

Hicks Canyon Elementary



School Procedures & Student Handbook 2025-2026

Deena Vela, Principal
Hicks Canyon Elementary
3817 Viewpark
Irvine, CA 92602
714-734-1878

Fax 714-669-0564

www.tustin.k12.ca.us/hickscanyon

HICKS CANYON ELEMENTARY

Important Information

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE TIMES

ARRIVAL: School starts promptly on time and students should not arrive earlier than 20 minutes before their start time. Parents are encouraged to establish a “leaving-home” time with their children. No early arrival because there is no supervision. Pupils must arrive at school no earlier than 8:10 a.m (Grades 1-5) and 7:55am (Grade K). Teachers will supervise children after that time.

DISMISSAL: Students should go straight home. **If you will be picking them up, please be on time. We do not have the facilities to watch or take care of children after they are dismissed. All children should be picked up no later than 3:10 p.m.**

Students are picked up in the front loading/unloading zone of the school, outside the back gate or at the end of the sidewalks in the front of the school (bus loop area or the end sidewalk of the upper grade building).

EARLY PICK-UP: When it is necessary to withdraw your child from class for an appointment, **please notify the teacher by e-mail or a written note the day before or early the day of the appointment. (preferably the day before)**. Unexpected classroom withdrawals cause the teachers to interrupt the lesson to stop and give your student homework directions, etc. Please check in at the office to sign him/her out when leaving and sign back in when returning. If you are withdrawing your student for a medical appointment, please return with a doctor’s excuse/note so that we can note the absence as excused.

PARENT/GUARDIAN PICK-UP APPROVAL: If you want one of your emergency contacts to pick up your student early from school, please send a written note or email to the teacher that day. Only parents/guardians are approved to pick-up early.

TO AND FROM SCHOOL: Be sure to speak to your child about going straight to school in the morning and straight home after school. Be sure that you inform him/her to let the office know immediately if there are problems with strangers, etc., on the way to and from school. Let him/her know that we are here to help.

PARENT SUPERVISION BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL: Parents on campus before and/or after school should supervise their children. **The same orderly behaviors are expected of the children before and after school. Parents should be cautious not to lose sight of their children while talking with other parents.**

ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE AND TARDY PROCEDURES

The Board of Education believes that regular and punctual attendance in school is essential to a student's success. Absence from school is one of the greatest contributing factors to unsatisfactory schoolwork. Pupils are required by law and Education Code 48260 to attend school punctually and regularly. Any pupil subject to compulsory full-time education who is absent from school without valid excuse three days in one school year or tardy for more than 30-minutes during the school day without valid excuse on three occasions in one school year is a truant and shall be reported to the attendance supervisor or to the superintendent of the school district.

Regular attendance at school is important for every student for the following reasons:

- Students need to be in class to learn.
- The teaching-learning process builds on lessons previously taught.
- Lessons often involve hands-on activities, which cannot be duplicated with paper and pencil assignments outside of class.
- Students who miss a day of school suffer because that day of instruction cannot be retrieved.
- Students develop the habits of good attendance and punctuality for future careers. School funding is dependent on student attendance.

Excused Absences (defined by school laws of the State of California) are absences for illness; medical, dental or optometry appointments; or attendance at a funeral service for a family member. If a student is out ill 3 or more consecutive days, the school may request a doctor's note to verify the absence.

Unexcused Absences are absences for any reason other than those listed as an excused absence.

Consequences for Truancy or Absence: On the student's first day back to school after an absence, the student must bring a signed written note from his/her parent/guardian which lists the date of the absence and the specific reason for the absence. In lieu of a written note, a parent/guardian may call the school office or e-mail the school secretary.

Further monitoring includes:

3 unexcused absences	Letter sent home
6 unexcused absences	Letter sent/parent conference
After 9 unexcused absences	Letter/Habitual Truant Classification/ Truancy Conference

Unverified Absences: If a parent does not contact the school regarding their child's absence within 3-5 days of a student's return to school, the absence will be recorded as **unexcused**.

REPORTING AN ABSENCE

Parents must report an absence within 3-5 days by reporting the child's name, grade, reason for the absence and your relationship to the child, one of the following ways:

- Log onto the school website www.hickscanyon.org. Click on Report an Absence
- Call the school office 714-734-1878 at ext. 102.
- Email
- Send a written note to school.

Illness and doctor/court appointments are considered "excused." Students going to the doctor must get a note from the doctor verifying the visit. All other absences are considered "unexcused" and should be avoided. Children should not be sent to school when they are ill. **Children must be fever free (under 100 degrees) for 24 hours before returning to school.** It is a parent's responsibility to pick up their student in a timely manner if they are being sent home from school due to illness. The student must be checked out of school by an authorized adult (there is a sign-out sheet in the office). Students are not allowed to leave on their own under any circumstances. Students should never use a cell phone to contact parents to pick them up.

