

Handbook



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Welcome to Thorsby Elementary!

Thorsby Elementary School is a wonderful place with a lot of activity. Education is a partnership between home and school. We strive to make the relationship between home and school a positive one.

This handbook has been prepared for both the student and their caregivers. We hope that it will provide information about our school policies and procedures.

Visitors to our school

We often have people in our building who are visitors to our school. At TES, the safety of our students is of the utmost importance. We require any visitor at our school to report to the office.

Who is considered a visitor? Any individual who is not a current student of the school, nor a current employee of Thorsby Elementary School. Visitors include, but are not limited to: parents, guardians, volunteers, and presenters. Thank you for your understanding.

History

TES provides a full range of educational services to approximately 260 students in Pre-Kindergarten to grade 6. TES is a member of Black Gold Regional School Division #18 and their head office is located in Nisku, Alberta. Thorsby Elementary School colors are black, orange and white and our school team name and design is the "Sabre Cubs". Our school mascot is **TES**, a Sabre Cub.

Changes to Personal Information

Students or parents may have changes to their initial registration form during the year, i.e. telephone numbers, medical conditions, address, and/or place of employment. Any change should be reported to the school office as soon as possible in order to keep our records updated. With our new automated system it is critical that contact information be current.

Arrival at School

Students are asked to enter and exit the door assigned to them. Supervision commences at 8:15 am, though students remain outdoors until 8:20 am. Students should not be arriving prior to supervision beginning.

Mission Statement

Our mission at Thorsby Elementary School is to guide students to become responsible global citizens who are life-long learners intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically.

Vision

To further develop as a caring and compassionate school that recognizes various abilities and embraces differentiation through multiple instructional techniques.

Values

We value Relationships: therefore we will encourage, build, and maintain positive relationships with our students, staff, parents, and community.

We value Respect: therefore we will promote respect and responsible behaviour for all members of our school community.

We value a Safe & Caring Environment: therefore we will provide our students, staff, and parents with a welcoming environment with open lines of communication.

We value Passion: therefore we will be passionate about life-long learning hoping to encourage the same in our students.

We value Professionalism: therefore we will continue to develop our professional practices to enhance student learning.

We value Physical & Mental Health: therefore we will promote the physical and mental health of both our students and staff.

We value Inclusive Education: therefore we will support the diverse needs of our students helping them reach their academic potential.

We value Collaboration: therefore, we will nurture an environment where staff collaborate and support each other.

Being Ready for School

Students learn and achieve best when they are ready for school. Please:

- Ensure your child is well rested, properly nourished and dressed for the weather
- Ensure your child arrives at school on time
- Provide healthy, nutritious snacks and lunches that your child will eat
- Ensure that your child has the necessary school supplies
- Mark all school supplies as well as shoes, boots and other outdoor clothing with your child's name.

2019-2020 School Year Hours of Operation

Time

8:15 AM	Supervision Begins
8:20	School doors open
8:29	O'Canada/Announcements
8:31	Period 1
9:09	Period 2
9:35	Period 3
10:07	Morning recess
10:22	Period 4
10:54	Period 5
11:26	Classroom Lunch Time
11:41	Noon Hour Recess
12:11 PM	Period 6
12:43	Period 7
1:15	Period 8
1:47	Afternoon Recess
2:02	Period 9
2:34	Period 10
3:06	Home Room/Agendas
3:08	Dismissal

Supervision ends once the busses leave and students are off of school property.

Early dismissal occurs the first Wednesday of each month (except September).

Early dismissal time 2:21 PM

Custody of Children

We are best able to support your child and be sensitive to particular situations when we are aware of custody, visitation rights or special instructions. If your family has these circumstances, please make sure that the school is provided with a written copy of the current legal agreement

Pre-Kindergarten Program

Thorsby Elementary offers a Pre-Kindergarten Program. This program will provide educational services in an inclusive program for children with disabilities or delays. A number of community children without disabilities will also be integrated into the program to provide a leadership role. We currently offer both a morning and an afternoon program.

