

Cougar Connect

August 11, 2023



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A Note From Mrs. McDonald

Dear families,

Today, all families will receive an email from PickUp Patrol (PUP) encouraging you to input your child's dismissal for this school year. You may not receive this email for families who may have registered in the past 24 hours, but please prepare to share how your child or children will dismiss before school begins next Wednesday. **All new and returning families will have to complete this process through PUP for the new school year.** To learn more about using PUP this school year, please click [here](#).

Kindergarten families, there has been a change of date for the event, Start Strong | Kindergarten Edition. Please see the flyer below for more details.

Our office is currently processing registration for those submitted. If you have not registered yet, please do as soon as possible, as your timely registration will ensure our team is prepared to welcome your child to OTE.

To begin the registration process for the 2023-24 school year for new students, go to www.bluevalleyk12.org/registration and click "New Student Registration." For returning students, click https://ks-blu-psv.edupoint.com/PXP2_Login.aspx to begin registering for the new school year.

Families new to Blue Valley will be asked to create an online parent account. Online registration will take approximately 20 minutes, an important step in getting your student started with kindergarten! You will be asked to pay fees later this spring.

Before you take off, please read the remainder of the newsletter below for important information to begin the school year.

I hope you have a great weekend, families!

Sincerely,

Erica McDonald
Principal



save
the
date

Save-the-Date

Monday, August 14: PTO Board Meeting; 9:00 AM-11:00 AM

Monday, August 14: Sneak-a-Peek; 5:00 PM-6:00 PM

Wednesday, August 16: First Day of School and Kindergarten Orientation

Friday, August 18: Skate Party at Skate City; 5:00 PM-7:00 PM

Thursday, August 24: Back-to-School Night; 5:00 PM-6:00 PM

Friday, September 1: PTO Board Meeting; 9:00 AM-11:00 AM

Monday, September 4: No School | Labor Day

Tuesday, September 5: No School | Professional Learning

Friday, September 8: OTE Carnival; 5:30 PM-8:00 PM

Thursday, September 14: PTO Restaurant Night; 4:00 PM-8:00 PM

Wednesday, September 20: Picture Day | Individual and Classroom

Friday, September 22: Birthday Book Lunch

Monday, September-Thursday, September 28: Fall Conferences

Thursday, September 28: No School EC-8 | Parent-Teacher Conferences

Friday, September 29: No School | District-Wide Break



The PTO is already in full swing for the year ahead. Follow these simple steps to ensure you don't miss any of the fun!

otepto.org

PTO Checklist

1. Visit otepto.org

2. Login or Create a FREE account by clicking the "Login" button

3. Complete the Family Information and Publish Preference forms under "My Account." By doing this you'll receive your child's Field Trip shirt for the 23/24 school year.



4. Consider a PTO Membership, click "Register". This funding helps support PTO programs

5. Explore! Buy carnival tickets, check out the calendar of events, and follow the PTO on Facebook & Twitter

PTO Events | August



(Be sure you follow the simple steps above to receive the PTO emails about all these fun events)

Friday, August 18th - Back to School Skate Party @ Skate City - 5-7:00 p.m.

A percent of the OTE sales come back to the PTO.



Thursday, August 24th - Back to School Parent Social @ Rock & Brews

Immediately following Back to School Night. Pop in, meet and socialize with other OTE parents.



Friday, September 8th - Fall Carnival @ 5:30 p.m. Tickets are available NOW; CLICK [HERE!](#)

Welcome to OVERLAND TRAIL ELEMENTARY!

Name: Denise Ortiz

Schooling: Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Texas A&M University; Master of Arts in Educational Psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University

Number of Years Working in Schools: 2

Your Role at OTE: School Psychologist

Fun Fact About Me: I consider myself one of the best New York tour guides! I will gladly share my itineraries.

**we
are
family**

Overland Trail Elementary



WELCOME



DENISE ORTIZ

**"I am most excited about getting to help students
with a passionate and enthusiastic group of
individuals."**

OTE Library | "The family that reads together grows together." Carmela Dutra

Mrs. Mason is looking for pictures of you and your family reading together to include on a bulletin board across from the library. Email your pictures to jmason02@bluevalleyk12.org.

Attendance Message to Parents and Caregivers

Every day Overland Trail Elementary opens its doors to students for a day filled with learning. When a student does not arrive at school or unexpectedly misses a portion of the school day, we are concerned and want to ensure you know that your child is absent.

