

Mira Catalina Elementary School



Comprehensive Safe School Plan

**Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District
2014-2015**

**Approved by the PVPUSD Board of Education
March 26, 2015**



Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District

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Dear Parents, Guardians, and Community Members,

The Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District (PVPUSD) is committed to the belief that schools should create a safe and orderly school campus and contribute to the same in the surrounding community. Each school in the PVPUSD holds fast to this belief and has created an individual Comprehensive Safe School Plan designed to put this belief into action.

Comprehensive safety is fundamental to students' school success and achievement. The goals of each school's Comprehensive Safe School Plan are designed to:

- ✚ create a caring community where students are encouraged to meet their potential,
- ✚ decrease discipline problems,
- ✚ increase time on task,
- ✚ minimize disruptions and discipline that detract from teaching,
- ✚ create a feeling of community,
- ✚ identify existing programs that promote school safety,
- ✚ create stronger links with district and community resource partners,
- ✚ analyze data about current conditions,
- ✚ identify programs and funds to address identified needs,
- ✚ publicize successes and need related to school safety,
- ✚ decrease vandalism, and
- ✚ keep students on a productive track toward a productive future.

Each plan has been created with the efforts of many stakeholders in the school and the community. Yearly updates, revisions, and edits will keep the plan current with school conditions, current trends and requirements in the law.

We hope that you, the community, will stand with us in our ongoing efforts to provide a safe, constructive learning environment for all students in the Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District.

Sincerely,

Donald B. Austin, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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Comprehensive Safe School Plan Committee Members
Mira Catalina Elementary School
2014-2015

Mr. Brett Egan
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brett Egan", written over a horizontal line.

Consulting Community Member

Mrs. Alicia Grant
School Site Council Representative

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An Assessment of the Current Status of School or School-Related Crime

An assessment of the *California Safe Schools Assessment: School Crime Reporting Summary* reveals that at District elementary schools during the period between 8/27/13 and 6/5/14, there were no reported crimes involving the possession, use, or sale of drugs, drug paraphernalia, or alcohol at Mira Catalina Elementary School. Additionally, there were no reported incidents of assault with a deadly weapon, battery, homicide, robbery/extortion, sex offense, arson, bomb threat, destructive explosive devices, loitering/trespassing, nor possession of weapons.

At Mira Catalina Elementary School there was no report of burglary or theft. There was reported vandalism in the form of graffiti and minor destruction of school property.

To date, there have been two suspensions. We have not experienced any instances of hate crimes.

This assessment is a solid indication that the District elementary school students, parents, and staff are relatively safe on campus, off campus at school-sponsored events, and traveling directly to and from school.

1. Child Abuse Reporting and Procedures

At Mira Catalina Elementary School protecting children from child abuse is a major priority. At the start of each school year, the principal takes time to meet with the staff to discuss child abuse indicators and to remind teachers of the procedures to follow when abuse is suspected. All staff members are reminded that they are mandated reporters and that the site administrator will be very supportive if the need to report should arise.

All Mira Catalina Elementary School employees are familiar with Penal Code Section 11166 and understand the requirement that certificated and classified personnel report suspected child abuse immediately by telephone. They are all aware that the telephone call must be followed within 36 hours by a written report to the Child Protective Agency.

The staff is aware that the site administrator maintains the Child Abuse Information Folder which is kept in the Administrative Office at the site. Information including current literature, guidelines for recognizing abuse, and specific directions for reporting are found in the Child Abuse Folder.

The procedures for reporting abuse are excerpted from the PVPUSD Board Policies and Administrative Regulations guidelines.

2. Disaster Procedures

Mira Catalina Elementary updates and revises the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) at the beginning of each school year.

Mira Catalina Elementary reviews the Emergency Plan with staff at the beginning of each school year to review Emergency teams and responsibilities. We conduct multiple drills each year to make sure that in an emergency situation, our school will follow the emergency plan to make students and staff as safe and comfortable as possible during an emergency situation. Our PTA annually takes inventory of the Disaster sheds on campus making sure that we have sufficient food, water, and supplies for at least three days.