TARDIES

We have a 5 minute warning bell at 8:25am. Students should be lined up in an orderly manner with their class when the 8:25am bell rings. The start of school bell rings at 8:30am. **Any student who arrives on campus after 8:30am must go to the office for a tardy slip.** It is critical that all students are in the habit of arriving at school on time and ready to learn. Any student tardy for more than 30-minutes during the school day without valid excuse on three occasions in one school year is a truant and shall be reported to the attendance supervisor or to the superintendent representative of the school district.

EXCUSED TARDIES

- Medical or dental appointments for the **student only**. (Must return with a note.)
- Sick/not feeling well
- Immediate family member funeral
- Court appearance

All other reasons for tardiness are unexcused. Any unexcused tardies count against perfect attendance. Any student tardy 15 minutes after the start of school, 8:30 am, must have a parent walk the student into the office to get a tardy slip.

Note: A student is considered tardy if he/she arrives after the start of school bell rings at 8:30am.

EARLY RELEASE (30 minutes or more)

According to District policy, early release from school is monitored and reviewed. Students leaving school 30 minutes or more, must have a valid excuse or they will be marked Unexcused-Early Release.

Excused – Early Release

- Illness (sent home from health office)
- Doctor Appointment (must return with a doctor's note)
- Court Appearance
- Funeral

Students leaving 30 minutes or more will be marked – Excused Early Release.

Unexcused – Early Release are absences for any reason other than those listed as an excused absence.

Examples:

- Personal
- Trip
- Vacation
- Birthday

Students checked out of school for invalid reasons will be marked as Unexcused Early Release.

INDEPENDENT STUDY

Trips, Vacations, Family Business: Students and their parents may request a Short-Term Independent Study when it is necessary for the family to be away from school because of a trip, extended medical care, or family business. Independent Study is valid for as few as 1 school day, but may not be used for more than fifteen (15) cumulative school days per year. Short-Term Independent Study requests must be approved at least **five days (ten days is preferred)** prior to the start of the Independent Study absences.

Note: Short-Term Independent Study is the ONLY way for an absence to not count against your student's cumulative attendance record.

Independent Study is an optional educational alternative.

- A parent of the student shall complete the Master Agreement for Independent Study in the school office no less than five days prior to absence.
- The teacher will provide the work to the student on the last day the student is present at school pursuant to the Master Agreement for Independent Study.

Required hours of work per day.

TK-K: Assign a total of **180 minutes** of work **per day**.

1-3 grade: Assign a total of **230 minutes** of work **per day**.

4-5 grade: Assign a total of **240 minutes** of work **per day**.

- **The student must return to school with the completed work** and give it to the teacher on the first day of his/her return pursuant to the Master Agreement for Independent Study. No partially completed work will be accepted for credit.
- **Independent Studies will not be authorized the first week and the last two (2) weeks of school.**

NOTIFICATION OF MOVE

Please let the office know ahead of time if you are moving. We can put together the papers you will need to enroll in your new school. **All iPads, textbooks, workbooks and library books need to be turned in before leaving.**

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Please be sure to update your work or cell phone numbers in the Aeries Student Portal. . If you have a new address, you will need to bring in proof of residence to the office (utility bill: Electric, Gas or Water) and Deed/Mortgage Statement or the full Lease.

MEDICATION

When your child's physician prescribes medication to be administered during school hours, state law requires that the physician sign the appropriate district form giving the dosage and related information, which is kept on file in the health office. Parents must sign the release allowing the school personnel to dispense medication. All medication (including Tylenol, and Benadryl) must be under the supervision of school personnel. Absolutely no medication may be kept in a student's possession. Forms for medication are available from the office.

FOOD ALLERGIES

It is imperative to inform you that we currently have students, and staff members, who are acutely allergic to peanuts and all tree nuts. If peanut butter, or even the slightest trace amount of peanut or any type of nut, enters his/her body (through the eyes, nose or mouth, and even skin contact), he/she could experience very strong reactions and would require emergency medical treatment.

After discussions with district staff and those in the medical community, it has been suggested that the best way to provide a safe environment for these students would be to enlist the support of the parents to help make his classroom an "allergy controlled zone." We are asking our students to avoid bringing snacks with any peanut butter or nuts. In addition, we appreciate you considering the reality that many food products contain "hidden" ingredients where cross-contamination may occur. We realize this request may pose an inconvenience for you when packing your child's snack and lunch. However, we

wish to express sincere appreciation for your support and understanding of this potentially life-threatening allergy.

LUNCH

The district is offering free hot lunches this school year. A student may bring lunch from home. There is no drop off of school lunches. If your child forgets his/or her lunch, they will receive a free lunch from the cafeteria.

