

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Elementary School marks the beginning of the primary years during which students develop, socially, emotionally and academically. In the Elementary School, our main goal is to provide children with opportunities to explore their interests and strive to foster their independence in working to the best of their potential, not only academically, but also physically, socially and creatively. Classes and activities are planned with the developmental stages from 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grades in mind. We also provide our students with character education activities to help them develop into caring individuals. The core subjects in the Elementary School are Language Arts (reading, spelling, vocabulary, grammar, composition), Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Spanish, Physical Education, Art, Music, Computer and Library. All students are placed in a Spanish class appropriate to their proficiency level. Some students receive additional help in English and Reading.

## **2. MISSION**

It is the mission of Country Day School (CDS), a private, non-sectarian, English-language school serving students from early childhood through high school, to provide its students with a traditional college preparatory education committed to high academic standards and achievement through a balanced program structured primarily on United States curricula.

In keeping with this mission, CDS:

- Provides for the development of intellectual, social, aesthetic and moral values that satisfy the needs of our students.
- Serves students from the expatriate and local communities.
- Maintains high academic standards and fosters a love of learning.
- Provides a program that focuses on the basics: English (literature, writing, speaking and listening), math, science, history, geography, Spanish, physical education and the arts (drama, art and music).
- Maintains a structured plan for learning, which clearly articulates curriculum content.
- Evaluates students learning frequently with a variety of assessment tools to ensure that each child is progressing appropriately.
- Helps students prepare for a world of rapid change in which continuing education, creative thought, the ability to use technology and acquisition of skills are essential.
- Values and teaches cultural understanding and knowledge of the complexities of our world.
- Teaches and models virtues such as honesty, compassion, diligence, kindness, fairness, loyalty and the “Golden Rule”.
- Prepares students for admission to universities in North America, Costa Rica and around the world.

### **3. HISTORY OF COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL**

Country Day School was founded in 1963 as a private coeducational school, similar to US College Preparatory Schools. The school grew from an initial 18 students to its present combined enrollment of over 850 students, representing over forty nationalities from four continents. We are located on a ten-acre campus in the town of Escazu, about seven kilometers west of the center of San Jose. CDS is owned and directed by Woodson C. Brown. CDS is recognized throughout Costa Rica and Central America for its level of consistent excellence in academics. In the past twenty years, we have had sixteen National Merit Scholarship winners, including nine semi-finalists, six National Hispanic Scholars and a Presidential Scholar. Median SAT scores among our seniors are 600 Math, 550 Verbal. Over 90% of CDS graduates attend US colleges and universities. Many of our graduates have been accepted at such prestigious institutions as Brandeis, Carnegie-Mellon, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Duke, Georgetown, Harvard, Northwestern, Oberlin, Reed, Rice, Smith, Stanford, the University of Virginia, Vassar, Wellesley, Williams and Yale.

- **Accreditation**

The Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools of the United States and the Ministerio de Educacion Publica (MEP) of Costa Rica accredits CDS. We are also a member of the Association of American Schools of Central America (AASCA).

- **Parent Committee**

The Parent Committee is an organization, which acts as a liaison between the parents and the school administration. The Parent Committee believes that there is a direct relationship between parent participation and student performance at school. The Parent Committee works to establish effective communication between parents and the school administration. It also works with the school administration, as a team effort; to support the academic and extracurricular efforts made on behalf of the students at CDS. Other items and activities sponsored by the Parent Committee include the CDS Telephone Directory, the Annual 1K-5K Fun Run, the Staff Appreciation Party and various special awards for students in the areas of academics, sports, leadership, service and spirit. The Parent Committee invites interested parents to attend their meetings, held the second Tuesday of each month in the school year and to join their organization as a class representative.

- **School Divisions**

CDS consists of four divisions: Early Childhood (EC) grades Early Learning Center – Preparatory; the Elementary School (ES) grades 1-5; the Middle School (MS) grades 6-8; and the High School (HS) grades 9-12. Each division has its own principal and administrative staff. The school day begins at 8:00am and ends at 3:00pm.

