



August 2026

Dear Polton families,

It is that time once again to get ready to come back to school! Whether you are a new family or a returning family, we can't wait to welcome you to the 2026-2027 school year! We've welcomed some fantastic new staff members, and our Assistant Principal, Ms. Kristin Kasselder is ready to start meeting our wonderful community.

We will continue our combined **Teacher Meet n' Greet/Back to School Night**. These events are combined in an effort to best utilize the time of our families and community. As you may remember from last year, this night is an opportunity to drop off your school supplies in the classroom and meet your child's teacher. Also, you will hear more detailed information from us about the upcoming school year and meet other staff members. **BONUS:** You get to find out our school theme for the year!

This combined **Teacher Meet n' Greet/Back to School Night** event will take place on **Thursday, August 13th from 4:00pm-6:00 pm**. All staff will be in attendance on this special night. Plan on connecting with Polton teachers past and present!

Main Session

4:00pm-5:30pm Meet n' Greet (this is when families drop off supplies and say hello to your new teacher!) Feel free to drop into several spaces and classrooms during this time to meet all of Polton's team members including our Integrated Arts team, Special Service Providers, and our center-based program teams!

School wide-Informational Session-

5:30pm-6:00pm **Kindergarten families and new to Polton families** are encouraged to join us in the gym for a general information session including staff intros, our world famous "**Hug and Go**" systems, as well as other information to ensure a great start to our school year.

FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL

For the first week of school, all Cherry Creek elementary schools will utilize the staggered start schedule to support a smooth and supportive start to our school year!

Monday, August 17th: **ONLY 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students** (No Kindergarten, 1st or 2nd). Kindergarten screenings will take place on this day, and our Kindergarten team will reach out to registered families with specifics. ***If you have not already done so, please sign up for your [Kindergarten Screener](#) appointment.

Tuesday, August 18th: ONLY 1st and 2nd grade students (No Kindergarten, 3rd, 4th or 5th). Kindergarten screenings will take place on this day, and our Kindergarten team will reach out to registered families with specifics. ***If you have not already done so, please sign up for your [Kindergarten Screener](#) appointment.

Wednesday, August 19th: ALL STUDENTS in the DEN! Pre-Kindergarten through 5th grade! **This is also the first day of school for kindergarten students.** Please join us for our **"Tissues and Treats"** event for our kindergarten families. This will be held from 8:00am-8:45am in our **Den Zone** (outdoor learning space under bridge). **As a reminder, the school day ends at 1:45 on Wednesdays (please see school day schedules below)**

Please note: Polton Place's summer programming ends, so there will **NOT** be any full-day programs after **August 14th**. Polton Place will only provide before & after school care to students who are attending school for the day.

Please help us welcome back all returning and new staff members to our Polton Den!

<u>Office Staff</u> Courtney Blume, Principal Kristin Kasselder, Asst. Principal Temple Cyr, Office Manager Sha-Nae Orr, Registrar Lauren Pepin, Community Liaison Ginger Daniel, Nurse Rachel Foote, Admin Health Liaison Kyle Lawton, Building Engineer Silvia Ibarra, Polton Place Director Sudha Sivachidambaram, Tech TA Teresa Durbin, Building Sub <u>Kindergarten</u> David Ashcraft Jordan Pratt Eliza Burghardt <u>1st</u> Devin Velasquez-Diaz Erinn Shea <u>2nd</u> Megan Plouff Antonia Davis Grace Wilkinson (used to be Ms. Darrow) <u>3rd</u> Aly Barker Heather Sharp Alicia Austin <u>4th</u> Christy Greene Annie Rim Sabrina Paquette Alyssa Deanda <u>5th</u> Sophie Larson-Fine Hannah Scudder Allie Sydow	<u>Support Services</u> Katie Schell, Instructional Coach Dr. Ana Novelli, Psychologist Sara Miles, Social Worker Robyn Wertheimer, Social Emotional Learning Specialist, Laura Fehrenbacher, Social Emotional Learning Specialist TBD, Mild/Moderate Teacher Molly Halvorsen, Mild/Moderate Teacher Mel Reznik, Mild/Moderate Teacher Kati Ippen, MLL Lorraine Schaeffer, MLL Debby Smith, Gifted and Talented Teacher Delaney Curley, Occupational Therapy Lauren Gutstadt, Speech Language Pathologist(SLP) Raven Talley, SLP Assistant Sydney Loewenstein, Intervention Meredith Olugbode, Intervention Hannah Lucas, Intervention TBD, Aurora Mental Health Terry Campbell, Special Education Teacher Assistant Allie Jarrell, Special Education Teacher Assistant Dominic Chapa, Paws Pad Tech Mary Ellen Dvorak, Zen Den Tech <u>IA</u> Jeannette Mouland, Art Shianne Cruz, Music James Rodgers, PE <u>Integrated Learning Center (ILC)</u> Erin Turner ILC Teacher Mary Baker, ILC Teacher Rhonda Tomkinson, ILC TA Taylan Caldwell, ILC TA Mandi Gosten, ILC TA Hailey Gutierrez, ILC TA Hakima Boufnar, ILC TA Phoenix McDonald, ILC TA Amanda Linsacum, ILC TA <u>Behavior Development</u> Erin Hoffman, Cubs Den Teacher Leah Zimmerman, Cubs Den Teacher
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<u>General Ed TAs</u> Aspen Fierros Suneetha Prakash Amy Stewart Rachel Wainner	Nicole Hartmann, Social Worker Bailey Hough, Cubs Den TA Oakley Castellano, Cubs Den TA Kara Olson, Cubs Den TA Keishlyn Pastrana, Cubs Den TA Janel Giles Lawson, Cubs Den TA <u>Cafeteria</u> Candy Buitrago Zelaya, Manager
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NEW! WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW TO ENTER THE SCHOOL BUILDING?

