

BIG THOMPSON ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL OF NATURE AND STEM
PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK



7702 U.S. Hywy 34
Loveland, CO 80537
(970) 613-5600



(revised 8/2017)

INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been prepared to provide students, parents, and guardians with important information about the Big Thompson Elementary School of Nature and S.T.E.M. As you probably know, our mascot is the Ram. All students should be RAMSmart (Responsible, Attitude to Achieve, Manners and Safety) at all times. In this handbook, you will find helpful information regarding our procedures, expectations, and activities. It is important that students, parents, and guardians study this handbook and keep it for future reference. Parents and guardians should discuss the handbook with their children. All students are responsible for knowing and abiding by the procedures and expectations set forth in this book. Students, if you follow the rules, then you too will be a strong Big T Ram!

Big T's Vision

Big T provides a unique learning environment by integrating STEM, nature, and wellness through an inclusive, collaborative community of students, staff, parents, and local partnerships. We are committed to excellence using 21st century skills emphasizing inquiry based, hands-on, and student-focused learning.

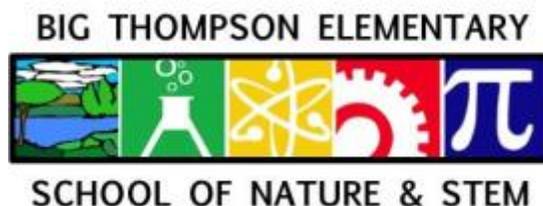
Thompson School District's Vision

Empower to Learn ...Challenge to Achieve...Inspire to Excel

Principal's Note

Welcome to Big Thompson Elementary School of Nature and STEM, affectionately known as Big T. We are unique, as we are not only a school but the hub of a community. We are also family. As our vision states, we are committed to excellence.

At any time should you have a question, concern, compliment or just want to chat, my door is always open. You may also contact me by phone: 613-5603 or email: sarah.walgast@thompsonschoools.org. We hope your experience and time at Big T is nothing but memorable and successful!





FACULTY AND STAFF

Administrative Staff

Sarah Walgast, Principal

Office Support Personnel

Debi Rom, Secretary

MaryAnn Zweigle, SHOA (School Health Office Aide)

Lexy Donnelly, Faculty Assistant

Heather Adsit, Nurse

Classroom Teachers

Grade	Teacher
K (half day)	Christina Helling
K (full day)	Laura Edwards
1st	Anne Messerli
1 st /2 nd	Michelle Stroik
2nd	Karla Leonard
3rd	Cody Wild
3rd/4th	Lisa Coalwell
4th	MaryKay Farrer
5th	Michael Kurtz
5th	Laura Wynkoop

Specials Teachers/Staff

Art- Susan Hunt

Physical Education- Tim Jones

Music- Tiffany Lahman

Library/Computer- Ava Wild

Support Personnel

Maralee Powell, Learning Center Teacher

Susan Shier, Learning Center Aide

Tammy Goddard, Speech Pathologist

Karlie Lindgren, Occupational Therapist

Shandra Cast, Psychologist

JB Carrico, Counselor

Diana Ritschard, Gifted and Talented/ Interventionist

Rona Anderson, Instructional Coach

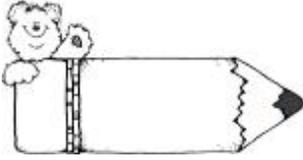
Custodial Staff

Mike Cramer, Lead Custodian

TBD, Night Custodian

Cafeteria Staff

April Hill, Manager



Daily Schedule

8:30 A.M. Breakfast Begins
8:38 A.M. Staff on duty
8:48 A.M. Warning Bell/End of Breakfast
8:50 A.M. Class begins
12:05 A.M.-1:05 P.M. Lunch
3:50 PM Dismissal Bell

Meal Prices:

Student lunch - \$2.75 (includes a drink)
Adult lunch- \$3.35 (without a drink) \$3.90 (with a drink)
Milk- \$.60
Juice- \$.50
Water- \$.30
Breakfast- \$1.50



Lunch/Recess Schedule

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Lunch</u>	<u>Recess</u>
Kinder:	12:05-12:30p.m.	12:30-12:45p.m.
1st:	12:10-12:30p.m.	12:30-12:45p.m.
1st/2nd:	12:15-12:35p.m.	12:35-12:50p.m.
2nd:	12:20-12:40p.m.	12:40-12:55p.m.
3rd:	12:30-12:50p.m.	12:50-1:05p.m.
4th:	12:35-12:55p.m.	12:55-1:10p.m.
3rd/4th:	12:40-1:00p.m.	1:00-1:15p.m.
5K & 5W:	12:50-1:10p.m.	1:10-1:25p.m.

