitors and volunteers must check in at the office, but if no one is in the office when you arrive, please check in at Room 3.

Health and Safety

Emergency Contacts on Registration Form

All students must have emergency contacts on file so we can reach you in case your child gets hurt or sick at school. There must be at least 2 local emergency contacts with phone numbers. If you are new to the area and have difficulty finding people to list, contact the school secretary for help. Please keep this information up-to-date by

informing us of any changes. Schools must have a current phone number at all times, in case we need to contact a student's family during the school day.

Medication

We cannot dispense medications unless we have the Consent to Administer Medication form, completed by a doctor and parent, on file. If your child needs to take medication during the school day, send the medicine in the original package with your child, explaining exactly when and how the medicine should be taken. The school secretary or a qualified registered nurse will dispense all medicine. If your child has asthma and must use an inhaler, please make sure one is left with the secretary or nurse. If your child has an allergy to bee stings, please give the office a bee sting kit. There is an Epi-Pen in the office for anaphylactic shock emergencies, as per state law, and there are staff members trained to administer it if necessary.

Emergency Drills

Emergency drills are held on a regular basis for students to practice how to react to fires, earthquakes, floods, etc. In the event of a natural disaster, your child will be kept at the school until you or the person(s) designated on your registration form's emergency list can pick him/her up.

Lice Head Checks

We check students for lice on a routine basis. Parents will be notified if there is more than one active case in the classroom. Our secretary is available to help families cope with head lice.

Dress Standards

Students should wear clothes that are comfortable and that will not interfere with his/her ability to learn and participate in all school activities, including physical education. Be sure that shoes are sturdy and safe. High heels and flip-flops should not be worn to school. All jackets should be labeled with the child's name. Clothing should not have words or pictures representing any kind of tobacco, alcohol or drugs. No violent, suggestive, or inappropriate language or depictions should be on clothing. If so, your child will be asked to wear the clothing inside out. Straps on dresses or tops should be at least one inch wide.

Special Instructional Programs

Library

Our library is greatly improved with many new books. Our volunteer librarian, Ann Forrest, are here on Tuesdays to work with your children choosing books and learning library skills.

Computer Lab

Our computer lab is well-equipped. It is open during school hours and after school. Each classroom has access to technology for educational purposes. For students to be allowed to access the Internet, an Internet Use Agreement must be on file.

After School Program (ASES)

This grant-funded program is designed to offer safe, fun and educational activities to students in grades K-8. A nutritious snack is offered daily in the after school program. It is offered five days a week from the end of the school day until 6:00 p.m. The program is free for those who qualify and there is a maximum fee of \$5 for those who can afford to pay. If you have skills and interests that you would like to share after school, please call Debbie here at school.

Special Events

Awards Assemblies

These are held each trimester. Citizenship, academic and attendance awards are given to the students. Parents are invited to attend and will be notified if their child is receiving an award. A final Awards Assembly is held in conjunction with the 8th Grade Graduation ceremony.

Back To School Night

Back to School Night is a great opportunity to find out about our school and what your child's teacher has planned for the academic year. Each teacher is available to discuss classroom curriculum and expectations. Back to School Night dates and times will be announced on our Facebook page: Casterlin Elementary School, as well as in notes home, and All-Calls.

Field Trips

We organize some K-8 field trips together. Individual classes also plan and organize field trips to enhance the subjects they are studying. Due to the high cost of using a school bus, parents and staff often drive private cars on field trips. Chaperones are always needed on field trips. This is another great chance to volunteer and have fun!

GATE Academy

Along with the rest of our school district, Casterlin students may be able to participate in the GATE Academy. A certain number (which changes yearly) of those who qualify for GATE enrichment are invited to the Rising Stars GATE Academy at Humboldt State University. When there are more qualified students than open spots in the Academy, we use multiple criteria along with a lottery system to choose each year.

Spelling Bee

Our school spelling bee is open to all students in grades 4-8. Winners compete in the district-wide spelling bee and then may progress to the countywide bee, and the state bee.

Winter Program

All students participate in the winter program, an important component of our visual and performing arts curriculum. Each class presents a musical or dramatic presentation on stage just before our winter vacation.

Family Fun Nights/Friday Night Live/Lip Sync

Activities at these night-time events can include scavenger hunts, silly relay races, craft activities, movies, a dance, a fancy nail salon, astronomy with a telescope, all ages softball, and even sometimes a lip sync, where students perform along with recordings of popular songs and show off their creative and dramatic abilities.

Spring Treasure Hunt

Just before Spring Break each year, students read grade level appropriate clues to find hidden treasures.

Open House

Our school Open House is held in the spring. Students and teachers get to show off the great work students have done all year!

Eighth Grade Graduation

Our eighth grade students are honored with a wonderful promotion ceremony followed by a dance as they end their years at Casterlin School.

Team Sports

Volunteer coaches organize sports programs for Casterlin students through community sports leagues and through other programs sponsored by the school. Be sure to send a bus note if your child is attending practices.

Other ongoing programs and activities at Casterlin include:

Classroom Parties

First 5 Play Group for Children Ages 0-5

Gardening

After School Harvest of the Month

Chamber Readers

Second Step Violence Prevention

Meet the Masters Art Program

Science, Art, and Invention Fairs

Parent Groups

School Site Council

This is a very important group at the school. Casterlin School's site council is a group of teachers, parents, and one classified employee that works with the principal to develop, review and evaluate school improvement programs, school safety plans, and school budgets. The Site Council's work is to make decisions that will best serve the whole school community.

