

Malibu Elementary

A Marine Science School



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Parent Handbook

2025-2026

Principal Sally Wennes

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Welcome & District Annual Disclosures

Welcome Statement: [Link](#)

Superintendent's Annual Handbook: [Link](#)

MES 2025 Parent/Family Engagement Plan and Compact: [Link](#)

New Student Enrollment Procedure: [Link](#)

Federal & State Testing: Pursuant to California Education Code Section 60615, parents/guardians may annually submit to the school principal a written request to excuse their child from any or all of the CAASPP assessments. This exemption does not exist for the ELPAC or Physical Fitness Test. Please see the Superintendent's Handbook page 13 above for greater detail. Also, please see the Assessment Chapter below for an overview of these assessments. If you wish to opt your child out of state testing this year, email Sally Wennes at swennes@smmusd.org before testing begins by April 24.

My child, _____, date of birth _____, is in ____ grade. I want to opt my child out of the summative California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) for math and language arts for 2026

Since my child is in 5th or 8th grade, I also want to opt my child out of the California Science Test (CAST) for 2026.

Safety / Emergencies / Health / Distance Learning during Road Closures

- Annual Student Emergency Card: [Link](#)
- Safe School Plan Overview: [Link](#)
- Medications at School: [Link](#)
- School Meals: All students regardless of income are eligible for no-cost breakfast and lunch everyday.
- **Learning While School is Inaccessible/Closed due to Road Closures, Fire, Power Outage:** Link to be updated
- Parent Referral for Wellness Counseling Form intake form: <https://bgcmalibu.formtitan.com/parent-guardian-form#/>

Parent Responsibilities / Attendance

Mandatory Attendance: [Link](#)

Why Punctuality Matters: Children must attend school in California. Attendance is so important, especially in kindergarten. Please [look at these statistics](#) and do all you can to create a culture of punctuality in your home.

Reporting an Absence: If your child is absent, please inform both the teacher and the Attendance Officer Kim Rivetti (krivetti@smmusd.org) within 24-hours if at all possible. Kim needs the reason for the absence for legal reporting purposes. Please see the [District Handbook, page 7](#) for details. There are 7 possible excused reasons for an absence. Note that the 7th reason requires advance approval from the principal. As always any absence will impact learning opportunities.

School Bell Schedule 25-26 [Link](#)
Attendance [FAQ Link](#)

Independent Study: Please see Kim in the office for a form for this.

Parent Responsibilities / Homework

Teachers will review the homework expectations for students during Back to School Night. Homework is intended to be an independent practice of skills that have been taught in the classroom. Parents can support students by creating a time and place for them to work successfully and by encouraging them to do their best work.

Year-at-a-Glance

District Calendar 25-26: [Link](#)

Positive School Environment

MES Positive Discipline Plan: [Link](#)

Organizations

Overview: [Link](#)

MES PTA Website: [Link](#)

SSC: [Link](#)

24-25 Improvement Plan Overview: [Link](#)

ELAC: [Link](#)

Parent Involvement

Volunteers: [Handbook](#) & [Application](#) We need volunteers. Every four years volunteers must submit an application and attend a training with the principal where you will review the handbook. Approved volunteers are kept on a list and given to the teachers. All volunteers will be screened each time for Megan's Law Violations. Requirements for **Volunteering at MES:** [Link](#)

Classroom Observation Procedures: [Link](#)

Communication

School Website/Staff Directory: [Link](#)

Principal's Weekly Newsletters: [Link](#)

Curriculum & Instruction School Signature Programs

Marine Science: [Overview Link](#)

Art with Nicole: [Overview Link](#)

This program is paid for by our PTA, not SMEF. The cost is \$35,000 annually. Students attend art once a week.

Music:

3rd Grade: All 3rd Grade students receive general music once-a-week for 40 minutes funded by the district. In general music, students are taught the lines and spaces on the staff, rhythmic notation as well as important music fundamentals. In addition to singing, they also learn to play the recorder and how to read music notes on the staff.

4th and 5th Grade: All 4th and 5th graders choose either orchestra string instrument, band instrument, or choir. Their classes meet twice-a-week during the school day and each class is 40 minutes in duration. 5th grade students have the opportunity to audition for the district elementary honor band, orchestra, and choir in December.

DreamBox Math: [How Parents Can Help Link](#)

Accessing Lexia and DreamBox: A Step-by-Step Guide [Link](#)

Thinking Maps: Help Your Child Think Analytically and Write Better: [Link](#)

Thinking Maps are consistent visual patterns linked directly to eight specific thought processes. By visualizing our thinking, we create concrete images of abstract thoughts. These patterns help all students reach higher levels of critical and creative thinking — essential components of 21st Century education. In a school-wide implementation, Thinking Maps establish a consistent Language for Learning.