#### **4. ADMINISTRATION POLICIES**

- **Admissions Policy**

Admission to CDS requires review of the grades for the two previous years, an entrance examination or a placement test and an interview. Original school transcripts, health records and a photograph must be attached to the completed application form. A student may be admitted provisionally on the basis of these transcripts and the entrance of placement test may be given when the student arrives in Costa Rica. 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade applicants are tested formally. The child is then placed according to age and ability level. No student is considered officially enrolled at CDS until the entrance examination is taken. Students who fail the examination will not be admitted. We have found that students from the United States with a “C” average or better have little trouble with the examination.

- **Appointments**

Please feel free to make an appointment with your child’s teacher at any time by contacting them directly. We ask that you do not arrive unannounced for a conference, since it benefits the student, parent and the child to have adequate time to prepare for it.

- **Bulletin Boards**

All notices, posters and announcements of interest to the school community may be placed on a bulletin board located in the business office and must have the prior approval of the director.

- **Change of Transportation**

If parents wish to change their child’s usual method of transportation home, they must send written confirmation to the elementary office or class teacher. Phone calls will not be accepted, in keeping with our policy to insure the safety and well being of all CDS students while on campus.

- **Closed Campus**

As the school is responsible for student safety and well being, CDS students in all school divisions must remain on campus during the school day, including after-school activities. If however, the student must leave campus for an appointment or other valid reason, the student may do so with written permission from a parent or guardian and with a pass from the principal.

- **Messages**

Please come to the elementary office to leave messages or items, instead of interrupting class time. Even though the parent’s message may be brief or the item quite small, such innocent, well-meaning presence causes a disruption to the class. The secretary will deliver such messages or items to any student or teacher as quickly as possible.

- **Parent / Teacher Conferences**

Generally held in October and March, the parent / teacher conferences provide a special opportunity to look at the student's work, as well as the report card and to discuss individual progress. The office sends a letter to each parent with the scheduled time for the conference. Families who have more than one child at CDS will be scheduled around the same time.

- **Visitors**

If the students wish to invite a guest to the CDS campus, prior approval should be obtained from the principal and a visitor's schedule will be arranged at that time. When the guest arrives at school, please notify the guard at the main entrance, who will advise the elementary office for issuance of a visitor's pass.

## **5. ATTENDANCE**

The school has a responsibility to know where every student is every day. We keep careful attendance records and call home to inquire when a student is absent. The school appreciates the parents calling to explain an absence.

- **Absences**

There are two types of absences, excused and unexcused. Absences are excused for legitimate reasons, such as illness, death in the family, or other reason at the principal's discretion. Students with excused absences will have the opportunity to make up assignments or examinations missed. If a student must miss school for an entire day or any portion of it, the parent should call the elementary office that morning. Only a parent may call to request an excused absence. If no telephone contact with the school has been made when a student is absent, the student must bring a note from a parent on the first day of return to school, to be given to the teacher that morning. A doctor's note is required in case of prolonged absence, absence before or after a holiday, or absence/non participation in PE class. It is the full responsibility of the student to find out about class assignments and tests missed due to absence, whether excused or unexcused and to take the necessary steps to make up any such class work missed.

- **Class Attendance**

Attending class is mandatory for every student. A pass from the teacher is required for any student who is out of class for any reason. Students who must miss any class must get written permission from the teacher at the beginning of the class, then take it to the elementary office for approval.

- **Medical/Dental Appointments**

CDS recommends that students make medical and dental appointments either after school hours or on Saturday when possible. If the appointment must be made during the school day, the student must present a note signed by a parent to the elementary secretary. Before departing school grounds, the student must present a green gate pass to the campus guard signed by the principal.

- **Non-Medical Absence**

CDS firmly believes that students should not miss school for non-medical reasons, since such absence causes significant disruption and delay in their academic studies. Making up missed assignments and examinations become difficult for both the students and the teachers. This is particularly true for those days before and after school vacations. We discourage students missing school on account of family vacations or recreational trips. Such request must be submitted in writing to the principal at least one week in advance, though permission may not be granted. Parents are encouraged to refer to the school calendar before planning such trips. However, certain circumstances such as a death in the family, a dire emergency or an extraordinary scholastic opportunity require that students miss school for non-medical reasons. In such cases, a written request must be presented to the principal at least one week before the intended absence. When a week's notice is impossible, as in the case of a family death, a telephone call to the elementary office is welcomed and preferred.

