

Welcome to Upper Elementary!

Written By: Mrs. Alaina Kelley (4th-5th-6th homeroom teacher)

Homeroom Schedule:

Upper Elementary Homeroom Morning Schedule – Monday through Friday

Time	Subject
8:30 – 9:00 am	Morning Meeting
9:00 – 10:15 am	Language Arts (Reading, Writing, and Spelling)
10:15 – 10:30 am	Morning Break
10:30 – 11:50 am	Math
11:50 – 12:30 am	Lunch

Our afternoon schedule varies throughout the week so that all core subjects and enrichment opportunities are integrated. I have included a general afternoon schedule that shows the approximate amount of time for these subjects. The specific time slots for each subject is slightly cumbersome for this handout but a poster size schedule exists in the classroom with more details for student reference. As always, these time slots are somewhat flexible if we need to spend a little more time on a concept that we are exploring.

Upper Elementary Homeroom Afternoon Schedule – Monday through Friday

Approximate Time	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
30min	Silent Reading & Library & RC	Silent Reading & Library & RC	Silent Reading & Library & RC	Silent Reading & Library & RC	Silent Reading & Library & RC
60min	Science or Social Studies	Science or Social Studies	Science or Social Studies	Science or Social Studies	Art
45 min	MUSIC	P.E. (Mr.Perez)	MUSIC	P.E. (Mr. Perez)	Friday Study Hall or Homeroom PE
15 – 20 mins	Clean Up Read Aloud	Clean Up Read Aloud	Clean Up Read Aloud	Clean Up Read Aloud	Clean Up Read Aloud

General Academic Overview:

- All core subjects are taught according to California State Common Core Standards.
- Social and emotional curriculum is also utilized in this classroom and throughout Garfield School to promote a strong and positive learning community while nurturing each student as an individual. Responsive Classroom and 2nd Step are integrated into the homeroom curriculum.
- Flexible grouping is utilized throughout all core subjects to promote student achievement. Students will also be organized by grade for certain classroom activities. Mrs. Pat Albert, our homeroom aide, will be here Monday-Friday for Language Arts and Math to lead small groups. Ms. Pat will also be in the classroom for our science and art block on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. We are very happy to have her.
- Math Journals and Writer's Notebooks are fundamental tools incorporated into core instruction. Math Journals will travel home frequently while Writer's Notebooks will dominantly stay in the classroom. Both notebooks will be available for parent review during parent conferences or upon request.
- Reading Response Logs are used to record the books that students have read as well as plan for future books to read. This year students are challenged to read 40 books covering multiple genres during the school year.
- Social Studies content is on a 3 year rotation according to state standards so that all core grade material in 4th, 5th, and 6th are covered within the 3 year life cycle of this homeroom. This year we will be covering US History content material (traditional 5th grade state standards).
- Science is a hands-on and minds-on approach to understanding scientific content and inquiry.
- We also participate in a rotation between our local Science Fair and local History Day. This year our school will be participating in Science Fair! More details will be coming home in October/November.
- Art is fundamental to the learning process, and weekly classroom time will be dedicated to art.

Homework Guidelines:

Homework is an important part of the learning process. Extended time between learning and practicing content in the classroom and then recalling and practicing the same content at home is a fundamental step towards academic mastery. Homework assignments will always be content that has been gone over in class.

I also truly value your family time and every student's right to much needed personal and play time. My homework expectation is that all students dedicate a total of **45 -60 min (including at least 20 min of independent reading) of good quality homework completion with focus and intention**. The use of a timer for tracking this time and access to some Post-It notes for writing specific questions to me are very useful to most students and I encourage each family household to have both available to their child during homework time. If completing the assigned homework is not falling into this time expectation, please contact me so that we can make appropriate adjustments.

In an effort to support all students in homework achievement, during the first three weeks of school students will be completing a majority of their homework in class so that homework expectations are clear. During this class time of homework training, students will become familiar with specific assignments (such as, spelling contracts and their math journal), time management, and a Post-It system for asking questions. Students will then take completed "homework" home to show parents so that families are also familiar with homework expectations. Also, students will complete "My School Habits" Questionnaire with their family so that each student has a good plan for completing homework and getting to school on time and ready to learn. Please, as always, feel free to talk with me about any special circumstances that are happening at home or if your child is having a particularly hard time with any aspect of school. I believe flexibility is a very important life skill and always individualize homework expectations. I also strongly value good communication between home and school.

Accommodations:

There are two types of accommodations that exist in this classroom. The first type of accommodation is by grade. Often times there will be a class project where the expectations and requirements vary in difficulty and complexity based on grade appropriate goals. If your student is experiencing an abnormal amount of stress related to an academic assignment, please contact me immediately. This seldom occurs, but when it does, there has usually been a miscommunication or misunderstanding of the appropriate grade accommodations. A good rule that I have for families is "if something seems off to you, please talk to Mrs. Kelley before continuing".