Procedures and Expectations

Arrival

- Students will report directly to the cafeteria for breakfast or the playground when they arrive at school.
- If you are dropping off your child and you arrive before 8:38 a.m., you must stay with him/her in the lobby or cafeteria as teachers are not on duty until 8:38 a.m. At 8:38 a.m. you may take them to the playground where there are staff members on duty.
- Also if you are dropping off your child, it is best to drop him/her off in the back parking lot. When doing so, pull all the way up to the end of the fence (in the parking lot) before allowing your child to exit your car. Allowing children to exit your car in the middle of the parking lot is a safety risk.
- Some days, there may be inclement weather. An announcement will be made regarding the arrival procedure for the day on such days.
- Please respect teachers' morning prep time before school, and allow them to focus on their students at the start of the day, as the bell rings. If you need to talk with your child's teacher, please make an appointment to do so.
- Parking at Big T is tight, please park in designated areas. The designated areas are the front and back parking lots as well as some areas along the road (please note the signs). The parking lot across Masonville Road is private property. Please be respectful of our neighbors.
- If you must walk through the parking lots, please do not allow your children to run/walk ahead of you and be alert for cars moving in and out of the parking lots.
- When the morning bell rings, students will line up in front of their classroom sign on the black top (on the lower playground).
- Students who arrive at school **after 8:50 a.m.** must sign in at the office and receive a **tardy note**. The school will investigate situations that result in excessive tardies.

Dismissal

- Instruction ends at 3:50 p.m.
- Car riders must exit through the front door when the bell rings. Parents, please make sure Ms. Rom sees you with your child before departing.
- Bus riders will be escorted by their teacher to the bus loading area in the back parking lot.
- Two teachers will be on duty with the bus riders until all buses have departed the parking lot.
- As mentioned under "Arrival," parking at Big T is tight, please park in designated areas. The designated areas are the front and back parking lots as well as some areas along the road (please note the signs). The parking lot across Masonville Road is private property. Please be respectful of our neighbors.
- And again mentioned under "Arrival," if you must walk through the parking lots, please do not allow your children to run/walk ahead of you and be alert for cars moving in and out of the parking lots.

Early Dismissal

Students who are being dismissed early must be signed out in the main office by an **approved adult**. If a student must regularly be dismissed early, his/her parent or guardian must make such arrangements with Mrs. Walgast for the early dismissal.

Transportation Changes

- The school should be notified of any permanent changes to a child's transportation.
- Temporary changes to a child's transportation must be verified with a note from the child's parent or guardian. **Example:** *If a child who usually rides the bus is being picked up by a family member for 2 days, then his/her parent or guardian should detail the change in a note and bring it to the school.*
- If there is an emergency change in a child's transportation, the parent or guardian must **notify the school before 3:30pm.**

Communication

Home-school communication is vital to success of our children. At Big T, we will communicate with you in a variety of ways:

- The school website.
- Teachers may have classroom newsletters.
- “Friday Folders” come home every Friday with important news and information.
- Ms. Rom emails the “Big T Weekly” each Friday that contains whole school information, events, dates and times and reminders.
- Parent Portal in Infinite Campus which will be available in October (there will be more information to follow)
- Periodically, we will send an automated voicemail.
- Please make sure we have an up-to-date and functioning email and phone number for your household.

Another great way to communicate with other families - Join the Big T group on Facebook and Twitter!



[Twitter](#)@bigthompsonrams

Visits

- All visitors must check in at the office upon entering the building using our computer monitoring system.
- Visitors other than parents or guardians must provide name and ID before visiting students.
- Visits to classrooms must be scheduled with the child’s teacher or arranged by the administration.
- You are welcome to eat lunch with your child. Please sign-in at the office before proceeding to the cafeteria.