- **Tardiness**

Students who arrive after 8:00am are considered late for school and must sign in with the elementary secretary to obtain a late slip before proceeding to class. A letter will be sent home to the parents of any child who is late three times.

## **6. CONDUCT POLICY**

CDS is a community of individual's working, playing and growing together. We support and respect each other in order to function well as a community. To ensure support and respect, there has to be standards of behavior for the members of our CDS community. Students should always behave in a manner that reflects honesty, trust, concern for the rights and property of others and an openness to ideas, feelings and cultures that may differ from their own. Our community will not tolerate actions, which are rude, disrespectful or dishonest. Good habits build strong character. In the elementary school, our goal is to promote self-discipline and a sense of caring and responsibility for all members of the school community.

- **Detentions**

Students are responsible for their own behavior and must understand that there are consequences when rules are broken. Generally, the teacher will correct minor infractions on the spot. The administration of the disciplinary system, however, is the responsibility of the principal and will be approached fairly with the interests of the student and community in mind.

There are two kinds of detentions: academic and behavioral. A behavioral detention is given as a disciplinary measure; an academic detention is given as an aid to the completion of schoolwork under supervision. An academic detention (yellow slip) is given to a student in grades 1-5, who has failed to complete work for that day. The detention is served during recess, while other students are at play, in a supervised classroom to allow the student time to do the assignment. The detention may not be postponed; it must be served during the stated recess. An academic detention has no behavioral consequence, or any effect on the conduct grade. However, a letter from the principal will notify parents when a student has accumulated three academic detentions.

A behavioral detention (pink slip) is given to a student in grades 1-5 when the rules of satisfactory conduct are broken. There are two levels of behavioral detention: recess and after-school. A recess detention is given for a minor offense or disruption and is served in the principal's office. A written assignment may be given to the student. After a serious offense or an accumulation of three recess detentions, the student moves to a different level: the after-school detention. Parents will be notified when this level is reached. The student must report to the office from 3:15 – 4:30pm to receive the detention assignment. The after-school detention must be served within three school days from the date incurred.

- **General Conduct Grade**

Class behavior during the quarterly grading period generally determines the general conduct grade, although behavior outside class (as in media centers, field trips and assemblies) is also considered. Each teacher notes the general conduct grade on the student's report card, which consists of the following:

E	=	Excellent	100-93 %
G	=	Good	92-85 %
S	=	Satisfactory	84-75 %
NI	=	Needs Improvement	74-65 %
U	=	Unsatisfactory	Below 64 %

- **Minor Misconduct**

Other behaviors of concern, to the disciplined depending on the severity of the behavior, include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Rowdy and disruptive behavior, either at school or on the bus.
2. Wandering school grounds without a pass.
3. Having candy or gum at school.
4. Running, yelling or throwing things anywhere, except on the playground or as part of PE class.
5. Improper uniform.
6. Littering at school or on the bus.
7. Eating or drinking food or beverages in non-designated areas.
8. Unauthorized sale of food, beverages or any other items.

- **Serious Misconduct**

The following behaviors show a serious violation of the principles of honesty, respect and concern for others, and merit serious discipline measures, including suspension, temporary or indefinite from CDS.

1. Fighting, bullying other students, or any such lack of respect to another person on a physical level.
2. Stealing.
3. Cheating or plagiarism (taking another's work as your own).
4. Possession of knives, guns or any other weapon.
5. Calling in a false fire alarm or bomb threat.
6. Use of tobacco product at school or school-related activities.
7. The use, possession, sale, purchase, or being under the influence of alcohol or other illegal drugs at school or at school-related activities.
8. Defacing or destroying school property.
9. Disrespect to faculty and staff, such as screaming, swearing, rude gestures, back talk, or continued class disruption.

