

GUFFEY COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL

**"Where Community Comes Together
For The Education of Its Children"**

Student/Parent Handbook 2009-2010

By enrolling in our school you are agreeing to these policies and procedures. Please refer to this handbook or ask school personnel if you have questions.

1459 Main Street P.O. Box 147
GUFFEY, COLORADO
80820
www.guffeyschool.org
PH:(719) 689-2093 FX:(719)689-3407

SCHOOL VISION STATEMENT

"Guffey is a place of learning and service that nurtures the light of the individual spirit by treasuring our countryside, the classroom, and the community, both local and global, in an atmosphere of safety, kindness and joy."

LETTERS OF WELCOME

Dear School Families:

Welcome to the 2009-2010 School Year! We hope that you had a great summer and that you are ready for an outstanding school year at GUFFEY COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL.

This handbook is for you to keep and use at home as a reference guide. While most of the important policies and procedures about our school are covered in this handbook, there may be other rules that may be unique to the classroom and are not specifically written here. If you have any questions about any aspect of life at our school, I encourage you to talk with one of the staff. Guffey School is a "living school." At our best we are flexible and adaptive in meeting the changing needs of all our students and meeting the educational requirements (Ends Policies) of the Guffey School. We are excited about this school year and look forward to working with you.

Pam Moore
School Principal/Administrator

Dear School Families:

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Guffey Community Charter School. We are looking forward to the start of another school year and meeting all of you. I would like to tell you a little bit about our board and how we operate.

Our five-member Board is made solely up of Guffey community members. The Board functions under the Carver Model of Policy Governance. Under this governance model, all school operations are handled through written policies that were developed by this Board.

Some of our policies address how we function as a Board, our expectations for the administrator, and how we communicate with her. These policies are commonly referred to as Means Policies and are monitored regularly by the board at our monthly board meetings. It is through this monitoring process that the Board ensures that school operation and the Board itself is in compliance with stated board policy. The board does not involve itself in the day to day operations of the school as long as the Administrator stays within the boundaries created by our policies. This allows the Administrator the freedom to run the school without constant board interference.

The Board, along with the staff and community, has also developed Ends Policies. These policies describe the ultimate goals of our school: The skills, values and knowledge a student attending our school will gain through our efforts. These policies are also monitored on a regular basis at our monthly board meetings. It is through this monitoring that the Board assures that the school is working towards achieving our stated Ends.

Besides the monitoring of operations and performance, the Board's role is to cradle the vision of our school. To look outward to where we are headed. To connect with our community to ensure that we are representing the diversity of the community. To communicate, to listen, and to encourage creativity. Consistent, purposeful, thoughtful interaction is key to ensuring a powerful school community bond.

Our board members encourage all community members to attend our board meetings which are held at 5:30 P.M. the second Wednesday of every month. Throughout the year we may have other community meetings or perhaps a potluck and will post these accordingly. We look forward to seeing you.

Frank Ruvo
Board President

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS, 2009-2010

- Frank Ruvo, President 479-2224
- Chris Peterson, Secretary 689-0219
- Don Rocksted 479-4320
- Peg Larson 479-2217
- Nancy Klima 479-2281

STAFF

- Alexi Alfieri 748-1318
- Lynda MacDonald 686-8824
- Pam Moore 689-0951
- Frank Ruvo 479-2224

HOURS AND SCHEDULES

Our school day is Monday through Thursday, 7:45AM- 4PM.

SCHOOL SNACKS & LUNCHES

The school makes every effort to provide healthy snacks and lunches. Since bused students arrive early in the morning, they are offered a light breakfast snack, however, we strongly encourage students to have a breakfast prior to coming to school. After mid-morning, classroom teachers serve a classroom snack. School lunch is served daily or students can bring a sack lunch from home. Although we have chosen not to participate in the federal government's lunch program, qualifying students will be served a daily lunch. Otherwise the cost for lunch is \$1.75 per child per day, and adult lunches are \$3.50 per meal.

DRESS CODE

Guffey School recognizes that students have a right to express themselves through dress and personal appearance; however, students should not wear apparel that may be deemed disruptive, unhealthy, or potentially disruptive to the school environment. Here are the school's guidelines:

- Shirts/tops on all students must reach their belt line when hands are extended above their shoulders.
- No skin showing around the middle when seated or standing is allowed.
- No spaghetti straps or strapless tops.
- Shorts and skirts must be at or below the middle finger of each hand when the student drops their arms at their side.
- Slacks/pants/shorts must be at waist line.
- Clothing should be free of offensive or obnoxious graphics or text.
Any student who continues to wear clothing that does not follow school policy will be sent home.

STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCESSES

It is important to maintain a high degree of health at school. If your student becomes ill or is ill at school we will request that you, or your designated emergency contact, pick up

your child. Please advise the school IMMEDIATELY, if your child is diagnosed with an illness that will impact other students.

- PARENTS ARE BE REQUIRED TO CALL the school explaining their student's absence before 8:30 a.m. on the day of the student's absence.
- Excessive absenteeism may result in a student's retention of grade level.
- If a student needs to leave during the school day, PARENTS MUST SIGN A CHECKOUT SHEET IN THE OFFICE. Upon the student's return (if during the same day), parents must check the student back in with the office.

SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO WEATHER

It is sometimes necessary to close school because of inclement weather or hazardous conditions.

WHEN THE DECISION IS MADE BEFORE SCHOOL OPENS IN THE MORNING:

- 1) Phone calls are made to a snow call tree that will result in contacting every parent who has a phone.
- 2) KOA 850AM radio stations are notified so that families without a phone might listen to the radio list of school closures.

WHEN THE DECISION IS MADE DURING SCHOOL HOURS:

It is extremely unusual for school to be closed during school hours, due to the complications in getting every child safely home with a parent – authorized guardian. Parents are encouraged to pick up their children at school if they feel the weather conditions dictate such action, or to keep their children home if they suspect weather conditions in their area would place their children in danger.

If weather conditions prohibit the transportation of children to their homes, administration and teaching staff will be responsible for making the students as comfortable as possible, providing supervision, and furnishing food to students from the school kitchen. Students will be released only when it is safe to do so, and only to adults who are authorized by the parents to act as emergency guardian.

TRANSPORTATION/SCHOOL BUS SAFETY RULES POLICY

Our school's 30 passenger school bus will transport students to and from school daily. As in the past, our school makes very effort to meet the transportation needs of our school community. Having a school bus is a great privilege for Guffey families because the state does not require a public school to provide student transportation. The following are rules for riding our school's bus:

1. All school rules apply while riding the bus.
2. The driver is in charge.
3. Stay properly seated, facing forward.
4. Unacceptable language, gestures, or loud noises are not permitted.
5. Always be on time, arriving 10 minutes before stop time.
6. Cross the road at least 10 feet in front of the bus.
7. Board or leave the bus at your assigned stop. Students must have written permission from parent, approved by the principal, and presented to the driver in order to go to another stop.

8. Parents must provide written permission if their child can walk home from the bus stop.
9. Students who do not have a parent/guardian at the bus stop will be returned to the school for pick up. The driver may have to take them on the rest of the bus route before returning to the school.

CONSEQUENCES

1. Driver, staff, student meeting with possible seat assignment.
2. Pink slip
3. Suspension/expulsion from riding the bus.

If the driver deems the bus to be unsafe due to student behavior, the bus will be pulled to the side of the road, where it will remain until order is restored. Staff or local law enforcement may remove the student/s from the bus, and parents may be called to pick up their student/s.

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND CHILDREN WITH LEARNING CHALLENGES

Special education at Guffey Community School is primarily an inclusive program, where the special education support person works with children in the classroom or a specially designed setting. In situations where more one-to-one private tutoring is necessary, we also have facilities where students can work privately with a special education consultant or support person. Through our school district we have a full range of services to help in identifying students who require special services. If a child is thought to be struggling with some aspect of school, a child study team meeting is held which includes the student's parents, to discuss ways to serve the child without identifying him or her as a special education student. In the cases where students are clearly identified as requiring special education services, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be developed by the parent/staff team. We also have contracts with other special service providers who can provide speech therapy, psychological assessments, occupational therapy, audiology, counseling or preschool assessment.

STUDENT PHONE CALLS

Students will receive incoming phone calls only in the case of an emergency. Any outgoing phone calls made by students must have the permission of an adult and be made from the school's office. Unnecessary calls to and from school are a disruption to the classroom instruction.

Toys and Stuffed Animals for Show and Tell Only

Toys and stuffed animals should not be brought to the school unless they are to be used for Show and Tell time in the classroom. Items of this nature will be either confiscated or kept in a designated area until Show and Tell time as determined by their classroom teacher.

Homework

Guffey school students will have assigned homework from time to time, and the majority of their work should be able to be completed during school hours. However, students who are absent consistently or not using their classroom time effectively should expect a fairly large amount of homework to complete at home. According to statements by the National PTA and National Educations Association (NEA), the following amounts of homework are recommended:

- From kindergarten to third grade, no more than 20 minutes per day.

