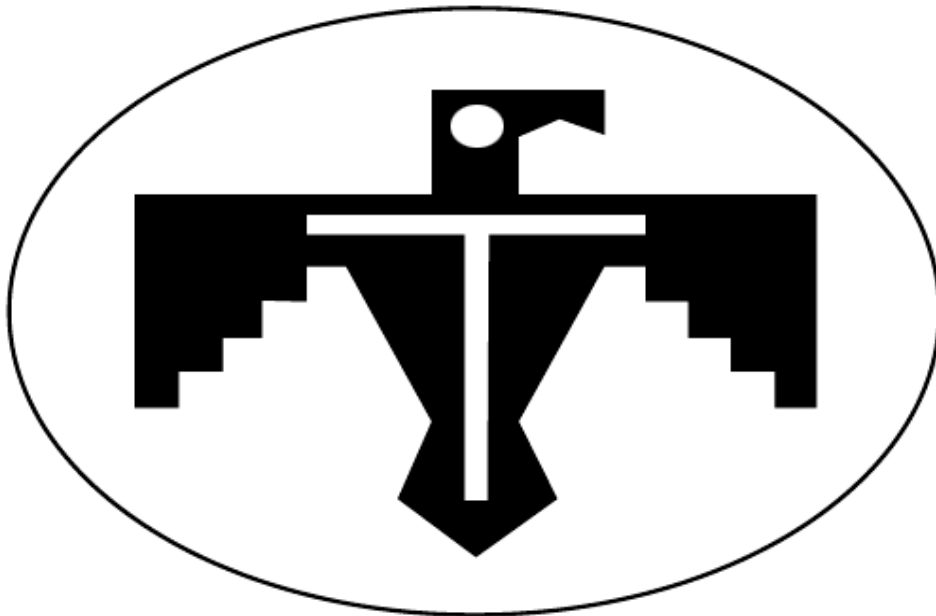


OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

# THORNHILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## Parent Handbook 2011-2012

(SUPPLEMENT TO THE OUSD PARENT GUIDE)



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OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT WEBSITE:  
**[WWW.OUSD.K12.CA.US](http://WWW.OUSD.K12.CA.US)**

THORNHILL ELEMENTARY PFC WEBSITE:  
**[WWW.THORNHILLSCHOOL.ORG](http://WWW.THORNHILLSCHOOL.ORG)**

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## PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME



Dear Parents,

It is my pleasure to welcome new parents and guardians to Thornhill Elementary!

I look forward to a collaborative partnership with each and every Thornhill family and am excited about the new school year.

Very often, we hear the comment that there is so much happening at the school all the time. This high level of energy requires a huge amount of coordination, with open communication and your participation being a key piece to our success. I hope this Handbook will be an ongoing resource for you as a place to start when you have questions about school programs and the Parent-Faculty Club (PFC).

Along with this handbook, you can find out about school happenings through teacher bulletins, teacher websites and the PFC eNews, which is released weekly on Fridays via email and posted on [www.thornhillschool.org](http://www.thornhillschool.org) and in the school office.

Please share your input on how we can continue to improve our lines of communication.

Welcome!

Warmly,

Mel Stenger  
Principal, Thornhill School

## ABOUT THORNHILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Thornhill Elementary School was built in 1958 and is located in the North Oakland hills area. The school is in a low-density neighborhood with many trees, giving it a park-like setting. Nearby is the Montclair business district. The school currently enrolls approximately 385 children in kindergarten through fifth grade, including one Special Day Class. The student population includes gifted, English-language learners, special need, and at risk students of different ethnic backgrounds. Thornhill staff includes approximately 15 full-time classroom teachers, of which one hundred percent are credentialed.

Thornhill has a reputation for having high academic and behavioral standards that help give students the tools they need to further their role in society. The staff takes great satisfaction in the knowledge that our students continue to build upon their education here and achieve success as citizens in our community. Immediate success among Thornhill's students is noted through high-test scores. Notably, current Average Performance Index (API) test scores rank Thornhill as one of the highest scoring elementary school in Alameda County and among the top one percent of schools in the state. Thornhill is a four-time recipient of the California Distinguished School Award.

### Mission

Our mission, and that of the district, is to educate all students so as to help them meet or raise their aspirations, to enable them to choose from the widest range of personal and career choices possible, and to prepare them to be effective, contributing citizens to society. A broad based curriculum is offered all students. The needs of targeted students (Under-prepared, ELL, RSP, GATE) are met in the classroom through enrichment and differentiation of instructional techniques.

### Vision

Our guiding vision is to ensure that all students have equal access to our core program within the context of the heterogeneous classroom. That is, we attempt to balance classes equitably, based on gender, ethnicity, and academic achievement. We believe that such classrooms provide a rich learning and social environment for all students. Our rigorous curriculum is aimed at actively engaging students in the learning process, while promoting higher levels of thinking. We believe that the delivery of high-quality curriculum will be informed by knowledge of subject matter and insight into the needs of children while enlivened by spontaneity and fun.

## SCHOOL POLICIES

### Attendance

We appreciate your cooperation in seeing that your child attends school on time every day. Each student generates approximately \$20 for each school day of attendance. State law mandates that the school only receives funding if the student is actually present. So if your child has a medical or dental appointment, please make sure that s/he comes back to school after the appointment. Also note:

- **Absences** – If your child is absent, please call the school office (510-339-6800) between 9:00 and 9:30 AM with the child's full name, grade of the student, and reason for absence. If your child will be absent for more than a day, the teacher may want to arrange work for the child to do at home. Upon your child's return to school, please send a note stating the specific dates and reason for the absence; your child should give the note to the teacher.
- **Tardiness** – Students who arrive on campus after the bell must go to the office for a late pass. Habitually late or tardy students may be asked to make up time and assignments during recess, lunch, free time or after school. There are no excused tardies. However, a note of explanation can help prevent misunderstandings and official letters of truancy from OUSD. If tardiness or absences persist, you may be referred to the School Attendance Review Team, which may result in a referral to the district-level attendance review board.

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

One night in September, all parents attend a meeting given by their child's teacher in their child's classroom. The teacher introduces him/her self and discusses his/her teaching program and curriculum for the year. This event is for parents only (no students or younger siblings) and childcare is not provided.

### **Birthday Invitations**

When not extended to everyone in a classroom, birthday invitations should be sent by e-mail, mail or phone. If the whole class is not invited, please do not pass out invitations anywhere at school.

### **Cell Phones**

Although State law permits student possession of cell (mobile) phones, OUSD policy says that the phones must not be visible or used during the school day. The office phone is available for all students for important matters. If cell phones are visible, they will be confiscated and returned to the parent. Please also do your best to model appropriate behavior by not using your cell phones (unless necessary) while in the school building.