Although we do not reasonably expect elementary students to be found in violation of all the items listed about, we include them because these items apply uniformly to all four school divisions.

- **Suspension**

After receiving three after-school detentions, continued misbehavior would result in a one-day suspension for each behavior detention received thereafter, regardless of the severity of the infraction. The student will receive a grade of zero on class tests or assignments for that day, with no right to make-ups.

An in-house suspension will be given if it is felt necessary to discipline the student immediately in order to make the child aware of the seriousness of the offence.

Should a suspension occur for non-cumulative reasons, whether the suspension is temporary or indefinite, the student and their parents will be notified immediately of the suspension, with the right to a conference as soon as possible with the principal. This conference may be held by telephone. The decision to suspend a student, on a temporary basis, is made by the principal after taking all reasonable measures to gather the relevant facts, consulting with any involved teacher or staff member and a conference with the student and the parents. Parents must accompany the student upon their return to school following the suspension, for a follow-up conference with the principal. The decision to suspend a student on an indefinite basis will be made following the steps outlined about, and may be decided by the Administrative Council.

## 7. **DRESS CODE**

On the days when the students have Physical Education, they are required to wear the following uniform:

- Red shorts, leggings, sweatpants or skort
- White gym t-shirt (collarless shirt with large circular CDS emblem on front)
- White socks
- Tennis shoes (any color)
- Red or white sweatshirt or sweater (optional)

On the days when the students do not have Physical Education on their agendas, they must wear the following uniform:

- Navy blue shorts, straight-cut pants or skort (no jeans)
- White polo shirt with CDS emblem on left breast
- Navy socks
- Black shoes or black tennis shoes
- Black belt if pants have belt loops
- Navy or white sweatshirt or sweater (optional)

Other specifications regarding student attire are as follows:

- Shirts may remain untucked, except for special school events and civic assemblies.
- Boys and girls should have neat hairstyles. Boys with shoulder-length hair or longer must keep it pulled back in a ponytail. Hair must be in tones that would be considered natural hair color.
- Only moderate jewelry and cosmetics are allowed.
- Visible body piercing is not allowed other than earrings for females. Earrings on boys are not allowed.
- Pants must not be over-sized. They must be hemmed and may not be worn frayed or cut at the ends of the pants.
- Sports caps are permitted during recess.
- Any t-shirts worn under the school shirt should be short-sleeved and solid white.
- T-shirts purchased for the annual 1K-5K Fun Run or other CDS t-shirts may be substituted for the school gym t-shirt.
- School uniforms are available from the Campus Store and CDS logo patches are available in the business office.

## **8. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Emergency preparedness is our most important ally and at school we run regular drills so that students will know exactly what to do in case of an emergency. At home, parents should talk with their children beforehand about what to expect should an emergency occur. Reassure them that they are doing their part by remaining at the school and following the instruction of their teachers and that you or one of your designated alternates will pick them up as soon as possible.

- **Accident Insurance**

All students enrolled at CDS are insured against accident and injury 24 hours per day, year round. More information is available in the Business Office.

- **Emergency Consent Forms**

CDS provides a consent form for parents to designate an alternate person to pick up their children in case of an emergency. Such designated drivers should be aware of their responsibility and the consent forms are kept at school. In an emergency, only people who have consent will be able to pick up your children.

- **Evacuation Plan**

In the event of a major fire or earthquake, emergency information in both English and Spanish will be broadcast on Radio Monumental (93.5 on the FM dial or 670 on the AM dial) or TV Channel 7. Do not call the school, as phone lines must be kept open for calls related to the emergency. If phones are not working, the school may not be able to contact the media. In that case you must make your own decision about whether to come to the school. Should evacuation of the school be deemed necessary, parents must pick up their children since bus transport will not be available. Please follow the instructions of the guards and teachers directing traffic, so that evacuation flows as smoothly as possible.

- **Fire/Earthquake Drills**

The signal for an emergency drill is a continuous bell or a siren. Students and teachers should evacuate the buildings quickly, calmly and quietly to their designated areas. Students should remain with their teachers throughout the emergency drill.