Attendance

- Students are expected to come to school every day.
- The Thompson School District Board of Education and the staff at Big T believe that regular and punctual attendance contributes strongly to student academic success and builds habits important for later life. Frequent tardiness or absence disrupts the continuity of learning, and often the work missed cannot be made up.
- Students who miss school must bring a note signed by their parent/guardian on the day that they return to school. Absence notes will be collected by the homeroom teacher and submitted to the office or a parent/guardian must call the office (970) 613-5600 on the day of the absence.
- Parents will get a phone call from Ms. Rom if their child is absent unless they call the office at the number listed above. You may leave a voicemail message when doing so.
- Students who miss **6 days** during the school year for any reason will receive a letter regarding their attendance and be put on alert with the truancy officer for the district. School attendance is necessary for success as nothing replaces learning in the classroom.



Student Behavior

- Students should behave according to our Positive Behavior Interventions Support matrix (on the next page).
- Hats are not to be worn inside the building. Coats should be taken off and put away upon entering the classroom. Children are allowed to bring a sweater or light jacket to wear in case classrooms are too cool.
- Any student moving through the building without direct supervision must have a visible **hall pass**.
- Students will not be allowed to use the phone without permission from a staff member. The nurse or secretary will contact parents of sick children to make arrangements for early dismissal.
- Toys, electronic games, and other personal items that cause distractions at school should be left at home. These items may be confiscated. **The school is not responsible for stolen or damaged personal property that does not belong at school.**
- Cell phones, iPads, tablets are allowed in the classroom as long as they are being used to enhance learning. If these devices become a distraction, the teacher will take the device and notify the parent/guardian. If your child has a cell phone at school, please refrain from calling them during school hours. Should you need to speak to your child during school hours, please call the office (970) 613-5600 and we will get a message to them or allow you to talk with your child. Unless the cell phone is being used for learning, students are instructed to turn their phones off during school hours
- Each student will help to keep the building neat, clean and attractive by cleaning up after themselves and encouraging others to do the same. Students should practice this cleanliness in classrooms, hallways, restrooms, the cafeteria, buses, and the playground.

Discipline

- Students who misbehave will receive consequences according to the steps in our PBIS plan listed below. PBIS stands for Positive Behavior Intervention Support. Our PBIS program promotes positive behavior by providing incentives for positive behaviors while intervening to change inappropriate behaviors.

Note: *The following steps are based on behavior that is not improving. Once behavior improves, the steps start over.*

Step 1- Redirection, teacher- student conference, time out

Step 2- Refocus to another setting, parent contact

Step 3- Office referral after 3 refocuses for the same behavior, parent contact

****The following offenses will result in an immediate referral to the office****

- ◆ Assault
- ◆ Fighting
- ◆ Severe disrespect of a staff member
- ◆ Weapon possession
- ◆ Sexual harassment
- ◆ Damage to property
- ◆ False alarms; such as fire alarm, bomb threat
- ◆ Theft, dishonest possessions of items

The PBIS plan does not supersede Thompson School District Policies and Procedures or the authority of the school's administration.

Note: Discipline is handled on an individual level to meet the needs of students just as is instruction for learning. We have implemented the “Well Managed Schools” program which emphasizes the explicit teaching of social skills, preventative prompting and praise. At times the Restorative Justice process may be used. This process allows students to right their wrongs, take responsibility for their actions and create and carry out a plan to make the right choice.