In the case of a fire, our school can be evacuated to safety within a matter of minutes. We practice regular drills. In case of flooding or any additional disaster, the procedures are explained in the emergency plan. The staff knows to listen for the bell followed by verbal directions indicating the nature of the emergency.

Mira Catalina has outstanding procedures in place in the event of a natural disaster or emergency.

3. Policies for Suspension and Expulsion

Each year, Mira Catalina Elementary School provides its staff members and school families with copies of the school district's *Safe Schools Policy/Program*. This document was created by the Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District and gives a general summary of provisions contained in the *Education Code*, the *California Code of Regulations (Title 5)*, and Board of Education policies and District regulations regarding disciplinary procedures. The Safe Schools Policy guidelines are updated regularly.

Four (4) categories of violations or offences are detailed, and the recommended disciplinary consequence of each is defined. For example, Category 1 Violations include three "Zero Tolerance Violations" that result in mandatory expulsion. Each offense, along with its accompanying disciplinary consequences, is clearly and succinctly defined. The same pattern is followed for Category 2, Category 3, and Category 4 offenses and consequences.

In the fall of each new school year (or at enrollment for new enrollees) when Mira Catalina Elementary School families receive copies of the *Safe Schools Policy*, both the student in grades 4-5 and his/her parent must sign and return an acknowledgment form to indicate that they have received, read, and discussed the disciplinary rules/regulations and consequences. An informational letter is forwarded to the parent/guardian of each student in grades K-3, but no signature is required. As a result, the entire school community trusts that consistent and effective consequences are in place for students who violate school rules and policies, and that a zero tolerance policy is utilized for students who commit serious offenses.

Implementation of the *Safe Schools Policy/Program* has been a priority at each of the schools throughout the school district.

4. Procedures to Notify Teachers of Dangerous Students

When the principal at Mira Catalina Elementary School is made aware that a student has caused or tried to cause another person serious bodily injury, or any injury which required professional medical treatment, an entry in the student's file is made for that child. Information based upon written District records or records received from a law enforcement agency are contained in the file.

When any such student is assigned to a teacher's classroom, the principal provides the teacher with written notification. The teacher is asked to review the student's record in the office. Teachers are informed that such information is to be kept in strictest confidence.

5. **Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy**

At Mira Catalina Elementary School one (1) component in the creation of a safe working/learning environment for both employees and students is the understanding that sexual harassment will not be tolerated.

The school district's *Safe Schools Policy/Program* (Appendix C) lists sexual harassment as a Category 3 Violation. Students in grades 4-12 who are guilty of sexual harassment are faced with disciplinary consequences that can include suspension and probable reassignment to a school away from the home campus, or recommended expulsion. Teachers discuss this policy in age appropriate ways to assure students that they need not endure any form of sexual harassment.

All Mira Catalina Elementary School, employees are familiar with the definitions of sexual harassment as they are listed in PVPUSD Board policy. Each is aware that this major offense may result in disciplinary action or the dismissal of the offending employee. If an employee feels that he/she is being harassed, he/she is encouraged to report such incidents to the immediate supervisor of the accused employee or the appropriate personnel department official.

Excerpts from PVPUSD *Board Policies and Administrative Regulations Manual*.

6. The Provisions of a School-Wide Dress Code

The Palos Verdes Peninsula Board of Education policy states the following regarding dress and grooming standards:

The Board believes that appropriate dress and grooming contribute to a productive learning environment. The Board expects students to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to wear clothes that are suitable for the school activities in which they participate. Students have the right to make individual choices from a wide range of clothing and grooming styles, but they must not present a health or safety hazard or a distraction which would interfere with the education process (Reference: Board Policy 5132).

When gangs constitute a danger to students, the Superintendent or designee may act to restrict student dress and grooming as necessary to comply with Board policy related to gang activity (Reference: Board Policy 5132).

Specifically, gang names, gang graffiti and/or gang logos on school property or on student possessions used at school or at a school function are prohibited. Also prohibited is any attire, jewelry, insignia, accessory or manner of grooming which, by virtue of its color, arrangement, design or trademark, connotes membership in a group that advocates behavior which would interfere with the normal orderly operation of a school (Reference: Board Policy 5136).