- **Medical Emergency**

In the event of injury to a student, the school will render first aid as necessary and will notify the parent immediately. Should the student be seriously injured, requiring immediate transport to a hospital or clinic, the school has a private ambulance service, Emergencias Medicas. The school will notify the parents immediately so they may proceed to the hospital. A student is never sent alone; the nurse, a teacher or an administrator according to availability always accompanies him or her.

## 9. REPORTING PROCEDURES

### • Conferences

Open communication between parents and teachers is an important support to children during their school years. Conferences give parents and teachers the opportunity to share information about the child's development at home and at school and to plan for further growth. Please feel free to call anytime for an appointment for a conference with your child's teacher.

### • Grading System

Student's progress in 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades in the individual subjects studied is shown on the report cards with number grades. The grading scale is as follows:

E	=	Excellent	100-93 %
G	=	Good	92-85 %
S	=	Satisfactory	84-75 %
NI	=	Needs Improvement	74-65 %
U	=	Unsatisfactory	Below 64 %

### • Homework

Homework is an integral part of the instructional program at Country Day School. It can serve the following purposes:

1. Provide essential practice in needed skills
2. Enrich and extend school learning experiences
3. Provide independent practice of proper study habits learned in school
4. Afford the opportunity for increasing self-direction, responsibility, and family involvement. Recognizing that there are individual teacher and student variations, the following guidelines have been established:

In grades 1 - 5, homework when assigned, is intended to help your child develop responsibility for completing a task and returning it on time. Daily reading to your child, having your child read to family members, and/or reading independently at their grade level is also a part of your child's homework. Reading is an important component in having your child become a competent reader and writer. Homework assignments become more structured with required time increasing throughout the grades. Skill practice, projects, and extended reading may require additional time. In all grades, weekend time should be reserved for family activities, but on occasion may be used to complete long-range assignments such as projects, reports, and supplementary reading. Students may also choose the follow up on classroom experiences on their own initiative. Homework is an outgrowth of lessons taught in class. Occasionally additional work may be brought home. This is the result of the student not completing an assignment in class. It is the student's responsibility to use class time wisely.

Note: This is just an overview of the homework policy in the elementary school. A more detailed explanation for each grade level and individual teacher is provided in their Back to School night packet at the beginning of school.

## **ALL PARENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO:**

1. Notify the teacher if their child is unable to complete assignments within a reasonable length of time. If your child consistently needs much more time to complete his/her daily homework, it is the parents' responsibility to contact the child's teacher so that we can best meet the needs of the child.
2. Help their child to schedule their time on a daily or weekly basis for homework and to provide a suitable place and a quiet atmosphere for study.
3. Provide necessary materials (e.g. notebook, dictionary, ruler, paper, pens, and pencils.)
4. Allow children to do their own work. Assist when asked specific questions.
5. Read regularly to with their children and listen to their children read.
6. Recognize that children need to become more independent in completing homework and returning it to school as they mature. This includes completing work missed when absent.
7. Parents, teachers, and students need to utilize various communication channels to ensure that homework is reasonable and purposeful. The following channels of communication can be used to share homework expectations and concerns:
  - A. Newsletters from teacher
  - B. Back to School Night
  - C. Other verbal communication between teacher, student, and parent(s)

### **• Promotion / Retention**

Promotion to the next grade depends on the student's satisfactory completion of the required curriculum for the school year. A conditional pass is given when a student has a yearly average below 65 in one or two major subjects, such as math, language, reading social studies, science, Spanish or spelling. This means that promotion to the next grade will depend on the completion of required work during the summer. We will require a written report from the tutor who works with the student, and in some cases, an examination. If the child fails that test, he/she will be given a second chance, and must receive extra assistance in that particular subject. A student is retained in the same grade when he/she is below average in three academic subjects.

- **Report Cards**

Report Cards are sent home at the end of each quarter. All grades are posted on EDLINE, a grading website used at CDS. Parents are assigned a password in order to access their child's report card. More detailed information will be given at Back to School Night. No report card will be given to your child if he/she has outstanding bills, such as instrumental rental, bus or tuition.

