



THINK
Together

Extended Learning Time Program

Parent – Student Handbook



Extended Learning Time Program Parent – Student Handbook

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Extended Learning Time Program Information

VISION

All children will receive the support they need from family, school and community to enable them to reach their full potential and become productive adults and responsible, contributing members of the community.

MISSION

To provide high quality academically-oriented extended learning time programs for K-12 students regardless of race, creed, or socioeconomic status.

VALUES

THINK Together intends to make our shared vision a reality through our values:

- Be accountable to our Mission
- Service above self
- Treat others with dignity and respect
- Open and honest communication
- Collaborate internally and externally
- Honor our commitments
- Embrace diversity
- Be humble
- Persevere
- Continuous learning Enjoy the journey and have fun!

ETHICS

THINK Together is committed to adhering to high standards of ethical conduct in all of our operations. This includes a commitment to provide accurate and complete information, to exercise care and act in good faith, to comply with all laws, regulations and organizational policies, and to promote ethical behavior. THINK Together's integrity and reputation of the Organization ultimately depends upon the individual actions of each Employee. Therefore, all employees are expected to conduct themselves in an ethical and lawful manner.

THINK Together has retained Ethical Advocate to manage THINK Together's ethics reporting. This reporting mechanism is designed to encourage Employees, as well as stakeholders -- including, volunteers, students, parents/guardians (hereinafter referred to as "Parent"), and school/district administration -- to inform THINK Together of alleged misconduct, to ensure that all allegations are thoroughly investigated, and suitable action(s) are taken where necessary. Corrective action, up to and including termination, will be taken where warranted for Employees. And, appropriate action will also be taken in response to any violation of this policy by any non-Employee.

THINK Together Employees, volunteers, students, Parents, school/district administration, and other stakeholders are encouraged to report any practices or actions believed to be inappropriate to the THINK Together toll-free ethics hotline at 866-993-5153 or www.thinktogether.ethicaladvocate.com. Calls to the toll free hotline or contact through the Internet site are facilitated by Ethical Advocate. Reporting of ethics violations will be treated as confidential information and can be communicated anonymously.

STAFF CONTACT WITH STUDENTS OUTSIDE OF PROGRAM

For the protection of our students as well as our employees, THINK Together does not tolerate, promote, or in any manner allow socializing or association with program participants outside of THINK Together normal operating hours or activities. Additionally, THINK Together employees are not allowed to walk students home or provide them with transportation from programs or to and from any other event.



Program Operation

HOURS OF OPERATION

The law requires that the program be open every day that school is in session and that it begin when the school day ends, be open daily until 6 p.m., and operate at least 15 hours per week [Section 8483(a)(1) of the California Education Code]. It is the intent of the Legislature that students participate in the full day of the program every day during which pupils participate, in order to accomplish program goals [Section 8483(a)(2) of the California Education Code].

STAFFING

- A Full-Time Site Coordinator ensures that high quality extended learning time is provided to each student enrolled in the program. Site Coordinators are college graduates and are required to go through a series of trainings given by THINK Together. Using standard THINK Together program materials, Site Coordinators coordinate and support the activities Program Leaders do with the students; work with teachers, principals and other instructional-day staff to align extended learning time activities with the students' instructional day programs; supervise and coach staff and do some site-based training; work with Parents; and gather data to assure student safety, participation in enrichment activities and improved academic performance.
- Program Leaders are part-time paraprofessionals who must meet the district's requirements for employment under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) guidelines. Program Leaders work directly with students under the direction of the Site Coordinator and go through a series of trainings given by THINK Together. A Program Leader supervises and manages a single group of 20 students and provides homework assistance, academic enrichment and physical activity, using curriculum and materials provided by the program.

A TYPICAL PROGRAM SCHEDULE

- School dismisses and students report directly to the program as part of the school's dismissal process.
- Students are checked in, and, in groups led by their Program Leaders, have snack, restroom break, and opening activities. For safety reasons, students are taken on scheduled restroom breaks. Emergency needs will be handled by the Site Coordinator.
- Students cycle through the different program components, including homework assistance, academic enrichment activities, and physical activity.
- Students are signed out by an authorized adult at the end of the day.

