

Family Handbook for KINDERGARTEN

Hazel Dell Elementary



**511 NE Anderson Rd.
Vancouver, WA 98665
Phone: (360) 313-2050
Absent line: (360) 313-1416
Fax: (360) 313-2051**

**Principal: Mychael Irwin
Associate Principal: Marjorie McCluer
Secretary: Lori Schutts
Enrollment Clerk: Debbie Dong**

Welcome to School at Hazel Dell Elementary!

We are the Panthers! We have PRIDE!



Kindergarten Teachers: Margaret Meddaugh, Elizabeth Barber,
Odetta Mabry and Su Roehl

Our Vision . . .

As a community, we nurture students today to prepare them for tomorrow.

Our Mission . . .

The mission of the Hazel Dell community is to promote an environment of achievement, cooperation, respect, compassion and accountability for all.

New K Families: You will likely have many questions as your child begins school at Hazel Dell. Some of the most frequently asked questions are answered below.

How do I register my child for school?

Bring your child's birth certificate, passport, or other official birth document and immunization records to our main office during regular business hours. You will also need proof of residency which could include a lease agreement or utility bill (electric, trash, water). Check to be certain all required shots have been completed, and then **register as soon as possible!** Our registration packets have all the information you need.

What are the hours for kindergarten each day?

The hours for the school year are 8:20 - 2:50 each day. It is imperative that students attend all day, every day as Hazel Dell has an **ACADEMIC** kindergarten program. Students who miss more than 10 days per year will be required to have a parent conference with the principal. Excessive absences could result in referral to truancy court.



Who chooses my child's teacher?

Students are placed by the Principal into classes with a mixture of ages and an even distribution of boys and girls. If your child has special needs, please inform our office. We do not take requests for specific teachers. For the first week, students are tentatively placed in classrooms. However, once we know more about your child, we may move him/her in order to provide for better friendship and learning opportunities.

When will I know my child's assigned teacher?



You will receive a newsletter in late August inviting you and your child to our Back to School Night. This is a time to meet all kindergarten teachers. We will not make kindergarten class placements "official" until we complete all of our initial assessments, which usually occurs during the first week of school.

What can I do to help my child feel good about starting school?

Give your child opportunities to do things independently. This will build self-confidence and a "can do" attitude. It is okay for children to make mistakes; it's how we all learn. Children need to feel safe in order to take risks as learners. Encourage your children to try. Praise their efforts, especially on tasks that are difficult such as tying shoes.



Sharing is a regular part of the day in school. Help your child learn to take turns by sharing toys, crayons, and games with friends and family members. *Waiting* is tough for preschoolers, but you can help them get used to it by saying things like, "We'll go to the park after lunch." Work with your child on *paying attention* and following simple directions: "Please put your pillow on your bed, and then put your shoes in your closet."

Self-regulation is also a giant part of preschool and kindergarten learning. Teach your child to *communicate* with words, not actions, when upset. If a child is refusing, crying or yelling for a long period of time when he/she does not get what is wanted, please do not give in at home. Teachers will be unable to do this and it will frustrate your child if this happens at home. Instead, tell your child that you will listen when they are calm and leave them alone to calm down. Explain why you cannot give them what they want and ask them to make a different choice.

What if my child seems anxious about coming to school?



Separation is often harder on the parents than the child. It is not unusual for a child to become teary when separating from a parent in an unfamiliar situation. Remember that this is a new environment with new faces. A child is bound to feel a little uncomfortable. Adults often have similar experiences when put in a similar situation. Be encouraging. Your smile, eyes, and body language communicate a lot. If a child senses any type of apprehension on your part, this enhances his/her own feeling of uncertainty. If they are teary, just leave them with us. They are usually OK within minutes once they are offered an activity they enjoy or time with a new friend.

Make friends with the school. Point out the school as you drive or walk past, and say, "That's *your* school. Take your child to play on the school's playground after school, on weekends, and during the summer.