PROHIBITED ITEMS

Toys, fidgets, sports/playground equipment, and personal items (electronic or otherwise) may not be brought to school without prior permission from a teacher. Any item (including Smartwatches) which causes a distraction to the learning process will be taken from the student and returned to the parent/guardian. The school/staff assumes no responsibility for any personal item which is brought on campus. Articles such as jackets, sweaters, lunch boxes should be clearly marked with the student's name. Specific items prohibited are: skateboards, roller skates, and roller blades, to and from school are prohibited. Radios, trading cards, and chewing gum are not allowed at school.

TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICIES

Students follow TUSD Acceptable Use Policies that are signed by parent/students at the beginning of each school year. You can find the AUP on the TUSD website.

CELL PHONES/SMARTWATCHES/TABLETS

Students are prohibited from using *personal* cell phones, smartwatches or tablets on campus unless the student has received permission from their teacher or other authorized school employee. If the student is given permission they will be directed where to go to use the personal devices. If a student is found using any personal devices on campus without permission, the devices will be taken and locked in the office or classroom by the teacher, until the parent comes to pick it up.

WEBSITE COMMUNICATION

We encourage you to use the school website for up-to-date information.

Husky Howl is sent via email each Friday to communicate all important activities. Review the Husky Howl for important dates and events. If you are not receiving the Husky Howl every Friday, please contact the office to check to see if we have the correct email address on file.

The Hicks Canyon Calendar can be viewed at Quick Links. Please be sure to bookmark our website for this important information.

UNIFORM POLICY

Parents should focus on getting their children (especially grades 3-5) to follow the uniform policy. Save Wednesday (Spirit Day) and Friday (Free Dress) for days to be out of uniform. Uniforms save time in the morning and money. Uniforms also help students focus on what is important.....learning and not about the latest jeans, shirt, or accessories.

Uniform guidelines are listed below. Parents are encouraged to follow these guidelines for their children.

GIRLS

Pants, skirt or shorts: Navy or Khaki

Jumper: Navy or plaid "Nordstrom"

Shirt with collar: Red, Burgundy, White, Gray or Navy

BOYS

Polo Shirt: Red, Burgundy, White, Gray or Navy

Pants and Shorts: Navy or Khaki

In addition, we particularly encourage spirit wear, "Husky" T-Shirts on Wednesdays (Spirit Days). This option consists of khaki or navy pants, shirts or shorts, and the "Husky" T-Shirts. These t-shirts are available for sale from our PTO.

Fridays are Free Dress Day. On Friday, students may wear jeans. Shirts should not say negative comments such as "Here Comes Trouble" etc. Students must adhere to **TUSD dress code policy (refer to the Tustin Unified School District website at www.tustin.k12.ca.us)**.

HAIR: Hair is to be neatly groomed above the eyebrows so that it does not interfere with vision. No haircuts with designs or tails. Hair needs to be a natural color.

ETC: No makeup, fake nails or eyelashes. These cause distractions. No dangling or distracting jewelry.

RAINY DAYS

Rainy day arrangements should be made ahead of time. Please discuss with your child what procedures to follow when it rains so that he/she will know ahead of time whether or not he/she will be picked up.

LOST & FOUND

Please make sure your children label all removable clothing, lunch pails, etc. with their name. The lost and found cart is kept outside the main building across from the lunch tables. All unclaimed items are donated to charity at the end of December, March, and May. It is amazing to see how quickly items collect in the lost and found and how few items are actually returned to their owner due to lack of identification on clothing etc.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

We understand that birthdays are very special to children. However, we do not allow birthday parties to be celebrated at school. Our first priority is to ensure that all students learn, so instructional time will be spent for instructional purposes. Please do not send in food items. Non-food options may be sent to school with your child to celebrate your child's special day and distributed at dismissal time. Some options may include sending party favor bags or individual items such as bookmarks, pens, stickers, etc. You may also choose to donate a book to our library. "Birthday Book Club" students will be recognized at our Friday Pep Rallies.

CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS

The school/district policy is for two parties a year; winter and end of the year. Room parents, please coordinate with the teacher. Grade levels coordinate similar activities. It is very important that grade levels work together.

PARENTS AND VISITORS

All parents and visitors to Hicks Canyon Elementary are required to **sign in and out of our school in the front office. Visitor badges are to be worn while on campus.** Please use the front office door to enter and exit the school. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding as it is necessary for us to be accountable **at all times** for all individuals on our campus.

For the safety of our students, all perimeter gates are locked during school hours. Please exit through the front office whenever leaving campus during school hours.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

We encourage parents to volunteer their time and talents to assist us. In fact, some of our programs rely heavily upon your help. If you are able to donate some time to the classroom, PTO or school, please contact your child's teacher or PTO. All volunteers must be on the teacher's guest list upon entering

campus. When helping in classrooms, anything heard or said is considered confidential. Do not talk about students with other parents especially about behavior, academic, social or emotional issues. Prior to volunteering, you will be asked to sign a confidentiality statement. "What happens in the classroom, stays in the classroom" and should never be repeated or discussed at school or social events. Any questions about volunteering in your child's class needs to be directed specifically to your child's teacher.