### **Class Assignments**

Class assignments can change during the first few weeks of school, as we determine enrollment and balance classes. Class size maximums are 27 for kindergarten; 30 for 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>; and 31 for 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades.

### **Conduct and Discipline**

Students are expected to maintain a high standard of personal conduct, to show respect for themselves and the rights of others, and to assume responsibility for their own actions. District guidelines for discipline can be found in the OUSD publication, *Parent Guide to Oakland Public Schools*, which is given to all students at the start of the school year.

Thornhill Elementary also has its own behavior-management program. Every classroom has an explicit plan for promoting positive social behaviors and consequences for negative behaviors. Following are some examples of unacceptable behaviors:

- Showing disrespect to an adult, another student or someone else's property
- Bringing toys to school (including trading cards, electronic games, headphones, balls)
- Behaving inappropriately
- Not following playground rules, including lining up rules
- Being in the building at the wrong time
- Play fighting, or not keeping hands and feet to themselves.

Students who misbehave may lose recess time, have a conference with the Principal, and/or receive a phone call or note home. We appreciate the support parents give in helping all children achieve their best behavior and taking responsibility for their actions.

### **Contact Information**

To ensure the safety and well being of your child it is essential to have current contact information on file in the school office. Please fill out a Pupil *Emergency Data Card* and a *Student Earthquake/Disaster Form* at the beginning of the school year. Please be sure to:

- Include names of people who can come pick up your child at school when sick / or in an emergency
- **Notify the office when your contact information changes**
- Check the box indicating that you child's information can be included in the school directory.

### **Dress Code**

Consistent with the district's educational goal of providing safe and secure schools, students shall at all times dress and groom themselves in a manner which demonstrates respect for the seriousness appropriate to a learning environment. Thornhill's colors are blue and gold. Students must wear clothes that do not have inappropriate logos or advertisements. Athletic shoes are best for active play on the yard

and play structure. Please do not send your children in flip-flops or sandals. Halter-tops, bare midriffs, and short shorts are not allowed. Makeup and excessive jewelry are inappropriate for school. Teachers and staff are responsible for making judgment calls about appropriate dress and we appreciate your support.

### **Early Dismissal**

It is very important that children stay to the end of the day, when teachers summarize learning, give additional directions and homework assignments, and make other final reminders. Please make an effort to schedule your medical appointments etc. to allow your child to stay until the end of the school day. If it is absolutely necessary to take your child out of school before the regularly scheduled time, please notify your child's teacher in advance. You must come into the office to check out your child and the office will call the classroom. Your child will not be allowed to leave the school grounds without permission during school hours. Please remember that your child will only be released to a parent, guardian or designated individual listed on your child's *Pupil Emergency Data Card*.

### **Field Trips/Carpools**

Properly supervised and planned field trips are an important part of the program. To ensure a safe experience for all, the following policies must be followed:

- A parent must turn in a signed permission slip for his/her child before each field trip
- Drivers/chaperones must keep the children in their care in sight at all times
- Each child must use a seat belt at all times
- A child must use a booster seat if under 6 years old or 60 pounds
- No children may sit in the front seat of a car with an air bag
- All drivers must have proper car insurance and show proof to the office

Please do not deviate from the field trip plan established by the teacher (do not give your group a 'special treat' or stop anywhere on your way back to school, as it causes problems).

### **Health**

Children should stay home if they are sick, especially if they have anything that may be contagious to other children. Children should stay home if they have a fever. Their temperature should be normal for 24 hours before returning to school. If a child becomes ill while at school, a parent or guardian will be notified and asked to come pick up the student. Make plans in advance for this kind of emergency in your family.

### **Homework**

Homework is an integral part of the educational program and process; it is designed to:

- Strengthen basic skills and give extra practice on work that has been introduced in class
- Extend and enhance knowledge and skills learned in school
- Establish/reinforce desirable study habits to develop initiative, responsibility, and self-direction
- Stimulate independent thinking
- Increase the range and scope of student interests
- Provide unique curriculum-related learning experiences, which are best completed at home.

Parent or guardian involvement is important to a successful homework plan. Parents may also have a role in specific assignments, whether participating in a discussion, listening to their child read, checking written work for neatness and accuracy, or simply giving encouragement. Parents are encouraged to provide a quiet place and time for a student to complete assignments. Students have the responsibility to complete all homework assignments neatly, accurately, and on time. All teachers explain their homework policy at the beginning of the year and at the Back-to-School night.

Please follow the teacher's instructions on the best way to complete homework; do not have your child complete all the week's homework in one evening. Most teachers will space the homework out in achievable chunks, to maximize the learning and effectiveness of the activity.

### **Immunizations**

Current law requires all students to be immunized against diphtheria, whooping cough, red measles, tetanus, polio, mumps and German measles prior to entering any classroom. Kindergartners must have Hepatitis B vaccines. Children entering first grade must show evidence that they have received a complete health assessment within 18 months prior to entry, or 90 days after entry into the first grade. Pupils may be exempted from these rules for medical reasons. In these cases, a physician's statement or a waiver is required. Visit the OUSD website to download the [OUSD Health Requirements PDF](#) for more details.

### **Letters of Recommendation**

Our ongoing focus is on teaching and learning. It is in conflict with our philosophy supporting public school education to provide subjective references/recommendations for student applying for admission to private or charter schools. The school will release, upon written request by the parent, copies of records for your child that will include attendance/tardy records, report cards and test scores from prior years. There is a \$5 copying/postage courtesy fee per request. Thank you for your understanding.

### **Library**

Students may check out books from the school library for one week at a time – for use at school only – and renew them unless needed by another student. Parents may also check books out of the library for use at home.

### **Lost and Found**

Please label ALL your students' personal items. All found items are put on the *Lost and Found Rack* located in the school lobby. Each month, all unclaimed items will be donated to a charitable organization. Small or valuable items are turned in to the office and returned when identified by the owner.

### **Lunch**

Students may bring lunch or buy lunch at school. Pre-packaged lunches and a salad bar are available to students daily. Lunches are delivered to school and distributed by an OUSD Cafeteria Manager. Visit the OUSD website for the latest [OUSD Menu](#).

The cost for lunch is \$2.25 daily, which includes milk. Milk is sold separately for \$0.40 and the salad bar alone is \$2.00. Lunches may be paid on a daily basis or prepaid one time for a set of ten lunches. Lunch checks, for the appropriate amount, should be made payable to *OUSD Food Service* and delivered to the school office in an envelope. Please be sure to write your child's name and room number and "lunch money" in the memo section of the check and on the envelope. A free- or reduced-lunch program is available to families who qualify. [Free/reduced cost lunch forms](#) are available online and also in the school office. It takes a few weeks to process, so submit your form as soon as possible.