If your child isn't already attending preschool or day care, look for ways for them to spend some time apart from you. Trade off with a friend, or sign your child up in a community program for preschoolers. Visit the local library for story hour.



Should my child ride the bus beginning the first day of school?

Yes. Children learn the routines most easily if they follow them right from the start. You may meet your child at school if you would like to walk him/her to the outside classroom door. All children line up on the blacktop outside on the playground to begin school. Please don't follow the bus to school, as it creates traffic congestion. It is imperative that the bus driver have all your information (we have a form for this) and that your child wear a backpack with the Kindergarten tag and the school bus color tag each day.

What procedures do I follow if I bring my child to school?

Please park in our parking lot (NO parking in the circle) and walk your child to the recess area or to the front door if your child eats breakfast at school. If you prefer to drive through the drop-off circle, please pull all the way around the circle. Students walk from cars to the recess area or breakfast each morning. When dropping off in the circle, please make sure the child exits on the passenger side of the car. Parents do not get out of their vehicles in the circle. If you need to get out of your vehicle to drop off your child, please park in the main lot. We require this for the safety of all car passengers.



Where does my child enter the building?

All student will go the blacktop play space or to breakfast. When the bell rings, they line up next to the fenced play space and are brought into the building. After the first week, we do not have recess at 8:00. Instead, all students enter the building and go to breakfast or Zero Hour. Your child's teacher will give you the information you need about Zero Hour prior to the second week of school.



Does my child need a backpack?

Yes. We ask that kindergarten students bring a full-sized backpack rather than the smaller ones as papers and materials do not fit well in the smaller version. Please label your child's backpack on the inside and bus tags are added.

What supplies should I send with my child?

You may purchase supplies from the supply list posted at most stores and the school in August. Please do not label your child's school supplies, as most supplies are put together and used as "community" supplies.



Who can pick up my child?



Only the registered guardians of a child or the emergency contact(s) may pick up your child. We require that each student have a go-home plan for each day. If you need to make changes to your contacts or if you need to have someone different pick up your child on a specific day, please send a note with your signature and the date. You can also email us before 1:00 pm at hazeldell@vansd.org.



Does my child need to bring a snack to school?

Yes. There is a sign up for class snacks. Each parent will be asked to sign up for times to send in class snack. Snack time will be before or after recess. Snack time teaches patience, manners, independence, and social skills. Typical snacks are saltines, Ritz crackers, goldfish crackers, pretzels, dried fruit and graham crackers. No cookies or high sugar snacks are permitted. Snacks such as fresh fruit, yogurt or homemade goodies are not permitted. All snacks must be commercially produced.

Do children go outside for recess when it's raining?

YES. We live in a rainy climate. Children will often go outside to recess when it's raining. Every child should be dressed for the weather, including a warm coat with a hood when appropriate. Rarely, children will stay inside for recess if the weather is severe. Kids may bring easy to slip on rain boots/shoes.

Send your child dressed for outdoor play. Tennis shoes are preferable. Dress-up shoes have slick soles; sandals and flip-flops are not safe for active play.



How will my child manage his/her property and materials?

Due to the large amount of lost and found items left at school each year, it is necessary for you to write your child's name on coats and outdoor clothing with a permanent marker. Kindergarten students should always have an extra set of clothing in case of potty accidents and clothing soaked by puddle play (which is prohibited, but inevitable). If your child carries a lunch box, make sure the name is labeled in permanent marker on the outside. All backpacks should be labeled with the child's name as well. If your child loses something, we have a Lost & Found in the cafeteria and put all lost materials out on tables for family events.

How can I be involved at school?

You have many opportunities to be involved in your child's education. In addition to providing support with academics at home, you can volunteer in the classroom, through the PTA, or in our Library. We welcome and train all volunteers.

A parent helper note will be sent home soon after school begins. You may indicate on it how you would like to be involved. Sibling preschoolers are not allowed on field trips.



