



Merryhill School®



Parent/Student Handbook

2026-2027

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About this Handbook

This Parent-Student Handbook ("Handbook") serves as your guide to the policies, procedures, and operations of our school ("School"). The Handbook highlights the expectations and practices that support every student's academic achievement, and the school community's safety and well-being. Location- or state-specific information may be communicated separately through School's agreements, policy documents, or other official communications ("School Policies"). Please follow those School Policies alongside the general policies and guidelines described in this Handbook.

A Note on Terminology

Throughout this Handbook, "Parent(s)" or "you" refers to a student's parents, legal guardians, and caregivers identified in the student records. We encourage Parents to review this Handbook carefully, together with the student. References to a "School Leader" may include a Head of School, Principal, Assistant Principal, or another administrator at School.

Purpose and Scope

This Handbook is intended to summarize our general policies and practices as of its publication date. Because no single document can anticipate every situation, School retains discretion to implement additional or different processes depending on the facts and circumstances of a given situation. This Handbook supersedes all prior policies (whether written or oral, expressed or implied) if there is a conflict. The policies in this Handbook set forth the general expectations regarding a student's enrollment at School, but they do not form a contract between School and the Parents or students.

Updates and Revisions

We review and update this Handbook at least annually. We expressly reserve the right to revise or update any portions of our Handbook at any time, with or without notice, unless otherwise required by applicable law. We have also made every reasonable effort to ensure the policies in this Handbook comply with all applicable state, federal, or local laws and regulations¹, and we will interpret and administer them accordingly if any ambiguity or conflict arises.

Confidentiality

Finally, this Handbook is shared with you to support you and your student this school year, and it will remain a property of School. To protect the privacy, safety, and interests of our community, this Handbook may not be used for any other purpose or distributed for commercial use.

¹ For more information about the child care licensing regulations in each state, please see Page 28.

Welcome

Mission & Goals

Our mission is to support the development of lifelong learners by balancing learning and play in a safe, healthy, nurturing, and stimulating environment for students. We develop productive parent-teacher partnerships, communicating and collaborating with Parents to share what their students are learning and discovering and, together with the Parents, foster each student's development.

Based on the shared belief that childhood is an important stage of life, and that each student, family member, and colleague should be respected for their unique qualities, our School and staff members hold themselves to high standards of ethical behavior. We base our work on knowledge of young students' learning and development, and we recognize that students are best understood and supported in a context of family, culture, community, and society. To meet the diverse needs of individual parents, we cooperate with agencies responsible for child welfare and we support parents in connecting with allied professionals.

School has curricular standards of excellence for instruction and for the arranged learning environment which helps students develop confidence in their ability to learn, self-understanding, self-worth, and self-discipline. They also begin to gain an understanding and appreciation of the world around them, including individuals different from themselves. With the implemented curriculum, evidence of learning is found throughout the school.

Non-Discrimination Statement

Our School does not discriminate on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, sex, gender, color, disability, religion, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law in the administration of its educational programs and admissions policies.

We are proud to serve a diverse community and are committed to ensuring every student has access to an excellent education in our programs. As part of that commitment, we offer all programs and services on a non-discriminatory basis and we will make reasonable modification to support students with disabilities as defined under Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA").

For more information on our ADA Modification Process, please reach out to your School Leader.

School Communications

Communication Resources

Our School uses a web-based application ("Portal") that helps us meet a parent's increasing expectations for electronic & mobile communications, and that helps make teacher's daily communication and record-keeping tasks easier. Parents typically receive communication about their student engaged in learning through the Portal. You have access to information about the student's daily routine as well as photos and brief description of a learning highlight from that day. Our teachers may also include additional notes that might be helpful to Parents. You may use the Portal to send notes to the teachers. More information about the Portal is available through School.

We strive to keep Parents informed of upcoming events, activities, and key dates, which can also be found on our School website.

Publication Rights to Images and Recording

We are very proud of our students and their many academic and co-curricular accomplishments. Over the course of the school year, students and their schoolwork may be included in pictures, videos, or articles promoting School. Upon signing the Enrollment Agreement, Parents grant School permission to use photographic images (video or still), audiovisual recordings, verbal statements, and School-related work (e.g., art, written work) of students and parents in School publications (whether in print or online), the School website, social media, other marketing collateral, or other School-related materials. Parents wishing to opt out of this should contact the School Leader. Please see the enrollment agreement for more details.

Also, while we do our best to monitor media coverage of School, please be aware that from time-to-time media companies and other individuals over whom we have no control may take photos or videos of School, students, faculty, and parents while engaged in School-related activities, both on and off campus. Please be aware that should students participate in any School or public event in which other parents, the community, or media are present, School has no control over photographs or videos taken.

Members of the School community (e.g., students, parents, related individuals) may not create and/or run social media accounts, websites and/or email addresses that refer to their enrollment in School or any School activities, or that have School's name in the title of the account, without the advance written consent of School. Any member of the School community who is found to be operating an unauthorized social media account, website, and/or email address must immediately delete the account, website, and/or email address, and such actions may be considered a violation of the Handbook.

To respect the privacy of minor students and our staff, please do not post any recordings you take at School or at School-related events.

Enrollment Policies & Student Records

Enrollment Forms

Enrollment Agreement, Emergency Contacts, and State-required Forms

Parents must complete and submit all required documentation for their student including the application form, enrollment agreement, authorized person(s) for pick-up and drop-off, emergency contact form for their student. Additional forms may be required by your state or School (such as medication authorization, certificate of birth/adoption or other form of identity and age, sunscreen, etc.). Please notify School if there is any change to the information provided on these forms, so that School has the most up-to-date information on file.

Each student's emergency contacts and the list of authorized person(s) for pick-up and drop-off must always be kept current. If you or any of the contacts have moved or have changed their contact information, please notify School immediately. We release a student only to those adults who have prior authorization. Please also review the list of emergency contacts for your student on the Portal and update as needed.

School is not responsible if you fail to update information related to the student's enrollment and academic records. Parents are also required to submit the enrollment paperwork and related fees to continue the student's enrollment next school year, regardless of the date of the enrollment paperwork for the current school year.