- From fourth to sixth grade, 20-40 minutes per day.
- From seventh to 12th grade, the recommended amount of time varies according to the type and number of subjects a student is taking.

The Guffey School's *Sort and Study* program and red homework folder system are in place to assist parents and students in staying current with school assignments. Student homework is due on Mondays. Long term assignments are outlined well in advance so that students can plan accordingly. If you have any questions about homework or school assignments, please contact your child's teacher.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

We know that you are your child's first and most important teacher. At the Guffey Preschool we strive to support you in your parenting role, and to provide a safe, stimulating environment for preschool age children. Our school's Preschool program continues to grow as families with young children move into the Guffey area. Our preschool program includes indoor/outdoor time, snack, skills development, and art and story time. Preschoolers will be engaged in child-initiated, teacher supported activities, which are designed to enhance all areas of development. There is an additional charge for this program and a preschool handbook is available for families of preschoolers.

FAQ'S

What is Multi-age Instruction?

All of our classrooms are set up to offer a multi-age teaching environment for teaching academics. Multi-age teaching, which allows for children of different age levels to be in the same classroom, is different from a "combined classroom." A multi-age classroom with 5,6,7,and 8 year olds, for example, allows all ages to work together on similar learning projects, but to advance academically at their own level. This is very different from a classroom in which a first grade lesson is taught to first graders and a second grade lesson is taught to second graders.

The advantages of multi-age teaching are many. A multi-age classroom is a true community of learners where everyone is respected for where he or she is on the learning continuum. All children have the unique opportunity to be leaders and to teach other students, thus reinforcing their own learning at the same time that they may be learning from other students. Teachers in multi-age classrooms are more aware of each student's needs; lessons must be designed to teach a variety of levels, so curriculum and techniques are used that are developmentally appropriate for students. Each child is allowed to progress at his or her own pace. Children in multi-age classrooms have the opportunity to stay with the same teacher for two or three years, thus eliminating a month or so of adjustment that is normally needed to establish the teacher-student-family relationship.

What is a Charter School?

Charter schools are free public schools of choice.

Charter schools are pioneers and innovators and are open to all students as a free public school of choice. Charter schools allow creative parents, community members, teachers and educational leaders to design schools that better serve particular populations. Because we are a charter school we have local autonomy in administrating

our school. Our five member board is made up of Guffey citizens who are deeply invested in the Guffey Community School.

How can parents and community get involved in the school?

One of our greatest assets at Guffey School is the involvement of our parents and the local community. Our parents and community members work hard to support our educational programs, and our school works hard to maintain a close link to the community. Classroom volunteers are encouraged and welcome in all of our classrooms. Community businesses in the Guffey area have organized themselves into a support group for the school, creating an advertising poster that donates all of its advertising fees to the school's preschool program. Anonymous community donors contribute generously to the school as well, indicating that the existence of our school is essential to the well being of the entire community. It is significant to mention that when the students put on a school performance in Guffey, the entire community comes to honor the children and their accomplishments...parents and non-parents alike. We are a true community school, devoted to the educational needs of the children and of all citizens of Guffey. Another more formal way to get involved is to join the school's Accountability Committee which meets monthly. Contact chairperson Lynda MacDonald for more details.

What to do when things don't go well...

Children are often the first line of communication that something is not going well at school. If they have a complaint about a teacher or other students, they are likely to voice this concern to their parents. It is important that parents pay attention to what their children are telling them; it is also important for them to check out what the child has reported. The first thing to do is to contact the child's teacher to get another perspective on the event. Miscommunication and misunderstanding are often the case, so talking to the teacher is the most important thing that parents can do to resolve a problem before it becomes an even bigger issue. One of our school's goals is to have the teachers and parents work together as a team in the interests of the child. If the issue cannot be resolved, then the school's principal will become involved. If a family would like to voice the concerns in a more formal manner, the school has the following policy for such matters as shown below.

Public Concerns and Complaints Policy

The school's Administrator welcomes constructive criticism motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational program or to equip the school to do its task more effectively. It is believed that complaints and grievances are best handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible. Therefore, the proper channeling of complaints involving instruction, discipline or learning materials will be as follows:

1. *Teacher*
2. *Principal*
3. *Guffey Community Charter School's Board of Education*

Any complaint about school personnel shall always be referred back through proper administrative channels. This means that prior to being presented to the Board for consideration, a meeting must take place with the school principal.

