

The Califon School

“Making Their Lives Extraordinary”



The Parent & Student Handbook 2026-2027

Phone # 908-832-2828

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www.califonschool.org

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Califon Public School

2026-2027

Student Handbook

Making Their Lives Extraordinary!

Dr. Lori Jones

Chief School Administrator

ljones@califonschool.org

Mr. Matthew Herzer

Business Administrator/ Board Secretary

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Mrs. Susan French-Gonzalez

Administrative Secretary

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Mrs. Jennifer Sedlacek

School Nurse

jsedlacek@califonschool.org

Main Office

908-832-2828

Fax: 908-832-6719

Important Contact Information

Administrative Secretary, Mrs. Susan French-Gonzalez
sfrenchgonzalez@califonschool.org
908-832-2828 ext. 211

School Nurse, Mrs. Jennifer Sedlacek
jsedlacek@califonschool.org
908-832-2828 ext. 212
Absentee line 908-832-2828 prompt #1

Office Hours: 8:10am – 3:12pm

Website: <https://www.califonschool.org>

Staff Directory: <https://www.califonschool.org/classroomsstaff>

PTA Information: <https://www.califonschool.org/pta>

School Hours for Students

School Hours for Students: 8:30am – 3:12pm
Arrival 8:15-8:30 am
Dismissal 3:12 pm

Early Dismissal Day Hours: 8:30am – 12:30pm
Arrival 8:15-8:30 am
Dismissal 12:30 pm

Delayed Opening Day Hours: 10:30am – 3:12pm
Arrival 10:20- 10:30 am
Dismissal 3:12 pm

School Closings/Emergencies

School Messenger is our alert system. Alerts will come through as an email or a phone call. Parents can update their contact information through the Genesis Parent Portal. If you require assistance with your Parent Portal please contact Mrs. French-Gonzalez.

School and Community Resources

Califon Board of Education

908-832-2828 ext. 213

Washington Twp. Police Dept.

908-876-3232

Califon Fire Company

908-832-2323

Califon First Aid Squad

908-674-6386

Child Abuse Hotline

877-652-2873

Poison Control

800-222-1222

Hunterdon County Health Dept.

908-788-1351

Hunterdon County Behavioral Health

908-788-6401

Child Protection and Permanency

800-392-2724

908-782-8784

Important Information and Procedures

This handbook contains important information and references that will be handy throughout the school year. In an effort to be economically and environmentally responsible, the Califon School will make every effort to reduce paper use where possible and increase electronic communication when feasible. A copy of this handbook will be available on the website should you need to print a new copy.

School Website and Virtual Backpack

The school website at **www.califonschool.org** is in the process of being updated frequently. Please check the Virtual Backpack icon for up to date access to community event flyers. The website will also provide information on Classroom Newsletters, School News & Activities, and Board Policies.

Absences

Call the school each day that your child will be *absent* from school or *late* for any reason. Absentee messages should be left by calling (908) 832-2828 Prompt#1.

NO EMAILS

If your child is going to be absent or late, please state the *student's name, grade, symptoms of illness, and your phone #*. The nurse will need to know your child's symptoms for records and may need to call you back. Students must be "fever free" for at least 24 hours without the use of any fever reducing medications during the 24-hour period. Fever reducers include Tylenol, Advil, Motrin or any generic forms of ibuprofen and acetaminophen.

Please see Code of Conduct document for information regarding absence and tardy guidance. ([P5600](#))

See Attendance Policy for NJDOE approved absences. ([P 5200](#))

Academic Achievement Awards

Students in grades 6-8 may be recognized for outstanding academic achievement. Students that receive all grades in the 90s in academic subjects along with receiving all Os or Ss in related arts/special subjects during the first three marking periods will be recognized at an awards ceremony during the fourth marking period.

Admission to Kindergarten and First Grade

A child is eligible for entrance into kindergarten who will have attained the age of five years on or before October 1 of the year in which entrance is sought. A child is eligible for entrance into first grade who will have attained the age of six years on or before October 1 of the year in which entrance is sought or has been in the first grade in another public school or has completed the Kindergarten program at Califon or an equivalent program elsewhere and has been recommended by the teacher for advancement to first grade.

After School Clubs/Academy and Night Activities

After school clubs and activities to be announced. Sports physicals are required for any student participating in a sport. Contact the school nurse for details.

Arrival, Dismissal, Driveway Procedures

The following procedures are designed to maximize safety during student drop-off and pick up at Califon School.