Medical & Immunization Records

Prior to enrollment, all students must have an updated medical form on file, including a current list of state-required vaccinations and screenings. All state-required immunizations must be completed unless parents produce the required documentation for applicable exemption. To protect all School community members, we will thoughtfully evaluate new enrollment requests for students who are not fully immunized when a currently enrolled student or staff member has a medically compromised immune system. Should a student who is not fully immunized be present during an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease within School, that student will be temporarily excluded from all School activities until the risk of infection has passed.

Early Withdrawal

Withdrawal during the School Year requires at least 4 weeks advance written notice. Please see the Enrollment Agreement for more information.

There are sometimes reasons that School must remove a student from the program on a short-term or long-term basis, including because the student's behavior is disruptive or jeopardizes the health, safety, or welfare of the student or other students or staff. These consequences are not meant to be punishment or penalization, but merely to keep the student and others around them safe until School and parents can address the behavior.

The School understands that a pause on enrollment, suspension or disenrollment is difficult for the students, Parents, and staff. In an effort to impose these consequences only, when necessary, School will do its best to work with the student and the parents to limit or prevent them.

Student Records

We release our student records only to the student's parent or legal guardian, unless otherwise limited by court order or other applicable laws. Student records mean the student's academic and enrollment records such as: enrollment documents, attendance records, disciplinary records, health and immunization records, progress and final reports, and transcripts. Parents may request a copy of the student's records by contacting School directly.

All information in student records, including family's information, is confidential, and will not be released without your prior written consent. State licensing and regulatory agencies have the authority to inspect our facilities and may audit certain enrollment documents from the student files without prior consent, to confirm compliance with the state regulations. Please note any financial information provided by the family for the payment of tuition and other fees will also remain confidential but is not included in the student records. Rather it is considered the account holder's consumer information.

Curriculum

Consistency of Care

We strive to provide consistency of care to foster stable connections between our teachers and students, between students of similar ages and developmental stages. We also aim to provide developmentally appropriate educational experiences for all our students. To this end, we strive to keep teachers with the same group of students, and to advance students to the next program when appropriate, based on their learning outcomes and developed skills.

To the extent possible, we encourage keeping infants and toddlers with their teaching staff for nine months or longer when possible. Student transition to the next age group is subject to chronological age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. Students who are moving up gradually spend more time in their new classroom.

When students are grouped in similar age levels, the maximum child group sizes and ratios of staff persons align with state licensing requirements. Lead and assistant teachers have primary responsibility for a single group of students. During the day, we stagger staff schedules so that students, especially infants, have as much time as possible with their regular teacher and classroom assistant. During opening and closing times, some age ranges (other than infants) may be combined, with the teacher in that classroom assuming the responsibility of care until the Parents arrive for pick up.

Proprietary Curriculum

Our School employs a proprietary curriculum ("Curriculum"). Our Curriculum is an integrated series of programs for ages six weeks to five years that engages the young learners' senses, mind and body and values the individual student. Each program engages a child's readiness to learn with activities that are fun, challenging, easily understood and meaningful.

Our Curriculum integrates learning across all content areas and supports a deep connection between school and home. Parents receive detailed information about what they can expect from the student at different stages of development, what students are learning in school, and how Parents can encourage learning at home. Our classrooms support the academic, social-emotional, and physical growth of young students. Instilled with a lifelong love of learning, students engage in opportunities to develop a strong sense of self and their community, while connecting learning to real world experiences.

Our Curriculum is built upon Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP), which provide teachers in our general education program the flexibility to differentiate instruction based on developmental stage and to build upon prior skills before advancing to higher-level content and includes opportunities for students to be curious and ask questions. It is built around the following principles:

Well-rounded content	A wide variety of information, skills, and activities are included daily. The breadth of the curriculum keeps students interested and promotes success at the next level.
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Literacy focus	A child-centered, literacy-rich environment where books are readily accessible, materials are labeled with photographs and words, vocabulary development is paramount, and students' writing attempts are apparent. Each week, teachers build rich learning experiences around a different set of central books. The central books provide focus, as well as critical background knowledge for young learners.
Center-based learning	Our students cultivate their natural curiosity by asking questions, investigating, and exploring through interactive experiences in small groups and real materials that engage all their senses.
Clear learning goals	Our Curriculum has a clearly defined set of skills that drive teaching and learning (what students should know and be able to do). These skills are shared openly with parents monthly. We know not all students will master all of the skills, nor will all students move at the same pace of learning, but this transparency helps parents understand what their child is learning and how they are developing.
Assessment for learning	Assessment of student learning and instructional efficacy is authentic, embedded, and regularly recorded. Teachers maintain observation notes, track progress using checklists, and maintain ongoing portfolios of student work. Teachers analyze a student's progress toward the skills and learning outcomes outlined in our Curriculum to determine how to meet their needs.
Personalized learning	Our Curriculum specifies a variety of ways for a more differentiated and personalized learning experience for students. Each classroom environment reflects the unique aspects of the lives of the students served. Students and their cultures are represented in family photographs, dramatic play props, construction center materials, music, and literature. Participation in centers is limited to a few students at a time, and small group instruction is encouraged so teachers can tailor learning experiences.
Social-emotional focus	Accessible class materials and room design foster social and emotional skill development. Students can easily move about the room and engage in social interaction with peers and teachers. Teachers sit with students during snacks and lunchtime, engaging in and modeling appropriate conversation, table etiquette, and safety.
Family communication	Parents receive communication about the student's progress, daily routine, as well as photos and brief description of a learning highlight from the day. We provide opportunities for Parents to contribute in developmental assessments through family conferences and observations.
Effective instructional practices	Essential classroom practices are research-supported activities that promote exemplary teaching, learning, and student interactions within the classroom.

Class Placement and Transitions

We support the development of the whole child and of individuality among young students. It is expected, therefore, that the rate and pattern of development in young students will vary as they grow and develop. Our teachers adapt their instruction to each student's learning ability. Students are placed according to developmental progress and may continue in a placement or repeat that placement if their developmental needs warrant such a decision. Appropriate continuation procedures and forms are used when recommending that a student repeat a program level and decisions are discussed with families.

Student transitions to the next age group is subject to chronological age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability.