Friends of Casterlin School (FOCS)

Casterlin's very active Friends of Casterlin School presents many events at the school, including Family Fun Nights, Spring Treasure Hunt, Winter Program, and the Eighth Grade Graduation ceremony. They also raise funds and donate time and energy for school beautification, field trips, and other special projects. Donations from parents and FOCS fundraising have paid for 50% of our third teacher for many years, due to the

inadequacy of the state funding for Necessary Small Schools of our size. The contributions FOCS makes to the school make our school GREAT. We encourage everyone to join.

Programs for Special Needs

Title I

This program provides special instructional time and materials to students in reading, math and language. Most of our instructional assistants are funded through this program.

English Learners (EL)

Students who qualify for our EL program are served at Casterlin School by an EL paraprofessional, who will help them become proficient in reading and writing in the English language. Student skills are assessed using the CELDT (California English Language Development Test).

Student Study Team

This team approach reviews the needs of individual students and helps them get the services they need. We address academic, social, and basic needs.

Resource Specialist Program

This program has specific requirements for entry and provides assistance for students as needed.

Speech and Language Program

This program serves students with speech or language needs.

Casterlin School Student Responsibility Plan

The purpose of this policy is to teach our students to develop responsible behavior, and to choose appropriate actions. It is meant to help students prepare for their lives as adults.

We believe that a positive approach to teaching works best. Because of this belief, this policy has several rewards for students who exhibit responsible behavior. It also has clear consequences for violations of school rules and expectations.

Let's work together to provide our children with the help and guidance they need to be successful and productive adults.

The School Rules—The “Three Bees”

The following rules are easy to remember, and cover all the “bases”

- **Be Safe**
- **Be Responsible**
- **Be Respectful**

Expected School Behavior

General Expectations

- **The directions of school adults must be followed immediately and without arguing. Time will be allowed to discuss the situation calmly.**
- Drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or tobacco products are not allowed at school ever.
- All medicine must be kept in the office, and you must have the appropriate signed forms on file. The secretary or a qualified registered nurse will give you the medicine when needed, if you have a note from a doctor.
- Real or toy knives, guns, or weapons must stay far away from schools.
- Keep candy and toys at home.
- State law prohibits stealing.
- Please clean up after yourself. Littering is gross.

In the Classroom

- You are in school to learn. Please complete assigned work during school as well as assigned homework.
- Listen to your teacher and follow the classroom rules.
- Allow other students the chance to learn by not bothering them or disrupting the class.

On the Bus

- The school rules apply to the time spent on the bus.
- Please stay in your seat on the bus.
- Please speak in quiet voices on the bus.
- Follow 'red light' rules.
- Be respectful to the drivers.

In the Hallways

- You must move safely in the school hallways.
- Walk in the hallways, and keep your hands to yourself.
- Speak in a quiet voice—Students are at work.
- Keep halls quiet and calm; bouncing balls and jumping are for the playground.

In the Bathroom

- Be safe in the bathroom. Play on the playground.
- Wipe up if any water spills.
- Paper towels go in the trash can only.
- Respect other students' privacy.
- Try to use the bathroom during recess time.
- Keep the bathroom clean for the next time someone uses it.

In Line

- Be patient and wait your turn politely.
- Face forward, speak quietly, and keep your hands and body to yourself.
- Line up *behind* the other people in line (unless you are the first one there!).
- Hold your lunch bag still when you are in line.

In the Cafeteria

- Please eat politely so that everyone will enjoy lunchtime.
- Be seated while you eat.
- Eat your own food, not your friend's food.
- Speak in a quiet voice with students next to you or across from you.
- Ask permission to get out of your seat.
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- Food must be eaten in the cafeteria, unless it's a picnic day.
- Clean up the area where you have been eating. Use the garbage, compost, and recycling bins appropriately.

In the Library and Computer Lab

- Keep food and drinks away from books and computers.

Pets at School

- Pets may only be brought with permission of the teacher and must be transported by a parent or guardian.
- Dogs need leashes, other pets mostly need cages to be safe.
- Pets may not come to school on the bus, and they may not be on the playground at lunch or recess.

On the Playground

- Be responsible for your safety and the safety of others.
- Stay within the school boundaries.
- Stay where an adult can see you.
- Take care of yourself and each other.
- Go up the slide using the ladders.
- Slides are for sitting on and sliding down.
- Swinging is back and forth only.
- Only jump from low places.
- Use playground equipment safely. If you aren't sure how to use it, ask an adult on playground duty to tell you what is safe to do.

Tag

Tag is fun when played safely. You may not tackle each other, pull on clothes or arms, or drag each other down. A tag must be just a light touch. Take a turn being 'it'.

Football

Touch football is allowed, and like any game, it is a privilege that can be lost if the playing gets rough.

Basketball

Half-court or full court games are allowed. Please share the basketball courts with other students.

Baseball

Wooden or aluminum bats can only be used when a teacher is with his/her class. At recess plastic bats must be used.

Soccer Follow the rules of soccer (no hands).