PBIS: Positive Incentives

- Classroom rewards- teacher incentives
- Positive behavior recognitions: (thermometer in cafeteria for rewards)
- Positive Office Referrals
- Principal’s 100- When a student receives a positive office referral, her/her name is placed on the “Principal’s 100”board in the hallway between the front lobby and the gym. Once a row or column is filled, the 10 students in the row or column have lunch with the principal.
- Golden RAMSmart ticket: RAMSmart behavior per semester
- VIP lunch table

Big Thompson Elementary School Positive Behavior Support Matrix

	All Settings	Hallways	Playground	Cafeteria	Bathrooms	Computer/ Library	Bus
R Responsible (actions & behavior)	Obey adults. Be kind. Treat others as you want to be treated.	Walk. Give space to others. Respect work displayed in halls.	Share equipment. Follow rules. Include everyone. Find solutions together.	Follow adult directions. Keep hands to yourself. Clean up your space	Be neat. Respect privacy of others.	Treat equipment properly. Raise your hand. Be kind to one another	Keep hands and feet to yourself. Treat others the way you want to be treated. Share seats.
A Attitude to Achieve	Have a plan to meet expectations. Give your best effort.	Walk quickly and quietly. Stay with your group.	Line up promptly. Use good sportsmanship. Be fair.	Help keep cafeteria clean. Eat your food. Be polite. Follow posted rules.	Quick trip! Flush! Wash hands!	Be prepared. Listen. Follow directions with a positive attitude Complete work without talking.	Be responsible for your own items. Clean up after yourself. Follow adult directions.
M Manners (Polite words)	Use "Please", "Thank you", and "Excuse me". Show gratitude. Give compliments.	Silent voices. Try "Please be quiet", and "I can't talk to you right now" Signal quiet.	Use kind words, such as "Please join us", "May I have a turn", & "Good catch!"	Use small, 6-inch voices. Raise your hand. Use "Please", "Thank you", and "Excuse me".	Clean up. Take turns. Small voices. Be neat.	Say, "I need help, please". Wait silently in line. Use quiet voices.	Use kind and appropriate words. Use inside voices. Try, "Your voice is too loud", "quiet please", "May I sit here?"
S Safety	Keep hands and feet to yourself. Follow directions.	Keep personal space; hands and feet to yourself. Walk to the right. One stair step at a time.	Use equipment correctly. Walk on sidewalks. Obey adults.	Walk. Raise your hand if you need help. Sit appropriately.	Turn water off. Throw paper towels in the trash.	Push in chairs. Treat equipment carefully.	Stay seated. Face forward. Keep body parts inside the bus.

Academics

- Our curriculum for Literacy and Math is based on the **Common Core State Standards (CCSS)** (http://www.cde.state.co.us/contentareas/ccss_in_the_colorado_standards) The CCSS is a rigorous curriculum that includes several **shifts** in how teaching and learning takes place.
- We are a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) school using the **Next Generation Science Standards** as well as the Colorado State Standards for science <http://www.nextgenscience.org>
 - STEM Learner Profiles- These qualities prepare STEM students to make exceptional contributions to school:
 - Communicator
 - Collaborative
 - Critical Thinker
 - Empathetic
 - Flexible
 - Globally Aware
 - Innovative
 - Integrity
 - Perseverance
- Literacy, math, science and social studies are integrated when possible (see the STEM map below).
- Big T also uses a variety of programs for children to practice and improve their skills. These programs include: Lexia, MobyMax, Soar to Success, Accelerated Reader, Reading Corps (for K-3rd grades), after-school tutoring
- iReady to monitor progress in reading and math as well as unit tests from Math Expressions.
- Specials: Art, Music, Physical Education (PE), Library and Computers: Art meets once a week for one hour. All other specials meet twice a week for thirty minutes. Sneakers are strongly recommended for PE. Students may check out two books every week during Library
Note the counselor does visit classrooms to teach lessons or facilitate Community Circles
- Standards Based Scoring and Competency Based Education-see the school district web site for more information: www.thompsonschoools.org
- Thompson 2 Life-see the school district website for more information: www.thompsonschoools.org.

Secure the Perimeter//Shelter-In-Place/Evacuation Drills

- We take every precaution to ensure the safety of our students during the normal school hours. Monthly drills are carried out to make certain students learn proper safety procedures. When we have had a practice drill, Ms. Rom will communicate this with a brief email via ParentLink.
- *Note: If your child rides a bus, the Transportation Department is required to run bus drills as well*

Security

- Controlled Access- The only access to the school during school hours is through the front door.
- While in the building, **please do not allow anyone access to the building through any other door.**
- Please do not prop open any door.
- Larimer County Sheriff- Periodically you will see officers in our building. Their presence is for our safety and familiarity. We want our students to associate their presence with comfort and friendship.