Beginning Thursday, Aug. 17, families will be notified of unexpected absences through email, phone, text, and optional push notifications. Overland Trail Elementary families can expect automated attendance messages by email, phone, and text at 9:35 AM. if a child is absent and his/her absence has not already been reported by a parent/guardian. The parent or caregiver must call the school to report an absence or reply to the automated email or phone message.

Families who would also like a push notification can download the ParentVUE app and manage their notifications. A push notification will immediately be sent to the parent or caregiver's mobile device if a child has an unreported absence when a teacher submits attendance.

Interested in push notifications? Download the ParentVUE app ([iTunes app store](#) or [Google Play](#)), enable push notifications in device settings, and select attendance notifications through in-app settings.

Guide to elementary school attendance messages



Automated Attendance Message

Families will receive automated attendance messages via email, phone and text message at 9:35 a.m. if a child is absent and his/her absence has not been reported by a parent/guardian. Forgot to report an absence? No worries, reply directly to the phone call or email.



Push Notifications

Families who would also like a push notification can download the ParentVUE app and manage their notifications. If a child has an unreported absence when a teacher submits attendance, then a push notification will immediately be sent to the parent/guardian's mobile device.



Boundary Adjustments

Board approves boundary adjustments for 2024-25 school year
At the June 12 Board of Education meeting, the board approved the 2022-23 Facility Planning Committee's report, including boundary adjustments that address elementary school enrollment and building capacity issues. The approved boundary adjustments impact several schools to keep contiguous attendance areas. Boundary adjustments approved for the 2024-25 school year include:

- Deer Creek boundaries will be adjusted to attend Overland Trail Elementary.
- Sandstone Creek, Savoy, and Plaza Gardens boundaries will be adjusted to attend Harmony Elementary. This adjustment will also include a change in feeder pattern to Harmony Middle and Blue Valley Northwest.
- Glen Abbey & Villas of Chapel Green and Highland Villas and Highlands Creek boundaries will be adjusted to attend Prairie Star Elementary. This adjustment will also include a change in feeder pattern to Prairie Star Middle and Blue Valley High.

The committee's work, including documents, maps, and presentations, can be found on the [district's website](#).

Attendance Procedures

If your child will miss school, please call the Overland Trail Elementary attendance line at 913-239-7005 or email the attendance line at attendanceOTE@bluevalleyk12.org.

Please include your child's name (first and last), grade level, classroom teacher, and reason for the absence. If leaving a message, please make sure you speak slowly and clearly. It is always helpful to repeat the information as well. The Blue Valley School District has amended the district's attendance policy (Board Policy 3200). **Students will be permitted *seven* excused absences during the school year for family emergencies, vacations, and personal business.** Send a note to the teacher and the office if your child is on vacation. Separate letters should be written for each child.

Attendance Reporting and Notifications

Families can expect automated attendance messages by email and text if a child is absent and their absence has not already been reported by a parent/guardian. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to report an absence or reply to the automated phone message.

What is the purpose of attendance notifications?

We realize that students may occasionally need to miss school for planned absences, illnesses, and appointments. However, when a student does not arrive at school or unexpectedly misses a portion of the school day, we are concerned and want to ensure you know your child is absent.

How can I get push notifications?

Families who would also like a push notification can download the ParentVUE app and manage their notifications. A push notification will immediately be sent to the parent/guardian's mobile device if a child has an unreported absence when a teacher submits attendance.

Are you interested in push notifications? Download the ParentVUE app ([iTunes app store](#) or [Google Play](#)), enable push notifications in device settings, and select attendance notifications through in-app settings. Once the app is downloaded, [these instructions](#) will help you complete the setup.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

