

## **School Culture and Vocabulary**

As part of the greater Jefferson County Public Schools system, Mitchell Elementary is proud to welcome students from foreign countries into its kindergarten through sixth grade classes. Mitchell makes every effort to help English as a second language (ESL) students integrate into the school's daily learning processes and long-term education programs. Families can expect their children to be greeted warmly by classmates and teachers and to be immersed into the English language, learning to read, write, and speak English with other students and teachers throughout the school year.

## **Enrolling for the School Year**

For new students, parents should fill out the Enrollment Form located on the Jefferson County Public Schools Web site, [www.jeffcopublicschools.org](http://www.jeffcopublicschools.org), by August of that school year. For kindergarten, students must be 5 years old by October 1 of that school year, and for first grade, students must be 6 years old by October 1 of that school year. For each child enrolling, the following documents are required and should be sent or given to the Mitchell Elementary office (201 Ruby Drive, Golden, Colorado 80403): birth certificate, immunization record, proof of residency (such as a lease agreement, a bill mailed to the address, or a house contract), an address and a phone number, and a copy of previous school records (can be sent by fax at 303 982 5874). For questions, call the office staff at 303 982 5875 or e-mail the principal at [rtwest@jeffco.k12.co.us](mailto:rtwest@jeffco.k12.co.us).

## **Transportation to and from School**

If you accompany your child into the school, please enter through the front entrance of Mitchell Elementary (on Ruby Drive) and check in at the main office. Please do not enter through the side or back doors. Even if you are just dropping off or picking up your child at his or her classroom door, you must first sign in at the main office. Mitchell Elementary is very concerned about the safety of each child in the school and makes sure that anyone's visit into the school is appropriate and documented.

## **Taking the Bus**

The Jefferson County school system offers bus transportation to Mitchell Elementary in certain neighborhoods. There are several locations, or school bus stops, where the bus picks up children in the morning and drops them off after school. Bus stop schedules and pick-up locations are offered on the Mitchell Elementary Web site at [http://www.jeffcopublicschools.org/transportation/bus\\_sched\\_elem.html](http://www.jeffcopublicschools.org/transportation/bus_sched_elem.html) or on a sheet available at the main office.

At the beginning of the school year, you will fill out a bus transportation form (available at the main office or from your bus driver) to inform the school and the bus driver about where and

when your child will be taking the bus. During the first week of school, the teacher will also ask students how they will be leaving school and will record that information so that each child goes to the proper transportation location after school.

### Driving to School and Carpooling

There are two main entrances to the school: the first is at the front of the school on Ruby Drive, and the second is at the top of the stairs behind the school on Cheyenne Street. You can either drive to the main entrance roundabout off of Ruby Drive or to the back entrance parking lot on Cheyenne.

For both locations, traffic can be an issue, and Mitchell Elementary encourages parents to turn off their engines and park in an appropriate location if they will be spending more than a couple of minutes dropping off their children at one of these entrances. (NOTE: Please remember to go through the main entrance and check in at the main office if you will be going into the school with your child.) A “Turn off Your Engines” Program has been initiated at Mitchell to prevent car exhaust pollution from entering the school and creating poor air quality. This program also encourages parents who live in the same neighborhood to carpool, meaning each parent takes a turn driving several neighborhood children to school on a certain day of the week to reduce the number of cars in the drop-off areas.

### Walking or Biking to School

If you live close to Mitchell Elementary, walking or biking to school may be an option for your child. You could walk with your child to school, or your child could join a “walking pool,” where children from the same neighborhood gather in groups and walk to and back from school together. If your child decides to bike to school, the school has metal bike racks in front and in back of the school where he or she can lock up the bike. The school also has a “Walk to School Day” once a year, and everyone is encouraged to walk (or bike) that day to reduce pollution and encourage exercise.

## **Communicating with Your Child’s Teacher**

Communicating with your child’s teacher is important. There are several ways the school will communicate with parents or guardians.

### Contact Information

At the beginning of the school year, you will receive paperwork about the elementary school that includes contact information (phone numbers and e-mail addresses) for the school’s main office administration and teachers. If wanted, you may also receive a Mitchell Elementary School Directory booklet that contains names, phone numbers, and addresses of your child’s classmates

in case you would like to contact a parent for some reason, such as for a birthday party or a playdate.

### Attendance

If your child will not be attending school on a certain day (such as because of an illness, appointment, or vacation), please call the school's attendance phone line before 9 a.m. that day and give the date, your child's name, your name, the teacher's name, the date of the absence, and reason for the absence. If you have a scheduled absence (such as a planned vacation), please fill out a pre-arranged absence form found on the school's Web site (<http://sc.jeffco.k12.co.us/education/school/school.php?sectionid=221>) and e-mail that form to the schools' attendance secretary (bryan@jeffco.k12.co.us). You can also retrieve a paper form at the main office and return it to a secretary once it is filled out. You should also inform your teacher of the absence, such as via e-mail or phone.

Please note that your child's teacher takes roll every day to make sure all the students in the class are present. If a child is absent, the teacher notes this and sends the sheet to the office. If the child's parents or guardians have not yet contacted the school to inform the office of the absence, the office staff will call the child's home or cell phone numbers until they reach someone who can inform them of the reason of the absence. The Mitchell staff is very concerned about students and their well-being and will make sure that each student is accounted for.

### Friday Folders

The Friday folder is usually a blue-colored folder. You will find the folder in your child's backpack each Friday. The teacher sends home important information and graded work (e.g., artwork, homework, class projects) as well as information on afterschool and extracurricular activities in this folder. Read the folder each Friday and remove your child's work. Sign any permission slips that are in the folder and return the folder to school with your child on Monday.

