



## **MAJURO COOPERATIVE SCHOOL**

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**Accredited by the Western  
Association of Schools and Colleges**

# Staff Handbook 2009-2010

Majuro Co-operative School strives  
to provide an environment that  
encourages each student  
to reach his/her potential  
in the academic, artistic, and social disciplines.

Co-op School prepares students  
for higher education,

and for assuming their roles in society as responsible and  
productive citizens.

Life long learning, respect for self and others,  
cooperation,

self-reliance, and appreciation of the Marshallese

culture

are promoted and encouraged.

*“What would you do if you knew you could not fail?”*

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### *Guiding Principles of the Institution*

- Provide a school environment that is safe and conducive to learning for all students.
- Promote self-esteem and respect of self, others and the environment, coupled with a positive attitude.
- Promote awareness and respect for cultural diversity.
- Develop responsible and productive citizens.

### **STATEMENT OF EXPECTED SCHOOL-WIDE LEARNING RESULTS**

The Expected School-Wide Learning Results are reflective of the mission, philosophy and guiding principles of the Majuro Cooperative School. All staff, students, and parents should be aware of the ESLRS and how these principals guide instruction, learning, and behavior.

Students at the Majuro Cooperative School will demonstrate:

1. **Proficient written and oral communication skills and comprehension in English;**

MCS students will acquire sufficient proficiency in English so that they will be capable of choosing to continue with their education in accredited schools either within or outside of the Marshall Islands

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**2. Effective problem solving, critical thinking, and mathematical skills;**

Students will demonstrate effective problem solving and critical thinking skills that will assist them in identifying and confronting problems that face them as students and as community members. Proficient and flexible mathematical skills are an important component of this ESLR.

**3. Strong social skills to be contributing, respectful and responsible members of society.**

The school will foster the development of strong social and personal skills so that all children will grow to be contributing, respectful, and responsible members of their school community, their country, and the global community

**Absence/Tardiness of Students\***

(see also: student handbook)

Teachers are required to submit daily attendance. Children coming to school after 8:15 are considered tardy. Phone calls for children who are marked absent will be made beginning at 8:30. Middle/high school teachers should take attendance for every class and check absences in office twice a day. Please assign student(s) to bring attendance information to the office. Children who are tardy will go to the office for a tardy slip.

**Absence/Hours of Staff\***

Contract hours for teachers are 7:45 a.m. until 3:45 p.m., with a 35 minute duty free lunch. Teachers are expected to be on campus (not housing) during contract hours. If a teacher needs to leave campus during contract hours (except during duty-free lunch), they should inform the office and sign out. Teachers should be available after school until 3:45 to answer questions for students and parents; to work cooperatively with colleagues; and to prepare for the next school day, unless they are involved in a school sanctioned after-school activity.

Teachers may leave at 3:15 on Fridays.

Teachers have 7 sick days and 3 personal days. If teachers are sick, they must provide detailed lessons plans for the substitute. It is a good idea to have a sub folder ready in the event of an emergency illness.

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Teachers and assistants should call Kathy's home answering machine by 6:30 a.m. if they will not be coming in due to illness. (247-8207) Upon return to class, staff will complete a sick leave form.

**Teachers must request personal days one week in advance of the planned personal day.** Personal days must be approved by Principal, and cannot be approved if too many other staff will be out on the same day. *Personal leave requests for leave during the last two weeks of school will not be approved except under special circumstances.*

In addition to regular hours, staff is expected to attend all staff meetings and Team Planning meetings. These meetings are held on Monday and Wednesday afternoons, begin at 3:15 and last no later than 4:00. Principal must be informed in advance if a teacher will not attend a staff or Team Planning meeting.

Staff presence is also required at PTA meetings, Open Houses, parent-teacher conferences, Talent/Variety Shows, graduation, school wide Halloween parties and other school events.