As per District Policy 8601, No student in the District's Pre-K program shall be permitted to walk home without being accompanied by a parent/guardian or other adult escort designated in writing to the Principal by the parent/guardian. No student in grades K-3 shall be permitted to walk home alone without being accompanied by a parent/guardian or other adult escort designated in writing to the Principal by the parent/guardian. Alternatively, the pupil in grades K-3 may be accompanied by an older sibling in grades 5-8 with the permission of the parent or legal guardian provided in writing to the Principal. Students younger than Grade 4 must be accompanied by an adult walking to and from school.

- **Arrival:**

- o **Drop Off:**

- Students may **NEVER** cross the street to get into or out of a car.
 - Parents **MUST** drop off in the drop off zone located on the sidewalk side of the street in order for students to exit safely.
 - Cars should stay in a line and one at a time, drop off the children and then exit up School Street toward Route 513.
 - Do not make U-turns or park and get out of your car in the drop-off area.

- o **Drop Off/Parking: If you are parking to walk your child up the sidewalk...**

- Parking is **ONLY** permitted on the side of the street above the school going up to 513 due to congestion at the entrance of the school driveway. Adhere to signage for parking zones.
 - o Cars are **not** permitted to enter the driveway between the hours of 8:00-8:30 am or between the hours of 3:00-3:30 pm.
 - o **Late Arrival:** Students who arrive late to school must be signed in at the main office before proceeding to class.

- **Dismissal:**

- **Early Pick Up by Parent :** Students who need to be picked up prior to 3:12 pm dismissal must bring a note to their homeroom teacher who will then forward it to the Main Office. The note should state the date, time of pick up, and designated person who will pick up the student. The note must be signed by a parent.
 - **All early dismissal students must be signed out in the Main Office.**
- **Illness Early Pick Up From Nurse:** Parents/guardians will be notified by the school nurse if a child needs to be picked up early due to health reasons.
- **Parents must pick up on the sidewalk side of the street in order for students to enter a car safely. Please adhere to parking rules. Parking may be on both sides of the school ONLY on the sidewalk side of the street.**
- **Students may NEVER cross the street to get into or out of a car.**
- **Alternate arrangements for playdate or childminding** should be made in advance and a parent note must be sent to the homeroom teacher. The note should state the date, time of pick up, and designated person who will pick up the student. The note must be signed by a parent.
 - Only in the case of emergency a parent or guardian must call the school and give the Main Office the pick-up information.

After School Supervision of Students

Driveway Monitoring

- The driveway will be closed to through traffic during dismissal.
- The Chief School Administrator or designee and a staff member will monitor the driveway and direct students in crossing on the sidewalk.

Student Dismissal

- Students in Pre-K will be escorted by the Pre-K teacher to the front exit and handed off to waiting parents/guardians.
- Students in grades K-4 will be escorted out of the building by a teacher.
- Students in grades 5-8 will be dismissed by their HR teacher and will exit through the courtyard classroom doors.
- Any student staying for an after school activity will be dismissed to go to the activity which will be supervised by a staff member.
- Any student not picked up after school will be escorted back into the building and will go to the main office until a parent arrives. Parents/guardians will be contacted by the main office staff.

Bicycle Procedures

Students in grades 4-8 may ride their bicycles, skateboards, or scooters to school. This is encouraged as it promotes a healthy lifestyle. Students should wear a regulation safety helmet. If the child is not wearing a helmet on school property, this privilege may be revoked.

Califon Public School participates in the NJ Safe Routes to School program, a statewide initiative to enable and encourage students to walk and roll to school safely. The program is designed to educate students in grades K-8 on how to do this. goHunterdon facilitates “Safe Routes to School” programming at Califon Public School, offering a comprehensive education and encouragement program focusing on safety.

Building Use - Facility Use forms are located on the school homepage.

<https://www.califonschool.org>.

Calendar

Located on the school homepage <https://www.califonschool.org> under the calendar tab.

Internet-enabled and non-internet enabled devices *(formerly known as Cell Phones/Personal Electronic Devices)*

- Students in kindergarten through grade 8 are prohibited from using internet-enabled and non-internet enabled devices on school grounds during the school day.
- Students in grades kindergarten through grade 8 will turn off internet-enabled and non internet enabled devices and store it in their backpack, locker, or other bag throughout the entire school day.
- Failure to adhere to the above, will result in:
 - First offense – 1 Day of Detention
 - Second offense – 3 Days of Detention
 - Third offense – 5 Days of Detention
 - Fourth offense - In School Suspension

[\(P 5516\)](#)

Child Study Team

Califon Public School utilizes a Shared Service with Tewksbury Twp. School District for CHild Study Team (CST) services. CST secretary, Monica Scala, can be reached at 908-832-2594 ext. 2006. Parental requests for a Child Study Team evaluation must be provided in writing to the Chief School Administrator.

