Kindergarten Virtual Open House 2021-2022

**Mission and Vision:**
The Whittier community is committed to ensuring educational justice by creating an engaging, supportive and culturally responsive environment for all students, families and staff. Through teaching and nurturing the whole child our staff strives to cultivate compassionate, resilient and creative children.

**Approximately 446 students in grades K-5**
- 19 – 21 per class K and 1st Grades
- 23 – 25 per class 2nd and 3rd Grades
- 26 – 28 per class 4th and 5th Grades

**Kindergarten: Essential Information for our Future Kinder Cats!**
Kindergarten is the time to lay the building blocks for an enriching and productive experience as a student at Whittier and beyond. Our teachers work hard to cultivate a happy and safe learning community that inspires enthusiasm, curiosity and excitement for every Kindergarten student.

All Kindergarten students are invited to participate in Jump Start at Whittier for the 2021-2022 school year. Jump Start will probably take place from August 16th – August 20th from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM. This provides you and your child some time to get used to school routines.

**Family Connection Visits:** The first three days of school are designated for “family connections.” Kindergarten teachers at Whittier conduct 30-minute home visits to assist with the transition to school. This is a unique opportunity for teachers to develop relationships and get to know families in their setting before the first day of kindergarten. They will discuss your child’s strengths, interests, hopes and answer any questions you may have. Teachers will contact families a week before school to schedule your home visit. We are also happy to host these meetings in the classroom if preferred.

Kindergarten students spend the **fall learning routines** (e.g., morning meeting, class helper jobs, calendar, class snack) and understanding what is expected of them as members of their new class and school community.

Kindergarten teachers spend a lot of time working with their students to develop a **sense of community** by talking about and demonstrating concepts such as respect, kindness, honesty and acceptance. They have regular class meetings where they learn to talk about feelings and practice conflict resolution skills.

Kindergarteners have three **recesses** (morning, lunch and afternoon). K students eat lunch together in the cafeteria.

Kindergarteners attend **library** on a regular basis during which time they hear a story, practice browsing and check out a book. They also have **P.E., Performing Arts and Visual Arts**, which they attend on an alternating basis.

**Choice time** is a chance for Kindergarteners to delve deeper into subject areas that are of particular interest to them and practice self-direction.
This is a sample of a Kindergarten daily schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attendance &amp; Morning Meeting</strong></td>
<td><strong>Math</strong></td>
<td><strong>Snack</strong></td>
<td><strong>Recess: 9:05-9:20</strong></td>
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<td>7:55-8:15</td>
<td>8:15-8:55</td>
<td>8:55-9:05</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Specials</strong></td>
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<td>9:25-10:00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Writing 10:00-10:50</strong></td>
<td><strong>Library 10:00-10:35</strong></td>
<td><strong>Writing 10:00-10:50</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lunch: 10:50-11:10</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lunch Recess: 11:10-11:30</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Quiet Time 11:30-11:40</strong></td>
<td><strong>Read Aloud/Phonics 11:40-12:10</strong></td>
<td><strong>Literacy: Independent Work / Small Group Instruction 12:10-12:45</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Afternoon Recess: 12:45-12:55</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Closing Discussion &amp; Dismissal 2:15-2:25</strong></td>
<td><strong>Wednesday Early Release Days</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Closing Discussion &amp; Dismissal 2:15-2:25</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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Specials alternate on **Rotation B** Schedule:  
- Art – Buck  
- P.E.- Pule  
- Performing Arts- Turner

*All students in every grade participate in our Specials Rotations.*
Whittier Elementary School - Specialists

The information below is intended to provide useful information to new families at Whittier. Please be advised some of this information may change for the upcoming school year.