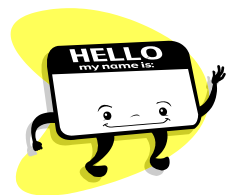
All regular parent volunteers must complete a volunteer clearance form. This procedure clears a volunteer for two years. There is an online application (<https://vansd.org/volunteer/>) or you can stop by the office and we will help you with this. You should sign up as soon as possible so that you are ready for any field trips or class activities.

Can I bring my preschooler(s) with me when I volunteer?

Preschoolers are not allowed on field trips due to safety concerns and liability. We recognize, however, that occasionally a parent who is volunteering in another capacity may need to bring along a preschooler. *If you do so, it is imperative that you teach and reinforce appropriate school behavior with your preschooler.* We want to make sure our learning environments are not disrupted.

How do we work together to keep my child stay safe at school?

The safety of children is our primary concern. All visitors are expected to sign in at the front office upon entering our building, wear a visitor's badge, and sign out upon leaving. This helps us account for everyone in emergency situations. You must bring your ID to register with Raptor, our computerized sign-in and sign-out program. It takes just a few minutes to get registered. All visitors must ring the doorbell to gain admittance to the building. Family members may not go to classrooms in the morning but can go to the cafeteria with their child.



Safety with friends and other students is also a primary concern. Please remind your child to tell a teacher when something happens at recess or on the bus so that we can address it. Often, students will tell parents that they did report it, but this turns out to be untrue. Kids are worried about being "in trouble" and fail to notify us. Call or Dojo/SeeSaw teachers as needed.

If your child does get into trouble for failing to follow the expectations, please follow up at home with a consequence like loss of electronics or a fun event that weekend. We use a minor and major behavior form and the teacher will notify you via phone, Dojo or SeeSaw when your

child has received a written referral of either type. Major behavior infractions result in a school consequence as well (loss of recess, time-out in buddy room, in/out of school suspension). One of our greatest concerns comes from students who tell us that their parents have told them to hit another student who is messing with them. Often they hit first instead of reporting to us that they are having a problem. We ask that parents advise their children to solve problems the same way they would at home. We know you would never ask them to hit a brother or sister that was messing with them. We ask that students use these strategies to address conflict: tell a teacher, move away from the problem, ask for help from an adult or peer mediator and tell the other person that they do not like what is happening. These are lifelong strategies for resolving conflict. If you feel your child is being targeted, you must contact the school.

How will my child know how to behave at school?

We teach and reinforce safe behavior with all students, using Hazel Dell's Lifelong Guidelines:

- Be Safe
- Be Respectful
- Be Responsible
- Be a Kind Leader



Our discipline is age-appropriate. It often takes the form of a gentle reminder or redirection. Choices are offered, encouraging children to make appropriate decisions and to take responsibility for their actions. Your child's teacher will work with you to develop a plan if your child is experiencing difficulty in making appropriate choices.

Many issues come up in areas with less supervision such as recess or the cafeteria or the bus. We have two paraeducators, peer mediators and certificated personnel at each recess and lunch. Students should report any issues to those individuals as soon as possible. The bus only has the driver. Kindergarten students are required to sit in the front seats, not with siblings further back in the bus. PLEASE remind your child each day about bus safety: back to back, feet toward floor, Level 1 voices and face to front. Students receiving bus referrals may lose the privilege of riding the bus to and from school.

How will I know what's going on at school?

Many of our teachers send home regular newsletters to parents to keep them informed. Nearly all teachers use SeeSaw or Class Dojo to stay in touch with parents. You must sign a permission form and provide an email address to access those apps. These are available at Back-to-School night.

NEWSLETTER

We have a school newsletter that is published monthly. You can also check out our website @ <http://hazeldell.vansd.org> for information about our school. You will receive a lot of correspondence from the school. Consider using a folder to collect and organize information sent by the teacher, the school office and the PTA.

Make it a daily habit for you and your child to go through his/her backpack.