Lunch Hour

Students are supervised for both lunch and noon hour activities. All students are expected to have lunch in the school. Students **must have** written permission to leave the school property during the noon break.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory for all students. Research shows that regular attendance at school is a direct indicator of academic success. If a student is absent for any reason, we ask parents to follow the procedure below:

Telephone the school between 8:00 am and 8:30 am 780-789-3776.

- Indicate your child's grade, teacher, and reason for absence.
- ONLY the parent/guardian should make the call.
- In the case of a medical or dental appointment, a note should be sent in advance so the student can be released from class.
- Students are encouraged to select a study buddy who can inform them of missed assignments or notes when they are away.
- Students who arrive late will be asked to **report to the office and check in.**
- Students who leave the school during the day **must be signed out at the office by a parent/guardian.**

In the event of absences, the following procedure will be followed.

- When attendance is deemed a concern, the student's parents/guardians will be first contacted by the teacher.
- After a minimum 14 yearly absences, written notification from the principal.
- Should this continue, the matter may be referred to the Superintendent.

Safe Call Policy (Student Absence)

If a student is going to be absent from school, please notify the school via email, note, or phone call. Thorsby Elementary has an answering machine so messages may be left at any time. To ensure the safety of all students, parents will be contacted regarding any unverified absence using the automated system. If you receive a phone call or text regarding the absence of your child, please contact the school. If possible, please avoid disruptions to your child's learning environment by making appointments outside of school hours.

Student Illness

In the event that your child is ill, we advise that you keep him/her at home until he/she is feeling better and capable of working through the school day. If your child has a highly contagious illness (examples may be, but not limited to flu, strep, pink eye) please do not send him/her to school until the symptoms have subsided, as it places all of our students and staff at risk. In the event of an accident or illness at school requiring medical attention, every attempt will be made to contact parent(s)/guardian(s) of the affected child. If a parent/guardian cannot be contacted, school staff will take the child to the doctor's office or the hospital if required.

Medical Treatment

As outlined in the Black Gold Regional Schools Education Policy Manual (Policy IHC) medical procedures or administration of medication will be offered only under written direction from a medical doctor and once a procedure waiver request is signed. Medication to be administered by staff must be provided in required dosage, in a labeled container, along with written instructions from a medical doctor regarding its administration. Any change in medication or procedures will require written direction from a medical doctor.

Absences Due to Family Vacations

It is the expectation of TES that students will attend school on scheduled school days and take holidays according to the school year calendar. In the event that parents choose to take their child/children out of school at times other than school holidays, the onus lies with the parents to provide a program. Teachers cannot provide detailed daily homework assignments that replicate the missed work. With this in mind, we would like to encourage families to be mindful of the school year calendar.

Report Cards

We place a high priority on keeping parent(s) and/or guardian(s) informed about their children's progress. Report cards are issued two times during the school year, a midyear report card in January and a final report card is issued at the end of June. Parents are encouraged to check PowerSchool regularly to view their child's progress. Each student's progress is assessed through a variety of methods. These include teacher observation, skill on assignments and exams, etc.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled in November and March to allow parents, teachers, and students to meet to discuss student progress. Parents are encouraged to participate. Your input is important as we work together to help your child's reach their potential. Parents are welcome to contact the school to discuss their child's progress at any time. Please contact the teacher to arrange an appointment.

Student Conduct and Discipline

At Thorsby Elementary we focus on teaching students to be respectful of the rights of others and to be responsible learners. At the same time we ensure that they are aware of the consequences of their actions and choices that they may make.

The School Act: Section 12 sets the framework for student conduct at school. A student is required to:

- be diligent in pursuing the student's studies;
- attend school regularly and punctually;
- co-operate fully with everyone authorized by the board to provide education programs and other services;
- comply with the rules of the school;
- account to the student's teachers for the student's conduct;
- respect the rights of others;
- ensure that the student's conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging;
- refrain from, report and not tolerate bullying or bullying behaviour directed toward others in the school, whether or not it occurs within the school building, during the school day or by electronic means;
- positively contribute to the student's school and community

School Property

School property that is damaged or lost by a willful or careless act is to be repaired or replaced by the student concerned. This includes damage to the building, text and library books, as well as Chromebooks and iPads.