- **Standardized Tests**

Standardized tests, published by textbook companies, are usually given at the end of each unit in math, reading and language. The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills are given once a year to all elementary in grades 1 – 3. Results will be sent home with your child.

## **10. FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

- **Cafeteria**

Hot and cold lunches, including a variety of drinks, snacks and desserts are available each day from the school cafeteria. Students may pay in cash or by deposit in the Business Office. Students may also choose to bring a packed lunch from home. For safety reasons, we cannot allow glass bottles or other breakable containers on campus. We have microwaves available for students to heat up their food brought from home. Please refrain from sending or bringing in food items purchased from fast food chains. Parents are welcome to have lunch with their child if they wish. Please support our efforts to encourage students to enjoy healthy items for snack and lunch.

- **Guidance Counselor**

The elementary guidance counselor is available to talk with students about personal and academic issues that may arise during the school year. Other support programs such as orientation of new students and consultation with faculty and parents are also provided. The counselor's office is located in the Elementary Administration Building.

- **English as a Second Language**

Our school language is English. We offer a structured ESL program to meet the needs of our second language students. Students are usually pulled out during the language arts period to receive individual or small group instruction in English.

- **Health Services**

CDS offers the full-time services of a registered nurse, whose office is located in the Elementary Administration Building. The nurse will not administer medicine to any student, unless the parents give permission. If a student develops a fever or otherwise becomes ill at school, the parents will be called immediately to come and pick up the student. Please do not send students to school if they have fever, vomiting, diarrhea, conjunctivitis, head lice or any contagious virus or disease. Please understand that our infirmary is designed to serve as a first aid clinic rather than a medical center.

- **Learning Center**

For students who may struggle with academic subjects, we offer supportive services in the learning center. Students are pulled out for support during the school day and are provided with instruction in the specific areas of need.

- **Library**

The Library offers an excellent selection of over 10,000 titles in its collection, along with magazines, videos, vertical files, laser discs, maps and posters. All students, parents, faculty and staff are welcome to use its facilities. Students in 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades have scheduled library time each week in order to check out books. During the time, library and research skills are taught in connection with the classroom activities. Students are allowed to use the library computers for research activities as well as occasional time to play educational computer games. Students may check out two books at a time. Students may return books before the due date in order to check out more books. Following a three-day grace period, a 10 cent per school day fine is charged for overdue books. The charge for lost or damaged books is a minimum of \$3,000 or the cost of the book. End of the year report cards will be withheld for overdue books or unpaid fines. Parents may come to check out books for their children on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:00-8:30am and 3:00-3:30pm

- **Thousand Page Club**

The purpose of the Thousand Page Club is to motivate children to read and to increase reading comprehension. Following are the rules of the club. We ask that you read these guidelines carefully with your child so that you can conscientiously supervise your child's home reading.

1. Children can read 1,000 pages during any period of time during the school year. For each 1,000 pages read, they receive a certificate and badge. Please turn in charts by the end of each month, or after each 1,000 pages have been completed. For those children reading 5,000 to 10,000 or more pages during the year, an additional award will be given at the end-of-the-year assembly. Certificates are given at the beginning of each month.
2. The reading done for the Thousand Page Club must be recorded on a chart that can be obtained in the library. This chart indicates the author, title, number of pages read and the date for each book read. The parent or the teacher, whoever is verifying the reading, signs this chart. This is a critical

step in the reading process, because it is at this point that the adult checks on the child's comprehension of the book. If you think that the child merely entered the book on his chart without reading it, please do not sign the chart.

3. 1<sup>st</sup> graders may be read to, but they should be reading at least 50% of the pages recorded on the reading chart.
4. 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders are required to do independent reading.
5. The books read for the Thousand Page Club must be at the child's own reading level.
6. Books in English and Spanish are permitted but titles may not be repeated within a semester.
7. No comic book or magazines are permitted.
8. Books from the child's personal library at home are permitted.

- **Lost and Found**

All personal items found on the school campus will be placed in the lost and found box located outside the elementary office. Please feel free to come and search for lost items. Items labeled with the student's name will be returned as soon as they are turned into the lost and found. Please remember to label your child's belongings. Please note that every two months, all unclaimed items will be donated to charity.

