



July 26, 2023

Hello, Willow Creek Community!

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year. I hope this letter finds you still enjoying your summer as we are busy preparing for a great year at Willow Creek. I never tire of the excitement of a new school year! Everything feels new, fresh, and possible! I am eagerly waiting to welcome your children, our staff, and you to this new school year. Each year, we enjoy a theme; a theme focuses us all on our why: **Our Students!** This year, our theme is *intentional*. We are intentional about the way we connect with students and our families. We are intentional about our planning and the way we engage each student. We are intentional about our Professional Learning Communities. We will be intentional about welcoming Pre-K to Willow Creek. We hope you are intentional about partnering with us.

Please know that safety and security are something we take very seriously. Our entire staff is well-versed on the Cherry Creek School District's safety protocols and procedures. We discuss, prepare, and practice throughout the school year. Last year, we installed a secure vestibule with a second set of doors. We need your help as we believe we can continue to provide a warm, welcoming neighborhood school and be vigilant to provide a safe learning environment for our students and staff. Thank you for being kind and considerate to staff as they ask you to refrain from entering a side door and to check in and provide an ID at the front door. Although inconvenient, please remember that safety supersedes convenience and that safety is our priority.

Families are asked to complete their Parent Forms online prior to the first day of school. New families will need to set up an account and then enter information such as medical contacts, permission to pick up your child, and emergency phone numbers. Returning families simply need to confirm or update information. To access the forms, go to my.cherrycreekschools.org/ and click on the PowerSchool Tile. There is also a Parent Forms tile with detailed instructions if needed. Your child will have a green checkmark next to his/her name once their forms are updated.

You will receive an email from your child's new teacher during the week of Aug. 7th introducing themselves and asking you to sign up for **Family Connection Meetings**. Most Family Connection meetings will take place later in the work week of August 7-11 or in the beginning of the first week

of school when that grade level does not have students. We know some of you will be on last-minute vacations; and for you, we will accommodate by meeting before or after school during the first few weeks of school. The meeting is **not** a conference in the traditional sense, as we are not sharing data. The meeting is truly a time to connect and learn about your child from you, your child's expert! This meeting is in lieu of a traditional Back to School Night and will give you and your child more time with your child's teacher. Some of the questions you may want to think about are:

- What do you want us to know about your child?
- What are your child's assets/strengths, both in and out of school?
- What is important for us to know about your family?
- Tell us your hopes for your child for this year and beyond.
- Is there anything else you would like to share?

Pre-Kindergarten: We are excited to welcome Pre-Kindergarten students to Willow Creek this year. Pre-K families will have slightly different arrival procedures which will be communicated by your teachers. Also, Pre-K students attend 8:00 - 2:45 Monday - Thursday and do not attend on Fridays.

Staggered Start to the School Year:

- August 14, 2023 Grades 3, 4, and 5 **Only**
- August 15, 2023 Grades 1, 2 **Only**
- August 16, 2023 All students (Pre-Kindergarten -- Grade 5)

Back-to-School Family Picnic: August 10, 5:30-6:30 pm Please join us for a back-to-school family picnic! BYOD (Bring Your Own Dinner) and come play on the playground near our K, 1, 2 doors. We look forward to seeing you for this social event to kick off the start of school. We will have other pops to cool off your children and celebrate the start of the school year.

New Families Grades 1-5: If you are NEW to Willow Creek, please join us for the Back-to-School Family Picnic as mentioned above. At 5:45 on August 10 (during family picnic), there will be a brief tour of our school for NEW families only (does not include Kindergarteners that already had orientation). Meet other parents and kids, visit the PTO tent, and find out more about upcoming events and activities. This is not a time to connect with your teacher (that's Family Connection Meetings), it is a time to connect with each other, me, and see our school.

Community Movie Night: PTO will host a Community Movie night on September 15 weather permitting. More information to come. We are excited to provide another opportunity for our community to connect.

New Assistant Principal: We are thrilled to welcome Kelly Hynes in this role and know she will be such an asset to our students, staff, and community! Please see her letter.

Arrival and Dismissal::

- Please plan on having your child come in their grade level door between our Soft Start Times: 7:45-8:00. If arriving after 8:00, your child will be marked tardy and need to enter through the front doors.
- School dismissal is at 2:45 except on Wednesdays. Please make every effort to be on time to pick up your child.
- CCSD provides a weekly Early Release Day for Elementary Schools. This allows our teachers to meet weekly in their Professional Learning Communities to continue to promote student achievement. **Every Wednesday students will dismiss at 1:45.** Buses will run accordingly. Also, our Before and After Club (WCKK) will open at 1:45 every Wednesday afternoon. Please contact our director, Devin Coats (dcoats@cherrycreekschools.org) if you need more information.
- Thank you for adhering to crosswalks and driveway rules. We know we can have the safest community out there with help from all.

Warmly,
Principal Mary Whitney