At least two weeks in advance, teachers will provide Families with a transition plan outlining the date of the transition and important information about the child's new classroom. We try to transition students when it makes the most sense and is the least disruptive to the child and the classroom.

Most group transitions occur in the fall when the new school year begins. The goal is to keep students together with the group in which they will enter kindergarten.

Play-Based Learning Activities

In our classrooms, play is the foundation of our curriculum. Every developmental domain is supported through play, small group activities, and community-based instructions, which allows students to explore and interact during hands-on experiences.

Through play, young students strengthen social, emotional, cognitive, language, and motor skills—the skills needed for success in school and in life. They learn to solve problems, regulate emotions, collaborate with others, and think creatively. Even simple activities—such as creating binoculars or using a magnifying glass to explore nature—support science, literacy, imagination, and social-emotional development. Play is not just recreation; it is at the heart of our Curriculum, equipping students with the creativity, resilience, and problem-solving skills that prepare them for a lifetime of success.

To support active play and learning, we limit screen times in the classroom to no more than 1 hour per week in Beginners, Intermediates, and Pre-K classrooms; students younger than 2 years do not have screen time.

Daily Schedules

Your child's schedule may vary from day to day based on their needs. The preschooler's morning schedule may include breakfast, free choice activities, circle time, language development/reading readiness activities, math readiness activities, learning centers, motor movement and other activities, such as Spanish and computers. The afternoon schedule may include activities such as art, cooking, language experience, stories, music, and learning centers.

Physical Activities

We strongly believe young students must have the opportunity to run, jump and stretch and utilize their large muscle groups on a daily basis. We provide structured as well as free play time in our outdoor playground, generally 30 minutes in the morning and 30 minutes in the afternoon. On days when weather

conditions prohibit outdoor play, students will be provided with adequate amounts of physical activity opportunities (yoga, dance and stretch) in our indoor large muscle playroom.

Water Activities

Preschool students may participate in water activities such as “Splash Day,” in which they may explore sprinklers and water toys. Wade pools are not permitted.

Families should provide swimsuits, towels and water shoes for all water activities. Students must perform a swim test to determine skill level before swimming freely. Students unable to pass the swim test are required to wear a lifejacket while swimming.

Field Trips

During the school year, infant- and preschool-aged students do not participate in field trips. Instead, we provide students with additional learning experiences in the safety of our School premises. In summer, School may include short trips for our young students for an offsite walk that may include a visit to a nearby attraction such as a park, fire station or library. We follow the ratios for staffing required by the state licensing regulations. Prior to the activities, we will send more information to Parents with the permission form. Field trip participation is limited to the students whose Parents submitted their signed permission forms.

For schools with a school-age license, field trips may take place with School-provided transportation. Additional details regarding field trips will be communicated prior to the event. Parents must submit a signed permission form for their students. All students will return to School and we will not release any student to Parents while on a field trip. For more information, please contact your School Leader.

Developmental Progress

We strive to routinely assess the developmental progress and needs of the students. Based on these assessments, teachers plan lessons to meet students' cognitive, physical, and emotional needs. We regularly update the classroom materials in support of our teachers' lesson plans that encourage students to explore their environment and develop social skills, problem-solving skills, and new ways of thinking.

If these observations reveal possible developmental delays or special needs, they are brought to parents' attention, along with suggestions for parents to reach out to pediatricians or other support professionals for further assistance. We do not diagnose developmental delays or special needs but partner with families to support each child's growth and well-being.

While a child's individual assessment information is kept confidential, we review assessment results in aggregate (across all classrooms of similar age groups) to support continuous improvement in program quality and practice.

Program leadership uses this aggregated information to understand the overall patterns of learning and development, evaluate curriculum effectiveness, identify professional development needs, and make informed decisions about classroom materials, equipment, and learning resources. Assessment trends may also inform efforts to strengthen partnerships with families and community resources.

Bulletin Boards

There is a bulletin board generally located near the entrance of each classroom so you can easily access information such as:

- Current lesson plan
- Learning outcomes
- Infant/Toddler skill sheets
- Current Week-at-a-Glance
- Toddler skill sheets
- Items as required by local licensing agencies (e.g., daily schedule, menu)

Teachers also display a variety of students' work in the classroom to illustrate how classroom activities build skills. Please see enclosed School Policies for more information.

End of Month Folders

The End of Month Folder is an individualized form of communication shared with parents. Each student's End of Month folder will contain specific work samples, activity descriptors, and photographs showcasing individual learning experiences. End of Month folders are sent home with each student at the end of each month. When compiled properly by the teacher, each folder should contain:

- Family Connection letter with activity suggestions and a link to view all of the skills and learning goals that were the focus for the month
- Spanish poster for the upcoming month (if applicable)
- Work samples of skill-connected student work with activity descriptor: work samples reflecting a variety of links and skills with an appropriate level of academic rigor

The monthly folder offers parents a lens into their child's activities and learning progression, gives evidence of skill attempts and mastery, and suggests ways that parents can be an integral part of their child's ongoing successes. The combination of preprinted communications and the student's own work samples show how our structured curriculum offers a unique and rich experience for each child. Teachers are required to send home the folder on the last school day of each calendar month, which may include letters to the parents, lists of skills, and samples of the student's work.

Family Reports and Family Conferences

To ensure that teachers and families have a regular opportunity to discuss each child's needs, learning, and development, Family Conferences are held three times a year (October, February, and June). More information on scheduling the family conferences will be shared closer to the event, through the Application and the bulletin board near the entrance of each classroom.

During the conference, teachers will share their observations from school and invite families to provide their observations from home.

Family Reports which complement the conferences will also be shared with the families prior to the meeting. It will reflect the child's learning profile, based on a culmination of data collected through

developmentally appropriate assessments in the classroom and family-provided observations. Teachers do not “test” the students in order to complete the Family Report.

All skills are rated on the following scale:

Rating	Description	Meaning
I	Introduced	Students have been introduced to the skill but require more exposure to move towards developing or mastery of the skill.
D	Developing	Students have been repeatedly exposed to the skill through learning experiences that allow them to further progress towards mastery of the skill. While they may be approaching mastery of the skill, students may still need scaffolding and support in order to complete the skill aligned activities independently.
M	Mastered	Students have had multiple opportunities to display proficiency in the skill. Students can now complete the skill independently; however, scaffolds can be used to further support learning and skill development.