All visitors within our school will need to present their legal form of identification when entering our building and/or checking their student out. ID must be presented every time to our office staff. (e.g. driver's license, military ID, passport, Colorado ID App) This will be occurring in all CCSD schools.

WHAT ARE THE SCHOOL HOURS AND DROP OFF/PICK UP PROCEDURES?

SCHOOL HOURS

Drop Off – 7:45 am – 8:00 am

School Day – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday (8:00 a.m. – 2:45 p.m.)

Wednesday (8:00a.m. - 1:45p.m.)

A few years ago, Cherry Creek Schools and the Cherry Creek Education Association agreed to dismiss all elementary schools one hour earlier every Wednesday in order to enhance professional development and training opportunities for our elementary teachers. By having this specific time set aside, there will be less of a need to pull teachers out of the classroom during the day, which creates continuity for students and less of a reliance on substitute teachers. With this change, our elementary schools will still exceed the class time required by the Colorado Department of Education.

For families who participate in [Polton Place](#) for after-school child care, Polton Place will be extended every Wednesday. For families who need care, you can [register](#) with our school's program. More information about after-school care is listed at the end of this letter.

DROP OFF & PICK UP PROCEDURES: The school hours are 8:00 a.m. to 2:45 p.m./1:45p.m. on Wednesdays.

Please do not drop off students prior to 7:45am, as there is no supervision outside. Students will be brought in as they arrive at their assigned grade level doors. Please drop students off in the designated grade level areas (listed below). You may drop off at the youngest student location if you have more than one student at Polton.

If you arrive after 8:00am, a parent/guardian will need to walk your child(ren) up the Bridge to Door #1 to sign them in. Students arriving after 8:00 will be marked as "late."

Due to Fire Department Regulations, the main parking lot is designated as a “No Parking Area” and must remain clear for buses from 7:30am - 8:05am and also 2:30pm - 3:05pm. The parking lot will be CLOSED and NO PARKING will be allowed during these times.

One of the great things about Polton is our beautiful neighborhood. Please be mindful of the neighbors who surround our school as you park in the morning and afternoon. Our Dam West community are huge supporters of our school. We ask that you **DO NOT** block their driveways or park in front of the hydrants when parking in the neighborhood. Thank you for your patience and cooperation!

At no time should you park and leave your car unattended in our fire lane. Again, if you cannot find a parking spot, we ask that you exit the parking lot and search for parking in the neighborhood, avoiding driveways, fire hydrants, and no parking zones including our Hug & Go Lane.

“HUG & GO LANE”

Our [Hug & Go](#) Lane for our Kindergarten-5th grade students has been incredibly successful for the past several years, and we look forward to partnering again with our families to ensure a safe and organized drop off/pick up procedure. If you have any kid-friendly music requests, please let us know! 😊

Paris St/Oakland Street (east side of school)-**Drivers must stay in their vehicles at all times.** Drivers traveling southwest on Paris St/Oakland Street to drop off/pick up students in our “Hug & Go” lane **may not exit your car.** Please only stop long enough to allow children to exit the car safely and/or safely enter the passenger side of your vehicle. When using our “Hug & Go Lane” please pull forward to let other parents also efficiently drop off/pick up their students along this curb. **It’s like “Follow the Leader.” Please no cutting in line or U-Turns.** We will have traffic supervisors outside to help open car doors and get your students safely to/from the building. **After your student has exited the car, please wait to be directed to leave.** If you are traveling northeast on Paris St/Oakland Street and there is parking available, you may park on the far side of the street. Please be sure to cross the street at the crosswalk when walking students to/from the building. **Please understand that the traffic rules are designed to protect our students and keep the flow of traffic safe for our Panther community.**

To ensure a smooth and safe flow, conversations with school staff are discouraged during drop off and pick up. Please email your teacher if you need to meet or have questions. Additionally, please make sure that your student(s) always know their dismissal plan whether they are walking, riding the bus, Polton Place, or using “Hug & Go.” **If your dismissal plan changes, please notify the office PRIOR TO 2:00pm, or 1:00pm on Wednesdays.**

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH ARE FREE!