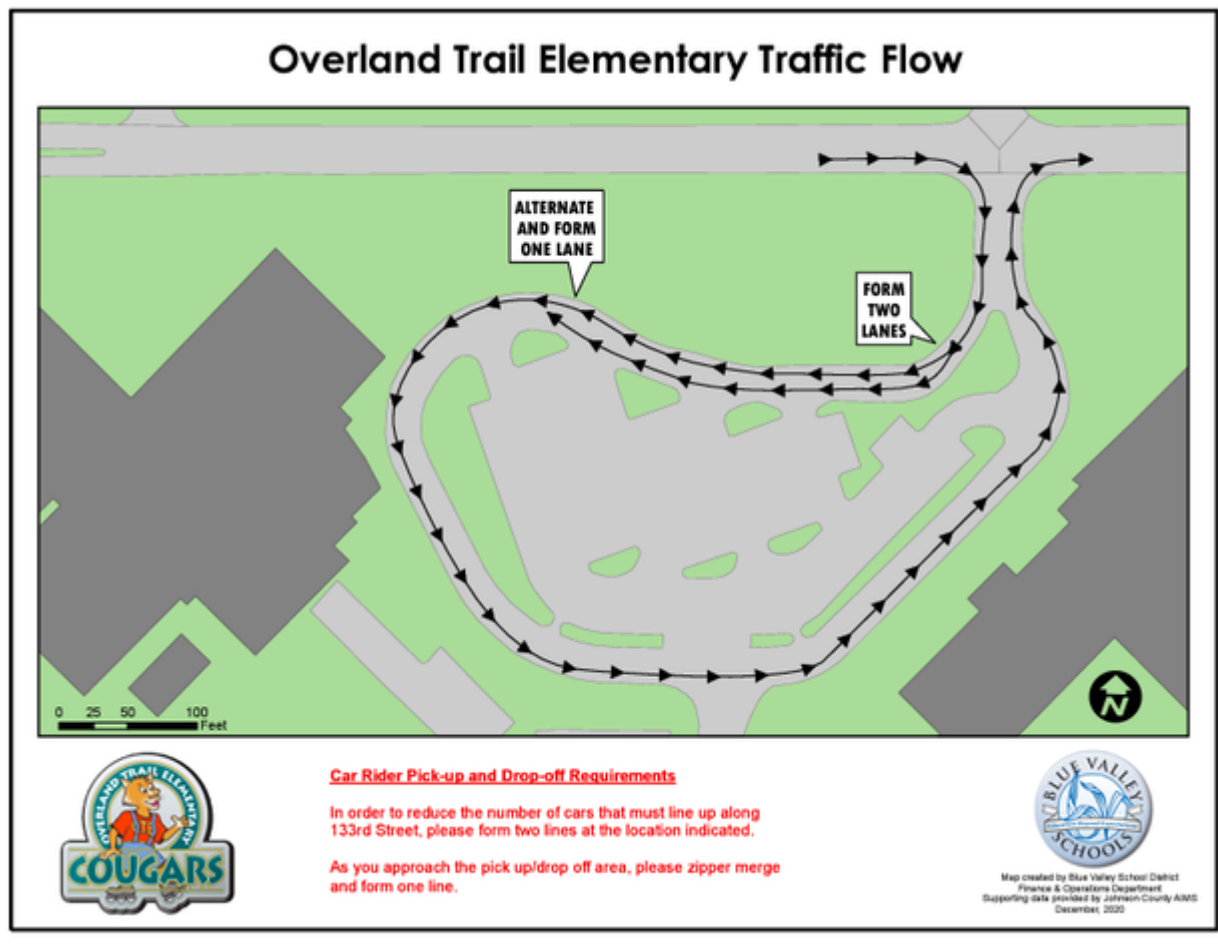
Arrival Procedures:

1. **Our school doors open at 8:25 AM.** Children should not arrive before 8:25 AM.
2. School begins at 8:40 AM. After 8:40 AM, students are considered tardy. A parent or guardian must come to the school's front entrance with their photo id to have their child signed in if they arrive at school later than 8:40 AM.
3. The crosswalk will be closed starting at 8:25 AM. If your student needs extra assistance, park in the parking lot closest to the playground. Do not park in the main parking lot.
4. Students should remain buckled in their seats until the vehicle stops in the traffic loop.
5. Cell phones should not be used while in the traffic loop.
6. Vehicles in the traffic loop will have the right of way and will be given priority over families walking or going to the parking lot.

Dismissal Procedures:

1. **Dismissal begins at 3:30 PM.** Our goal is to complete dismissal by 4:00 PM.

2. Students who walk home will exit the building through the exit doors on the North side of the building.
3. Students who walk home cannot stay on the OTE campus. Y-Care utilizes the building and playground after school, Monday-Friday.



Durham Bus Services

If you wish for your child to be a bus rider, please visit the bus website to sign them up:

[Durham Bus Services](#). You can also sign up for text message alerts for your student's bus.

Café (Cafeteria)

The breakfast and lunch menus can be found online [here](#). You can also download the Nutrislice app to access daily/weekly menus.

We will be excited to welcome visitors to our lunchroom again this year, starting after Labor Day, Wednesday, September 7. We will practice café routines and procedures for the first couple of weeks. As a reminder, we ask that you and your child enjoy your lunch at the table designated for students and their visitor(s).

Safety Expectations | Food Deliveries

- Food delivery services disrupt the learning environment and pose a potential security concern. Various doors have been utilized, and most delivery service providers have unfamiliar faces that are challenging to verify.
- We will not accept meals delivered by paid delivery services during the school day for students. These deliveries will be refused.