Homework

Children should be encouraged to read as much as possible. They should also be read to. Children should also be encouraged to write frequently. Family conversations help the children to develop language skills, mature judgement and critical thinking skills. Participation in a variety of athletic, social and cultural experiences is also important. Teacher assigned homework will vary according to the age and needs of the children. Suggested Homework time would be:

- Grade One to Three: daily reading or math games (10-15 minutes)
- Grades Four to Six: 15 to 30 minutes daily and as class work requires. Students in these grades should also be reading daily

Lockers

Lockers are assigned for individual student use, although the lockers themselves remain the property of the school. The school reserves the right to inspect a locker, when deemed necessary, without informing the student.

School Searches

A principal or designate may conduct a search of a student, school property used by a student, and student articles and objects when there are reasonable grounds to believe there has been a breach of school rules, in an investigation of school discipline, or as a matter of school welfare and safety.

Cell Phones and Personal Items

Cell phones and camera phones raise issues about personal privacy and propriety Cell phones must remain in a student's locker during the school day. Students may bring personal items to school (e.g. iPods, DS, and other electronic devices) provided they are not used during instructional or recess time. Please be aware that the school will take no responsibility for their safekeeping. Students are also discouraged from carrying any substantial amount of money to school.

Contacting Staff

If you wish to contact teachers or administration, please leave a message with one of the secretaries. Staff can also be contacted using email for general questions. Please do not send absentees or end of the day arrangements by email. Classroom teachers may be absent or may not have the opportunity to check their emails until later in the day.

After School Arrangements

Please make going-home plans with your child before school. If an emergency change is necessary, please phone well in advance, as the secretaries often cannot reach children just before bus time. If your child usually goes home on the bus, please remember that your child will be put on the bus unless we receive a note or phone call from you prior to 3:00 pm. After school arrangements to visit with friends etc., must be made prior to coming to school.

Student Dress Code

Students are expected to dress in accordance with good grooming practices, bearing in mind the public nature of the school and its educational atmosphere. The following items are not allowed to be worn at school:

- Clothing or accessories that depict alcohol, drugs, sex, violence or inappropriate language.
- Short tops that do not cover the stomach (navel must be covered).
- Low cut tops.
- Hat or caps.
- Short skirts or shorts that are too revealing.
- Jeans or pants that are low-riding and revealing.
- Visible undergarments.

Students will be asked to change if their clothing is deemed inappropriate.

Indoor Footwear

To help keep our school clean, we request that students have two pairs of footwear – one for outside play and one pair strictly for inside the school. Please avoid purchasing shoes that leave marks on the floors. All students will be required to remove outside footwear of any kind before entering the school.

Classroom Interruptions

In order for the classroom teacher to deliver the most effective instruction possible for all students, it is important to minimize classroom interruptions. If you need to drop off something for your child during class time, please leave it at the office. If you need to speak with your child, please call the office and the office staff will ask the child to call you during a break. If your child is late, he/she needs to check in at the office. To allow the students to finish their day uninterrupted, we kindly ask all parents/guardians to please remain outside of the school. Thank you for your cooperation with respecting our learning environment.

Bicycles, Scooters, Skateboards etc.

Bicycle racks are provided for students who ride their bicycles to school. Because the bike rack area is not supervised, please be aware of the potential risk factors with using this area. Students are required to walk their bikes when on the sidewalk and obey the rules of the road. Use of helmets is mandatory.

The school requests that skateboards, in-line skates, skate shoes, etc., be kept at home where their use can be properly supervised and the children's safety ensured.

Technology – Admirable Use Agreement

All students will sign and adhere to the Admirable Use Agreement each year with regards to technology use in the school. This applies to both school owned or BYODs. Failure to honor this contract will result in having his/her user privileges suspended.

Head Lice Policy

In the event that your child is found to have lice, the parents will be contacted and asked to pick up their child. Students will be allowed to return to school once they are treated.