At the beginning of each new school year at Mira Catalina Elementary School, every family is provided with a copy of the *Student-Parent Handbook*. In it, standards for pupil dress are defined:

Mira Catalina Elementary School pupils are expected to dress in a neat and appropriate manner. For safety reasons, open-toed sandals are not recommended. While hats are not illegal at Mira Catalina Elementary School, they may not be worn inside a classroom or any other room.

In individual classrooms, at school-wide assemblies, and in monthly newsletters, families are reminded of these dress standards, and standards are consistently enforced for all students.

Excerpts from PVPUSD *Board Policies and Administrative Regulations Manual*.

7. Procedures for Safe Ingress and Egress

Mira Catalina Elementary School takes pride in being part of a school district which has a mission to provide a safe environment for all children, their parents, and school employees. To achieve this goal, the school works closely with the Lomita Sheriff's Station and the City of Rancho Palos Verdes to guarantee that the school's immediate community is safe. Staff will monitor the play areas and the parking lot areas both before and after school to ensure children's safety.

There is an active Neighborhood Watch program in the area surrounding the school.

To ensure the safety of bike riders, students in grades 3-5 are permitted to ride bicycles to school only after parents have given written permission to the school. Younger students may ride only in the company of a parent (Reference: Board Policy 5142.3).

To ensure safety during pick-up and drop-off periods, students, staff, and parents cooperatively developed the "Valet" program at Mira Catalina Elementary School. This drop-off and pick-up safety program is taught in classrooms and at parent meetings, and is described in the *Traffic Safety Information* given to parents at the beginning of the school year.

School district programs such as PV Kids' Corner (a child care program located on campus) and an enrichment program, provide safe activities for students to participate in both before and after school.

8. **A Safe and Orderly Environment Conducive to Learning**

Component 1 - People and Programs - Creating and Caring and Committed School Climate.

Each of the items discussed in this Comprehensive School Safety Plan make significant contributions to the creation of a safe and orderly environment at Mira Catalina Elementary School. Clearly defined child abuse reporting procedures help ensure that children are protected, and an *Emergency Disaster Preparedness Plan* that has been repeatedly rehearsed gives staff and students confidence that they will know how to proceed in the event of an emergency. The District-wide *Safe Schools Policy/Program* clearly defines the school's commitment to holding students accountable for their actions. Sexual harassment is not tolerated. Standards of dress and grooming are clearly delineated. Students, parents, and school employees arrive and depart from school in safety each day, and teachers are informed in advance when a student with a history of violence is placed in his/her classroom. And, as will be made evident in the next subsection, school rules are developed and reinforced by all members of the school community.

At Mira Catalina Elementary School, students begin at an early age to assume leadership roles in encouraging a positive school environment. A school-wide character development program is in place. Cross-grade buddy systems allow older students to serve as mentors and role models that assist younger students both academically and socially. Through participation in Student Council, students are empowered to design and then carry out plans for school improvement. Students have assumed responsibility for the overall conditions of the school's physical environment as they've organized clean-up projects, planned school beautification projects, and sponsored activities that promote school spirit.

Component 2 - Creating a Physical Environment that Communicates Respect for Learning and Individuals.

An important aspect of the positive atmosphere at Mira Catalina Elementary School is its strong family involvement. The high level of family support is evident on campus as parents and grandparents are highly visible in classrooms, in the library, in the office, and on the playgrounds throughout each school day. The cooperative spirit that exists between parents and school personnel as they work together for the good of students and the school models for children the high value that the important adults in their lives place on education.

Clearly defined and consistently reinforced behavioral expectations, coupled with a partnership between children, parents, and teachers, ensure that high academic standards are met, and that no child is allowed to fail.

9. The Rules and Procedures for School Discipline

To help ensure a safe and orderly environment at Mira Catalina Elementary School, a *Student Behavior Code* was developed as the result of a collaborative effort involving the school principal, teachers, parents, and students. Meetings for the development of these rules were held during non-classroom hours to ensure the participation, views, and advice of representatives from each of these groups.