Students should follow established lunch-time procedures, including sitting with classmates in the designated area until dismissed; placing litter and recycling in the appropriate garbage/recycling cans; and playing safely.

Please PACK HEALTHY snacks and lunches in REUSABLE containers. In 2010, we launched a Zero-Waste Lunch program in an effort to stress waste reduction as well as food waste composting in the cafeteria with all the kids. This means our goal is no disposable packaging in lunches; we hope you'll utilize reusable containers so your kids can eat waste-free!

PLEASE NOTE, several students have a severe food allergy to nuts. They must strictly avoid nuts in order to prevent a life-threatening allergic reaction. Therefore, we have designated ALL CLASSROOMS AND EATING AREAS as PEANUT/NUT-FREE. Exposure to peanuts/tree nuts may cause a severe reaction that could these students to require immediate medical treatment. Please do not send any food products that contain peanuts/nuts to school with your child. We appreciate your support in helping us to maintain a safe environment for all our students.

### **Medical Emergencies**

In the event of a serious medical emergency involving illness or injury, the child will be transported to a hospital emergency room. In these cases, parents or guardians will be contacted.

### **Medical – Non Emergencies**

For cuts and scrapes, superficial first aid (washing, bandage, or ice) is administered in the office. We attempt to always notify parents if a significant injury has occurred. In the case of bumps on the head, a letter is sent home with the child to make sure parents know to give follow-up attention.

### **Medications at School**

Students are not allowed to have any medications in their possession, with the exception of asthma medication as described in the following paragraph. In addition, the school is not permitted to administer any medication without a doctor's note, even with your verbal permission. If your child requires prescription medication during the school day, the medication must be kept in the school office, in the original labeled pharmacy container. A note from the child's physician and parent/guardian must be on file with the school in order for the medication to be administered. School personnel may not administer non-prescription medication; only a parent or legal guardian may give non-prescription medication (Education Code 49423 and 49489).

Pursuant to OUSD Administrative Regulation AR 5131.65 and BP 5131.65, students with asthma need to have a completed Asthma Plan on file in the office. An *Administration of Prescription Medication by School Personnel* form can be obtained from the school office and should be completed as soon as possible at the start of each school year, and when there is a change in the student's treatment regimen. The Asthma Plan needs to include provision for students who cannot self-medicate and are keeping their medication in the school office, or a signed release for students to carry and self-administer their asthma medications.

Parents of children with severe food allergies requiring treatment with auto-injectable epinephrine must provide an Epi-pen to the school office and have a completed *Administration of Prescription Medication by School Personnel* form on file as well. It is also advisable to have an additional Epi-pen in the classroom.

### **Messages to Students**

Please be sure that when your child leaves in the morning he/she knows the arrangements for after school pick-up. Parents and guardians are asked to limit telephone messages to their children for emergencies only (not for arranging playdates). Lunches, coats, and messages brought to school for students during school hours should be left in the school office for delivery to the classrooms at recess.

### **Morning Line Up**

Kindergarten students line up at designated spots on the schoolyard near the garden prior to the start of class. Each teacher escorts his/her students into the classroom. On rainy mornings, kindergarten students should wait under the breezeway in front of the Multi-Purpose Room. Students in the 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grades are allowed on the yard after 8:30 AM and line up at designated spots on the schoolyard after the bell rings at 8:40 AM. There is no supervision on the play yard prior to this time and children may not be left unattended. On rainy mornings, 1st through 5th grade students arriving early should sit quietly in the Multi-Purpose Room and then go directly to their classrooms after 8:30 AM.

### **Office Hours**

The school office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 pm daily. The phone number is (510) 339-6800 and the fax is (510) 339-6801. Please try to limit calls between 12 noon and 1:00 PM, as the lunch hour can be quite busy, with limited staff available to assist you.

### **Office Phone Usage**

Students and parents are to use the office phones only for emergencies and school business. They are not for personal use (such as for setting up playdates after school).

### **Open House**

At our Open House, students are given the chance to show off their hard work and efforts to their parents and guardians. Materials are arranged on each child's desk and classrooms are set up in advance.

### **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Parent/Teacher conferences are held twice a year. Additional conferences are held as needed on an individual basis. If you would like to speak with the teacher, please schedule a specific time with your teacher. Unscheduled drop-ins are to be avoided. Prompt, open communication between home and school is essential. The entire week of parent/teacher conferences are minimum-days to allow time and space for these appointments.

### **Personal Possessions**

Students are not allowed to trade, sell or buy personal property at school. Candy, gum, trading cards, radios, electronic games or toys should be kept at home. If such items are brought to school, they will be stored in the school office or classroom until claimed by a parent.

### **Physical Education and Motor Skills Participation**

Physical Education (PE) and Motor Skills are integral parts of the instructional program. All children will be required to participate. If your child cannot participate on a particular day, please send a signed note to your child's teacher. A daily note will be satisfactory for up to three consecutive days; after that time, a doctor's statement is required. Motor skill instruction is offered one hour a week to K - 3<sup>rd</sup> during school hours. The objective is to assist each student in acquiring efficient movement, promote improved sensory functioning, and the development of a positive self-image. The program concentrates on balance and motor skills, hand-eye and foot-eye coordination, and body space awareness. Attributes of movement such as motor coordination, agility, strength, and flexibility are also developed.

### **Playground Rules**

1. Students should be at the right place at the right time.
  - **No student is to be on the school grounds unattended. There is no yard supervision by staff personnel before 8:30 AM and after 3:15 PM**
  - When the bell rings, everyone must *Stop Play* and *Freeze* until the yard supervisor whistles for students to line up for class
  - Students must play in designated areas only
  - No student is to be in the building before or after school or during recess without permission from his/her teacher or a 911 emergency
  - On rainy days, students may proceed directly to their classrooms after 8:30 AM.
2. If a child is hurt on the playground or if there is a problem, students are to report it to the yard supervisor immediately.
3. Students should use the play structure properly. Parts of the structure painted RED indicate where children go UP; yellow parts indicate where children go DOWN.
4. Students must walk in the area between the portables and the play structure.
5. All children are encouraged to play in organized games and activities. A menu of possible activities is reviewed with students prior to recess periods at the start of the school year and periodically as needed. Playground equipment (balls, jump ropes, etc.) is distributed to students prior to recess.
6. Restrooms: No loitering. Keep restrooms clean. Students are required to have a pass to use the restrooms during class time.

### **Registration**

For current information regarding registration please visit the OUSD website at [www.ousd.k12.ca.us](http://www.ousd.k12.ca.us) or telephone the district office at (510) 879-8582.

**If your child is currently a student and returning to Thornhill:** Complete and return the *Intent to Return* form sent home with your child in the spring, indicating whether or not your child will return in the fall.

