

Larkspur School District  
**Hall Middle School**

**Information for Incoming Fifth Grade Students & Families**  
**2008 – 2009 School Year**

Below you will find answers to many of the most frequently asked questions about the fifth grade program at Hall for the 2007 – 2008 school year.

**Facilities Questions**

*Where on campus are the fifth grade classrooms?*

The five fifth grade classrooms will all be housed in the same central wing of the campus that they are in this year. See the attached map. This allows all of the fifth graders to be close to the library, computer lab, office, gym and band room. It also keeps the fifth grade team of teachers in close proximity.

*How many fifth grade classes will there be? What will be the class sizes?*

As of current enrollment numbers, there will be five fifth grade classes at Hall next year. We staff classes at 25:1 or less.

*Do the fifth grade have their own bathrooms?*

Yes, the fifth grade has bathrooms in their hallway that are exclusive to them.

**Logistical Questions**

*What are the hours of the school day?*

Fifth grade students have the same starting and ending time as the rest of the school. The first bell is at 8:20 am and class begins at 8:25 am every day. The school day ends at 3:05 pm every day except Wednesdays, which end at 1:50 pm.

*Where do I pick up and drop off my child?*

We encourage families to explore ways to carpool, take the bus, walk, bike or skateboard to school in order to reduce congestion on campus and on Doherty Drive. Many Hall families use the Albertson's parking lot for pick-up and drop-off. Additionally, Larkspur Plaza Drive has been designated as a passenger loading zone. On-campus pick-up and drop-off will occur along the main office building. Families dropping off on campus must use the main entrance (at the signboard), turning left towards the new wing. Families may not use the Piper Park Drive entrance.

*When can I drop off my child at school?*

Students may not be dropped off before 8:00 am.

*Do fifth graders take the bus?*

Yes, fifth graders may take the GGT bus to and from school, along with other Hall and Neil Cummins students. GGT will again operate Route 117 that begins at San Clemente and travels up Tamalpais to Magnolia and then to Doherty.

*Do fifth graders have lockers?*

Because the fifth grade is self-contained, they do not need hallway lockers. They do have cubbies or backpack hooks in their classroom.

*How does lunch work?*

We do not have staggered lunches at Hall. In order to create some separation between 5/6 and 7/8, we use staggered eating times within a common lunch and a facilities-sharing schedule. For the first fifteen minutes of

lunch, seventh and eighth graders eat at the lunch tables while fifth and sixth graders have play time. During the second fifteen minutes of the lunch period, all four grades have playtime, following a schedule for sharing the field and blacktop/play structure. For example, on a given day the seventh and eighth graders have exclusive use of the field while fifth and sixth graders have use of the blacktop and play structure. For the last fifteen minutes of the lunch period, fifth and sixth graders eat lunch at the lunch tables while seventh and eighth graders have playtime.

*What about recess?*

There is one fifteen-minute recess for all students. Grade levels follow the field/blacktop division schedule for the day.

*Is there a hot lunch program?*

Next year Hall will offer full lunches five days a week, purchased in advance.

*Where do fifth graders park their bikes?*

The bike rack is located behind the new wing. Students are required to wear a helmet and lock their bikes.

*How do I get in touch with my child during the school day, and how do they get in touch with me?*

Contact the office if you need to get a message to your child during the school day. We will send them the message or bring them to the office to call you, if necessary. If students need to contact you during the school day, they can use the phone in the main office.

*What if my child forgets her/his lunch?*

If your child forgets her/his lunch, bring the lunch to the office and we will send a note to them in class to tell them to come to the office during lunch.

### **Instructional Program Questions**

*What does the instructional program look like for fifth graders?*

The fifth grade at Hall is very similar to fourth grade at Neil Cummins. Fifth grade classes will be self-contained with pull-outs for “specialist” programs.

*What are the Specialist programs and who teaches them?*

Every week, fifth grade students have pull-outs for two periods of science, two periods of physical education, one period of computers, one period of music and one period of library. These classes are taught by Hall staff who currently teach those subjects to other students. The physical education pull-out will be used for small-group instruction.

*Do fifth grade students change for PE?*

While sixth, seventh and eighth graders change for PE, the fifth grade do not. They wear their street clothes and should have appropriate shoes for physical activity.