The *Guidelines for Student Behavior* explains to students both their rights and their responsibilities as members of the school community. General responsibilities, include, playground, lunchtime, restroom, classroom, and assembly behaviors that are clearly defined for students. The document also outlines consequences that can result for students who do not accept their responsibilities. The *Guidelines for Student Behavior* is reviewed and/or revised at least every four (4) years.

The *Guidelines for Student Behavior*, coupled with the school district's *Safe Schools Policy/Program*, establish a consistent description of rules and discipline procedures that are in line with the law and the rules prescribed by the State Board of Education. Copies of both are provided to students at the beginning of each school year and to newly-enrolling students, upon enrollment. Parents are expected to discuss these with their children and to indicate with a signature that they have done so. Teachers begin the school year with a review of these policies. The school principal meets with individual grade levels to reinforce their importance. As a result, the rules established at Mira Catalina Elementary School, are understood, regularly followed, and reinforced by all members of the school community.

A copy of the *Student Behavior Code*.

10. Hate Crime Reporting Procedures

Hate crimes are defined according to **Penal Code Section 422.55:**

For purposes of this title and for purposes of all other state law unless an explicit provision of law or the context clearly requires a different meaning, the following shall apply:

- (a) *"Hate crime" means a criminal act committed, in whole or in part, because of one or more of the following actual or perceived characteristics of the victim:*
 - (1) *Disability.*
 - (2) *Gender.*
 - (3) *Nationality.*
 - (4) *Race or ethnicity.*
 - (5) *Religion.*
 - (6) *Sexual orientation.*
 - (7) *Association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.*
- (b) *"Hate crime" includes, but is not limited to, a violation of Section 422.56*

For purposes of this title, the following definitions shall apply: Penal Code Section 422.56:

- (a) *"Association with a person or group with these actual or perceived characteristics" includes advocacy for, identification with, or being on the ground owned or rented by, or adjacent to, any of the following: a community center, educational facility, family, individual, office, meeting hall, place of worship, private institution, public agency, library, or other entity, group, or person that has, or is identified with people who have, one or more of those characteristics listed in the definition of "hate crime" under paragraphs (1) to (6), inclusive, of subdivision (a) of Section 422.55.*
- (b) *"Disability" includes mental disability and physical disability as defined in Section 12926 of the Government Code.*
- (c) *"Gender" means sex, and includes a person's gender identity and gender expression. "Gender expression" means a person's gender-related appearance and behavior whether or not stereotypically associated with the person's assigned sex at birth.*
- (d) *"In whole or in part because of" means that the bias motivation must be a cause in fact of the offense, whether or not other causes also exist. When multiple concurrent motives exist, the prohibited bias must be a substantial factor in bringing about the particular result. There is no requirement that the bias be a main factor, or that the crime would not have been*

committed but for the actual or perceived characteristic. This subdivision does not constitute a change in, but is declaratory of, existing law under In re M.S. (1995) 10 Cal.4th 698 and People v. Superior Court (Aishman) (1995) 10 Cal.4th 735.

- (e) "Nationality" includes citizenship, country of origin, and national origin.*
- (f) "Race or ethnicity" includes ancestry, color, and ethnic background.*
- (g) "Religion" includes all aspects of religious belief, observance, and practice and includes agnosticism and atheism.*
- (h) "Sexual orientation" means heterosexuality, homosexuality, or bisexuality.*
- (i) "Victim" includes, but is not limited to, a community center, educational facility, entity, family, group, individual, office, meeting hall, person, place of worship, private institution, public agency, library, or other victim or intended victim of the offense.*

While hate crimes are not a prevailing issue on the Mira Catalina Elementary campus, the Board of Education affirms the right of every student to be protected from hate-motivated behavior. It is the intent of the Board to promote harmonious relationships that enable students to gain a true understanding of the civil rights and social responsibilities of people in our society. Behavior or statements that degrade an individual on the basis of his/her race, ethnicity, culture, heritage, gender, sexual orientation, physical/mental attributes, religious beliefs or practices shall not be tolerated.