When a complaint is made directly to an individual Board member, the procedure outlined below shall be followed:

- *The Board member shall refer the person making the complaint to the principal.*
- *If the person will not personally present the complaint to the principal, the Board will ask that the complaint be written and signed.*

If at any time the person making a complaint feels that a satisfactory reply has not been received from a principal, they can request that the Board hear the complaint. The Guffey Community Charter School Board's decision is final and the RE-2 District is not responsible for the decisions made by the Guffey Community Charter School Board.

What about enrollment?

Our enrollment over the past three years has averaged 35 students grades K-8th. Our school also has a preschool program and can enroll up to 11 students. Our small size is a great benefit to our students as we are small enough for personal attention, yet large enough to stimulate thinking and sharing. This atmosphere seems to encourage greater parent/community member involvement because they have a stronger sense of being an integral part of the school environment.

Who are the staff?

We have exceptional teachers and a fine support staff. All of our staff are residents of Guffey or nearby small towns and are thoroughly dedicated to the children and the school. Our classroom teachers are all Colorado Certified Teachers with extensive classroom experience and a love of children that is boundless! The strength of each individual teacher is multiplied by the fact that the whole staff works in harmony to meet the educational needs of students.

How is the school funded?

Charter schools in Colorado are funded in the Public School Finance Act, along with all other public schools. We receive per pupil revenue (PPR) on the same basis as other public school students in the district. As a public school we are funded like all state schools with the majority of the funding coming from Park County property taxes. Grant funding has also played a key role in our school having a host of additional enrichment programs. There is also the Guffey School Foundation, a fast and easy way for community members and friends to make private donations. This fund will be a key to the school's long-term sustainability.

Where is the school located?

Guffey Community Charter School is located on Main Street, County Rd. 102, in the heart of the town of Guffey, Colorado, approximately an hour and a half from Colorado Springs and forty-five minutes from Canon City. The mountains that are now heavily treed were created by volcanic activity approximately thirty-five million years ago. Our current elevation is 8,000 to 9,000 feet, depending upon where you are standing! Our summers are pleasant with short afternoon rain showers and our winters average 60 to 65 inches of snowfall. Blue skies and sunshine prevail 300 days per year.

What is the curriculum?

Our school is open Monday – Thursday like many schools are in Colorado. Our school is structurally simple but organically complex. The good work done in our school is not the work of a genius. It is the hard work of caring and competent, but ordinary, people who

achieve extraordinary ends because they work in an environment that not only expects the best from everyone, but brings out the best in everyone.

Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Service Learning, and Fine Arts are all subjects that are taught at our school. Our curriculum is strongly focused on developing literacy and math skills during the morning and the afternoons are devoted toward applying those skills toward multi-disciplinary projects that are often student-designed. The projects require students to be able to set project goals, create a budget, carry out their activities, assess their learning progress, and evaluate the final outcome of each project. Much of our learning is rooted in a sense of place, encouraging students to honor and serve their local community as they learn. Students are often out of the classroom, on research trips or involved in projects that require them to use academic skills in hands-on settings. In our striving for excellence, we believe that talent can be developed, success begets success, quality requires feedback, the best decisions result in win/win decisions, less is more, and commitment to excellence requires time.

How about class size?

Guffey Community Charter School is still quite small. We have three classrooms for the instruction of students in grades K-8. The preschool operates two afternoons per week and a playgroup for infants and toddlers meets once a week. Our size allows us to provide one-on-one tutoring, as needed, in a warm and nurturing environment.

How will the school grow?

As the surrounding population continues to grow, we will certainly be challenged to grow with it. We intend, however, to always honor the qualities of natural beauty, small size, community commitment, and the educational excellence that we now enjoy.

What are the school's frameworks of standards and benchmarks?

Our curriculum follows a P-8 grade framework of five strands of math instruction and four strands of literacy instruction. Our framework for math and literacy exceeds the requirements of Colorado State Standards. All strands of science and social studies instruction are aligned with Colorado State Standards. Our students are assessed with the CSAP (Colorado State Assessment Program) according to the same procedures as every other public school in Colorado. We also use Northwest Evaluation Association's MAP testing which is a computer-adaptive testing program that measures a student achievement levels.

How does the school use technology?

Our school is well equipped with an average of one computer for every two students. We also have scanners, video-editing equipment, digital cameras, color copier and an LCD projector to assist in student projects. We have two computer labs, both of which are situated adjacent to our classrooms so that students have immediate access to the computers throughout the day as they work on research projects, written assignments and presentations. Some of our technology purchases have been made possible through grants and private donations.