#### **Accidents/Injuries/Emergencies/Student Illness\***

(see student handbook)

#### First Aid

Bandages, gloves, and ice are available in the office. Tylenol may be dispensed in the office, unless parents have requested otherwise. All other medications are distributed only with written consent of parent/guardian. If you notice the first aid supply is getting low, please inform the office assistant.

#### Accident Reports

Accident reports must be completed no later than 3:00 for all accidents or incidences that result in injury to any student. (Immediate reporting is preferable.) There is an accident/illness report binder in the office next to the medical/first aid kit. Directions are on the cover of the binder. This is required of any teacher who witnesses an accident or who has a student in their class in an accident.

1. Fill out report for every accident/incident that occurs. (Exceptions would include minor cuts and scrapes.)
2. Make a copy to send home and make sure it goes home with the student.
3. Put the original the report binder and return binder to office.

4. Notify parents if the situation is serious, or ask administration to notify parents.
5. Any head injury should be reported to parents.

### Student Illness

Children who are ill can be sent to the office with a note from a teacher, where they will rest and be monitored for a few minutes. Children will be sent back to class if office staff feels they are well enough to participate.

Students must go through the proper procedures in the office before they will be allowed to go home. Office must authorize phone calls and parents/guardians need to sign students out. Teachers should not give students permission to go home.

### **Alcohol, Tobacco, or Other Drugs**

No student or school employee shall possess or consume alcohol and/or other drugs on school grounds. Consumption of alcohol and kava at school functions is not allowed as students look to staff to provide behavior role models.

### **Assemblies**

Morning assemblies are held every Monday and Friday morning from 8-8:10. After the flag raising, anthem, and brief announcements, classes are invited to present at the assembly. Assemblies will focus on accomplishment of Expected School Wide Learning Results. Awards assemblies will be twice a year.

### **Assessments**

Ongoing assessment is important to insure that students make adequate yearly progress, are meeting the ESLRS, and are provided with the support they need. Assessment “windows” are listed on the academic calendar. Required assessments include Fontas and Pinell Reading assessments, all Saxon Math assessments, LAS English Language Assessments, Dictated Sentences, and Writing Assessments. In addition, regular assessments will include observation, use of teacher and student generated rubrics, unit assessments, projects, and behavioral assessments (to be developed to help evaluate behaviors required for success with our third ESLR.) Assessment information should be referred to in lesson plans.

### **After-School Activities\***

(see student handbook)

Staff is invited to offer After- School Opportunities to students from 3:15-4:15 (or later, if staff is

interested in doing so.) Possible activities may include Drama Club, Chorus, Dance Club, Art, Sports Clubs, Chess Club, Homework Club, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, yearbook, etc. We are able to charge a small fee to students for their participation in the activities, or clubs may choose to do their own fundraising. The fee may cover materials, snack, and teacher extra-duty pay. Staff may submit After-School Club proposals to the principal. We recommend waiting until the end of first quarter for After School Activities.

### **Bake Sales**

Wednesdays during snack, classes have bake sales to help raise funds for special activities, materials, and supplies. The Bake Sale schedule is posted in the office and should be posted in classrooms as well. Campus Clean Up schedules can be found on the same schedule.

### **Breakfast**

Breakfast items will be available for sale daily from 7:30-7:50. Students are expected to be in class by 8:00.

### **Bulletin Board and Display Case**

The bulletin board in the cafeteria is a place to display evidence of “ESLRS in Action.” Submissions are greatly appreciated. The Display Case is for photos, announcements, showcase pieces, news articles.

### **Cafeteria**

Students are expected to clean up after themselves in the cafeteria. This includes throwing away garbage, sorting recyclables, cleaning up spills, and throwing away food/beverage wrappers. Teaching assistants are assigned to supervise students in the cafeteria, but it is very important that teachers also remind students of cafeteria expectations. Teaching assistants and cafeteria staff need "back up!"

### **Calendar**

Please record important events and reminders on the school calendar in the office. Check the calendar daily so you know what’s going on at the school. All staff has copies of the academic calendar. Reminders and changes will be posted on the office calendar.