- **Money and Valuables**

Though CDS makes a valiant effort to provide on-campus security, it is not responsible for any money, radios, CD players, MP3 players, cameras, hand-held computers, clothing, guitars or any other personal property brought to school by students. CD players, MP3 players, hee-lies, and skateboards are not allowed on campus, unless specifically requested by a teacher for a class assignment. Any such property brought on campus without permission will be held in safekeeping in the office. Students are not permitted to bring cellular phones to school. Any money or valuables, which must be brought to school, should be entrusted with the secretary for safekeeping until the time needed.

- **Telephone Calls**

Messages from parents to students will be delivered as soon as possible after they are received. Phones in the elementary office are available for brief personal student calls, but only with written permission from the classroom teacher.

## **11. TRANSPORTATION**

- **Buses**

CDS hires local buses to provide transportation for many of its students. Buses drop off and pick up students at the main entrance to the school. Bus routes are available for almost any location in the greater metropolitan area of San Jose. New families should consult with the Transportation Coordinator about routes and schedules. As a courtesy service, an after-school bus service at 4:30pm operates for students participating in extracurricular activities. These are express routes only, not the regular bus routes.

- **Parking**

Please park your car outside the main gates or in the enclosed visitor's parking lot. The parking spaces inside the main gates are reserved for faculty and staff only. After 3:30pm or during evening school activities, however, you may park inside the main gates should there be space available. CDS will not be responsible for damage or theft.

- **Traffic Flow Plan**

All vehicles must enter by the upper parking lot gate and exit by the lower gate. The traffic must flow in this direction only. Please stay in a single line in the pickup area. Parents must drop off and pick up children only at the curb in front of the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> grade building.

## 12. **SPECIAL EVENTS**

- **Arts Week**

Usually in the second semester, we celebrate the arts. Students participate in a number of concerts, assemblies, and presentations to recognize the importance of art and music.

- **Assemblies**

Students participate in various assemblies each year. At the end of each semester, all students participate in a presentation prepared by the music department. Assemblies provide each child with the unique opportunity for self-expression in front of a live audience. Please note the date on your calendar, so you can share this special occasion.

- **Book Month**

Generally held during the second semester, the Library sponsors a month long celebration of the world of books. Various activities are offered at every grade level, including DEAR Time (Drop Everything and Read), guest readers during library classes, bookmark design contests and the Youngbery Authors competition.

- **Back-To-School-Night**

At the beginning of the first semester, parents are invited to meet with grade-level teachers to discuss in detail the planned curriculum for the school year. In addition, representatives from the Parent Committee will be available to encourage new membership and answer any questions about its events or activities.

- **Costa Rica Independence Day Celebration**

In September, a civic assembly is held to recognize the Independence Day of Costa Rica. Dances, songs, poems and short skits are all included in this celebration. We encourage students to wear the typical costume of Costa Rica on this day.

- **Earth Day Celebration**

In celebration of Earth Day, our students participate in activities and presentations of how we can better protect our precious earth.

- **Field Day**

All of our students participate in a day dedicated to sports. Activities include competitions and class activities. Parents are welcome to join us and cheer for the participants.

- **Health Fair**

In the first semester, we sponsor a health fair to encourage our students to become healthier individuals.

- **Open House**

Open House, held in the second semester, is a wonderful opportunity to share with your children your pride in their many achievements at school. Open House invites all parents and students to visit and enjoy classrooms together.

- **Science Fair**

Generally in the second semester, a week is dedicated to grade level science fairs. Students work on specific experiments, demonstrations, and projects which are presented in the cafeteria.

- **Thanksgiving Lunch**

We celebrate Thanksgiving each year with a special Thanksgiving Lunch. Traditional favorites are served. Students may purchase a ticket in advance for small or large portions. No other food is available for purchase in the cafeteria that day.

- **United Nations Day Assembly**

In keeping with the school philosophy of appreciating world cultures, the elementary school sponsors a United Nations Day program in the first semester, culminating in a festival activity, or an assembly of music and dances.

