

Welcome to Upper Elementary!

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

Homeroom Schedule:

Upper Elementary Homeroom Morning Schedule – Monday through Friday

Time	Subject
8:30 – 9:00 am	Morning Meeting (Greeting, Sharing, Thinking Routine, Group Activity & Day At A Glance)
9:00 – 10:15 am	Language Arts (Reading & Writing)
10:15 – 10:30 am	Morning Break (5 minute snack & play)
10:30 – 11:30 am	Math (math journals, number talks, small group instruction, McGrawHill My Math textbook, game play)
11:30 - 11:45 am	Class Read Aloud
11:45 – 12:30 pm	Lunch (~15 min lunch and play)

Our afternoon schedule varies throughout the week so that all core subjects and enrichment opportunities are integrated. Examples of enrichment activities would include class debate, mindfulness, and reflections of traditional literature read alouds. Spelling and keyboarding are also incorporated into this time. I have included a general afternoon schedule that shows the approximate amount of time for these subjects.

Upper Elementary Homeroom Afternoon Schedule – Monday through Friday

Approximate Time	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
30min	Silent Reading & Library	Silent Reading & Library	Silent Reading & Library	Silent Reading & Library	Silent Reading & Library
60min	Minimum Day Dismissal at 1pm	Science or Social Studies Enrichment	Science or Social Studies Enrichment	Science or Social Studies Enrichment	Art
45 min		PE (Mr. Devin)	Music (Heidi)	PE (Mr. Devin)	Classroom P.E.
15 – 20 mins		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. Components of 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. Academic accommodations are always provided in both grade and multigrade groupings.
- **Callie Jennings** is our homeroom aide and will be here Monday-Friday for Language Arts and Math to lead small groups. She is an excellent addition to our classroom.
- **Math Journals and Writer's Notebooks** are fundamental tools incorporated into core instruction. These tools will dominantly stay in the classroom but may travel home on occasion. Both notebooks will be available for parent review during parent conferences or upon request.
- Every year students are challenged to read 40 books covering multiple genres during the school year. The real goal is to read more books this year than last year with good comprehension. Learning Ally is also a supplemental online resource to aid in enhancing reading levels.
- **Social Studies content is on a 2 year rotation** according to state standards so that all core grade material in 5th and 6th are covered within the 2 year life cycle of this homeroom. This year we will be covering **Ancient Civilizations** content material in alignment to California state standards (traditional 6th grade standards). We will also be using the Teaching Hard History Frameworks developed by Learning for Justice as supplemental guidance and reference.
- **Science** is a hands-on and minds-on approach to understanding scientific content and inquiry. **Nature Journals** and outdoor explorations are an integral component to place based learning.
- We also participate in a rotation between our local Science Fair and local History Day. More details will be coming home in October/November as details of those events are known. We work on these projects mainly in the month of January. This year will be a **History Day** year.
- **Art** is fundamental to the learning process, and weekly classroom time will be dedicated to art. We are incorporating the EPIC art curriculum across all multi-grade classrooms 😊

Homework Guidelines:

Homework is a collaboration between school and home. My goal is to provide a homework system that can accommodate the highest number of families while providing consistent, doable, and useful academic practice for each student. Because of this goal, homework will consist of a strong emphasis on nightly reading with an interactive reading log and short activity to do each night selected from a monthly choice board. I provide activity choices for all subjects and update monthly. ***I strive to balance high engagement tasks with routine skill practice and real life application to learning concepts.***

Homework will be due on Monday morning and reissued on Tuesday. Individual checklists are available upon request and collaboration. 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 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.** Oftentimes 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. The student images used in the newsletter are random and dependent on the student agreeing for a photo taken. However, pictures of every student are taken for projects and special events.

Math Journals, Nature Journals, and Writer's Notebook are a very big part of the student work for Math, Science, and Language Arts. Graded or reviewed student work will be available at parent conferences. You can expect an End-of-the-Year Portfolio for both art and academics in May.

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 Zoom or 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 with Kathy at the front desk, and I will get back to you at the soonest available time.

E-mail: Alaina Kelley akelley@garfieldschool.org

Volunteering:

Volunteering is always much appreciated in our classroom as our year gets underway. There will always be opportunity for event based volunteering (field trips, fundraisers, and classroom projects). Please contact me if you are interested in volunteering.

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 too! Here are some upcoming known days where class volunteering would also be appreciated:

- Field Trips off campus
- Nature Walks around campus
- Play costumes and props (month of December)
- Driving students for swimming lessons & surfing at the end of the year
- Graduation Slide Show – one to two 6th grade parents organize and put a slide show together for our graduation. Our school provides many of the photos

School Supplies:

All necessary school materials are provided in class. 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 email access for educational purposes only. The main application our school will be using is access to Google Classroom, Google Docs, and Google Drive for easy word processing sharing between home and school.

Chromebook & Technology

Every student in the Upper Elementary classroom has equal access to a Chromebook privilege. Please refer to the attached Chromebook Expectations, Technology Use Expectations, and Privilege Policy for specifics. Personal Devices (cell phones, internet watches, etc) are not allowed on campus.

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:

Hand Sanitizer (Qty:1)

Extra Erasers (Qty:1)

Extra Pencils

Water Bottle (Qty:1; resealable cap)

Extra Notebook (Qty:1)

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

Post Its (Qty:1-2)

Ball Cap or sunhat - stored in backpack during class (Qty. 1)

Teacher Approved Fidget (Qty. 1)

Please support your child to leave toys at home

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!