### **Campus Clean Up**

Teachers are responsible for their own classroom clean up and garbage. In addition, each classroom is responsible for cleaning the area immediately surrounding the classroom. Time can be set aside each day for students to assist with these tasks. **Classes will also be assigned to sharing responsibility for daily cleaning of playgrounds and common areas. Please mark your assigned weeks on your calendars.** Garbage should be placed in trash cans outside of the classrooms. Recycled materials should be taken to the cafeteria and placed in the proper containers. Maintenance/security will remove trash bags from cans, take the bags to the dumpsters, and wash out the trashcans. Bags are available in the office.

### **Canteen Cards**

Staff and students may purchase canteen cards for \$5.00-\$20.00. The cards may be used to pay for breakfast and snack items.

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### **Cell Phones and I Pods**

Students are not allowed to use cell phones and I-Pods during school hours. If students are found using these items, they will be confiscated and held in the office until the end of the day. Second offenses will result in holding the phones in the office until the parents have been notified and come to pick them up.

### **Child Protection Policy**

If any kind of child abuse is suspected, teachers must inform the principal of the situation. See Appendix A for complete Child Protection Policy and Procedures

### **Child Study Team\***

Staff with concerns about a child's academic, emotional, social, or behavioral well-being may bring the concerns to a Child Study Team meeting. Referral forms are available in the office. The Special Education teacher coordinates Child Study Team meetings, which are attended by the principal, classroom teacher, previous classroom teacher if possible, Special Education teacher, and other staff as relevant. A CST meeting will not always lead to a Special Education referral, but will result in suggestions for additional ways to support a struggling student.

### **Class Meetings/Talk-Ins**

Class meetings early in the school year are a good idea so that parents can be informed about homework policies, your expectations, communication, and class needs. We attempt to schedule class meetings after most general PTA meeting.

### **Communication**

Please check mailboxes and white board in the office twice a day (morning and afternoon) for messages and announcements.

### **Confidentiality**

On a small island such as Majuro, it is especially important to be aware of the need for confidentiality. All written and oral information about a child is considered confidential.

Care should be taken when discussing students in public places, the office, and anywhere

off campus. A parent or an aunty of the child you are telling stories about may be sitting at the next table in the restaurant, so be careful!

Student files are kept in the cabinet in the office and should not be removed from the office under any circumstances. Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs) for Special Education students are kept in the locked file cabinet in the office. If you would like to review a student's IEP, the file must be checked out and remain in the administration building.

### **Copy Machine**

The copy machine is in the principal's office. Please be respectful of the needs of all in regards to use of the copy machine. Monday morning at 7:45 is not a great time to do your copying for the week- others are probably waiting. Big jobs should be done during non-busy times, and if you are working on a big copy job, please move over briefly for someone who comes in to make one or two quick copies. Teachers have access to the copy machine on week-ends as well.

### **Curriculum**

Though there is a lot of room for creativity and innovation at Co-op, teachers are expected to follow the school's curriculum standards for the assigned grade or subject level. Teachers are also responsible for completing required assessments by assigned deadlines, to maintain assessment records, and to maintain a pass-on portfolio for each student. Each teacher is provided with a binder with grade level standards and curriculum maps (curriculum maps are under development.) Full sets of standards, K-12, are available in the office. English language development, including listening, speaking, grammar, and writing is a required component of all subject areas. Support in this area will be provided by the English Language Program Director. The Saxon Math Curriculum is used by all grade levels at the Co-op School. The use of this curriculum is required by the school board. A Balanced Literacy Approach is used for teaching Literacy. Literacy Program Binders and Guided Reading materials are offered in the Reading Resource Room. Science Kits are available for teaching Science at the elementary level. Each grade level should plan to use at least two kits a year, as determined at Team Planning Time meetings early in the school year.

Lesson plans are required and reviewed by principal and resource staff. Plans should be kept in a binder in the classroom. The submitted plans provide evidence of attention to standards, use of assessments to guide instruction, and teacher reflection. They also help resource staff provides useful suggestions relating to content resources.