Field Trips

Field trips are a valuable and enriching educational experience for our students. Specific guidelines are followed concerning supervision, parental permission and insurance coverage. Parents are encouraged to volunteer to assist in supervision when staff requires additional adult leadership. If necessary, students may be assessed a fee to help cover expenses.

Use of School Phones

There are phones available in the classroom and in the office; however, students are only allowed to use these phones in the case of emergency and illness, with their teacher's permission.

Bus Safety and Conduct

Students are expected to display safe and responsible behaviour on the bus. Unacceptable behavior will be written up on a discipline form by the driver and submitted to the school office. A copy of the form stating the disciplinary measures taken will be sent home. Please ensure your children are dressed appropriately for the weather conditions. Parents should use discretion when deciding if their children should ride busses in extremely cold weather. The bus drivers are not able to accept students who are not registered to ride on their bus.

Inclement Weather Policy

The administration at TES will make the decision if it is an "Inside Recess". If the temperature is -20C or below, including the wind-chill, students will usually remain indoors for recess. This will be at the discretion of staff.

Bad Weather Days

The decision whether or not to cancel bussing because of inclement weather is made by Black Gold Regional Schools personnel by 6:00 a.m. This decision is made after checking/consulting with all or some of the following:

- local weather reports/daily forecast
- bus contractor area representatives
- Leduc County Public Works Foreman
- surrounding jurisdictions.

Notification to parents of bus students will be sent via the voice call out system before 7:00 am. Media (radio and television) will also be contacted.

A message regarding school closures will be placed on the Black Gold Regional Schools website. To ensure the safety of all students, please notify the school, via email or phone, if their child will not be attending school when the busses are cancelled.

Parental Discretion: Although busses may not be running, Thorsby Elementary will usually remain open in extreme weather conditions. At such times, please use your judgment when deciding to transport your child to school.

Emergency Response Procedures

At TES the safety of our students is paramount. Therefore, we follow the Black Gold Regional Schools Hour Zero Emergency Response Procedures. The following is a list of drills that are performed at the school in order to ensure that the students are able to follow the procedure in a safe manner.

Evacuation: An Evacuation requires all students and staff to leave the school and go to an alternate location. This may mean only going outside and away from the building until it is safe to reenter the school. In other cases, students and staff may need to go to an evacuation center. Parents will be informed of the alternate location through the school's Crisis Notification Network.

Hold and Secure: This is used in response to security threats or criminal activity outside of the school. During a Hold and Secure, all entrance doors to the school are locked, with no one permitted in or out of the building. No one, other than law enforcement, is permitted access to the building until the Hold and Secure has been cleared.

Shelter-in-Place: Generally, Shelter-in-Place is used during an environmental emergency, such as severe storms or chemical spills. During a Shelter-in-Place, students and staff retreat to safe zones to seek shelter. This includes having students or staff who are outdoors come back into the school. Each school's emergency response plan identifies the safest location for its occupants and how to seal a room from hazardous conditions. Students will not be released or dismissed until the situation has been resolved.

Lock-Downs: Lock-Downs are usually used in response to acts of threats of violence to students and/or staff directly impacting the school. No one is permitted in or out of any area once it has been locked. Students and staff must respond very quickly to a Lock-Down command to get to a safe location before doors are locked. No one, other than law enforcement, is permitted access to the building until the Lock-Down is over.

Awards – Three Cheers for the Year

Academic and non-academic awards are presented at "Three Cheers for the Year" held at the end of June. Students and staff celebrate a variety of accomplishments that occurred during the school year.

Being "Allergy Aware"

This policy will be instituted in the classrooms that have students with severe allergies. Ensuring the safety of anaphylactic children in a school setting depends on the cooperation of the entire school community, therefore we would like all parents to be informed of our Allergy Aware policy.