Classroom Parties and Birthday Celebrations:

There are three party occasions at Califon School: Halloween, Valentine's Day and End of the Year. Parties are organized by each class's homeroom parent and teacher.

Birthdays are celebrated with non-food items such as a small pencil, sticker, or token. You may contact your child's classroom teacher for recommendations. [\(P 5331\)](#)

Student's birthdays will be recognized in the morning announcements and by individual in-class teacher activities.

Code of Conduct

Disseminated at the beginning of the school year. Parents and students are required to sign the Disciplinary Guidelines Acknowledgement. ***Required signature form is on the last page of the Code of Conduct and must be returned to the main office.***

Computer Usage, Chromebooks

The Califon School Board promotes the use of computers and chrome books in school for educational purposes. Califon Public School incorporates a 1:1 initiative. Students in grades K-3 are issued chrome books that remain in school. Students in grades 4-8 are issued a chrome book that they may take home as needed. The District has supplied a protective case, for grades 5-8, that must remain on the device. Stickers are not permitted on the device or the case. **All students will sign an Acceptable Use form at the beginning of the year.** [\(P 7523\)](#)

Dress Code

Students should be dressed in an appropriate manner so as not to interfere with the learning process and is respectful of the educational setting. Clothing should not include pictures or slogans with profanity, drugs, alcohol, or sexually suggestive messages. Clothing should not be defamatory against any particular societal groups including race, color, religion, or gender. Hats are not permitted to be worn inside the school building unless they are part of a student's religious belief or medical condition. Please refer to the full [Student Code of Conduct](#) parents sign at the beginning of the school year. [\(P 5511\)](#)

Students are required to wear sneakers to gym class. Students may leave sneakers in school and change prior to gym class.

Grading

Students in grades 1 through 8 receive four report cards, while students in kindergarten receive three. Report cards for students in grades kindergarten through 5 are standards based. Kindergarten receives no final marking period grades. [\(P2624\)](#) The grading scale is as follows:

Standards Key grades K-5

4 – Exceeds Standard, 3 – Meets Standard, 2 – Partially Meets Standard, 1 – Not Meeting Standard, NA – Not Assessed

Academic Key grades 1 through 3

O – Outstanding, S – Satisfactory, I – Improving, N – Needs Improvement

Academic Key grades 4-8 (Grades 4 and 5 receive a letter grade, while grades 6 through 8 receive a numerical grade)

A+ 97-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	INC Incomplete
A 93-96	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	NG No Grade
A- 90-92	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	
			F Below 60	

Related Arts/Special Subjects Key grades K-8

O – Outstanding, S – Satisfactory, I – Improving, N – Needs Improvement

Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB)

The Board of Education prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying against any pupil in accordance with the provisions of New Jersey’s Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act and the Califon Board of Education Policy 5512, Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying. A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for pupils to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a pupil’s ability to learn and a school’s ability to educate its pupils in a safe and disciplined environment. Since pupils learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers should be commended for demonstrating appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

“Harassment, intimidation, and bullying” is defined as any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, gender, a mental, physical or sensory disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin or ancestry, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school grounds, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus and that:

- A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of harming a pupil or damaging the pupil’s property, or placing a pupil in reasonable fear of harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or
- Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any pupil or group of pupils in such a way as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

“Electronic communication” means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or chrome book.

[\(P5512\)](#)

HIB Contact Information:

Dr. Lori Jones

Anti-Bullying Coordinator

908 832-2828

ljones@califonschool.org

Mrs. Christine Sullivan

Anti-Bullying Specialist

908 832-2828

csullivan@califonschool.org

Forms to report potential HIB incidents are located on our website at

<https://www.califonschool.org/hib>

Homework

Homework should reinforce topics learned in school. Assignments can be daily or long-term projects. The amount of homework may vary from night to night but a general guideline is 10 minutes of homework assigned times the child's grade level. For example, Kindergarten and grade 1 = 10 minutes, grade 2 = 20 minutes, grade 3 = 30 minutes, etc. If you have any questions or concerns regarding homework, please contact your child's teacher.

If you request homework for your child as a result of an absence, please request it as early as possible to give your child's teacher(s) time to prepare it for the office. Vacations during school days are discouraged; however, we understand certain opportunities arise. If you request multiple days of homework, it is the teacher's discretion as to what to supply. [\(P 2330\)](#)

Health Information

Providing a healthy and safe environment for your children is the primary goal of the school nurse. This cannot be done without the help of the parents. The following guidelines must be used when determining if your child should be kept home from school or preschool. Always consider your child's comfort and energy level needed during a school day when making your decision.