**If you have another child who will enter Thornhill in the fall Edit to register during open enrollment:** Please check with the office or the OUSD website: [www.ousd.k12.ca.us](http://www.ousd.k12.ca.us) for exact open enrollment dates. Typically they are in January.

**If you have a friend or neighbor new to the school:** Prospective parents should call the school anytime starting in November to learn when registration will begin and school tours will be conducted. To register, parents must bring to school their child's original birth certificate, completed medical form, immunization record, and three items to prove residence. The office can provide you with medical forms for your pediatrician to complete.

### **Visitors**

For your children's protection, all visitors to the school and classroom are asked to report to the office to sign in and get a *Visitor's Pass*.

### **Volunteering**

OUSD requires that parent volunteers must:

**Submit Negative TB Verification.** Every four years it is necessary to obtain a tuberculosis skin test verification form from the office or your doctor's office, get tested, and then return the form to the office if you receive negative TB results. The form will be kept on file in the *Room Parent Volunteer Binder*, located in the school office.

**Provide Proof of Automobile Insurance** A completed automobile insurance form must be on file in the office prior to driving on a field trip during the school year. A new form must be completed and filed each academic year. Completed forms will be kept in the Room Parent Volunteer Binder, located in the school office.

**Sign in at the Office** and get a *Visitor's Pass* before beginning your work in the classroom. This is required for safety purposes. This also helps the school keep track of the number of hours parents volunteer at the school, which is required when the school applies for awards and grants.

## **SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

Teachers at Thornhill Elementary School follow Oakland Unified School District curriculum, which is based on California State standards and portions of national standards, and supplement as-needed:

- OUSD Curriculum: [www.ousd.k12.ca.us](http://www.ousd.k12.ca.us) and [http://webportal.ousd.k12.ca.us/kb\\_curriculum.aspx](http://webportal.ousd.k12.ca.us/kb_curriculum.aspx)
- Open Court Reading program: [www.sra-4kids.com](http://www.sra-4kids.com) and <http://webportal.ousd.k12.ca.us/opencourt.aspx>
- Harcourt Math program: [www.harcourtschool.com](http://www.harcourtschool.com)
- Supplemental Curriculum: music, library, art, computers, motor development, PE, garden.

## **LEADERSHIP & CHARACTER-BUILDING PROGRAMS**

Leadership and character building are two of the strong threads that hold the school together. Students are encouraged to develop their leadership skills in many ways, including:

**Caring Schools Communities** – social skills curriculum adopted in the 2011-2012 school year, including cross-age buddies, classroom meetings, explicit social skills instructions, and home support.

**Conflict Managers / Junior Coaches** – upper-grade students trained to mediate playground disputes and lead games during recess to encourage inclusion of all children.

**Recycling Monitors** - 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders collect and sort recyclables.

**Lunch Monitors** - 5th graders escort students to lunch and supervise lunch.  
**Cross-age Tutors** - upper-grade students help lower-grade students with class work, as needed.  
**Student Council** - active group of student leaders who discuss, plan, and implement ideas, and plan spirit activities and service projects.

The staff at Thornhill believes children can become effective decision-makers when they have a healthy self-concept and when helped to become contributing members to the school community and society. Through these programs and other efforts, teachers help develop students' social skills, such as:

Positive self-concept	Interest in learning	Responsibility
Open mindedness	Self-discipline	Honesty
Problem solving skills	Generosity	Patience
Respect for self & others	Compassion	Perseverance
Acceptance of self & others	Courtesy	Cooperation
Anger management	Empathy	

## SCHOOL-WIDE EVENTS

Many school events are held during the year that enliven the core curriculum and add a lot of fun. Please come to these events to honor your child's efforts and socialize with the school community.

**First-Day-of-School Coffee** – parents socialize after dropping off their children  
**Walkathon** – students walk as many laps as possible around the school  
**Halloween Parade** – students and teachers parade in costumes in the yard  
**December Holiday Celebration** – students sing multi-ethnic songs with band accompaniment  
**Oratorical Fest** – participating classes and students deliver speeches in front of an audience  
**Lunar New Year Celebration** – students parade in the yard and some perform Asian lion dances  
**Carnival** - families have fun with old-fashioned carnival games, prizes, and food  
**Science Fair** – students display science experiments and boards at school  
**Open House** – parents have the opportunity to visit classrooms and see student's academic work  
**Benefit & Auction** – parents and staff enjoy a great party and bid on auction items  
**Spring Music Night** – all students' show off their budding musical skills  
**Drama Club Play(s)** – Drama Club actors and actresses put on a play(s) for families  
**Staff Appreciation Day** – parents honor and thank teachers and staff for their efforts

## BEFORE- AND AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Following are the most popular 'enrichment' or fee-based programs used by Thornhill students:

- Adventure Time, on-site, phone 1-800-273-0610
- Jewish Community Center, phone 510-848.0237
- Montclair After-care, at Montclair Recreation Center, phone 510-482-7812.

For more information about before- and after-school programs organized by the PFC, see the website.

## SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

OUSD public schools are required to serve all children in the least-restrictive environment. Thornhill gladly meets that challenge, welcoming all students, regardless of their special needs. For a description of support services for academic needs, please visit the school website and look for the "Pyramid of Intervention" on the Principal's page.

### Designated Instruction and Services (DIS)

Additional special education services provided at Thornhill include Speech and Language therapy, Occupational Therapy, Adapted Physical Education, and Augmentative Communication. Qualifying students receive special help on a regular scheduled basis from an assigned specialist.

### **English as a Second Language**

Students who indicate a language other than English on the Home Language Survey are tested by a district specialist to determine the students' language proficiency. Students with limited English-language abilities receive instruction in English-language development in the classroom. Approximately four percent of Thornhill students are English-language learners.

### **GATE (Gifted and Talented Education)**

All third-graders are tested for possible GATE identification. The State no longer provides any funding for this program. Instead, all teachers are trained to provide academic differentiation and extension activities within their classroom program to meet the needs of their students.

### **School Psychologist**

Our School Psychologist is assigned to work at Thornhill for two days a week, with a primary responsibility to evaluate students who have been referred for special education assessment, and to be available to other students with parent permission and teacher referral. The School Psychologist has minimal time for counseling.

### **Special Day Class (SDC)**

The SDC for severely handicapped students is a self-contained class with limited general education classroom time. Instruction and support is provided through Special Education teachers and Aides to the Handicapped. Students are placed in a SDC based upon their special needs as identified in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Thornhill SDC is located in Room 7.