Sentence Frames: Frames help students engage in academic discourse and are especially helpful to students who are newer to English: [Link](#)

Leveled Reading: Ensure you know your child's evolving reading level range. Ask the teacher periodically for your child's level range. Make sure your child reads within their level range for 30 minutes a day, seven days a week. Encourage your child to re-read and read aloud. This leads to prosody. (Prosody means **reading with expression** — with the appropriate rhythm, tone, pitch, pauses, and stresses for the text. Prosody depends on both accuracy and rate. In order to read with expression, the student must be able to read words efficiently and break the text into meaningful syntactic and semantic units.) Prosody leads to comprehension. Comprehension is king. Leveled Reading: [Link](#)

Responsive Classroom: Creating a positive school environment: [Link](#)

Assessments

Federal and State Testing: [Link](#)

Trimester Star Assessments in Aeries: <https://www.smmusd.org/Page/6542>

Academic Concerns:

If you have academic concerns about your child, start by contacting the teacher. (Link to teacher emails). More ideas: Review your child's last report card and Star test results and schedule a post report card meeting. Also, please always attend Back-to-School Night and Fall Parent Conferences. These events will help you to help your child. In some cases, the teacher or the parent may request a "Student Success Team" meeting. Sample SST letter to a parent: [Link](#).

Special Education: [Link](#)

Office Staff Roles / Who Ya Gonna Call?

Senior Office Specialist (Attendance and Registrar) Kim: Attendance and enrollment

Administrative Assistant Diane: Everything else... Start here first!

Health Office Assistant Vanessa: Health records and minor health concerns

School Nurse Marion: Major health concerns

Principal Sally: Academics, positive school environment, and big ideas.

Miscellaneous

Vision Statement: [Link](#)

School Mascot & Colors: [Link](#)

School Song & Cheer: [Link](#)

Cash Handling: [Link](#)

Fundraising: [Download this form](#); see directions on the form.

Student Birthdays: [Link](#)

Holiday Parties: All holiday parties are to be coordinated in advance with the teacher. Parties may occur at any time of the day of the teacher's choosing. Sugary foods are allowable, but craft activities are preferable. Please, first consult with the teacher. The three holiday party days are Halloween, Winter Holidays, and Valentine's Day.

Valentine's Day: In elementary school, Valentine's day is a day to celebrate friendships. It is NOT a day of early romantic relationships. To avoid hurt feelings and unnecessary drama, children who want to distribute Valentine's cards must distribute the cards to all students in their class and the cards should have equal or comparable value. We don't want children to feel isolated or left out.

Giving Gifts to Staff: [Link](#)

Lost and Found: [Link](#)

Family Chromebook Guide 2025-26

- [English Guide](#)
- [Spanish Guide](#)

Private School Recommendation Letters: [Link](#)

Free School Guarantee - Pupil Fees, Deposits and Charges

Students enrolled in *MES* are not required to pay any fee, deposit, or other charge for participation in an educational activity offered by the school or the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District, except as authorized by law and consistent with the California constitution and *Hartzell v. Connell* (1984) 35 Cal.3d 899. Donations are sought and accepted for various activities and supplies, and are at times critical to the continued success of classes and activities, but donations are always voluntary, and no child will be denied the right to fully and meaningfully participate in any activity because he/she has not donated money or supplies. For more information, go to <http://www.smmusd.org>.

Work Permits : [Link](#)

The link above has a handbook from the Department of Education and an application from the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement. This form is submitted by the parent to the Office Staff who consult the Principal.

Students who are truant (poor attendance patterns) or are not keeping up with academic standards will not be approved for a work permit. The Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE) issues all entertainment industry permits. Inquiring parents or employers must be referred to the nearest DLSE office.

Family Picnic / 2nd Friday of the School Year

Parents/Guardians have been invited to have lunch/picnic with their children on the lower field. Some families will come and others won't. We are still serving lunch in the cafeteria. We are still expecting students to return to class afterwards. If a student doesn't know if their parent is coming, then teachers will assume the parent is not coming and direct this student to the lunch courtyard. Please let your child's teacher and Kim know if you elect to check their child out early. I will be supervising the picnic area.

TK & Kindergarten parents should go to the classroom to gather up their child to then bring them down to the lowerfield.

Friday Lunch Times

11:45 -12:15 1st-5th Lunch

12:00-12:30 TK & K Lunch