### **Discipline Procedures and Behavior Expectations\***

(see student handbook)

Teachers should review School Discipline Policies, Rules, and Expectations with students during the first week of school. Classroom rules and student-friendly ESLRS should be posted and reviewed as well. It is essential that teachers discuss early and frequently the expectations of respect and obedience towards all adults working on campus, including special class teachers, cafeteria workers, and teaching assistants. Please make sure that students understand that respect includes behaviors toward adults, one another, and the school environment. Discrimination,

racism, and classism will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Students need guidance in this area.

**No staff member may use any form of corporal punishment with students under any circumstances.** This includes teachers, teaching assistant, volunteers, security and cafeteria staff, maintenance staff, and office staff.

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Please discuss problems with the principal if there are recurrent disciplinary issues that you are having difficulty handling. Also, if you have concerns about any staff member's behaviors toward any students, please talk to the principal about your concerns.

The principal and high school director have authority to intervene in disciplinary actions.

### **English Language Learners**

With the exception of the Marshallese Studies classes, all instruction at Co-op is in English. Nearly all children (99%) who attend MCS are English Language Learners. Difficulties with English impact their achievement in reading, writing, and the content areas. The impact of English language issues should not be underestimated. This year we are piloting a program that will focus on the English Language needs of our students. The program will involve daily activities in all classrooms, beginning and end of the year assessment, and support for the students with the greatest need in this area. The director of the English Language Program will provide ongoing curricular support and staff training, as well as direct assistance for the students who struggle the most.

### **Expected School Wide Learning Results (ESLRs)**

As a part of our accreditation work, the school community (staff, Board, parents) developed ESLRs. Integration of the ESLRS into daily instruction is a requirement of our accreditation and helps insure student progress and integrity to school mission.

The ESLRS are that students will demonstrate:

- 1) Proficient written and oral communication skills in English
- 2) Effective problem solving, critical thinking and mathematical skills
- 3) Strong social skills to enable students to be contributing, respectful, and responsible members of society.

At the heart of these ESLRs lies the guiding principal that upon leaving the MCS, students will be prepared to be successful students and concerned citizens not only in the Marshall Islands, but also in the international community. ESLRs are reviewed annually with new and returning staff and Board members, parents, and students. Evidence of student understanding of ESLRS should be posted in classrooms and on the ESLR Board in the cafeteria.

## **Evaluation of Staff**

Three-month evaluations will be completed for all teaching staff at the end of the probationary period. Beginning in 2009-2010, we hope to also schedule end of year evaluation and goal setting conferences for all teachers.

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A Teaching Assistant evaluation system will be developed for 2009-2010. Teaching assistant evaluations will be completed by an administrator and a teacher every two years.

## **Field Trips\***

Field trips are an important extension of an educational program. Teachers are encouraged to use field trips throughout the year to enhance units of study. Field trip plans should be noted on the calendar in the office.

Field trips and field trip notices should be cleared with the principal before notes go home. Field trip plans should include destination, educational objectives, cost, time and date, chaperone requests, and mode of transportation.

*Field trip permission slips are required.*

## **Fire Drills and Emergency Evacuation**

We practice emergency evacuations quarterly. Students should meet in the road in front of the school unless notified otherwise.

## **Forms**

All items marked with \* have forms. Copies of forms are located in the registration office and in Appendix D.

## **Fundraising**

Because of the limited budget for supplies, classroom bake sales are organized to raise money for purchase of needed supplies. Bake sales are held on Wednesdays during morning snack. A schedule of bake sales is posted in the office.

Other fundraising activities should be discussed with the principal. All bake sale monies are turned into the Finance Officer. Teachers are asked to keep track of expenditures for this money and save receipts. Board must approve any fundraising aimed to raise \$1000 or more.