School Closure Information

- School closure information will be posted on the school district website: www.thompsonschoools.org as well as on local television and radio stations.
- You will also receive an automated telephone call, text and/or email from ParentLink (the school district's platform for communication).



Dress Code

- Students are encouraged to dress in a neat and attractive manner that reflects pride in themselves and their school. Clothing needs to permit the student to participate in all school related activities, regardless of weather.
- Proper gym shoes should be worn for physical education classes. While flip flops, Crocs, and sandals are permitted, students should bring gym shoes to school on days when they participate in P.E. classes. Students are not allowed to be barefoot on the playground or in any other school setting due to safety and sanitation issues.
- Shirts with spaghetti straps, shirts that show off the mid-section, or shirts too revealing are not appropriate attire for a school setting. Short shorts also fall into this category.
- Overly baggy pants that reveal a student's underwear are also inappropriate for school.
- Hats should be removed when inside the building unless part of a celebration or event or necessary for an individual due to special circumstances. Hats are allowable outside. Should a student want to wear a hat outside, he/she may bring it to the cafeteria, but it is to be worn only when he/she goes outside.
- Students who wear shirts with inappropriate statements or pictures that cause or have the potential to cause disruption to the learning of others will be asked to wear the shirt inside out or will be provided with another shirt if one is available.
- If you have any questions about a student's appearance and what is or is not acceptable, please let me know. I would be happy to discuss specific situations.

Field Trips

- Signed permission forms are required for all field trips and if you are planning to chaperon or attend any field trip, you must sign-up through the volunteer system, VITAL. This is done online through the school district website: www.thompsonschoools.org
- In order to volunteer for a field trip, you must sign-up through VITAL at least 48 hours prior to the date of the field trip

Field Trip!

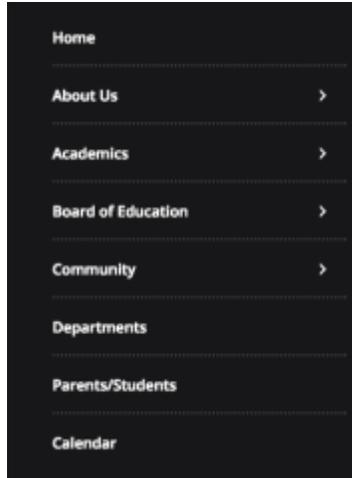
Recess

- Students go outside everyday, weather permitting. Please ensure that they have the proper clothing to do so, especially in the winter months.
- Colorado weather is unpredictable. Parents are encouraged to make sure that their child is prepared for changes in the weather since we do have outside recess unless the temperature is extreme (below 15 degrees including the wind chill). Appropriate dress for snowy days include hats, gloves, winter coats, and snow boots. If your child is not properly dressed for the weather, he/she will still go outside, but will be restricted to staying on the blacktop. If you are unable to provide appropriate dress for snowy days, please let the office know.



Snacks/Food from home

- Healthy snacks and water are allowed in the classroom. To find district policy and recommendations, visit the Thompson School District website. Go to Explore, Parents/Students Directory, Wellness. There you will find the information.



Birthdays

- In order to be in compliance with the district and state wellness plans, we will recognize student's birthday on morning announcements.
- Per elementary district handbook:
 - Require that all food brought in for celebrations be pre-packaged and sealed, and consist of healthy options (fruits and vegetables, whole grains, etc.). Water shall be the beverage of choice. Schools shall inform parents/guardians of school celebration guidelines.
 - * Please read the district Elementary Handbook for guidelines. Contact district Wellness Department with any questions.
- Teachers may honor your child within the classroom. Please inquire with your child's classroom teacher as to what his/her expectations are.
- Be creative, but be healthy please!
- Should your child be having a birthday party outside of school, invitations may be passed out at school **only if the entire class is being invited.**

Clubs and Organizations

- Fun Clubs
- LEGO Robotics
- Destination Imagination (DI)
- 100 Mile Club
- Chess Club
- Be Strong, Be Fit

Illness/Medication/Immunization:

- **Illness:**
 - Please keep your child home if he/she is ill. While attendance is important, it is in the best interest of everyone that the student remain home when he/she is ill.
 - If your child becomes ill at school, we will care for your child and attempt to contact you immediately so you can pick up your child. Please make sure that we have an emergency contact information for your child. This includes persons to contact if you are unavailable.
- **Medication:**
 - Should it be necessary for your child to take any kind of medication at school, please do the following:
 - Obtain TSD order forms and have them filled out by your doctor. You can get the forms on the TSD website of in the health office. **NO MEDICATION WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT ORDERS.**
 - The medicine container should be in the original container and labeled with child's name, name of medicine, and instructions for the medicine (over-the-counter or prescription)
 - The medicine should be brought directly to the school office where the medication will be kept in a locked cabinet.
- **Immunizations:**
 - Please bring up to date copies of immunizations to the health office
 - **IF YOUR CHILD IS EXEMPT:** go to www.colorado.gov/cdphe/vaccine-exemptions and sign off exemption. Bring copy of sign off from CIIS (Colorado Immunization Information System) to health office.

Conferences

- Parent/Teacher Conferences – October 13, 2017
- Parent/Teacher Conferences - March 19, 2018

Pictures

- As many of you attend events at Big T, you take pictures to remember them. While you are more than welcome to do this, please be mindful of those students/parents/staff members who may not want their pictures public before posting your pictures to social media. If you are not aware of those students who may not be photographed, please ask Ms. Rom

Lost and Found

- Lost and Found is located in the hallway by the cafeteria. Please check it often. Small items (i.e. jewelry) are brought to the main office. Due to space and cleanliness, we will donate all items in lost and found at the end of each trimester.
- Note: to minimize the chances of a jacket, lunchbox, and the like getting lost, please write your child's name these items.

Carpooling

- The Big Thompson Facebook group is a great way to connect with other Big T families. If you wish to find possible carpooling options, post and ask people to message you with contact info if they are interested.



[Twitter@bighthompsonrams](https://twitter.com/bighthompsonrams)

Volunteering:

- **VOLUNTEERS IN THOMPSON SCHOOLS ACCENTUATING LEARNING (V.I.T.A.L.)**
- We recognize that volunteers are an essential part of our school. We encourage parents and others from our community to share their time, knowledge, and abilities for the benefit of our students. We recognize that parents and members of our community have commitments that limit their availability, and that volunteers have different levels of comfort working directly with our students.
- District policy requires every individual who wishes to serve as a volunteer to register and undergo a background check. This process contributes to our overall school safety. Due to the turnaround time of background checks, volunteers must register at least 48 hours prior to taking on volunteer duties. Volunteers do not need to re-register every year.
- Visit Big T's website "PTA" section to find out how to contact Big T's volunteer coordinator.



R Youth Team

- RYouth Team provides before and after school care. Information on this service is available at the main office or at their website (ryouthteam.org)

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

- The Big T Parent Teacher Association is a vital part of our school community. All parents are welcome and urged to join this organization and to attend the monthly meetings. This group supports the school by providing communication, volunteer time, and conducting fund-raising activities. Parents wishing to join this organization are urged to contact any of the parents serving in executive board roles.

School Accountability Committee (SAC)

- Big T has an active and involved committee. The purpose of this group is to serve as an advisory council to the staff and administration as school plans for improvement are developed and goals identified. This group consists of parents, community members, school staff, principal, and area residents. The meetings are held each month and are open to the public.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FEE

The instructional materials fees for the 2016-17 school year were:

Kindergarten (half-day & full-day) - \$16.00 per student

Elementary School (grades 1-5) - \$32.00 per student

The instructional materials fee charged to elementary school student is based on a combination of the purchase price and normal life expectancy of texts (used in intermediate grades), the actual cost of workbooks (used in primary grades) and consumable materials. The instructional materials fee is charged on a per-student basis and goes into the district's general fund for distribution to the curriculum budget for text purchases and schools for additional texts, replacement materials or consumable materials.

Fees will be waived for students qualifying for free or reduced price school meals under the Federal Free or Reduced Price Meal Program. Fees will be pro-rated for students coming on or going off the meal assistance program during the school year.