Note: *The specific schedule for some groups or schools may vary from the one described here but all programs include all of these components.*

MEDICAL INFORMATION

In order to support the well-being of each student enrolled in the THINK Together program it is important that Parents make program staff aware of any medical conditions, allergies, and/or special needs that may affect their student during program hours. Medical information previously shared with school-day faculty and staff may not have been made available to THINK Together program staff, so it imperative that all necessary information be shared directly with program staff.

In the event a student suffers an illness or accident during program hours, THINK Together staff may seek medical help and assistance by contacting 911 emergency services or otherwise securing treatment at a medical facility. THINK Together does not provide medical treatment or coverage for participants.



Program Components

INTRODUCTION

It is THINK Together's intent to provide students with an enriching extended learning time experience which serves to develop the student by offering four main program components: a nutritious snack, homework assistance, academic enrichment, and physical activity.

NUTRITIOUS SNACK

The snack component of the program lasts 15-20 minutes. Its purpose is to provide students with a nutritious snack while giving them a chance to interact with their peers. This helps them focus during the rest of their time in the Extended Learning Time Program.

- A daily snack will be provided and include full servings of any two of the following foods or food groups: liquid milk; meat or meat alternate; fruits, vegetables, or 100% fruit or vegetable juice; and grains or bread products.
- Food may only be eaten during snack time or when served during nutrition education or special events. Medically necessary adjustments to this policy can be made on a case by case basis.
- Students may not leave campus to get food before or during the program.
- Parents must list all food allergies on the Program Enrollment Application.

HOMEWORK ASSISTANCE

Homework assistance is provided to students to give them an opportunity to begin their homework and get assistance and support from the program staff and volunteers in areas where they need it. With this support, our hope is for them to be more prepared to finish the remainder of their homework at home, if necessary.

The law requires that the program include an education and literacy element (such as homework assistance) and an education enrichment component [Section 8482.3(c) of the California Education Code]. Since both components are required, it is not always possible for every student to complete ALL of his or her homework during the program, nor is it possible for it to be entirely reviewed and corrected.

Parental responsibility and involvement in their student's academic work is strongly encouraged to continue the learning process at home.

ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

THINK Together's academic enrichment component allows for students to use academic skills in a variety of engaging activities. In addition, some schools also provide specific academic activities which support the work being done during the regular school day.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The physical activity component has four main objectives:

- Involve students in 20-30 minute periods of regular physical activity.
- Involve students in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity during at least 40% of physical activity time.
- Provide students with many opportunities to participate and practice skills.
- Provide students with a variety of enjoyable physical activities.



Student Behavior Guidelines

The primary purpose of THINK Together is to provide a safe and positive environment in which students can receive homework assistance and enrichment opportunities.

THINK TOGETHER AGREEMENTS

THINK Together believes that ultimately students themselves must commit to behaving appropriately, so students who wish to participate in our program are asked to accept four simple THINK Together Agreements:

1. Be Safe.
2. Be Respectful.
3. Be Responsible.
4. Have Fun!

When program starts we devote time to helping students understand what it means to follow these agreements in different circumstances throughout the Extended Learning Time Program, and we re-visit this topic periodically throughout the year. Our staff is also expected to hold to these agreements in their interactions with students, Parents, fellow staff members and instructional-day staff.

GOOD BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

In keeping with the purpose and agreements stated above, all students are expected to observe the following behavior guidelines:

1. Treat staff members, volunteers, and other students with respect at all times.
2. Follow directions given by staff members or volunteers.
3. Show proper respect for the buildings, grounds, equipment, and supplies.
4. Use language appropriate to the setting (no foul language, verbal insults, etc.).
5. Play in a safe manner at all times.
6. Bring all materials necessary to complete homework, including text books (if applicable), paper, pencils, et cetera.
7. Work quietly, without disturbing others, during the homework/study period.
8. If no homework is assigned, students will complete a supplemental academic activity provided by the program.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

In the event that a student violates any of the above guidelines, the following disciplinary process will be followed:

1. An oral warning will be given.
2. In the event of a second violation, the student's Parents may be notified in writing of the problem and the student may be asked to leave the program for the day.
3. In the event that a third violation occurs, the student involved may be permanently dismissed from the program.

Serious violations of the behavior guidelines may result in the student being immediately dismissed from the program at the discretion of the Site Coordinator, and the Parent or other authorized person will be contacted and asked to pick up the student.