## **Grading and Assessments\***

(see also assessment in this handbook and the student handbook)

Report cards are distributed quarterly. Teachers are responsible for maintaining records to justify grades. Teachers are also responsible for completing required assessments and maintaining student portfolios. Mid-quarter reports are sent home for all students who are having difficulty

with grade level work. In the case of middle and high school students, progress reports are sent home for students who are earning a grade lower than a C. Copies of progress reports and report cards are kept in the office. The principal must be notified of progress reports. It is very important that parents are kept informed of student progress and academic concerns on a regular basis.

Middle and high school students are placed on Academic Probation if their GPA falls below 1.7. This means required attendance at Homework Club and non-eligibility for extra-curricular activities.

### **Health and Guidance**

Health classes are offered to students from 6th through high school. Teachers in grades P-5 will be provided with curriculum support for health and guidance units.

A counselor from Youth to Youth is scheduled to spend one day at week at Co-op. Students may be referred to the counselor for support. The counselor assists with Youth Health Education (6th-10th grades) and is available to talk privately with students.

Public Health nurses visit the school frequently to provide immunizations, vitamins, fluoride treatments, de-worming treatments, and dental screenings. Vision and hearing screenings are scheduled every two years.

We are hoping to work more closely with the Wellness Center in planning healthy lunches and snacks and engaging students in physical fitness activities.

*See hygiene. Hygiene and prevention of the spread of communicable disease are part of each class' health curriculum.*

### **Homework\***

Homework is assigned so that students have additional opportunities to practice skills learned in class. Children should not be learning new skills with homework assignments. Homework is a useful way for parents to stay involved with their child's educational program and progress.

Middle and high school teachers should coordinate with one another on large project assignments. Homework is mandatory at this level, and should be assigned almost every day. Students in 5<sup>th</sup> grade through high school have planners for recording assignments and communicating with parents. Teachers and parents should check the planners every day. Students need guidance in the use of the planners and daily homework sheets.

Homework assignments are recorded daily in student communication/assignment journals and signed by parents. (see Student Handbook, Parent-Teacher Communication.) Teachers should post homework assignments for all classes in a regular place in the classrooms.

### **Housing**

See housing guidelines, Appendix B. It is very important that trash is not left outside of houses, as this attracts rodents. Please take your personal garbage to the dumpster every day. We remind you that there should be no smoking inside the houses.

### **Hygiene**

Students should be instructed in proper use of bathrooms, hand washing, garbage disposal, and ways to prevent the spread of communicable disease. (No dry cool-aid, use and disposal of

### **Internet**

Our internet is dial-up in the office (we pay by the minute) and “high speed” (not) in the computer lab. We pay by the month for the internet in the computer lab, and hope that teachers will take advantage of this benefit to look for resources, check personal mail, and more. It is very slow and you have to be very patient. Please try to limit your use of the internet during school hours whenever possible, especially if there is a class in the library. The computer lab should be available for students and classes during school hours. There are a few places on island where you have access to wireless internet, but it is still very slow. Sometimes you will have to use the internet in the office if the lab is exceptionally slow. We try to accommodate you in the office whenever possible.

### **Job Descriptions**

See Appendix C.

### **Laptops and Digital camera**

The school has six laptops for student use. These must be scheduled and checked out. We hope you will set up learning stations in your classrooms or make assignments that require students to use the laptops for reports and power-point presentations. There are also six computers with internet access for student use in the library. You may sign up to use the computer lab for your classes as well.

Please remember to reserve and sign out the laptops, and sign them back in upon return. If there are any problems with the computers or laptops, we ask that you report these problems promptly.

Teachers are welcome to check out laptops for overnight and weekend projects. Laptops must be returned before 7:45 a.m. on week days. If you check out a laptop on weekends, please only do so for one day in case others are waiting.

Please monitor student use of computers and laptops to be sure they are not using inappropriate websites, screensavers, and language. Computer use is a privilege.

The school owns one basic digital camera. Staff is welcome to borrow the camera for school projects.