### Friday Note

The Friday note is written by the principal. The note is sent to your e-mail each Friday. In the note, you will find important information about events for the following week(s) and month. Be sure to read the Friday note each week.

### Parent-Teacher Conferences

Twice a year, you will be invited to meet with your child's classroom teacher at a conference. You can also schedule a meeting with the art, music, or physical education teachers, but this meeting is optional. During this time, you can ask the teacher questions about your child's progress in school. You sign up for conferences using a computer program. The school will send an e-mail to you that explains how to schedule the conference on the school's Web site. You will also receive information about the conferences and the program in the Friday folder.

### Informal Conferences

You can always ask your child's teacher about how your child is doing in school. It is important, however, to talk with the teacher when he or she is not busy with the school routine. The teacher needs to focus on the children during the school day. If you want to meet with your child's teacher, send him or her an e-mail, or call your teacher's voicemail to schedule a meeting.

### Back-to-School Night

On this night, usually held the week that school starts, you are invited to the school to meet your child's teacher(s) and school principal as well as and learn about the classroom curriculum. Typically, there is a school-wide meeting in the school's gymnasium, where the principal gives a speech and introduces all of the teachers at the school. After the meeting, parents go to their individual child's classrooms and visit with their child's new teacher. There will also be special meeting for all international families on this night.

### **Homework and Grades**

#### Homework Folders

Some classes provide a homework folder for your child each week. All homework for the week is in this folder. You receive the homework on a specific day, and homework must be returned usually within one week's time period or as specified by your teacher.

Some classes provide daily homework. The child brings home the assignment each night and must return it the next day. Your child's teacher will give you information about the homework procedures for your class.

#### Grades

A report card will be sent home in your child's Friday folder. The report card shows how your child is doing in class. The number 3 or a 4 on the report card is a good grade, meaning your child is performing well in school. The number 1 or 2 means that your child needs extra help in a certain area.

### **Discipline**

Each teacher has a discipline policy in the classroom. On the first day of school, the teacher will discuss this policy with the children. The following list provides information about some of the ways teachers provide discipline in their classrooms.

#### Red, Yellow, or Green Cards

In some classes, each student has a red, yellow, and green card displayed in the room. If the green card is showing, this means that the student is following directions. If the student

misbehaves (such as talking while the teacher is talking or not doing his or her work), the teacher may say, “Pull a card.” This means the student must take down the green card and put up a yellow one. The action is to remind the student of the rules. If a student gets two warnings, he or she will be given a red card. The red card means that the student will lose a privilege, like choice time (when a student may choose an activity, such as reading a book for pleasure) or recess. The teacher may also contact the student’s parents via a note or a phone call and schedule a meeting if the disobedience continues.

### Principal’s Office

If a student continues to cause disruption in the classroom and disobey the teacher after being warned with a red card, the teacher may send the student to the principal’s office for a meeting with the principal. The principal will decide the appropriate action for the student, and the student’s parents may be contacted.

### Time-Out Desk

Some classrooms have a desk that is placed away from other student desks in the classroom. If a student disrupts the class, the teacher may choose to send the child to this desk for some “quiet time” and reflection. The student may also work on assignments at this desk until the teacher meets with him or her and the problem is addressed.

### **Parent Volunteers**

Parents are encouraged to volunteer in the classroom. Parents do not have to speak English perfectly to volunteer. There are many jobs that a parent can do, such as organizing materials, helping children complete projects, assisting with reading, and baking food for school parties.

Teachers want volunteers to schedule their time in the classroom. Ask your child’s teacher how you can sign up to volunteer.

### Parent-Teacher Association

The parents of Mitchell Elementary students are very involved in their children’s lives. Parents have organized a group called the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). Members pay a registration fee per school year, and the money is used to fund a variety of extracurricular activities and programs throughout the school year. Parents volunteer their time to help at these activities.

One PTA learning program that requires many parent volunteers is called the Environmental Learning for the Future (ELF). Parents of each class volunteer their time to teach students about science and the natural environment, and there are usually four teaching activities per year. Other PTA-sponsored programs include the Gardening and Grounds Group (students help maintain their school grounds and learn about horticulture and habitats), Oral Interpretation (students

perform in front of an audience, such as by either reading a poem or playing a piece of music), Science and Social Studies Fair (students ask a scientific or social question and make a poster presenting how they answered that question), Reflections (students create a piece of artwork and enter a contest), and fundraising events (a “read-a-thon” for which students challenge themselves to read as much as possible during a school week and ask their friends and family to sponsor them, raising money for each minute they read).

### **The Cafeteria and Healthy Snacks for the Classroom**

In the school cafeteria, Mitchell Elementary provides a hot and cold breakfast and lunch menu for which students can pay daily or monthly. The school’s monthly menu is sent home usually in the Friday folder. The menu typically provides three choices of food for each school day; for lunch, the choices may be a chef salad, chicken nuggets, or pizza. Otherwise, parents can also send a sack lunch in their child’s backpack each morning. At the beginning of each school day, the teacher will ask your child if he or she is eating the school lunch or a homemade lunch so that the cafeteria is prepared to offer the correct amount of lunches.

Parents are also encouraged to provide a healthy snack for their child and a water bottle that children typically leave at their classroom sink. Teachers decide when it is most appropriate time for snacks to be eaten in the classroom, and this time could be morning or afternoon. Mitchell Elementary emphasizes the importance of giving your child healthy snacks, such as an apple, a bag of crackers, or a granola bar.