Teacher comments are based on objective observations, not opinions. Comments describe the student’s progress, the teacher’s observations, the lessons provided for skill development, and the activities. A sample copy of a Family Report is available for review upon request.

For Infant Programs:

Family Reports for the infants are simple narratives that document past growth and future goals. It will also include photographs and other samples to illustrate the skills the child is developing.

Family Reports include a cover sheet not only to maintain confidentiality, but also to provide a place for the family to send their questions or concerns to the teachers. Please drop off your notes with the teacher or send them through our Portal. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to schedule an additional meeting with the student’s teacher.

Parent Involvement & Responsibilities

Parent Responsibilities & Expectations

School recognizes that effective parent partnerships are essential in building a collaborative and shared School community. Our School and Parents share a joint responsibility to commit ourselves to open lines of communication, mutual respect, and a common vision.

In addition to using various School Communications, we hope to keep the dialogue open about any developmental strengths and progress, as well as any concerns on those fronts. Similarly, we expect full participation and cooperation from our students and Parents as part of the School community. Some examples of a lack of full participation and cooperation include: (1) excessive absences, (2) distractions from the learning environment, or (3) lack of participation in School. If the student is not fully participating in the program, School will discuss with the Parents to develop a plan of action to address the concerning behaviors.

School reserves the right to exclude any Parent or adult involved with the student from further access for conduct that may undermine School's administration, disrupt the learning environment or operations, or violate School policies, whether on School premises or at a School event. Furthermore, School may immediately disenroll or refuse to re-enroll the student if the Parent's conduct prevents positive collaboration in the student's education or interferes with School's mission or educational goals.

We hope to address any conflicts through open communication. In the rare instance that we are unable to resolve the situation through direct communication and Parents pursue a Dispute Resolution outlined in the Enrollment Agreement, Parents also agree to concurrently participate in a good-faith mediation process administered by American Arbitration Association (AAA), a neutral third party. The mediation will be subject to the AAA mediation rules.

Attendance

Absences

We expect students to be in School for the period of their enrollment, whether full time or part time. Parents are responsible for informing School of any absences. If your child will be absent, please call the school by 10:00 AM or add a note in the Application.

Repeated absences, tardiness, or significant missing time may warrant a conversation between School and parents to discuss the student's continued enrollment.

For an extended leave for your student, please contact your School Leader to discuss options for continuing your student's enrollment. There may be a cost and need for additional documentation associated with holding continued enrollment for an extended period. If there is no communication from the Parent after three (3) or more consecutive days of absence and at least two (2) attempted communication from School to the Parents, School may, at its discretion, move to withdraw the student.

Arrival & Drop-Off

To minimize the disruption, students are required to be at school by the start of their class time. Please allow time in the morning to drop off students in an unhurried manner, sign in, and to talk with the teacher, as needed.

Dismissal & Pick-Up

You must sign each of your students in and out daily when arriving and departing from School at the front entrance. Additional persons authorized to pick up your student must also sign them in and out using the same system.

If someone other than the previously authorized individuals will be picking up your student, we must have verifiable written permission from you. Photo identification is mandatory for anyone unknown to the staff. A student will NOT be released without confirming the identity and authorization of the person picking up.

Please remember that we organize staff supervision based on our students' registered programs. Please pick up your student promptly at the end of his or her scheduled program and complete the sign-out process. To accommodate the traffic flow, Parents and students should depart the school building and grounds after the pick-up. Please have any extended conversations with other parents outside the School premises and closely supervise your child/ren at all times. Please do not allow your student or any other child you supervise to play on the school playground or in the parking lot.

Early Pick-Up

Whenever possible, please ensure that extracurricular activities, doctor's appointments, etc. occur outside of the school day schedule. We ask your support and advance planning in minimizing these disruptions. If you wish to pick up your student early (before dismissal time), please provide School with 24 hours' notice whenever possible. Upon arrival, please check in at the front desk with School Leader or administrator. Our administrator can support the pick-up process by coordinating with classroom staff to minimize disruption to the classroom. Please let us know immediately of any changes to your early pick-up plans.

School may ask you to pick up your student early due to a variety of reasons, including severe weather, emergencies, sickness, injury, or behavior that endangers the learning environment (e.g., significant disruption or threat of harm to self or others). Parents or an authorized person for pick up is expected to arrive within 1 hour of the notification by School. Parent's refusal to pick up or being late to pick up after being notified may result in consequences for the student's enrollment, including and up to disenrollment.

Late Pick-Up

If your student has not been picked up within 15 minutes of School's closing time, School Leader will attempt to contact all emergency contact persons listed for the student. School will comply with local regulations for next steps. Fees may be charged for late pick-ups and afterschool care as described in the enrollment agreement and fee schedule, or in School Policies, and repeated late pick-ups may result in discontinuation of enrollment.

School Vehicles

We do not offer transportation arrangements for our infant or preschool aged students. For schools with a school-age license, we may provide transportation arrangements between designated public schools and our School. Please note that transportation is not provided to/from the student's home.

Multiple Households

To communicate most effectively with parents and support each student, Parents must inform School of any court-ordered guidelines regarding primary households, visitations, picking up a student from School, parent involvement in field trips, or other such similar issues. Unless otherwise specified, each Parent for whom School has current contact information will have access to the student's file as well as other informational mailings and electronic communications during the year. It is the parents' responsibility to inform School of any living, custody, or financial arrangements that may affect the student's enrollment or experience at School. School may require additional documentation to better understand your educational and custody rights with respect to your student.

Also, in some instances, certain electronic platforms School utilizes permit access by only one account holder; it is the parents' responsibility to communicate directly with one another about the information on the platform as School is unable to create a secondary account.

Personal Relationships with Staff Members

In order to ensure the professionalism of our staff and avoid any conflicts of interest, staff members are prohibited from babysitting or working for Parents and from any form of social interaction (including via social media) with students or Parents previously or presently enrolled in our Schools, outside of the official social media pages or social events. Please discuss with School Leader if there are exceptional circumstances.