*Do fifth graders get grades?*

Fifth grade teachers have created a new report card that incorporates standards and letter grades. Students get report cards every quarter.

*How will class assignments be made for next year?*

The current fourth and fifth grade teachers will meet with the Neil Cummins principal to determine classroom assignments for next year. Classes will be heterogeneously grouped.

*Do fifth grade parents get conferences?*

Fifth grade parent conferences are held for all students in the fall, during late October and early November. Spring conferences are available for all parents who want one.

## **Homework**

Most homework is assigned daily. There are several projects throughout the year that will need to be completed at home. Homework should average approximately an hour per night.

## **School Safety and Support**

*Who supervises students at recess and lunch?*

During recess and lunch, students are supervised by the principal, assistant principal, school counselor, campus supervisor, and classroom aides. Additionally, during recess several classroom teachers supervise the campus.

*What academic and social support is available for students?*

Our full-time counselor, Ms. Waters, works with individuals and groups of students on a variety of social and academic issues. After school academic support will be available for students in need of additional support.

*What orientation is there for fifth graders?*

Small group meetings will be available to fifth grade students and parents on May 23 and 28. At that meeting the counselor and I will get to know your child a little better and answer any additional questions you might have.

The current fourth graders will come to Hall for a tour of the campus from June 2 to June 6. I will meet with each class to answer questions, introduce them to important people and show them important locations on campus.

The WEB Program (Where Everybody Belongs) will provide all fifth graders with an orientation and connection with an eighth grade student. On Friday, August 22, all new fifth graders will participate in a welcoming activity and work with an eighth grader in a small group to get to know each other and the school. This program is a great way for students to get comfortable with each other, the campus, and an eighth grade student. Your child's WEB group will meet with their WEB leader throughout the year.

## **School Rules and Discipline**

*What is detention and how do kids get it?*

Students can earn a detention for a variety of reasons. Inappropriate behavior, showing disrespect to a substitute teacher, excessive tardies, and failure to return backpack mail are some examples of how a student can earn a detention. Detentions are served by performing campus beautification during lunchtime.

*Does the school have a tardy policy?*

Yes, students earn a detention when they accrue their fourth tardy in a class during a quarter. They earn an additional detention for each and every tardy after the fourth. Students are tardy if they are not seated and ready to learn with all of their supplies when the bell rings.

*Does the school have a dress code?*

Yes, any clothing that distracts from the learning process is not appropriate at school. Students may not have clothing that has drug or alcohol references, bare midriff, bare shoulders, spaghetti straps, pajamas or other sleepwear, or excessively short skirts or shorts. Hats are not permitted to be worn indoors.

*What are the rules about phones, cameras, and iPods?*

Cell phones must be turned off and in student backpacks/cubbies during the school day. Students may only use them after the school day is over. They can use the phone in the office if they need to contact you during the school day. All iPods must be turned off and in backpacks/cubbies during the school day, as well. Students may not use them on campus at any time. Cameras are not allowed at school. Students may use portable game devices during recess or lunch.

*Can students skateboard to school?*

Yes, students can skateboard to school if they submit a Skateboard Contract with parent permission and abide by the rules. These forms are available in the office.

## **Extra and Co-Curricular Activities and Programs**

### *How do fifth graders participate in Student Council?*

Like every other grade, each fifth grade class elects a homeroom representative to represent them at the weekly Student Council meeting. Student Council meets every Thursday at lunch. Only seventh and eighth graders will be eligible to run for Cabinet positions. Fifth graders can vote for their favorite Cabinet candidates.

### *What activities exist for fifth graders?*

Odyssey of the Mind, Math Olympiad, Geography Bee and Great Books are available for fifth graders at Hall. Additionally, fifth graders participate in the spring 5/6 school musical.

### *Can fifth grade participate in after-school sports?*

Fifth graders may participate in cross-country, girl's volleyball and basketball.

### *How do fifth graders participate in band and choir?*

All fifth graders have a music pull-out one period per week. Beginning band is offered as a zero period class before school several days a week. Choir is a lunchtime activity available to all students.

### *What after-school care options are available?*

A number of options are available for families. The Hall library is open until 4:00 pm every day. Larkspur Park and Recreation offers The Lounge, an after school program that runs until 6:00 pm. Other classes and activities are available after school, including gymnastics, wrestling, fencing, board games, dance, woodshop, rocketry, jewelry-making and others.