Allergy Aware vs Nut Free Classrooms: In "Allergy Aware" classrooms

- The child, family, medical service provider(s) and school work together to develop a reasonable safety plan
- Allergy kit(s) can be on hand; adults know how to use them
- Other children can be taught about respecting allergies and how to help a student in an emergency

"Nut Free" classrooms cannot be guaranteed because schools:

- Cannot ensure that the classroom is completely free of nuts
- Cannot guarantee other parents will not send peanuts/nuts to school

Each situation will be discussed and a plan will be put in place for each classroom that has a student with a Nut Allergy. An information letter will be sent home with the students in the class if there is a student with a Nut Allergy. Depending on the situation, parents of all students in that class may be asked to NOT send any Nuts or Nut products to school. Please see our website for additional information.

Hot Lunch Program

Every Tuesday and Friday from mid-September through June, students will be able to purchase a hot lunch. Forms to purchase coupons are available from the school office or can be purchased on Acorn. On occasions where the school is closed on Friday, the hot lunch will be moved to the last school day of the week. Please be advised that in the event that busses are not running and the school is open it is the responsibility of parents to provide lunch (even if it is a scheduled hot lunch day).

Hot lunches are prepared and served by parent volunteers. Parental involvement is absolutely necessary for the continuance of this beneficial program. If you can help in any way, please call the school at 780-789-3776.

Milk and Juice Program

Milk and juice are available for purchase every morning which students can enjoy with lunch. Coupons for milk and juice are available from the school office or through your PowerSchool Account.

Library/Learning Common

Students will visit the Learning Common with their class at least once a week. At that time, they will discover and understand how the library is organized, they will learn about authors and illustrators, and they will listen to readings of some new and familiar books. During library classes, children will be encouraged to return and exchange books and will be able to borrow books for a two-week period with the option of renewal.

Clubs and Activities

Thorsby Elementary School offers many opportunities for students to participate in a variety of additional activities throughout the year. Intramurals, arts and crafts, choir, drama, sprouts, library club, computers, special event days, as well as a variety of athletic clubs are some of the activities students can choose from. We encourage students to get involved and become part of the TES team.

Inter-school Activities

Students have the opportunity to try out when a school team or group is to be selected for inter-school activities. Eligibility for competitive teams at TES will be determined through criteria determined by the coaching staff. At TES we are proud of our students who demonstrate characteristics of our school philosophy and are excellent ambassadors for TES.

Parking

For the safety of our students, please respect and follow the bus lane and parking signs at the school as well as:

- When dropping students off, please use the Drop Off Zone on the south side of the street
- The parking lot is not a Drop Off area. If you would like, use the Visitor Parking to park and assist your child.
- Please remember that Staff Parking is for staff members only
- When crossing the street and parking lot area, students must use the crosswalk.

Thorsby Elementary Parents' Association (T.E.P.A.)

T.E.P.A. Philosophy

The Thorsby Elementary Parents' Association is an organization of people concerned with the establishment, encouragement and development of the highest possible standards of education and the welfare of children. T.E.P.A. is a volunteer organization which aims to enhance funding and expand areas of education for the entire school population.

T.E.P.A. invites your participation. Volunteers are involved in fund raising, assisting in school activities and helping coordinate special school events. T.E.P.A. provides immense value and support to many school activities and events. Plan to attend a T.E.P.A. meeting this year and make a difference to your child's educational experience.

School Council

Thorsby Elementary School Council Mission Statement:

"The mission of our school council is to provide the support required to foster the well-being and effectiveness of our school community so that our students have the opportunity to learn, to grow and to become responsible members of our society."

The school council provides a structure in which parents, school staff, students and community members can discuss and provide a voice in educational issues that affect this community.

Parent Volunteers

There are a number of important tasks parents can do to assist the efficient and smooth operation of Thorsby Elementary School's educational programs. If you have a little extra time and are interested in helping out, please contact your child's teacher and/or the Learning Common.

All volunteers must complete a "Volunteer Registration Form", sign in at the office and are required to read and follow the School Volunteer Policy. Anyone who regularly volunteers must complete a Vulnerable Sector Check as well as a Child intervention check and those documents need to be submitted to the office. Volunteers will be required to wear an ID tag while volunteering. These will be available at the office. You can make a difference and your help will be greatly appreciated.