## **SCHOOL SITE COUNCIL**

The School Site Council (SSC) is the "local school board;" it acts as a policy setting and review body. It is made up of five parents and five staff members and is responsible for the overall direction of the school. Some of its responsibilities include:

- Planning, monitoring, and assisting with implementation of the SPSA (Single Plan for Student Achievement)
- Provide an opportunity for parents' voices to be heard on a regular basis, regarding any concerns or issues related to school programs
- Reviewing student achievement and identifying ways to improve achievement
- Identifying common goals and establishing a three-year plan for the direction of the school, including all programs and groups connected with the school
- In many schools, the SSC focuses only on categorical funding. At Thornhill, we look at all funding and PFC support for school programs, as well.

The committee is composed of at least five parents and five staff members, who are elected by their peers. In addition, during the 2011-2012 school year, the SSC will be helping Thornhill to articulate the ways that we are a Full Service Community School, as proscribed by OUSD.

## **TRAFFIC**

The morning drop-off and afternoon pick up can be very busy times at Thornhill. In order to make the drop-off time as safe as possible for everyone in the neighborhood, please adhere to the following options in the morning. The same options are available in the afternoon with the exception of Quick Drop.

We anticipate that construction at St. John's Church will occur during the early part of 2012, which will disrupt our current traffic flow procedures. Please watch the eNews and website for the most updated information as this unfolds.

## **OPTIONS FOR PARKING AND QUICK DROP:**

### **1. PARK AND WALK IN FROM ST. JOHN'S CHURCH PARKING LOT**

Enter the church parking lot from Gouldin Road. The Church has generously offered the use of their private property for the convenience and safety of the children and parents of Thornhill School. Please respect the church signage. Park your car and then walk with your child at least as far as the stairs going into the yard area at the back of the school. Exit the parking lot from Alhambra Lane only. Observe the stop sign at the bottom of the driveway into Alhambra Lane. Stop and look before proceeding.

- Do NOT park in the spots directly in front of the church building where the signs say "Church Parking Only" (or our privileges to park in the lot may be taken away!)
- Do NOT stop the car and drop off your child at the top of the stairs.
- Do NOT park a long car perpendicular near the entry to the stairs on the left—this may make it unsafe for both a car and those walking to the stairs to pass each other.
- Do NOT walk through yards or gates of residences next to the parking lot, and do not walk through the cul-de-sac; they are all private, and the owners cannot assume the liability of non-resident foot traffic through their properties.

### **2. PARK AND WALK ON THORNHILL DRIVE**

Parking spots are available along Thornhill Drive near the coffee shop end of the school. Please use only legal and safe options. In the morning do not park in the *Quick Drop* lane, indicated by cones.

### **3. ALHAMBRA LANE DRIVE-THROUGH FROM ST. JOHN'S CHURCH PARKING LOT**

This is a drive-through drop-off zone used to get more students out of their cars more quickly and safely. Children who are let out of the car here enter the schoolyard through the breezeway between the multipurpose room and the main kindergarten building. This is most suitable for parents driving DOWN Thornhill Drive whose children are ready to get out of the car by themselves. Enter Alhambra Lane through the church parking lot. Have your children ready to get out of the car: backpack closed, hair brushed, breakfast eaten, etc. Stay to your left when you pull over to stop your car, so that other cars can continue to pass on the right and your child won't have to run in front of cars. Pull up as far as possible, along the backside of the main kindergarten building, before stopping to let out your children. Try to have your children exit as quickly as possible to keep this drop-off location moving. If mini school buses or cars are blocking the left side of the street, wait your turn to drive forward before letting out your children. After you drop off your child, direct your car back to the right side of Alhambra Ln. as you exit onto Thornhill Dr.

- Do NOT park in the cul-de-sac
- Do NOT park anywhere on Alhambra Lane
- Do NOT leave your vehicle parked near the breezeway to drop off or run into the school; this area is for immediate drop-off and pick-up only
- Do NOT turn into Alhambra Lane from Thornhill Drive.

### **4. QUICK DROP THORNHILL DRIVE**

This is a drive-through drop-off lane created to get more students out of their cars more quickly and safely. It is located between the red zone on the curb and the yard driveway. Have your children ready to get out of the car: backpack closed, hair brushed, breakfast eaten, etc. Enter the Quick-Drop lane at the back. Pull up as far as possible in the lane before stopping your car and letting out your child. The first car in line should pull up to the front cone. Several cars may unload at the same time in the lane. Exit the lane after the last cone- only when your car is the first in the lane and after ensuring there is no incoming traffic. Drive up to Merriewood Drive to make a U turn if needed. Cones, indicating the drop-off lane, will be set up around 8 AM in the morning. Parents of AM kindergarten children and older can use the lane at their drop-off time. Quick Drop on Thornhill Drive is most suitable for parents driving UP Thornhill Drive whose children are ready to get out of the car. Parent volunteers will sometimes help open cars doors and offer instruction on how to best use the lane. If there is no one at the curb to help, please proceed on your own.