Open-Door Policy

We have an open-door policy and encourage Parents to observe their child's classroom and to access the student records at any time, unless otherwise restricted by law. We also encourage Parents to bring concerns or questions about their student's performance to the teacher and other staff members daily during our School's normal hours of operation, subject to any applicable security of classroom management procedures.

Parent Class Observation

Please schedule in-classroom observations so that the teachers and School Leaders can find a time that works best with the class and the learning process. If at any time, the observation is an interruption to the lesson being taught we may need to reschedule the visit.

It is important that our teachers focus on helping students transition in and out of the classroom during pick-up and drop-off, and thus, are not available for long conversations. Should you need to engage in a longer conversation, you are welcome to reach out to the teacher or our school through the Application, email, or schedule a time for a phone conversation.

Calls for Students

Barring emergencies, we do not interrupt classes to deliver personal phone messages to students. Outgoing calls by students are limited to emergency situations and can only be made through School office.

Special Circumstances

If a situation arises in your family that may place your student under stress, please advise the school at once. When teachers are aware of special circumstances, such as a family illness, birth of a sibling, a move, divorce, or bereavement, they can offer extra support where necessary.

Our Schools aims to support Parents and students who may need additional accommodations, to make them feel welcome in terms of home language, differing abilities and cultural backgrounds. School will work with Families to give information and have discussions in a way that they can understand.

Birthdays & Special Occasions

Birthdays are important to young students, and they enjoy sharing them with their friends at School. We normally celebrate birthdays at snack time. Please notify the teacher or School Leader if you plan to bring a snack for celebration. Parents may bring only commercially prepared foods, subject to School Leader's approval, for birthday or holiday celebrations. All items should be nut free, and labeled with their ingredients list. Items will be served with either the morning or afternoon snack.

Teachers are not to be responsible for distributing party invitations. We urge you to distribute them outside of the school to avoid hurt feelings among the uninvited.

A popular way to celebrate birthdays is with a new book donation to the school library for all students to enjoy. Your School Leader may suggest titles for donations, if you prefer.

Family Events

School schedules a variety of family events which may include Back to School Night, Fall Festival, Spring Flings, etc. Special events and reminders will be publicized by newsletters and other forms of communication well ahead of time.

Parent Volunteers

School has varying opportunities for participation, such as donating time or treats for parties, accompanying field trips, etc. We encourage participation and volunteering. You are welcome to visit and observe our schools in operation at any time.

Vehicles on School Grounds

Because the safety of our students is of paramount concern to us, we require all parents to adhere to the following rules of the road while on School property:

- All vehicles must obey the 5 miles per hour speed limit.
- Pedestrians always have the right of way.
- Parked vehicles MUST have ignitions turned off and the keys removed.
- Students may NOT be left unattended in a vehicle at any time or for any reason.
- Parents should NOT leave their vehicles parked at School overnight.

Violations of these rules may result in a warning. If a violation is serious, or violations continue, School personnel are authorized to take a tag number to report to local police. School is not responsible for Parent vehicles or property vandalized on School grounds during or after school hours.

Student Behavior & Support

We expect all students, regardless of age, to learn about our code of conduct. We encourage Parents to take into account their child's age, developmental stage, and grade level in talking through this section.

Uniform & Dress Code

Students are expected to be clean, well-groomed, and dressed in a manner that allows for freedom of movement, active play, and independence. Students should wear sturdy, close-toed shoes to school, preferably athletic shoes or sneakers.

We encourage young students to wear athletic shoes with their uniforms to ensure their safety. Rugged shoes with good ankle support and closed toes are acceptable substitutions.

If your School requires school uniforms, please see School communication. Uniforms must be purchased through our approved vendor and details will be provided to you. Look alike items will not be accepted. Dresses must be knee length, with the students ages 3 and older wearing cartwheel shorts underneath. If you have question regarding the uniform policy expectations, please let us know.

Behavior Guidance

Our behavioral guidance is constructive, age- and stage-appropriate, and redirects students to appropriate behavior and conflict resolution. Our approach to discipline is grounded in respect, empathy, and proactive behavior support. We believe that with appropriate structure, guidance, and collaboration, most behavior challenges can be addressed within the classroom setting. Positive classroom rules, structure, and reinforcement help students understand expectations of behavior. Circle time and other group meetings incorporate time for students to give and receive praise for positive actions, to plan activities together, and to discuss class concerns and goals for desired behavior. Students are supported through clear expectations, positive reinforcement, modeling, redirection, and class discussions that help build social-emotional skills.

When a student consistently engages in disruptive or unsafe behavior that is harmful to self or others, or places the student at high risk for long-term challenges, staff will work closely with the student and Parents to build a strategy for resolution, unless the behavior warrants immediate intervention. This process includes assessing the possible reasons behind the behavior, including developmental, environmental, or emotional factors, communication with Parents, individualized strategies based on the student's needs, and referrals to outside professionals when appropriate. Parents are kept informed of progress and are expected to be open and forthcoming with relevant information regarding the student, cooperate with the School, including with respect to seeking assistance from third-party external supports.

In rare circumstances, and only after all other possible interventions have been exhausted, suspension or expulsion is necessary. We reserve the right to suspend or dismiss a student for harmful or inappropriate behavior in our sole discretion: 1) If we do not have adequate expertise or resources for the student's educational, medical or other needs; 2) for violations of our policies; or 3) for any reason we determine to be in the best interest of the safety of students and the School. In these rare instances, we may offer parents assistance in locating assistance and alternative placements.

Forbidden Methods of Discipline

Students learn best when they are comfortable and feel safe. While all students need periodic redirection and behavioral guidance, we are committed to maintaining an environment of dignity, safety, and respect for every child in our care.