### **Lesson Plans\***

Careful planning is necessary for effective teaching. All teachers are expected to write weekly

lesson plans. Lessons to be taught, assignments, and schedules should be explicitly noted. It is critical that lesson plans be left on the desk at the end of each day in the event that a teacher has an unplanned absence. Grade level standards must be referenced when making lesson plans.

Currently, teachers complete a weekly lesson plan using the standardized lesson plan form and turn in more generalized plans at the end of each week. These and past lesson plans are kept in binders in the library and may be used as resources for teachers. We will begin the school year following these guidelines, but lesson planning and documentation will be addressed in a Focus Group to improve the process.

### **Library**

Staff is welcome to use the school library, and may schedule student groups to use the library on a regular or as-needed basis. Most materials in the library have been donated, and library resources are limited. We do not have library staff. Therefore, students must be supervised in the library at all times. Teachers are responsible for re-shelving books used by their students and making sure that the space is kept clean and welcoming for other groups.

We do not allow any food or drinks in the library or computer lab.

### **Lunch and Snack Program**

Lunch is provided to students and is included in their monthly tuition. Snacks are available for sale in the kitchen. Students are not allowed to leave campus during the school day to go to the store. Soda, gum and candy should not be eaten on campus except under special circumstances. Dry Kool-aid is banned from the campus.

Teachers and staff are welcome to eat school lunch at no charge. Guests are \$3.00. Breakfast and snack items are available for purchase.

### **Maintenance**

Because of the many demands on Custodian's time, maintenance requests should be approved by the principal or office assistant, so that requests can be prioritized.

### **Marshallese Studies**

Co-op offers a program in Marshallese Studies. This is mandated for all schools in the Marshall Islands. The teacher instructs the students in culture and history of the Marshall Islands, as well as in reading and writing Marshallese. There is no formal teacher training program for Marshallese Studies, and teaching materials are not available. Ideas and feedback are greatly appreciated. The Marshallese instructor also appreciates assistance and support with discipline problems and in some cases, the assignment of a teaching assistant.

## **Math**

MCS uses the Saxon Math program for all grades and levels except preschool. All teachers are required to implement the Saxon Math curriculum. Leveled math groups are provided for upper elementary, middle and high school students.

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## **Office Passes\***

It is very helpful to the people in the office if, when teachers send students to the office, they always send them with a pass and written explanation. Please let us know if the child is sick, needs the phone, has been creating problems, etc.

## **Parent Communication\***

Communication Journals/Assignment Notebooks have been successful methods of communicating with parents. Teachers are asked to meet with parents after school or during planning periods, but not during class periods. Class newsletters are encouraged. Copies of written correspondence and class newsletters will be filed in the office. Please inform the principal if you find yourself in an uncomfortable situation/conversation with a parent. Please inform parents of difficulties a child is experiencing and offer suggestions on how parents can better follow up at home. Co-op parents like to be kept informed.

Upper elementary, middle and high school students have planners. Teachers should check planners every day, and students should copy daily assignments into their planners.

## **Parent Teacher Association**

All teachers are members of the PTA and attend PTA meetings. Classes/groups are from time to time be called upon to do performances/presentations at PTA meetings. PTA meetings are held 4-5 times a year and are usually scheduled around fundraisers and school wide events. Each class has a PTA representative, and this group forms the PTA Board. The PTA Board requests that one teacher serve on this Board.

## **Pass-On Portfolios**

Pass on portfolios were initiated at the end of 2007. Please review the portfolios for your students and keep up to date with work samples.

## **Private Tutoring and Outside Employment**

Teachers may offer private tutoring services for a fee to students as long as it is clearly communicated to families that this is a private arrangement, not provided by Co-op. When considering your fee for tutoring, please keep in mind that monthly tuition is \$200 per student. Tutoring arrangements should not interfere with teachers' availability to answer student questions, provide short term assistance, and attend required meetings.