All students in the *Cherry Creek School District* will have access to free and nutritious school meals every day. Our District is excited to participate in the program! Here is some additional information and a few important reminders about what this means for our schools and families.

- Please fill out the new [Free & Reduced Meal Application](#). While meals will be provided for free to all Cherry Creek students, **it's important for us to continue gathering this information to receive full access to available federal funds that support nutritional programs at our school.**
- All household income information provided through this form is strictly confidential and protected by law. **Only one form is required for all children in the household.** Immigration, migrant, citizenship or refugee status is not required when completing the form.
- Please complete this form during registration for the 2026-27 school year. By providing this information, you will help our district access all available funds to cover the cost of meals, and other nutritional programs for students. Plus, families who fill out the form may qualify to receive discounted school fees, class materials, bus passes, utility supports and more! Click the link below for more information and to apply! 😊

[Free & Reduced Meal Application](#)

Breakfast will open daily at 7:40am sharp! Students will enter DOOR #16 to join our breakfast line. Please allow for extra time in the breakfast line in the morning as class starts promptly at 8:00am. If your student(s) will be eating breakfast with us, it is important that they arrive EARLY so they can be in class on time.

Student arrival will be assigned to doors listed below:

Cub's Den- (Door 15 and/or grade level doors) **ILC** – go in through grade level doors

5th grade - Door 6

4th grade - Door 6

3rd grade - Door 2

2nd grade - Door 2

1st grade - Door 2

Kindergarten - Door 2

During the first week of school, students will be able to connect with their classroom teachers outside and will then enter the building together. After the first week, we will have staff members at the doors listed above to let students in the building.

Student dismissal will be assigned to doors listed below: Grade levels that are highlighted will dismiss from a different door than their arrival door to help with the flow of foot traffic.

Cub's Den- (Door 15 and/or grade level doors) **ILC** - grade level doors

5th grade - (Door 6)

4th grade - (Door 1)

3rd grade - (Door 2)

2nd grade - (Door 5)

1st grade - (Door 2)

Kindergarten - Ashcraft - Door 4, Burghardt-Door 3, Pratt -Door 4

WHEN WILL WE KNOW WHO OUR CHILD'S TEACHER IS?

For 1st-5th grade, class lists with teacher names will be posted on Door #2 of the building (under the bridge) on Wednesday, August 12th at 4:00 pm. **If your student's name is not on a class list, it indicates that your parent forms have not yet been updated.** Please log into my.cherrycreekschools.org to update your Parent Forms for the 26-27 School Year. If you have registration/admission questions, please call Cherry Creek Admissions at 720-554-4550 or call our School Registrar, Sha-Nae Orr at 720-747-2601.

For Kindergarten, tentative class lists with teacher names will be shared by our Kindergarten team after the screening process is complete. Students will be assigned to a class by Tuesday, August 18th before Kindergarten students come for their first day on Wednesday, August 19th. Kindergarten lists will stay tentative as we get to know students, and changes may be made to maintain balanced classrooms.

WHAT IF MY CHILD HAS HEALTH NEEDS? We are thrilled that **Ginger Daniel, RN, NCSN** will continue to serve our school community as our beloved school nurse. Please feel free to contact her with any questions, concerns, or for information about your child's health needs and/or to drop off medications. You may reach her at gdaniel3@cherrycreekschools.org or at 720-747-2603.

DOES POLTON PROVIDE BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL DAY CARE? Our School-Age Child Care Program, [Polton Place](#), will be under the direction of our Director, Silvia Ibarra. Polton Place is available from 6:30 a.m. to 7:45 a.m. and 2:45 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. daily. It is also available from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on non-pupil contact days and some breaks. If you would like more information on this program, or have any questions related to day care, please call Silvia directly at [720-747-2678](tel:720-747-2678). You may also email her at sibarra@cherrycreekschools.org.

HOW DO I SUPPORT POLTON PTCO 2026-27?

We are thrilled to introduce our **NEW** 2026-2027 [PTCO](#) board members. A gigantic thank you in advance for the care and support they provide to our community.

Michelle Gardner: President **Fred Martin:** Treasurer **Amy Isaacs:** Secretary

As you know, our incredible PTCO works hard to create and facilitate multiple opportunities for student and community engagement! Over the last few years, our fundraising efforts have supported several school initiatives and needs. These included outdoor benches, spirit wear for ALL students, new chairs for student assemblies, several smart TVs that both staff and students will utilize, and various teacher + classroom grant requests! Additionally, our PTCO supported ALL field trips which provided so many great learning opportunities for our cubs! Again, we love, value, and are thankful to have the partnership of our [PTCO](#) at Polton. If you'd like to know more about how YOU can join our PTCO, please email poltonptco@gmail.com!

We look forward to seeing you all very soon! Thank you in advance for your partnership and support! **We truly are better together-Panther Pride!!**

Sincerely,

Courtney Blume, M.Ed

Principal

Kristin Kasselder

Assistant Principal