Visual Arts with Mr. Buck

Visual Arts education offers up so many unique opportunities—at Whittier, we try to take full advantage. We emphasize cultural exploration through Visual Arts as students become competent talking about different techniques, movements and styles. Creating a safe, creative space for students to express themselves and collaborate with others is the first concern. Exposing students to various materials and processes in the 2D and 3D realm is a top priority as well. The Wildcat curriculum is rooted in Disciplines-Based Art Education—art history, aesthetics, critique and production. Within these parameters, students are free to create and modify in order to explore their interests and create projects they can be proud of and enjoy talking about and sharing. Seattle School District’s standards for Visual Arts also provide us with the direction and goals for attaining new skills and progressing as artists.

Performing Arts with Ms. Steph

Performing Arts at Whittier incorporates a blend of music, movement and theater. The curriculum is based on annual themes, such as genres of music and global performing arts. Within each unit, students explore musical and dramatic concepts using active listening, theatrical skills and singing, as well as choreographed dance and movement games to connect body and rhythm. Through hands-on exposure to instruments, students examine steady beat and rhythmic differentiation. We spotlight historical and contemporary “Artists in Focus” for each unit. Past artists include Bob Marley, Ella Fitzgerald, Johnny Cash and Tito Puente. All lessons are rooted in Common Core and 21st century skills: creative and critical thinking, perseverance, growth mindset, communication and collaboration. Through these skills, students demonstrate accrued knowledge and growth through reflection, collaboration and discussion.
P.E. with Mr. Pule
Whittier’s physical education program is success-oriented with emphasis on individual skill building, small and large group activities, and the creation of a safe, cooperative environment. Too often children are turned off to physical activities because they are thrown into large games with underdeveloped skills. They may not be successful and will seek to avoid repeat experiences. At Whittier, students are introduced to many different skills and activities in a manner that helps them succeed and will hopefully lead to a lifetime of activity, whatever they choose to pursue.

Whittier students juggle, roller skate, do archery, use throwing/catching skills, bowl, bike, unicycle (we “uni” in three parades each year), participate in an optional before-school recreation program, and much more. First through fifth graders track their improvements and achievements in their own P.E. portfolio over the course of the year, learn to make healthy nutritional choices when fueling up” and choose physical activity as a life-long interest.

Our physical education aligns with the Seattle School District’s “Five For Life” P.E. curriculum. It exposes students to the five components of physical activity: cardio-respiratory endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition. Students set goals and strive to improve on their journey to becoming physically educated individuals.
Whittier Elementary School - General Information

The information below is intended to provide useful information to new families at Whittier. Please be advised some of this information may change for the upcoming school year.

**Recess:** Recess is generally an outside activity. All students have at least 30 minutes of recess a day.

**Lunch:** For children bringing lunch from home, parents are encouraged to pack high-value foods in easy-to-open containers. For students who purchase breakfast and/or lunch at school, there are a variety of convenient ways to pay for school meals.

**Extensive Enrichment/Field Trip Opportunities in Every Grade:** All students have the following exciting opportunities as they progress from Kindergarten to fifth grade. Many of these opportunities are funded generously by our PTA. Whittier students have participated in the following field trips: Pumpkin Farm, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Children's Theater, Pacific Science Center, Pike Place Market, Wetlands Exhibit in the Arboretum, Washington State History Museum, and visited the Capital Building in Olympia. All Whittier students, their fifth-grade year, spend three school days learning about the environment and the people of the Olympic Peninsula.

**After School Activities:** Both the school and our PTA sponsor several after school activities for Whittier Students. The following activities have been available for our students. Spanish, Coding, Lego Robotics, Sewing, Hip Hop, Chess Club, UW Philosophy, Girls on the Run, Basketball, Extended Pule PE, Ukulele, Board Game Club, Yoga, Math Club, Comic Club are a few of the activities that occur at Whittier after school.

**Before & After-School Childcare:** There are several popular options for before & after-school childcare providing transportation to and/or from Whittier: The following places are recommended by families at Whittier. These are not affiliated with Whittier or SPS school district:

- Boys & Girls Club – [http://www.positiveplace.org/locations/childcare/Pages/ballardchildcare.aspx](http://www.positiveplace.org/locations/childcare/Pages/ballardchildcare.aspx)

**Communication:** There are several venues for information regarding Whittier news and events. Teachers send weekly updates through email and/or utilize "kid mail". This year our K-4th grade teachers used Seesaw and our 5th grade used Schoology. The “WildChat" is a weekly publication put out by the Whittier Staff and Whittier PTA.