Staff contracts state that teachers may seek outside employment, provided that this employment does not interfere with contract hours and other contract requirements. Many teachers enjoy working at the college, wellness center, and other agencies. The contract also states that outside

employment should be discussed with the principal prior to acceptance. We strongly discourage teachers from seeking outside employment during the first semester of the first year of employment at Co-op.

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### **Professional Development and Professional Development Plan\***

Professional development is provided during staff meetings, in-service days, team planning time, and through implementation of professional development plans.

Individual Professional Development Plans are due on October 1 for all educational staff. Completion of activities in plans is due on May 1.

Teachers may form professional development teams to work on common goals.

### **Reading**

Reading instruction at Co-op utilizes a Balanced Literacy model. Differentiation of instruction according to each child's "instructional" reading level is implemented through flexible Guided Reading Groups. There is a Reading Resource Room with leveled reading materials, resource and professional development materials, and balanced literacy binders. Teachers may check out appropriate materials for each student or group of students. Reading assessment is ongoing, using running records and comprehension assessments.

We currently have support staff that help provide reading support and leveled reading groups. Children who are below grade level should be referred for additional support.

### **Recess Supervision**

Students are supervised on the playground and in the cafeteria by our teaching assistants. Too often, students do not follow directions given by teaching assistants. We rely on teachers to support teaching assistants and confront students in these situations.

All of us need to be aware of student safety. If you cross the playground and notice that there are no or too few playground supervisors, please try to find someone to cover- or help cover yourself! Tell the principal or office assistant if you see a problem with supervision or safety.

### **Special Education and Support for At Risk Students**

Students with IEPs will receive support through the Special Education program. At-risk students who do not qualify for Special Education may receive support through the At-Risk teacher. (See "Student Support.") Students with significant English language deficiency will receive instruction through the English Language Program

### **Staff Meetings and Focus Groups**

Wednesdays after school are set aside for staff meeting and Focus Group Work. Focus group work may include work on curriculum and instruction, assessment, student support, parent

involvement, school climate, meeting the needs of ELLs.

### **Standards**

The Majuro Cooperative School is using U.S Content standards to guide instruction. Teachers are provided with grade level (elementary) and subject standards (middle -high school) that should be kept in each classroom.

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### **Standardized Testing and Assessments**

Students in grade K-9 takes the SAT-10 every spring. These tests help us measure our students' achievement against students in the United States. In addition, students in grades 3, 5, and 8 take MI-SATs (Marshall Islands SATs.) All students in grades K-9 are assessed by teachers three times a year using Basic Reading Inventory (BRI) or Fontas and Pinnell Reading benchmarks. LAS Links assessments are used to screen students with English Language needs. Pass -on portfolios for all students help us assess individual student growth over time. Math progress is monitored with weekly Saxon tests, as well as pre/post tests and final exams for upper grades. Teachers use a variety of in-class assessment, which may include tests, projects, observation, reports, and presentations. Assessments are an important part of our educational program and are used to help guide our instruction. Teachers interested in seeing past SAT and Reading Assessment results for your students, class, and the school as a whole may find assessment binders in the office.

### **Student Support\***

If teachers are concerned about a student's academic progress, behavior, or emotional or social well-being, they may request a **Child Support Team meeting**. Participants at the meeting may include: classroom teacher, Special Education teacher, principal, former teachers, team members, and sometimes a parent. Referral forms for Special Education, At-Risk Student Support, English Language Support, and Counseling may be completed at the meeting. The Director of Special Education coordinates Child Support Team meetings. Team Planning meetings times are often used for Child Support Team meetings for the middle and high school students.

### **Summer School**

Co-op does offer summer school to students who struggle and to students who are identified as likely to lose progress over the summer, perhaps due to limited English exposure at home. Teachers who are interested in teaching summer school receive extra pay. Summer school for 2010 is planned for July, which will allow summer staff to have a full month off for travel in June.