PERSONAL PROPERTY

Students should refrain from bringing personal property (including valuables and collectible items) to the THINK Together program. Students are expected to take reasonable precautions to protect his or her personal property and assume all risk related to such property. THINK Together is not responsible for lost, stolen, damaged, or destroyed items that are brought to, used during, or left at the THINK Together program.

Student Enrollment, Attendance, and Release Guidelines

STUDENT ENROLLMENT POLICY

THINK Together works with each school to enroll students in the program and to notify Parents when openings are available. Students are enrolled when openings become available. If no openings are available when an application is received, the student will be placed on a waiting list and Parents will be notified when there is a place for the student.

Parents must complete and submit the Enrollment Application prior to a student's participation in program. By signing the Enrollment Application, Parents acknowledge receipt of, and agreement to, the policies and procedures within this Handbook. Submission of the Enrollment Application does not guarantee placement in the THINK Together Programs. Participation in THINK Together Programs is a privilege, not a right, and a student's failure to comply with the program's rules, regulations, and policies may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to suspension or dismissal from the program.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

THINK Together believes that attendance is a key element in determining the level of impact made on the academic lives of the students it serves. In addition, it is the intent of the Legislature that pupils participate in the full day of the program every day, in order to accomplish program goals [Section 8483(a)(2) of the California Education Code].

To comply with the law and ensure the effectiveness of our program, elementary school students should participate in the full day of program every day that school is in session and the student has attended school. In order to benefit from the THINK Together Extended Learning Time Program, middle school students are encouraged to attend five days each week; however, in order to maintain enrollment status, students must attend a minimum of three days or nine hours per week. This will support participation in school-sponsored activities (e.g., sports, visual/performing arts performances). Failure to meet this attendance expectation could result in disenrollment. If the number of students wishing to participate in program exceeds program capacity, priority enrollment shall be given to students who attend daily.

Modifications of the Attendance Policy

Modifications of the Attendance Policy may be made on a case by case basis when a modification is in the best interest of the student. Such modifications must be agreed to by the Site Coordinator, the Parent, and if possible, a school representative.

AUTHORIZED RELEASE OF STUDENTS POLICY

To ensure your student's safety:

- Unless the school district has a different policy, and unless the appropriate forms are completed by an authorized Parent (i.e., a Parent who is documented on the Program Enrollment Application), your student must be signed out of the program every day by an authorized adult of 18 years of age or older.
- Students may be released only to those persons indicated on the Program Enrollment Application. It is the responsibility of the Parent who originally completed and submitted the Program Enrollment Application to document all persons to whom the student may be released, including Parents with shared custody rights; THINK



Together staff will not arbitrate custody disputes. As long as both Parents are documented as authorized release persons, the student can be released to either Parent on any day.

- It is the responsibility of the Parent who originally completed and submitted the Program Enrollment Application to provide the Site Coordinator with updated contact information and notice of any changes in the list of persons authorized to pick up the student (including in case of emergency). If a Parent is being removed from the Program Enrollment Application, a court order must be provided which clearly and unambiguously indicates that the other Parent no longer has the right to pick up the student. All changes in information must be noted on the Program Enrollment Application or in a letter from the Parent; phone calls to add someone will not be accepted unless extenuating circumstances exist.
- Each school district will determine the circumstances, if any, under which a student is allowed to walk home alone or ride a district-approved bus home alone. Where circumstances make it necessary and school district policy permits it, permission for a student to walk alone or ride a district-approved bus home alone may be granted when requested in writing by the Parent. Permission is granted on an individual basis and only if it is consistent with student safety.
- When authorized in writing by a Parent, a student may also be released from program to attend a non-THINK Together activity located on site. The activity may be administered by school district personnel and/or a third-party provider.
- In case of emergency, a student may be released to law enforcement personnel if the Parent or authorized emergency contact person(s) cannot be reached.
- For the safety of the students, identification of the Parent or designated person picking up the student may be requested at any time.
- THINK Together and its community partners are NOT accountable for incidents involving a student which occur prior to arrival at or after departure from THINK Together programs, including when they are under the supervision of, or have been released from the supervision of an on-site program/activity not supervised by THINK Together.