The second type of accommodation is by student. Every student in this class is treated with respect and given both the academic and social emotional accommodations that are necessary for that student. Because of this important Garfield School philosophy, students of the same or different grade

may have different but appropriate expectations to meet the unique needs of that child. I use the philosophy with students “Stay in your own lane” as a quick reference to my classroom expectation to just stay focused on the work and goals that apply to yourself without comparing yourself in general or the details of any given assignment to other students in the classroom. All students are highly accommodated with differential instruction and assignments at Garfield School. To further clarify, this philosophy is not meant as unfairness but rather an honest and appropriate adjustment to each individual’s needs. This creates the atmosphere of “Strive for excellence” for each student by meeting each student where they are at as both a student and person for their academic and social expectations 😊

Newsletter & Student Work:

A weekly classroom newsletter will be e-mailed to each family. There will be a handful of times throughout the year that a newsletter may not be sent. In that case, the following week will cover any content of the missed previous week. Graded or reviewed student work will be returned home throughout the year. Math Journals and Writer’s Notebook are a very big part of the student work for Math and Language Arts. Please check out these notebooks when students are using them for homework assignments. The Writer’s Notebook will not be going home as frequent as the Math Journals so if you would like to stop by the classroom or send me a note I will make sure you get a frequent opportunity to review your child’s Writer’s Notebook.

Communication:

Positive communication between home and school is a very high priority of mine. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you are having or to schedule a time to meet. We can also schedule a phone conference. E-mail is the best way to reach me. You may expect a response within 24 hours. You may also leave a note for Lisa at the front desk, and I will get back to you at the soonest available time.

E-mail:	Alaina Kelley	akelley@garfieldschool.org
	Marly Echeverria	mecheverria@garfieldschool.org (pending)
	Jenna Young	jyoung@garfieldschool.org

Friday Schedule:

Mrs. Echeverria will be the upper elementary Friday Teacher for the beginning of this year followed by the return of Mrs. Young in February. The Friday schedule is the same academic morning blocks as the rest of the week. However, Friday is also a targeted day to focus on standards based collaborative projects – such as, monthly STEM challenges, team word problems, and 6th grade buddies. Hands-on Art, homeroom P.E., Friday Study Hall and gardening (as needed seasonally with Mr. Quinlan and Mrs. Tollner) are during Friday afternoon.

Volunteering:

Volunteering is always an option in our classroom ☺ The consistent volunteering need in this homeroom is math on Wed (10:30 – 11:30 or so), Thurs (10:30 – 11:30 or so), and Friday (11:00 to 11:45). Also, there will be opportunity for event based volunteering (field trips, fundraisers, and classroom projects). Please contact me if you are interested in volunteering or sign the volunteer sign-up sheet at the Back-to-School Potluck with your preferences.

There are always ways to help out our school and class through the Booster Club. Our Booster Club does excellent work for our classrooms. Please check out their ways to volunteer! Here are some upcoming known days where class volunteering would also be appreciated:

- Service Learning Project (TBA – planned for the month of November and December)
- Play costumes and props (month of December)
- Pasta Gala - April 10, 2018
- Poetry Stations – Tues., Wed., and Thurs. afternoons in the Freshwater Guild after spring break for 3 weeks
- Driving students for swimming lessons & our Upper Elementary End-of-the-year activities
- Graduation Slide Show – one to two 6th grade parents organize and put slide show together for our graduation on June 12th. Our school provides most of the photos.

School Supplies:

All necessary school materials are provided in class. However, with the adoption of the California Common Core State Standards and the advancement of technology as an educational tool, there is a growing focus and need for upper elementary students to have computer based knowledge and skills (such as, writing skills expressed by keyboarding, math proficiency using electronic modeling, and an overall comfort and familiarity with the computer interface). **Because of these growing demands, upper elementary students are beginning to need computer and internet (with occasional printer) access at home.** At Garfield School, we strive to meet these growing demands but also

understand that this is very difficult for some families. **Computer access may be arranged for any student during GASP and after school time in the multi-purpose room for homework.**

Students in the upper elementary classroom will all have their own Chromebook (an internet based computer) for school use. Since all middle and high schools in Humboldt County adopted Google for Education, Garfield School has also invested in Google for Education so that our students are prepared and familiar with this system. Students will have their own secure google accounts without e-mail access for educational purposes only. The main application our school will be using is access to Google Docs and Google Drive for easy word processing sharing between home and school.

Extra Desk Supplies:

Extra desk supplies are limited to the following list to best allow for a positive learning environment and self-expression with the least amount of distraction. 😊

Allowable Extra Desk Supplies:

Lip Balm (Qty:1)

Hand Sanitizer (Qty:1)

Extra Erasers (Qty:1)

Extra Pencils (Qty:3)

Water Bottle (Qty:1; re-sealable cap and size fits in desk)

Extra Notebook (Qty:1)

Extra Art Supply Bag or Box (Qty: 1; small to medium size)

Post Its (Qty:1-2)

School Dismissal:

The school dismissal time for each homeroom at Garfield School is staggered to avoid overcrowded parking and confusion for younger students. Dismissal time is as follows: Early Primary 2:55pm, Middle Primary is 3:00pm, and Upper Primary is 3:05pm.

I truly value working with your family so that we can provide the best learning environment possible for our students. Thank you!