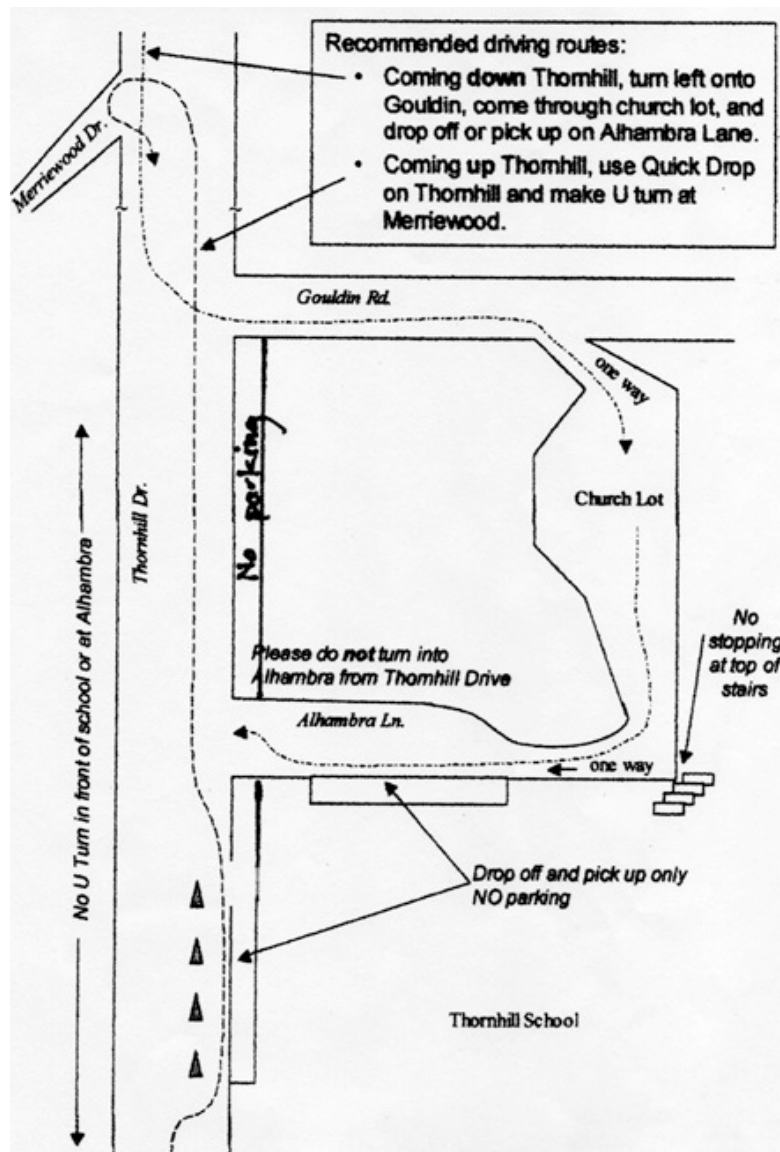
## 5. CARPOOL OR WALK TO SCHOOL

All of us who drive to school contribute to the traffic congestion around the school. Help reduce the problem by using the alternatives – carpooling or walking.

In any case, whatever you choose, **OBEY THE LAW!**

- U turns are not allowed in front of schools.
- Double parking in front of the school is not safe.
- No parking on the right or left corners of Thornhill Drive at Alhambra Lane is allowed because this blocks visibility for drivers exiting Alhambra Lane.
- It is not safe to drop your children off in front of the apartment buildings on Thornhill Drive and have them run across the street. Do not park in front of the apartment building either.
- A white-painted curb is for student loading and unloading only.
- No parking at a red curb.
- Do not drop off in the striped cross walk in front of the coffee shop
- Please do stop for pedestrians on all 3 crosswalks.

For further guidance, please refer to the following traffic flow map.



## **SITE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

### **Policy**

In compliance with the California Education Code, an Emergency Policy has been prepared as part of our overall Safety Plan. Its objective is to provide the staff with a guide of emergency procedures and duties, which will ensure the safety of pupils. Responsibilities for action are designated. One emergency drill is practiced each month.

### **Closing of the School**

Cancellation of school should only take place during extraordinary circumstances. Announcements will be released to radio, television, e-mail, and newspapers. If school must be cancelled DURING the school day, a parent or guardian or someone listed on the *Pupil Emergency Data Card* will be notified.

### **Evacuation**

If it is necessary to evacuate the school site, their classroom teachers and staff will lead all students to the grass area next to the baseball diamond at Montclair Park between Mountain Boulevard and Moraga Avenue. All teachers will take their class rosters, *Pupil Emergency Data Cards*, and the *Student Earthquake/Disaster Forms*. Students will only be released to a parent or guardian or someone listed on their *Pupil Emergency Data Cards*.

### **Emergency Supplies**

In the case of a major earthquake or other disaster, emergency supplies are available for use should they be needed. Food, water, blankets, first aid supplies, tents, lights, temporary toilets, tools and other miscellaneous supplies are stored in the large container on the yard. The PFC Site/Safety Committee furnishes and replenishes supplies. Kindergarten parents must provide supplies in plastic zip lock bags for their children, as instructed by the teachers at the start of the year. The child's name should be written on the outside of the bag and contain: a used pillowcase, a picture of the family, a few factory-sealed packages of your child's favorite snacks, a small item that may comfort your child, and a brief note. These supplies are stored in the kindergarten classrooms and returned at the end of the school year.

### **Fire Drill Procedures**

People in these rooms exit the building in an orderly fashion using these exits:

- Front entrance exit: Rooms 14, 12, 10, 8, and 7, Resource Room, Library and office
- Back stairs exit: Rooms 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6
- Multi-purpose room - nearest exit.

Children then line up on the yard by class in the same spots where they line up in the morning. When teachers leave the building they take their class rosters, the *Pupil Emergency Data Cards*, and the *Student Earthquake/Disaster Forms*.

## **OUSD COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

It is always our goal to work with you in resolving any questions or concerns you may have about your child's educational program here at Thornhill. Our Formal Complaint Procedure, as required by State and Federal law, is summarized below.

**Step One:** Speak directly with the staff member(s) involved. Discuss the problem openly and make every attempt to work out a solution. No one can solve a problem better than the person(s) involved. Most problems are resolved at this step.

**Step Two:** If, after meeting with the staff member directly involved, there is still no satisfaction, the complainant must submit his/her concerns either verbally or in writing to the Principal. Every effort should be made to resolve the matter within five days of the presentation of the problem.

**Level I Complaint:** If the complainant is not satisfied with the Principal's response, or if there is not response within a five day period, complainant may file a written statement of complaint to the Area Executive Director or designee. Level 1 complaints must be submitted in writing on the appropriate form, and will require the signature of the complainant, certifying under penalty of perjury that the complaint is true. Within fifteen school days of receipt of the written complaint, the executive Director or designee shall respond to the complainant.

**Level II Complaint:** A complaint not satisfactorily resolved at Level I may be appealed to the District Ombudsman or designee in writing by the complainant within five days of receipt of the Level I response.

**Level III Complaint:** A complaint not satisfactorily resolved at Level II may be appealed to the State Superintendent or his/her designee in writing within five days of receipt of the Level II response.

## **HOW THE PFC SUPPORTS THORNHILL**

The Thornhill School Parent Faculty Club (PFC) is the school's official parent-teacher organization, comprised of parents, teachers, and the Principal. All families and faculty are welcome to participate; there are no dues required. The Executive Board makes PFC funding decisions. If you wish to participate on the Board, or wish to present ideas, please contact the PFC President or a specific chairperson.

*"We, the parents and guardians of Thornhill Elementary School students, establish the Thornhill Parent Faculty Club (PFC), a volunteer organization, for the purpose of fostering academic knowledge, intellectual curiosity, imaginative thought, and social responsibility in our children. The PFC will work with the teachers and principal of Thornhill Elementary School to set priorities to supplement and support programs meeting these goals, and to raise and allocate funds to accomplish these goals." PFC Bylaws, 2008.*

### **Before- and After-School Clubs and Classes**

The PFC organizes before and after school enrichment classes. These are fee-based programs. Please find information about these programs on our website or in the newsletter. If you have an idea for new after-school classes that you are interested in coordinating, please contact the Enrichment Chairperson. Prior classes include (offerings may change): art, band, chess, chorus, creative writing, dance, drama, drumming, fitness, foreign languages, guitar, legos, martial arts, origami, science, video, yoga, etc. If you have one sibling with a class and the other does not, please make appropriate child care arrangements; it is not safe to allow one child to wander on the playground while waiting for their sibling.