No staff member may use physical or psychological disciplinary actions to inflict pain on, humiliate, ridicule, coerce, threaten young students. These forbidden methods of discipline may include:

- Corporal punishment of any kind
- Roughly grabbing or pulling students by any body parts
- Demeaning or abusive language or yelling
- Use of any device to restrict movement of a child
- “Time-outs” and isolation, including enclosing a child in a confined space
- Chores or physical activity required as punishment
- Withholding of affection, food, sleeping, toileting, clothing, medication, or aids to physical functioning

Our discipline practices are age-and-developmentally appropriate for our young students, and no child shall be disciplined for toileting incidents or for not sleeping during rest periods. Our staff will speak kindly to all students, interrupt dangerous activities while respecting the student’s body and rights. For example, when physically escorting a student away from danger, a teacher may gently touch or hold the student’s hand, arm, shoulder, or back to redirect the student to safety. All school staff members review our Forbidden Methods of Discipline Policy upon hire and annually thereafter, to ensure a shared commitment to students’ emotional and physical well-being.

Health & Safety

Our Commitment to Health & Safety

Providing a healthy and safe learning environment for our students is our highest priority. In addition to following our School's comprehensive health and safety practices, we regularly adjust our operations to meet or exceed the most current guidance from local and state health departments.

Our health and wellness protocols include:

- Disinfecting and cleaning of "high-touch" surfaces throughout the school day and in the evenings (including desks, doors, public spaces, and bathroom fixtures)
- Frequent and thorough handwashing by students and staff, actively encouraged throughout the school day
- Ensuring all staff and students who are feeling ill stay home until they recover

Alcohol- and Substance-Free School

Our Schools are smoke free and tobacco free environments. Smoking and the use of any product containing, made or derived from tobacco, including e-cigarettes, shall not be permitted on the School grounds, in vehicles used to transport students, or during any off-premises School activities.

Direct Supervision

Providing a healthy and safe learning environment for our students is our highest priority.

When our School is in session, the maximum class sizes, student to staff ratios, and direct supervision align with the state licensing requirements. Our staff will actively supervise our students, by maintaining sight and sound supervision and performing headcounts regularly throughout the day.

During the Before/After-Care program, extracurricular activities, or other events outside the School session, we may combine students of different age groups. In such an event, the classroom will be supervised pursuant to the applicable state licensing regulations for the student to staff ratio based on the youngest age group in the classroom.

Supervision of School Age Students

School-age students will be grouped according to grade and will be assigned to a group for before and after school care as well as breaks and camps. These groups may be combined during opening and closing times.

If the school-age students are transported by the public school district vehicle or other school transportation, our supervision begins when the student exits the school vehicle, until the student returns to the school vehicle or is picked up by the authorized person.

Cleaning, Disinfecting, & Sanitizing

We recognize the importance of clean and sanitary conditions for students' health and safety. Toys that have been in a child's mouth or otherwise contaminated are removed immediately, cleaned with soap and water and disinfected. This also applies to other surfaces in the classroom. We do not use toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized. To control odors, our School uses ventilation and sanitation rather than

sprays, air freshening chemicals, or deodorizers. Any spills are immediately and thoroughly cleaned up, and surfaces are disinfected using fragrance-free and least toxic cleaning products to ensure that proper cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing of the School is carried out.

All cleaners and other toxic substances are kept out of the reach of students, in most cases in a secure locked cabinet.

Food & Nutrition

We provide students with nutritious morning and afternoon snacks. Information about the school lunch program, if available at your School, will be sent home at the beginning of the year. Please see your School Leader regarding program availability and the menu options at your School.

Our menu conforms to all state child nutrition guidelines for the amount and type of food we provide students.

Staff discard any food not taken home by Parents at the end of the day, as well as food with expired dates. Fresh fruits and vegetables are thoroughly washed before serving. No plastic or Styrofoam containers, bags, plates, or wraps are used to reheat students' foods or drinks.

Students with special dietary or feeding needs are referred to School Leader. We do our best to accommodate dietary restrictions and preferences, and some Schools have specific policies on outside food. Food exceptions cannot be made, except in the case of allergy or religious constraints noted in the student files. We ask you to please remind the students not to share food with their peers at School to prevent accidental exposure to allergens.

Naptime and Sleep Safety

A naptime or rest period is provided each day for a minimum of 45 minutes and a maximum of 2 hours, unless otherwise required by the state licensing regulations. If your child chooses not to sleep during the naptime, they are offered a book or other quiet activities. School provides a cot for each student for rest, and we sanitize the cots after each use. We ask that families send their students with comfortable and safe bedding, which will be stored in their own cubby. Please take all bedding home at the end of each week to be laundered.

- For students over 18 months: a blanket and crib sheet to fit the cot or mat
- For students younger than 18 months: a fitted crib sheet only

During the naptime, we may alter the child to staff ratio, as permitted by the state regulations.

Safety Practices in Infant Programs

Diapering

For our diapered students, teachers check diapers every 2 hours, when a child wakes from a nap, and upon being soiled. The changing table is sanitized after each diaper change, even if paper covers are used.

Bottle Feeding

Bottles must be labeled correctly to be accepted by the School. If your bottle is missing information, you may be provided with the tape and a marker. All bottles must go home at the end of the day. To ensure our infant students receive the correct bottles, we require the following labeling procedure:

- Label the bottle and cap with the child's first and last name, using the assigned colored tape for your child.
- Mark the current date on the bottle.
- All breast milk bottles must have red tape in addition to the assigned colored tape and must be marked with the date and time the milk was expressed.

After warming, breast milk or formula bottles may be out for no more than one hour before being discarded.

Breast milk or formula bottles cannot be reheated or returned to the refrigerator after initial warming.

Breastfeeding

We provide a comfortable area for nursing mothers to breastfeed their children. In addition to a private space, our nursing mothers may stay in the classrooms while breastfeeding, such that they are not disturbed, and they do not distract from the learning environment. Please speak to the School Leader for more information for arrangements and safe practices for breastmilk storage.