LATE ARRIVAL/EARLY RELEASE POLICY

The law requires that the program establish a policy regarding reasonable early daily release of students [Section 8483(a)(1) of the California Education Code]. In order to accommodate the need for early release from the program, as well as late arrival to the program, while meeting the requirements of the law, THINK Together has the following Late Arrival/ Early Release Policy:

In order for the THINK Together Extended Learning Time Programs to qualify for state funding and for students to receive a well-rounded experience, students are expected to attend the full program, pursuant to Section 8483(a)(1) of the *Education Code*. A well-rounded Extended Learning Time Program experience occurs when students attend five days each week from the end of the school day until program closure.

For safety reasons it is THINK Together's policy that students arrive to program on time and that instances of a student's late arrival to program be documented by staff. Late arrival is defined as any time after the normal sign-in period at the beginning of program, and may be either "occasional" or "recurring." Occasional late arrival will be documented on the daily attendance sheet. In case of supplemental program, the Parent or person authorized to drop the student off at program is requested to provide the reason for late arrival.



If a student is unable to attend the program for the full day, a Parent may authorize a student to be dismissed early from program. Early release is defined as any time prior to the normal release period at the end of program, and may be either “occasional” or “recurring.” In cases of occasional early release, person(s) previously authorized by the Parent to pick up the student may also authorize early release if picking the student up early on a given day. Occasional early release will be documented on the daily attendance sheet.

A Parent who wants a student to arrive late or be released early on a regularly recurring basis – for example, for a weekly tutoring session or religious obligation – must submit a signed Late Arrival/Early Release Form indicating the reason, and the period of time (hours and range of dates) for which the late arrival/early release will occur. Staff will indicate any recurring late arrival/early release information on the daily attendance sheet so staff will know when the student will be arriving late or leaving early.

Authorized person(s) are required to document the time and reason for late arrival, early release, and/or release of students to on-site programs/activities not supervised by THINK Together. Reasons may be any of the following:

1. Enrichment activity (attending on-site programs/activities not supervised by THINK Together, or off-site activities such as Club soccer, basketball, etc.)
2. Academic support (working with student’s teacher after school, etc.)
3. Family emergency (such as death in family, catastrophic incidents, etc.).
4. Weather conditions
5. Medical appointments
6. Child accident/illness
7. Transportation
8. Release due to early darkness “Dark 30” (Early release for students who walk home, generally occurs November through mid-March; release times will be pre-established by site staff)
9. Other reason (in best interest of child)

There are many students who would like to participate in THINK Together; however, limited space is available. Late arrivals and early releases need to be kept to a minimum. If THINK Together staff feel there is a problem, they will contact the Parent to discuss ways to address the situation.

POLICY FOR ON-SITE RELEASE OF STUDENTS TO NON-THINK TOGETHER ACTIVITY

In the interest of student safety, THINK Together documents the release of students to on-site programs/activities not supervised by THINK Together. When authorized by a parent/legal guardian, a student may be released from THINK Together’s responsibility to attend a non-THINK Together program/activity administered by school district personnel and/or a third-party provider located on site. THINK Together staff will document the time and reason for release. If the student is not expected to return to the THINK Together program prior to program closure, he/she will sign themselves out and the parent/legal guardian assumes responsibility to make release arrangements with the other program/activity.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY

It is important that students be picked up on time, particularly because the Extended Learning Time Program dismissal occurs in the evening when the rest of the school is closed and typically there are very few staff members still present. Safety concerns arise when a small number of students and extended learning time staff members are alone on campus after the program closes.

- Students must be picked up on time.



- If the person picking up a student is going to be late, we ask that person to contact the Site Coordinator to inform her/him immediately.
- If late pick-up continues to occur, the student may be dismissed from the program.
- In addition, when a student is not picked up in a timely manner, if we are unable to contact any of the people authorized to pick up the student, or anyone listed as an emergency contact, we may need to call law enforcement for assistance.

SUPPORTING THE PROGRAM

In order for students to have a positive experience, Parents, school staff, and THINK Together staff need to work together collaboratively. All policies and procedures have been established to create a safe and engaging environment for students, and to maintain the standards set forth by legal and funding guidelines. Questions and concerns about the program, and information about student behavior, are expected to be handled in a professional and courteous manner. Inappropriate conduct does not demonstrate positive problem-solving strategies for students and will not be tolerated.