What shots does my child need?

Washington State law requires that children be immunized prior to admittance to school. Please see our office staff for immunization forms and current information regarding required immunizations.

Students without the proper immunization can be excluded from school until those shots are administered or waiver paperwork is approved.



What if my child has a health concern?

Please be sure to complete the health information section on the registration form. In addition, if your child has a medical problem that may affect him/her at school, be sure to review the concern with our office staff during the registration process. Also, make sure your telephone numbers are always up to date as we will call immediately if we have questions.

When should I keep my child home from school?

For the health and well being of your child and of others at school, please keep your child home for the following reasons:



- ◆ A fever of 100 degrees or more, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. A child should remain at home for 24 hours after the fever, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea is gone. Needed antibiotics should be administered for 24 hours before a child returns to school.
- ◆ A runny nose if there is colored nasal discharge. Persistent coughing.
- ◆ Red, "crusty", or itchy eyes - conjunctivitis is very contagious. The child must be kept at home for 24 hours while being treated with antibiotics and should only return to school if there is no discharge from the eyes.

Please call if your child has a communicable disease, such as chicken pox, conjunctivitis, pin worms or Fifth's Disease so we can exercise additional control methods and notify other parents. Your child's identity will be protected at all times.

What do I do if my child is going to be absent?

Please leave a message by 9:00 a.m. on our 24-hour attendance line. Call 313-1416 and follow the instructions. Clearly state your child's name, the teacher's name, and the reason for the absence.

What if my child needs to go home due to illness or injury?

The parent or the person listed as the emergency contact will be called. Please make sure you update your phone information as needed. Make sure emergency contacts are listed with updated information on your child's enrollment forms. You can make changes to that form by sending it with your child as a note to the registrar or by coming into the main office.

How will I know if school has been canceled due to weather or other circumstances?

Please watch the local television news, listen to the radio, check out the district website (www.vansd.org) or call the school district school closure number at 313-1401.



What will my child learn in school?

Your child's teacher will host "Curriculum Nights" throughout the year to give you all the specifics about our program. Hazel Dell has an ACADEMIC kindergarten program. This means that students learn the foundations for reading, math, writing, science and social studies. We also teach social skills. Our reading curriculum is Wonders; our math is Eureka (www.greatminds.org for parent information/homework helps); our writing curriculum is Lucy Calkins Units of Study and we use Picture Perfect Science to integrate science concepts into our literacy time. You will learn more about these and our i-Ready assessments during curriculum night family events.

Because of the rigor of the program, it is very important that your child be at school every day, on time. The math program builds on the previous day's learning. Missing school will make math more challenging. We recommend that you use Moby Max and Zearn accounts at home if your child misses school. Every child has an account for these programs and we ask for 30 minutes daily as part of our homework and missed days requirements.

What does a typical day in school look like?

The following are activities that your child will usually participate in each day:

- ◆ Calendar, including mathematical concepts like patterning, counting, mental math, addition and subtraction and place value. (www.greatminds.org for family information for math in Kinder)
- ◆ Literacy where students learn to identify letter names and sounds and the sight words needed to read books with and without patterned text. (Countdown curriculum for phonics)
- ◆ Recess and Snack
- ◆ Math: Kindergarten students learn about place value, number quantities, counting by 1s, 2s, 5s, 10s and how to count to 130 with and without objects. Students will learn to add and subtract and will be able to do basic geometry and measurement.
- ◆ Social studies, science and visual arts: Students learn about community, life cycles and have the opportunity to create visual representations of their learning.
- ◆ Choice time, including exploration opportunities in the classroom with objects designed to develop fine/gross motor, social play and responsibility, engineering, literacy, and the science.

Should my child be able to write his or her name before starting school?

Yes, it would be beneficial if you would start to introduce name writing and name recognition before your child enters school. You might spend this summer using magnetic letters to help your child build his/her name on the family refrigerator and writing it in the sand or with sidewalk chalk. Be sure to name each letter as these are the first letters a child learns. Then have your child write her/his name on paper with no lines.