Infant Sleep Safety

Safe sleeping practices are in place for all infants. These practices promote safe sleep when infants are napping and reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) or suffocation death. All staff who interact with infants are trained on the consistent use of safe sleep practices, which include:

- If an infant falls asleep outside the crib, they are moved to the crib.
- If infants arrive to the program asleep, or fall asleep, in equipment not specifically designed for infant sleep, the infant is removed and placed in appropriate infant sleep equipment, such as a crib.
- Staff must place infants younger than 12 months on their backs to sleep without the use of infant sleep positioners, unless ordered by a physician. Once they can turn themselves over, infants may assume any comfortable sleep position.
- Crib labels with the child's picture and name must indicate whether the child is able to roll over on their own AND always indicate that the child must first be laid down in the crib on their back.
- Sleeping infants are directly observed by sight and sound routinely and frequently.
- A teacher must be present in the crib area if any infants are sleeping.
- Infants' heads will NOT be covered with blankets or bedding at any time.
- Cribs will not be covered with blankets or bedding. No loose bedding, pillows, bumper pads, etc. will be used in cribs. Sleep sacks may be used instead of a blanket.
- Toys and stuffed animals are not allowed in the cribs. Pacifiers will be allowed in infants' cribs while they sleep, but a pacifier clip is NOT allowed.
- Only one infant is in a crib at a time unless we are evacuating infants in an emergency.
- All infants are given the opportunity to nap/sleep. No infant is forced to sleep, to stay awake, or to stay in the napping area.
- Infants are removed from the crib upon waking up. The crib is NOT treated as a playpen.

Infant Sleep Safety (California Only)

Prior to enrollment, Parents must complete the Department's Individual Infant Sleeping Plan (LIC9227).

Per our state licensing regulations, we do not swaddle infants or use sleep sacks, unless the School has the licensing agency's prior approval on the specific product(s) used at the School. Our teachers closely supervise sleeping infants—they physically check on the infants, by sight and sound, at least every 15 minutes, and record the checks in a napping log (Title 22, C.C.R §102425).

ADA Modification Policy

If the student has accommodation needs in order to participate in our program, please inquire about our ADA Modification Plan process. Parents and the School will work together to create a modification plan, upon review of the modification requests along with any supporting medical documentation provided by the student's care provider or an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Allergies

Parents are expected to inform the School about their child's allergies. Each student with food allergies should have a Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan ("FARE Plan") or similar Emergency Care Plan (e.g., for FPIES) on file, listing their allergies, recommended treatment in case of an allergic reaction, prepared by Parents and the child's physician. Parents and the School will work together to ensure understanding about the allergies, emergency plan, and supporting medical documentation provided by the child's physician. Students with complex or life-threatening allergies may be referred to our ADA process for creation of a modification plan. Please contact your School leader for more information on our ADA policy.

Illness

Parents assist us in maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all our students by keeping sick Students at home. The purpose of our sick Student policy is to:

- Reduce the spread of illness from a sick Student to other students and members of School staff.
- Promote complete recuperation of the sick student.
- Prevent the constant spread of cold, flu, diarrhea, and other communicable diseases that are common in the community.

We reserve the right to refuse admittance to any student who shows a sign of illness. Students who become ill at School will be made comfortable and parents will be notified to pick them up within one hour. Parents must keep sick children at home until they have been symptom-free for at least 24 hours* if they display any of the following:

- Fever of 100.4 degrees or more. (Students must be free of fever for at least 24 hours, unassisted by fever-reducing medication before returning to school.)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Sore Throat
- Skin Rash
- Head Lice

- Heavy nasal discharge requiring frequent wiping every 3-5 minutes
- Persistent, non-productive, or “barking” cough
- Fussy, cranky behavior unlike the child’s normal demeanor
- Symptoms of communicable disease such as pink eye, measles, chicken pox, mumps, or strep throat

*The length of time students should stay out of our School depends on the illness and local guidance. Please see your School Leader for updated guidance.

Medication Administration

Whenever possible, prescription or over the counter medication should be administered at home or by a Parent who comes to the School for that purpose. We encourage Parents to ask the student’s health care provider to prescribe or recommend medications in such a way that they do not need to be administered during the school day. If the physician determines that the medication should be administered during the school day, we will consider such requests in accordance with state and local regulations.

When we agree to administer prescription or nonprescription medications, Parents must provide a note from the student’s health care provider requesting us to administer the medication, with detailed dosage information, circumstances, or schedule of medication administration, and any adverse reactions that could occur.

The medication must be in a new sealed container. Prescriptions must be in the original pharmacy container or box, with the official pharmacy prescription label securely attached. The prescription indicated on the label must be current. **Parents cannot premix medication into food or liquid before bringing it to school.** Parents must turn in medication to the School’s front office.

Both the medication and a copy of the physician’s note will be stored in the locked medicine location, unless otherwise indicated. School Leaders complete the dispensing log after each dosage, recording the name of the student, the medication and dosage given, the time and date, and signature of the person dispensing. Epi-pens and other emergency medications may be stored in either the normal locked medication cabinet or a secure location, unless otherwise indicated by applicable law. See *Allergies* section for additional information.

If the medication request is for any medication that requires specific skills or prior medical training to administer, parents may be asked to follow our ADA process, requiring approval and development of a modification plan, based on the note from the student’s health care provide including the requirements referenced above. In some instances, we may require additional information or documentation, and we will work together with Parents to prepare a modification plan. Please contact the School Leader for more information on our ADA modification process.

Our *Medication Administration* policy applies to all medications, including any OTC skin products such as sunscreen, insect repellent, diaper ointment and lip balm. Products will not be accepted, kept or used beyond the expiration date.

For sunscreen only: Parents must provide written permission for School staff to apply sunscreen on their child, in accordance with the state licensing regulations. All products must be in the original container, labeled with the student's name.

If you choose not to send a product for your student but would like us to use the product we keep for everyone's use, we still need your written consent. We choose products that are advertised as hypo-allergenic and has at least SPF rating of 20.

Accidents & Injuries

The health and safety of both students and staff in our School are of paramount importance. All employees are expected to assist in the prevention and control of injuries, illnesses, and hazards and to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. Staff members inspect their classrooms and outdoor play areas daily for potential hazards.

If a student experiences an accident, injury, or possible injury, staff will report it to School Leaders and a written incident report will be completed. Parents will also be immediately contacted if the injury needs medical attention.

For any serious accident or incident, we will attempt to notify Parents by a telephone call as soon as possible.

If a student requires medical attention, Parents will be notified. In the event of a serious emergency, the School will secure immediate medical attention as described in the "authorization for medical treatment" section of the Enrollment Agreement. Every effort will be made to contact parents or authorized emergency contacts during such emergencies.