General Reminder for Visitors During the School Day

Parents and Caregivers,

Our office staff wants to share a general reminder that all elementary schools in the district utilize the buzz-in entry system for visitors during the school day. Visitors will need to come to the front of the school. At the front entrance, visitors will press the buzzer, show government-issued photo identification, and state the purpose of their visit each time they visit the school. **If you arrive without identification, the office will seek the administration's approval for entry.**

We ask that guests not hold the door open for another visitor once they have been buzzed in. Instead, allow the door to close for visitors to go through the above-mentioned procedures. We appreciate the support of our safety procedures.

Overland Trail Elementary will open for visitors after Labor Day beginning Wednesday, September 6, 2023.

Thank you,

Erica McDonald

Back to School Events

We are so excited to see our school community back on campus soon. Back to School events are just around the corner, and we would like to share our plans for welcoming everyone back and keeping everyone safe.



Sneak-a-Peek: Monday, August 14 | 5:00 PM-6:00 PM

Sneak-a-Peek will take place on Monday, August 14. This event is where you will have the opportunity to walk your child into the school, see their classroom, meet their teacher, take pictures, and see their new learning space. Sneak-a-Peek is not required, but it will be an excellent opportunity for adults to enter the building with their children.

As nothing is more important than the safety of our students and staff, on the first day of school, Wednesday, August 16, all elementary schools in Blue Valley will follow our routine safety procedures at arrival time. Therefore, students will enter the building at the designated time of entry. Feel free to come to campus and plan a goodbye, hug, and first-day photo with your child on our front lawn before wishing them well on their first day. Thank you for understanding the importance of controlled access during arrival.

Kindergarten Orientation: Wednesday, August 16

Our Kindergarten staff is prepared to invite our incoming students in with their parents for a session to explore their new surroundings, meet new friends, and, hopefully, calm any fears or anxieties. Parents and caregivers can ask questions, take pictures, communicate with the teacher about transportation, and get to know a few children in the class. Following the schedule below, families should expect to attend orientation according to their last name. Please sign up by clicking the session below that you and your child are to attend.

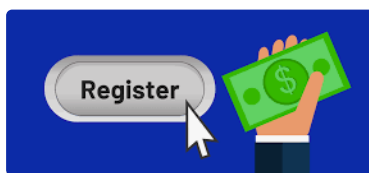
- [Session 1](#) (9:00 AM-10:00 AM): Last names A-F
- [Session 2](#) (10:30 AM-11:30 AM): Last names G-O
- [Session 3](#) (1:00 PM-2:00 PM): Last names P-Z

First Day of School (Kindergarten): Thursday, August 17

Incoming Kindergarten families, please look for communication coming soon, specifically about Kinderten Camp, the first two days of school for Kindergarten students. Kindergarten Camp will occur Thursday, August 17, through Friday, August 18. On Monday, August 21, Kindergarten students will begin learning in their assigned homeroom.

Back-to-School Night: Thursday, August 24 | 5:00 PM-6:00 PM

Back-to-School Night will take place on Thursday, August 24. This event is where you will have the opportunity to learn more about your child's classroom and receive pertinent information that will enable you to navigate the year easily. Additionally, you will learn how to volunteer with the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) and contribute to your child's classroom events for the school year. Overall, the one-hour open house will allow you to visit multiple classrooms, general education, and beyond for Back-to-School Night and provide flexibility with how much time you spend in each learning space.



Registration and Fees | 2023-2024

Parents and Caregivers,

[Elementary school registration](#) for the 2023-24 school year is open and [online now](#) for all students. Registration is required annually and is the time to update your child's information and pay fees. Completing registration confirms that your child will attend school for the 2023-2024 school year. Thank you for providing important information as part of the registration process. For more registration information, visit www.bluevalleyk12.org/registration.

Thank you,

Yolonda Merritt

YMCA Fall Enrollment Open

For parents unfamiliar with Y-Club, the YMCA operates within district elementary schools during the school year. The program opens at 7:00 AM daily for early drop-off and stays open until 6:00 PM.

Please [click here](#) to find out where to learn more or register for the 2023-24 school year. Registration opens on May 10th.

Incoming Kindergarten Information

Watch for my email on or around the first day of school. The email will describe a couple of surveys we kindly request you complete. These surveys provide us with great information for helping your child.

Please click [here](#) to register your incoming Kindergarten student and gain the most recent information shared with incoming Kindergarten families.





Calling all Blue Valley Kindergarten parents and caregivers!