### **Computers**

The PFC provides for computers, technology volunteers, and a paid technical support person. A computer lab with networked computers is available for teachers to use for guided activities. Younger students learn keyboarding skills and older students learn keyboarding as well as how to conduct online research. The computer lab follows the Cyber-Safety Protocol provided by OUSD.

### **Directory**

A school directory, listing student addresses and phone numbers, is assembled by the PFC and made available in a secure PDF format to parents / guardians. Please include your child's contact information at the start of the school year. A directory listing all students is one way of uniting all families. Information is for school use only.

### **Diversity and Unity Committee**

The Diversity and Unity Committee exists to help provide a safe, welcoming and supportive school community that values the dignity and worth of each individual member. The committee supports efforts towards greater awareness around issues of diversity and inclusion for the community as a whole, including students, faculty, and parents. The committee is open to all. Please email [diversity@thornhillschool.org](mailto:diversity@thornhillschool.org) for more information.

### **e-News**

There is no better way to keep up to date on what is happening at Thornhill elementary than through the electronic newsletter (eNews). This weekly e-newsletter features a school calendar listing all upcoming events and current school news. It's distributed via e-mail and posted in the school office and online at [www.thornhillschool.org](http://www.thornhillschool.org). Please e-mail your school related news items to [newsletter@thornhillschool.org](mailto:newsletter@thornhillschool.org) by 3:00 PM Wednesday for Friday publication.

### **Garden Club**

The Garden Club designed and installed the California Nature Path and garden in front of the school. Its purpose is to teach children the principles of gardening such as weeding, planting, mulching, and watering, and maintain garden areas around the school. In 2010, the school added a full vegetable and flowering garden area between the portables and the building. These garden boxes are used by the teachers and their parent volunteers. Please feel free to ask you teacher if you are interested in being a garden docent during the classroom time. In addition to student help, the grounds are kept up solely by hard-working volunteers and new volunteers are always welcome! Email [site@thornhillschool.org](mailto:site@thornhillschool.org) to get your thumbs green.

### **Library**

The PFC funds the Library Manager position and contributes hundreds of new books each year during our *Back-to-School Donation Drive*. Over 6,500 books are in the library collection. Students visit the library on a weekly scheduled basis to check out books and do research. Our librarian assists the students in library skills by grade level, book selection, research, checking out books, and story reading. Skills introduced:

**Kindergarten** – title/author; how to locate/check out a book; basic book and library manners.

**First Grade** – plot/book characters, fiction/non-fiction, locate books in alphabetical order.

**Second Grade** – parts of a book and book spine labeling for book identification and location.

**Third Grade** – authors/illustrators, the card catalog and search for books by call number.

**Fourth Grade** – Dewey Decimal System, automated catalog, genres of fiction, book indexes.

**Fifth Grade** – reference materials for reports (almanac, National Geographic Index etc.) and use automated catalog extensively.

### **Music**

Music is offered once a week during school hours to all students of all grade levels. Students perform with their classmates at the December Holiday Celebration and Spring Music Night.

**K-2<sup>nd</sup> Grade, Special-Day Class** – Based on the ORFF approach, students sing, chant rhymes, clap rhythm and beat, play hand percussion and bar instruments, and participate in drama movement.

**Third Grade** – All students, in class together, learn to play recorders and violins and develop music reading skills. Each student pays nominal fees for their instruments and booklets for the year.

**Fourth Grade** – In the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the year, students learn more advance music reading, and learn the basics of Intonation, Articulation, and Tone. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the year, students have the opportunity to briefly play one instrument from each of the four instrument families. Students then choose one instrument to continue using for the remainder of the year.

**Fifth Grade** – Students who express interest in participating in this class at the start of the year develop musical proficiency on an instrument and prepare for a middle-school band or orchestra program. Instruction is given in small groups. Each student rents an instrument for a nominal fee from OUSD through the music teacher or a private music store.

### **PFC General Meetings**

For the school year 2011-12, the PFC meetings will be held the third Wednesday in September, October, November, January, March and May from 6:30 to 8:00 pm at the school. Babysitting is provided free of charge. The president of the PFC presides over these meetings. The principal, two teacher reps., and PFC Board members attend and report on school and district news. Please come and stay informed, ask questions, and get involved!

### **Physical Education Class**

Physical Education (PE) instruction is provided by a full-time teacher hired by the PFC. The PE teacher works in conjunction with the Motor Perception teacher to provide comprehensive instruction in the areas of physical and social development. Activity units lasting 2-3 weeks are introduced across all grade levels, and revolve around a central theme, with modifications made based on the developmental needs of each grade level. Sample units include: dodge ball, basketball, soccer, ultimate Frisbee, and physical fitness. Appropriate PE clothing consists of tennis shoes, pants or shorts, and a warm layer during cold weather. A note from a parent/guardian or doctor should accompany any student who is unable to participate in PE due to injury or illness.

**Kindergarten – 3rd Grade** – One 50-minute period weekly (and one Motor Skills class per week)  
**4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grades** – Two 50-minute PE periods weekly

### **Reimbursements**

If you have made a purchase authorized by a PFC Executive Board member, complete a PFC reimbursement form (obtained from the office) and have it signed by the Board member who authorized the purchase. Payment will be made and sent to you directly by the Treasurer.

### **Scholarships**

The PFC provides need-based partial scholarships to ensure that all children are able to participate in any school-related programs. Before scholarships are awarded, we ask that parents complete the application for free- and reduced-price lunch. Please discuss your needs with the Principal.

### **Site and Safety Committee**

The Site and Safety Committee is responsible for supervising projects related to the safety and improvement of the school building and grounds. The committee works with the school administration and OUSD in order to maximize results. Projects undertaken by parent volunteers and paid for by the PFC in the past have included: maintaining emergency supplies in the yard container, building new picnic benches, bolting tall shelves to walls in the classroom, and painting the “Kids at Play” mural on the play yard wall. Opportunities to volunteer are available for those with ideas and energy!

### **Teacher Support**

The PFC recognizes that classrooms are the center of student learning. Parent volunteers help teachers with a myriad of activities, such as assembling homework packages, helping with prep, conducting art and science classes, tutoring students in reading, and driving on field trips. The PFC also pays a stipend to each teacher for classroom supplies and funds teacher aides for the classroom. The classroom aides generally come twice a week to work in each classroom with the teacher.

### **Thornhill Apparel**

Apparel, sporting the Thornhill Elementary School name and Thunderbird logo, is available to purchase at various events through the year. All proceeds from the sale of these items will be donated to the PFC. For more information please email Amy Morosini at [amy.d.morosini@gmail.com](mailto:amy.d.morosini@gmail.com) or call 510-339-0734.

### **Visual Arts**

The PFC funds weekly art instruction for 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students for the entire year, weekly art instruction for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade for one semester, and support for 2<sup>nd</sup> through K. Additionally, many parents serve as art volunteers. We often hold an art exhibition giving students the chance to display their artwork in a museum-like setting for the school community.