**Digital Learning:** For the upcoming school year, all of our students will have access to either an iPad or a laptop. Students have opportunities to participate in our Maker Space during lunch recess and before school.

**Drop Off & Pick Up:** In the morning, children wait on the playground for the first bell to ring. After the first bell our 3rd through 5th graders meet their teachers at the door. Our K-2 students wait in their designated line. Teachers meet and escort their students into the building each day. At pick up, parents wait on the playground until their child exits the building. For students who ride the bus, staff members escort them to the bus.

**Homework:** As a rule, we do not assign homework to our Kindergarten through third grade students. We do encourage all students to read every day, engage in play and utilize games to build number sense at home. In grades fourth and fifth, students will receive some opportunities to participate in homework.
Whittier supports all learners: Several of our students have special designations. We serve students who qualify for Special Education Services, English Language Services and 504 plans. In addition, we serve students who are highly qualified or qualify for advanced learning. Seattle Public Schools offers services for students who meet eligibility requirements as advanced learners. Please visit the district website for testing information. At Whittier all students are integrated throughout all classrooms. To meet every individual child’s need, students are placed in appropriate groups or stations in reading and math.

Whittier PTA: We encourage you to consider membership in the Whittier PTA. PTA meetings serve as venues for discussion about a variety of informative issues, ranging from school initiatives to expert-led presentations. Whether attending meetings, taking advantage of our many volunteer opportunities, or committing to a leadership role on the PTA Board, you can make a difference in our community. At all levels, your involvement in the PTA and general Whittier community is an excellent way to stay on top of what's happening at the school and to connect with other families and school leaders.

Please visit the [Whittier PTA](#) under the ‘Get Involved’ section of the Whittier School website for more information on our PTA and how to join.

PTA Community Events: Whittier Elementary and the Whittier PTA coordinates several events for new and returning students throughout the year. Summer play dates for new families are offered during the late summer. All families are encouraged to attend the back-to-school event “Fill Us In” to complete paperwork, make payments, learn about school and PTA offerings, and join classmates on the playground. In addition, the PTA and the school want to promote a positive environment and hosts an amazing fall carnival. In addition, we host a variety of evening events to engage the community in learning and fun.

Transportation: Students who live within the Whittier attendance area but outside the designated walk boundaries are eligible for district transportation. District transportation is not provided for students who, by parent/student choice, have enrolled in a school other than their assigned school. Questions regarding school buses should be directed to the Transportation Department at 252-0900.

Volunteer Opportunities: There are many opportunities to get involved at Whittier. If you are interested in learning about volunteer opportunities beyond the classroom, please contact the Whittier PTA Volunteer Coordinators at volunteers@whitterptaseattle.org. Whittier makes regular calls for volunteers through the WildChat newsletter and the school website. All volunteers must complete required forms, available on the school website, and be approved by the district before they begin any volunteer work at the school.

PBIS and the Whole Child: As a system, the Whittier staff work to create a safe, welcoming and engaging environment. Our work is guided by our pillars – safety, responsibility and respect. Our teachers utilize the RULER curriculum to help students identify and manage emotions. In addition, we emphasize monthly virtues throughout the year. Our staff and students engage in daily circles and discuss kindness, gratitude, empathy, mindset, perseverance, love, honesty and flexibility.

Important Upcoming Dates (these dates may change):

- June 9th - Popsicle Play Date
- August - PTA hosted Playground Playdates
- August 16th - 21st Kindergarten Jump Start
- September 1st - First Day of School for 1st through 5th
- September 2nd - 4th Family Connection Meetings
- September 3rd - Kindergarten Back to School Pizza Party
- September 6th - First Day of School for Kindergarten

More information to come if these events will be in person or virtual.