BV Well and Blue Valley School Counselors, Social Workers and Psychologists invite you to a complimentary session designed especially for Kindergarten parents and caregivers that will address:

- expected **social and cognitive milestones** for 5 and 6-year-olds and why thinking about **screen time** is important at this age
- the **number one parent factor that fosters child wellbeing** and what you can do to build and sustain it
- **digital health and wellness** practices for your family

Featuring:

- **Dr. Libby Matile Milkovich, MD**, Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrician, Children's Mercy Kansas City
- **Screen Sanity**, an international nonprofit whose family-education programs help parents consider the role technology plays in their lives and connect with their kids in meaningful ways

Scan to register online for
Starting Strong:
Kindergarten Edition
Space is limited - register today!



Register now!

Scan to purchase Screen Sanity's
Elementary School Plugged-in
Planner. Books will also be
available for purchase at the event.



Screen Sanity's presentation sponsored by:



Communication

Cougar Connect (Previously the OTE News): Cougar Connect, the parent/caregiver newsletter, will be shared at the end of each school week. These newsletters tend to be packed with information to keep you updated and included in our school's events and activities. This newsletter will also include Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) communication. Please read each newsletter and let us know if you have any questions.

Attendance

- Email: attendanceote@bluevalleyk12.org
- Phone: (913) 239-7005

School Office:

- Email: oteos@bluevalleyk12.org
- Phone: (913) 239-7000



Personal Devices

To provide the most effective learning spaces possible, the following guidelines concerning personal cell phones (CP) and associated personal technology devices (PTD) at the elementary school level are in effect. Cell phones and personal technological devices are any devices designed for personal communication, digital information transfer, or electronic gaming/play.

Cell phones and personal technology devices are not allowed to be used by elementary school students during the school day. The school day is defined as anytime the student is on campus property on a day school is in session. CP/PTDs are to be kept in backpacks out of sight and powered off. Should the need arise for a student to contact parents during the school day, the main office phone or the classroom phone should be used for such a call. Should the need arise for parents to contact their child, the main office phone should be used for such a call. CP/PTDs may be used by the student only at the request of the classroom teacher or other staff member. CP/PTDs used to monitor identified student health needs, such as blood sugar levels, are allowed and must be approved by the principal.

Grades 3-12 | Grade Opt-In Option for Securly Filter

Parents and caregivers can now choose to place their 3-12th grade students in the High Restrictions Filter Group for their district-issued device by signing up [here](#). The link details the differences between the Default and High Restrictions Policies.

Birthday Policy

Due to the growing number of food allergies and medical needs of students, OTE has a **non-edible** treat policy. Students may bring non-edible birthday treats (e.g., pencils, stickers, etc.) per arrangement with the classroom teacher. Remember that a birthday celebration should not take away from instructional time.

Birthday Invitations: We ask that students not distribute invitations to private birthday parties at school unless every class member receives an invitation.



Nut-Safer Guidelines

At OTE, we have a wide variety of food allergens and restrictions. To remain safe and to prevent exclusion, we don't accept food, including items from the Nut-Safe List, to serve in school or send home with students for birthday celebrations. This complies with our **non-edible birthday celebration**. Essentially, we must remember that sending food home is a risk for children as they transition between school and home, putting our families in an undesirable position when they cannot eat what is provided.

Blue Valley (BV) School's Nut Safer Guidelines for daily snacks will be implemented throughout the school year.

- Classroom snacks must be from the Nut Safer list.
- Nut Safer seating is available in the café during lunch.

We appreciate your support as we work to be more preventative with food safety measures to enhance student and staff safety.

The complete **Nut Safer Foods** and BV Guidelines can be found [here](#).

Kindergarten Tidbits

Please review the attached newsletter for information missed at Kindergarten Roundup and what to look forward to as we begin a new school year at Overland Trail Elementary.

School Supply Lists

District Calendar (2023-2024)

Overland Trail Elementary's Homepage


Family Handbook



Erica McDonald, Principal

 @OTEMcDonald

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 ECMcDonald@bluevalleyk12.org

 (913) 239-7000


 bluevalleyk12.org/OTE




Alicia Anderson, Assistant Principal

 @OTEAnderson

 6335 West 135th Street, Overla...

 ARAnderson@bluevalleyk12.org

 (913) 239-7000

 bluevalleyk12.org/OTE




Office Staff

 @OTECougars

- Robin Warren, Administration Assistant/Bookkeeper
- Yolonda Merritt, Administration Assistant/Registrar
- Debby Alexander, Attendance

 6225 West 133rd Street, Overla...

 (913) 239-7000

 bluevalleyk12.org/OTE



we are. family

Overland Trail Elementary