Medications

The only medications that students are allowed to carry and self-administer are those medications needed for potentially life-threatening illnesses such as epipens for anaphylaxis and inhalers for asthma. Students may carry these medications only when the student is able to demonstrate proper self-administration technique.

Students in need of over the counter and prescription medications during the school day must have a medication authorization form completed by both the parents and the students physician. All medications must be brought to school by a parent or guardian with an order from the child's doctor. The school nurse may not administer medications/treatment without a doctor's order. No medications may be brought to school by a student in their backpack or lunchbox for the safety and well being of all students at Califon School. [\(P5330\)](#)

Additional information and related forms can be located at www.califonschool.org under Information/Facilities, Health Office.

Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS)

A school based group of selected school professionals that meet to review the needs of children who may be experiencing academic or behavioral challenges in school. Along with the parents, strategies are developed to try and best meet the needs of the child. Additional support services may be recommended. [\(P 2417\)](#)

Lunch/Recess

Students are to bring a packed lunch daily.

Students in grades 6-8 eat lunch from 11:29-11:52 and participate in recess from 11:52-12:15.

Students in grades K- 4/5 eat lunch from 12:17 -12:40 and participate in recess from 12:40-1:03.

Students in grades 7-8 may leave for lunch with a daily note from a parent after permission slips are submitted to the main office. This program will start in October after the administration reviews the rules with the students , information will be sent home.

Please have your child dressed in appropriate outdoor clothing for the current daily weather conditions. As a general rule, students will go outside for recess if the current real-feel temperature is 32 degrees or higher including the wind chill, and the surfaces are safe.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Conferences are held at the beginning of November each year. They typically last about 15 minutes and are meant to be a basic overview of your child's progress. We urge you to contact your child's teacher as soon as possible if you have any questions or concerns throughout the school year so that we can best meet his or her needs as a team.

Project Child Find

Programs for preschool aged children with special needs are available. Children between the ages of 3 and 5 who have difficulty speaking, seeing, hearing, walking or taking part in activities with other children could be eligible for services. Please, call the Child Study Team office (908-832-2174) for more information.

Promotion/Retention

Students will be promoted to the next grade level upon proper demonstration of the proficiencies required for movement based on teacher recommendation. If these proficiencies are not met, it may be necessary to retain the child in the same grade level the following year. If this is the case, the child's teacher will notify the parents no later than three weeks prior to the end of the school year.

PTA

Califon's PTA sponsors special lunch days for students. Information regarding this is disseminated to families. There are a number of events that are sponsored by the PTA throughout the year. Please become a member of our PTA as their support is to be commended.

For more information, please visit the following link on our website: <https://www.califonschool.org/pta>.

School Hours/Visitation/Item Drop-Off

Please note that school hours are 8:15am-3:12pm. The school will be locked during school hours. Entry will be prohibited after 3:30 pm unless prior notification is made. Please understand this is for the safety of our school staff. A “Drop Off” box will be available at the front door for convenience.

All visitors to the school building must wear a **visitor badge**. **All visitors must sign-in** stating their name and destination, prior to visiting any classroom or any other room in the building. It is important for all staff to be aware of visitors in the building for security purposes. Parents/visitors **are not** permitted to enter a classroom or loiter in the halls outside classrooms during school hours without approval from the teacher. Parents or students are not permitted to enter any classroom unless the teacher is present.

Parents who are dropping off forgotten items such as lunch, instruments, homework etc. will be asked to **leave all items in the bin on the front porch. Items must be labeled with students name and grade**. Please ring the bell to let us know you have left something for your student. Parents are not allowed to bring items to individual classrooms, nor are they permitted to go to a classroom to “pick up” a child, as this is disruptive to the academic classroom environment and school security procedures.

Additionally all students are responsible for their personal belongings such as homework and other items. It is the student’s responsibility to ask the teacher if he/she may check with the office for forgotten items. It is not the responsibility of the staff to “call down” to classrooms each time an item is dropped off. Please let your child know that he/she will be expected to take such responsibility and that staff may or may not have time to make individual calls to students.

Student Lockers/Cubbies

Lockers located in the girls bathroom and the end of the hallway are reserved for students in grades 6-8 who are in sports only. Cubbies in the rooms may be used for all students. It is recommended NOT to store expensive personal items in lockers and/or cubbies. Students may store sneakers for gym class in their cubbies and change prior to and after gym class if necessary. In the case there are more students than lockers, locker space will be shared. At any time, locker privileges may be revoked.

For additional district policies/regulations visit: <https://www.califonschool.org>