### **13. SPECIAL PROGRAMS & PROCEDURES**

- **After-School Activities**

We offer a variety of after school activities which may include arts and crafts, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and children's theater. We also offer sports activities such as soccer, basketball, volleyball, swimming, and baseball. Remember that we also have an after school bus that leaves the campus every day at 4:30PM. Students may not stay after school unless they have a special activity and are being supervised by a teacher or an adult. If any parent would like to help organize, coach, participate or start an activity, please contact the principal.

- **Birthdays**

CDS likes to acknowledge children's birthdays by singing "Happy Birthday" in class, but we do not allow time for birthday parties. Parents may bring a cake or cupcakes for the entire class to share at snack or lunchtime, with permission in advance from your child's teacher. Please do not send party favors or pinatas to school. If you would like to send invitations to your child's classmates for a birthday party, your child's teacher will distribute them provided that all students in the class are invited. If you are planning to invite just a few, we ask that you email or telephone your invitations in order to avoid hurt feelings among classmates.

- **Community Service**

As a school, we are dedicated to serving others in the community. Throughout the year, our students participate in a number of activities which may include volunteering in local schools or visiting orphanages and hospitals.

- **Environmental Program**

We make a conscious effort each year to protect the environment. We have a recycling program at school. We also provide our students with ongoing education of ways to conserve water and energy.

- **Field Trips**

Teachers schedule field trips for the purpose of educational enrichment or community awareness. Each student who wishes to participate must present a permission slip signed by a parent or guardian prior to leaving the campus. Students wear the school uniform on the field trip, unless your child's teacher has given approval for more appropriate clothing.

- **Life Skills**

As part of a character education program, we emphasize the following themes in the school each month; Cooperation, Responsibility, Self-discipline, Appreciation, Respect, Kindness, Honesty, Determination, Fairness and Service. Teachers provide activities in the classroom to stress these themes. We also hold a monthly assembly to celebrate the theme of the month.

- **Lunches & Snacks**

Gum, candy or soda pop are not permitted at school. Please make sure that your child has a healthy morning snack and a lunch, either home prepared or purchased from the cafeteria. The teachers on cafeteria duty do their best to ensure that each child eats as much of his/her lunch as possible.

- **Materials & Supplies**

Each student is provided with paper, writing utensils, erasers and other supplies as necessary for daily class work. The cost of these materials and supplies is covered by the general tuition.

- **Music**

Students in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade have the opportunity to learn to play a recorder (available locally at Bansbach). Students in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade have the opportunity to join the Beginning Band. Students may also learn to play the violin, starting in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Special instructors from the Costa Rican National Symphony Orchestra are provided for individual lessons. Special performances by young violinists are given at the end of each semester. We also have an Elementary School Choir program for all ages.

- **Parent Involvement**

We welcome parent involvement and try to take advantage of any offers that are made. In addition to your individual choices, we have various activities for parent volunteers such as Book Month and Thanksgiving lunch. On occasion, we use parent chaperones for field trips and other special events. Please meet with your child's teacher to discuss how you might be able to help in the classroom.

- **Parent Workshops**

From time to time, CDS offers parent workshops about topics of general interest, such as childrearing techniques and learning difficulties. All interested parents are invited to attend these workshops.

- **School Photos & Year Book**

School photos are taken of each student by a professional photographer, generally in October. Parents will be notified in advance of the school photo schedule. Once all the photos are taken, a packet of prints will be available in the Business Office, which you may purchase at your convenience. If your child is absent on the scheduled photo taking day, a day for retakes is generally scheduled early in the second semester. Each student in 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade is entitled to receive a copy of the yearbook, free of charge.

- **Student Council**

We have an active student council which is dedicated to find ways to improve the elementary school as well as serve the community. Activities include Gym Night, Pet Show, Talent Show, Movie Afternoon, and donating food and clothing to needy children.

- **Summer Programs**

We are pleased to offer a summer program for elementary students, including activities as swimming, arts & crafts, computer, drama and ESL. Further information will be sent home to parents toward the end of the regular school year.