### **Teaching Assistants and Related Arts Staff**

We have been blessed with many dedicated and committed teaching assistants. They work in classrooms, on the playground, and with students who need extra support. Many of the teaching assistants have been here for several years and have seen a lot of teacher turnover. It can be challenging to work under brand new sets of expectations, teaching styles, and with cultures different than their own. Most teaching assistants are English Language Learners themselves, and can provide assistance in working with and understanding the needs of English Language

Learners. Most are high school graduates and some have completed a year at the Community College. They appreciate very specific directions, respect for their culture and prior experiences, and that teachers check with them for understanding. Please remember to compliment your teaching assistants frequently and be vigilant about hurt feelings and misunderstandings.

Teaching assistants greatly appreciate in-service opportunities geared to their needs. If you have suggestions for appropriate trainings, please share these ideas.

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Related Arts staff teaches Marshallese, PE, Music, and Art. Teaching assistants and Related Arts staff appreciate classroom teacher support with difficult student behaviors. Please check in with them frequently.

### **Team Planning Times\***

Teachers meet with grade level similar teams once a week for planning, professional support and training, and resource sharing. Resource staff and principal are scheduled to attend TPT meetings. TPT's minutes are turned in to the office.

### **Telephone use for students**

It gets crowded and busy in the office, so we try to limit student use of the telephone. If you are sending a student to use the phone, she or he should come with a pass explaining that. Remind students that they are not allowed to use the phone without permission.

After 3:30, students may use the phone to call for rides. There is a 25 cent charge for this.

### **Textbooks\***

Teachers must keep track of textbooks when they are issued to students. Teachers should keep accurate records of textbook numbers and condition of textbooks. Students are responsible for returning textbooks in reasonable condition or they will be required to pay replacement costs. Upper grade teachers should do "textbook" checks every few months.

### **Uniforms and Dress Code**

All students wear school uniforms every day. If they are not wearing their uniform, they must come to the office and buy one. Teachers may dress casually and neatly, with respect to the culture and values of the Marshall Islands. This means women do not wear shorts (long shorts and capris pants are okay) and revealing clothing. Men dress neatly and wear shirts on school grounds. **Men must wear long pants and women must wear dresses/skirts anytime you visit the Capital, International Convention Center, or Nitijela. This includes field trips**

### **Vehicle**

The school has one vehicle. It is "designated" for use for **school business only during school hours** and principal use after hours. After hours, the principal often leaves the car on campus to save on gas and to allow others to use it for shopping, laundry, and other daily living errands. Gas

is very expensive. The vehicle must be signed out whenever it is used, and reimbursement for personal use is expected. Please be respectful of others when using the car, clean out after use, report maintenance problems, and return keys to the office as soon as you return. Do not keep the car for more than two hours on weekends unless you are sure that no one else is waiting.

### **Volunteers**

The use of parent and community volunteers is encouraged. Staff is encouraged to invite guest speakers, guest readers, and others to visit class, in addition to inviting parents to help in the classroom or school.

### **WASC**

WASC stands for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. We are an accredited school through WASC. Accreditation is a very important for our students, teachers and to the families who spend a great deal of money to send their children here. It means our credits are transferable, and that teaching here "counts" on salary scales internationally.

It means that we hold our teachers and students to a set of standards and we are accountable to those students. Majuro Co-op School and Assumption School are currently the only accredited schools in the Marshall Islands. All staff will be involved in tasks relating to accreditation work. In-service on WASC requirements and activities will be provided. Teachers will have the opportunity to review the most recent WASC visiting team report, our Action Plan, Community Profile, and the Focus on Learning Report.

### **We Are Guests Here**

Please remember that most of us are guests in this country. Try to act the way you would if you were a guest in someone's home. You would respect their values, dress codes, and ways of interacting, even though these expectations are quite different than in our own home. As long as we do our best to respect the customs without being judgmental, we will get along fine, even if we make mistakes. When in doubt- please ask!

### **Writing**

In 2009, we identified writing as a big instructional gap at Co-op, especially at the elementary level. For SY 2009-2010, we will focus on improving writing instruction for students through professional development, co-planning, and sharing of resources and ideas.