What should I be doing to get my child ready for school?



One of the most important things you can do is read to your child — every day. You don't have to be a great reader; children love sitting with their family and looking at books together. Talk about the pictures, point out letters and words, and let your child pretend to read to you. Ask your child questions and encourage him/her to ask you questions. These kinds of experiences, cemented together with your love and approval, are the building blocks for success at school. Students who have a parent read with them have a 95% greater chance of graduating from high school and beyond. ***Make sure that at least half of the books you read with your child are "true" books, rather than just stories. Kids love to read about real animals, space, plants, insects, spiders, trucks and other real-world objects. This builds vocabulary and knowledge in a way a story is unable to do.***

Also, take your children to the library (www.fvrl.org) for story hour and make sure they can sit and listen for a period of time without getting distracted (or distracting) other students.

For math, point to numbers and ask your child to name the number. Count objects (4 slices of bread, 10 shoes, 6 sodas) while touching each object while counting, ask about shapes and allow your child help you cook. Play Uno or domino games. Practice counting to 100 out loud.

What if my child reverses numbers or letters when writing?

This is a normal part of the developmental process. Show your child the correct way to write the number or letter, but don't force him/her to correct it. Praise the effort but avoid using words like "smart" or "perfect" as this reduces future risk taking for learning. Say, "I see that you worked hard on that letter/number," or "You are trying so hard; keep it up."

What if my child wants to "pretend write"?

We encourage writing where children use "kid spell" or "sound spelling". Don't worry about "correct" spelling. Correct spelling comes with time and practice in school. If it is scribbling, ask your child to tell you about what he/she has written. Praise for effort.

How do I know if my child understands what I read?



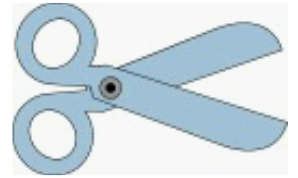
Talk about the story. Ask your child questions during and after the story. "I wonder what's going to happen in this story. What will happen next?" Allow your child to interrupt with questions or comments. Children can even act out the story. The ability to "retell" the story is the start of reading comprehension. When you finish reading, ask your child to tell another person about the story. Start small and work your way through longer reading passages as your child matures. Sometimes prompt your child with, "Why do you think that?" when he/she shares an idea. This ability to provide more detail is an important thinking and comprehension skill.

What else can I do to assist my child to be prepared?

Talk about the colors and shapes around you - the round clock, the red umbrella. Make simple counting a part of your child's day by counting aloud as you put each piece of silverware in the drawer, climb stairs, or bring in bags of groceries. Help your child learn important concepts by acting out the difference between up and down, in and out, high and low, over and under, small and tall.

You can also assist your child by working on the following skills:

- *Having appropriate hygiene habits (closing the restroom door, wiping, flushing, hand washing); The rule at Hazel Dell is "Go, Flush, Wash, Leave (returning to the classroom right away). At schools, bathrooms are for doing business, not for playing.*
- Practicing with crayons, markers, and pencils and especially scissors to develop fine motor skills; use Playdough and beads for play time
- Having self-help skills (shoe tying, coat zipping, buttoning, putting objects in backpack); these are so necessary for K success.
- Sitting and listening for 15 minute intervals while you read; we sit "criss-cross, apple sauce" on the floor in kindergarten and beyond (on your bottom, knees bent to form an X at the ankle with hands in your lap)
- Following three-step directions (go upstairs, get an object and bring it to me);
- Limit video and screen time and encourage outside and peer play activities;
- Playing cooperatively and taking turns. Board and card games are great for this!



Most importantly, understand that your child is unique and will learn at his or her own pace. Don't become frustrated if your child fails to master simple skills right away. Kids walk and talk at different times; they learn at different times too.

Make learning fun with your child and welcome to Hazel Dell!



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