### **Website**

Visit the website at [www.thornhillschool.org](http://www.thornhillschool.org) to learn about Thornhill school and PFC. The web site posts a school calendar, current newsletter and up to date information on PFC sponsored events and fundraisers. Links to individual teachers’ classroom websites are also included. (Please note that not all teacher’s have an individual website).

## PFC FUNDRAISING

The funds raised by parents from the following events allow the PFC to provide for the services and programs such as Art, Music, our Library, Physical Education, Teacher's Aids and others that are detailed in the PFC section of this handbook. Donating your time and participating in fundraisers is a great opportunity to get to know the school and families in it. While some fundraisers ask families to make purchases or donations themselves, or seek donations from the community, there are many that don't require a donation from the family. The money is donated by corporations who donate to schools as part of their charitable giving.

### FUNDRAISING EVENTS

**Back to School Donation Drive:** The first fundraiser of the year, it takes place in September and early October. Families make donations by check directly to the PFC, and all donations go directly to the school. Donations are typically tax deductible.

**Walkathon:** Students get pledges from family, friends, and neighbors for walking laps around the school in advance of the October Walkathon. It's a huge hit with the kids and all the pledge money goes directly to the PFC. Pledges are tax deductible.

**Winter Bazaar:** This is a fun community event that gives everyone the chance to let their creative side show. Rent a booth, make and sell your crafts or goodies just in time for the holidays.

**Thornhill Auction Benefit:** An adult only event usually scheduled in the spring, the event offers guests a great party and is one of the largest fundraisers. During the evening, items donated by classrooms, parents, local business and community members are auctioned off in both silent and live auctions.

**Ra-Ra-Raffle:** Students and families sell raffle tickets in the weeks preceding the Spring Multicultural Carnival to friends, family and community to win fabulous prizes. The raffle drawing is held at the Carnival.

**Sees Candy:** Fifth grade students sell Sees candy as a way to raise money for the specific costs related to their promotion celebration and 5th grade year book.

### ONGOING FUNDRAISING AT NO COST TO PARTICIPANTS!

**Employer Matching Funds:** Many larger employers will match cash donations made by employees. Check with your employer to get matches Back to School or Walkathon donations.

**Target Visa or Guest Card:** Target will donate 2% of your purchases made at Target with a Target Visa or Guest Card at Target stores. Specify Thornhill Elementary School as a recipient.

**eScrip and Safeway Club Cards:** Thornhill receives a percentage every time you shop at eScrip vendors using your registered credit card. Vendors include Safeway, Village Market, Andronico's, Whole Foods, Round Table Pizza, and Payless Shoe Source. To register go to [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com), click on "sign up", enter our group name, "Thornhill Parent Faculty Club" or Group ID # 137611992. If you have difficulty getting set up, please contact the Scrip Coordinator listed in the PFC Executive Board directory. *Please note that Safeway Club cards must be renewed every year by November 1<sup>st</sup> in order for Thornhill to receive ongoing donations. You must also know your Club Card ID number when registering for the first time. Club Card ID numbers (if you have forgotten yours) can be obtained by calling 1-800-801-4973.*

**Amazon Associates:** Begin your Amazon.com shopping by clicking on its link from the Thornhill School website ([www.thornhillschool.org](http://www.thornhillschool.org)), and Amazon will donate 5% of the order to our school.

**Lucky Shares:** As Lucky is our local grocer, many of us shop there on a regular basis. If you sign up for and use you Shares card when you shop there you will earn a percentage for our school every time. This is free money!

**Box Tops:** Please save the box tops coupon from your participating grocery products. Drop them in the box on the table in the school lobby and we will send them of for cash back to our school.

**Ink Refills:** When you change thin ink in your printer or fax bring in you old cartridge and drop it in the box in the school lobby. This will be recycled and earn us cash back for the school.

**United Way:** Designation of nonprofit organizations (our tax ID number is 94-2529197).

**Office Depot:** Thornhill gets 5% back with their "back to schools" program.

## HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

There are a lot of ways in which YOU can get involved at Thornhill. Choose the way that works with your schedule, interests, and abilities. Everyone's help is needed! Cooperation and teamwork among staff and parent volunteers provides our children with an exceptional learning environment. Volunteering is a great way to get to know other families at the school, and give your child a sense of community. The time and energy you give to the school will enrich the lives of many. Your child will love having you at school!

**Volunteering Inside the Classroom:** The Principal provides training sessions at the beginning of the year for school volunteers. We ask that you register with OUSD as an official school volunteer. All volunteers must have current TB tests. Possible ways to help include:

- Plan or assist at parties
- Lead or prep for art, science, & computers
- Assemble homework packages
- Plant bulbs and plants in the garden
- Share your knowledge, interests, and skills with students
- Identify and bring in Community Resources.
- Plan a special holiday activity related to your cultural background
- Assist in planning field trip logistics, and/or drive and chaperone
- Read with the children

**Volunteering Outside the Classroom:** Here's a sampling of ways in which you can get involved at the school, outside of the classroom and PFC Executive Board positions. These options work well for those who can't volunteer during school hours.

- Serve as Room Parent for your child's class
- Volunteer at events like the Walkathon or "Site Improvement" Days
- Prepare a classroom basket to auction at the Benefit & Auction
- Help with the Benefit & Auction (donation solicitation, party planning and decorating)
- Assist with Quick Drop/Quick Pick Up before or after school
- Take on garden activities such as weeding, watering or liter pick-up
- Help staff a booth at the Carnival, or help with ticket sales or food sales
- Be a political parent representative for the school at district events
- Find someone to come perform/talk at a school assembly, or set up a community service project
- Help sew costumes and paint decorations for school plays
- Prepare PFC school literature

**How to be a Successful Volunteer:** Keep in mind that a volunteer in the classroom is there to support the teacher. The teacher is the person in charge, the person to whom the student owes primary attention.

- Spend your time on the project you've been given. Discuss personal concerns or students' problems during pre-scheduled parent teacher meetings, not volunteer time.
- Be faithful and prompt. Call the school (preferably the day before) if you are unable to come, and try to get a substitute to work your assignment. Please stay home when you are sick.
- All visitors at the school must sign in at the school office and wear a visitor/volunteer badge. Help ensure the safety and security of the school by asking the identity of unfamiliar faces in the hall and inform them, all visitors must sign in at the school office.
- Attend orientation meetings or training sessions for your area of volunteering.
- Introduce yourself to other volunteers and work with them. Do not criticize. If a problem exists, discuss it with them outside the classroom. If it persists, discuss it with the teacher.
- Treat others (both children and adults) with respect.
- Please remember patience is required, and we all have good and bad days!