NO CLASSROOM INTERRUPTIONS

Please confirm after school play dates, sports activities, etc. before school to avoid last minute arrangements. Phone calls, which interrupt the classroom instructional program, will not be put through. The only exceptions to interrupt the classroom would be to provide a student with eyeglasses, medication or an emergency.

All items brought to school during instruction time including homework, books, etc. should be labeled with the student and the teacher's name. Items will be put in the teachers' box which they will retrieve at recess and lunch. No lunches or water bottles will be delivered to classes throughout a school day. If students forget lunch, they will receive a "free" lunch from the cafeteria. Students have the ability to drink water from the fountains on the playground and in class. Please discuss this procedure with your student.

HOMEWORK POLICY

There is no research that shows homework has a positive impact on student success in early education. Actually, you would find research that states that homework causes unnecessary stress and anxiety for young children. Hicks Canyon teachers have agreed that students in grades K-2 will not have paper/pencil homework. They will be expected to read EVERY night for 15-20 minutes. Teachers may also request for students to practice skills on a few apps each night too. In grades 3-5 students will begin to have homework to help teach responsibility and prepare them for middle school and beyond.

If your child spends substantially more time each day on homework than is indicated, please communicate with your child's teacher immediately.

GRADING SYSTEM

Students will be evaluated each trimester with a report to parents evaluating a student's participation and progress toward State Standards. Student work is evaluated on standardized tests, teacher observation, portfolios, and rubrics. Graded work is sent home in the students' Friday Folders. Please review all work with your child. Always review work and teacher comments on the papers sent home. Continue to review all academic areas that your child struggles with in class. Contact the teacher when you see work that your child is struggling with. Don't wait until progress reports come out, and then voice concerns about your student's progress.

POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS (PBIS)

Respectful, Safe, Responsible

Hicks Canyon Elementary is a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) school. This school-wide discipline system includes proactive strategies for defining, teaching and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments. All students are expected to comply with behavioral guidelines on the PBIS teaching matrix (Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Responsible). To assist students in meeting our high standards of expected behaviors, a system of rewards and consequences will be implemented.

PBIS RECOGNITIONS

Husky Hurrahs:

Staff members may give a “Husky Hurrah” to students who demonstrate outstanding behavior and are following the PBIS teaching matrix. Students will collect their Husky Hurrahs and be able to redeem them for a variety of rewards based on the number of Husky Hurrahs earned. The rewards chart will be posted and made available for the students.

Character Awards:

Once a month, teachers will select students from their classes to be recognized for Character Awards at our Friday Pep Rallies.

PBIS DISCIPLINE

Consequences

Teachers: Warning, “Behavior Reminder” slip, loss of privileges, phone calls home, restorative lunch assigned, Positive Behavior Reminders (Minor Referral) sent home.

Administrators: Phone calls home, Major Referrals, restorative lunch assigned (possibly multiple days), letter sent home, in-house suspension, suspension from school, and in severe cases, expulsion.

BICYCLES/SCOOTERS

Students in grades 3-5 may ride bikes or scooters to school. In order to prevent thefts, **bike locks are required**. Hicks Canyon is not responsible for bikes or scooters left unlocked. All students are required to wear a helmet when riding bicycles or scooters to and from school. Bicycles and scooters must be walked when on campus. No E-vehicles are allowed on campus.

PARKING LOT SAFETY

We feel it is very important that you and your child review the rules for arriving and leaving the school safely. Please note that the local police department does patrol our school area. Be sure that you pick up your child promptly if they aren’t walking home, there is **NO SUPERVISION** on campus after 3:10pm. Please cooperate fully with the Hicks Canyon Staff on parking lot patrol as they have your child’s safety as their highest priority. If you are interested in joining our staff in “parking lot safety,” please call the school office.

Skateboards, roller blades and skates are ***PROHIBITED*** on school grounds **AT ALL TIMES**. Pets are also not allowed on campus (even outside the gates during drop off/pick up times).

CLOSED CAMPUS

Please remember that Hicks Canyon Elementary is a closed campus. Some organizations have contracted with the school district to use our facilities/fields. However, if you see any unusual occurrences and/or behavior (loitering, skateboarding, bike riding, etc.) on campus after school or on the weekends, please contact the Irvine Police Department (949) 724-7000 or Tustin Unified School District Security Day Time: (714) 412-4833 and Night time: (714) 981-3962. We want to ensure that our campus remains vandal free.

**THANK YOU FOR HELPING US PROVIDE A SAFE
AND ORDERLY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT!**