Toileting Assistance for Infant, Toddler, Beginner Students

When younger students are developmentally ready for potty training, we expect Parents to cooperatively work with the teachers to create consistency between home and school. At School, we will continue to support diapering during the training period while regularly encourage the students to use the toilet. Students will be monitored for safety and will not be forced to use the toilet, if they are not ready.

If the student's clothes become soiled during the training period, we will help them wash their hands and change into clean clothes. Parents should provide an adequate supply of extra clothes to support the potty-training process.

Once fully potty trained, students will have access to use the bathrooms independently with appropriate supervision. School age students will have access to a more private, partitioned bathroom space, within the classroom.

Clothing & Personal Belongings

Parents are responsible for providing the required supplies to the School to ensure your child will be comfortable. Students should have one (1) extra full set of clothing (including socks) at the School for emergencies (2 sets, if the student is not yet potty trained). Please ensure the clothing is appropriate for the season (ex: jackets, mittens, hats, and scarfs for winter) and that for any shoes provided, close-toed

shoes are required (ex: not sandals). All clothing, including individual socks and underwear, should be labeled with the student's first and last name.

Diapered Students

We ask that you provide the School with at least 2 packages of wipes and one to two sleeves of diapers or pull-ups. A two-week supply is recommended. Supplies will need to be replenished regularly and we will do our best to give Parents reminders. If you have any questions about how much or what clothing to provide, please speak to the teacher.

Abuse & Neglect Reporting

As mandated reporters, all school staff members complete required training related to their mandated reporting duties, before they assume their child care responsibilities and regularly review these policies and procedures during staff professional development training and staff meetings. The law requires our school staff to immediately report to the applicable state or local child protective agency any known or suspected instances of child abuse or neglect by anyone, including a family member or another staff member.

In addition to the mandated reporting duty, staff members will report their observations immediately to the School Leader to ensure that concerns are addressed without delay. If necessary, we will take the necessary steps to prioritize the safety of the students, including but not limited to communicating with the Parents (if safe to do so), removing those whose conduct is under review from school access, and involving the law enforcement or other agencies as needed as soon as possible.

Mandated reporters can file reports anonymously. To the fullest extent permitted by our legal obligations, we are committed to protecting the confidentiality of all individuals involved, including those who have experienced harm, those who have come forward to report, and those against whom allegations have been made. To further facilitate the transparent safety culture, the reporters are protected from retaliation or other disciplinary actions for having made the report in good faith.

Building Access

Access to our building is limited to enrolled students and their Parents, staff, and registered visitors. Access may be through a buzzer or keypad. **Where there is a keypad lock on the front door, parents of enrolled students and School staff are the only ones given the code.** Do not share your code with anyone else, and do not allow people to enter behind you without permission of the School Leaders. The keypad code is changed on a regular basis.

Visitors cannot enter our School unless approved and escorted by a staff member. School staff, enrolled students and parents, and approved emergency contacts for students are not considered visitors. All visitors, including vendors, applicants, and other family members are required to do the following:

- Wait in the lobby/reception area until escorted by a staff member.
- Present a government issued ID.
- Sign-in to visitor log, matching their government issued ID.
- Wear a badge, issued by the School, that is clearly visible for the duration of their visit.

- Completely fill out the visitor log with: date of the visit, visitor's full name and affiliation, purpose of visit, badge number, sign-in time, and sign-out time.

Fire & Other Safety Drills

As required by law, our School holds regular fire and safety drills. It is expected that all students on the campus at the time of such drills participate fully. If a drill must take place in inclement weather, all attempts will be made to ensure that students are properly attired. Should you find yourself at the School while a drill is taking place, please participate with your child, and take the time to review and discuss the importance of such drills with your student.

Lockdown or Other Emergency Action

If an emergency requires lockdown or evacuation, we will notify parents as soon as possible. All entrances to the School will be secured and the School will take emergency action, as needed, to keep School staff and students safe.

Weather Emergencies

In case of severe or hazardous weather, we may have to delay School opening hours, dismiss the students early, or close the School for the day. We will notify Parents via Application, email and text with the special instructions regarding drop off and pick up. Where applicable, bus/van services will make independent decisions regarding inclement weather procedures. Parents will be informed of these decisions.

In an emergency, immediate decisions may be made. We will attempt to contact you, authorized family members, or specified friends. If you are going to be out of town, please notify your emergency contacts and let us know who is the preferred emergency contact.

Questions and Concerns?

We encourage open communications between parents and staff so they may work together for the benefit of the students. Parents can interact with the teachers and other staff members on a daily basis during School's normal hours of operation, subject to any applicable security of classroom management procedures. Parents may also interact with the School Leaders informally and/or by appointment. In almost all cases, we can resolve most concerns and conflicts by actively engaging with Parents. If Parents are unable to reach a resolution through discussions with the teachers and School Leaders, School will escalate to the Regional Director to whom the School reports. The response will typically be within 1~2 business days.

This process ensures families have multiple avenues for communication and resolution, with increasing levels of formality as needed.

Child Care Licensing Regulation, by State

State	State Regulation	State	State Regulation
Arizona	<i>Arizona Administrative Code, Title 9, Chapter 5, Article 2</i>	California	<i>California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 12, Chapter 1</i>
Colorado	<i>Code of Colorado Regulations, Volume 8, Rule 1402-1</i>	Florida	<i>Florida Administrative Code, Chapter 65C-22</i>
Georgia	<i>Rules and Regulations of the State of Georgia, Chapter 591-1</i>	Idaho	<i>Idaho Administrative Procedures Act, Title 16, Chapter 06, Rule 03</i>
Illinois	<i>Illinois Administrative Code, Title 89, Part 407</i>	Maryland	<i>Code of Maryland Regulations, Title 13A, Subtitle 16</i>
Nevada	<i>Nevada Administrative Code, Chapter 432A</i>	New Jersey	<i>New Jersey Admin. Code, Title 3A, Chapter 52</i>
North Carolina	<i>North Carolina Administrative Code, Title 10A, Chapter 9</i>	Ohio	<i>Ohio Administrative Code, Chapter 5180:2-12</i>
Oregon	<i>Oregon Administrative Rules, Chapter 414, Division 300</i>	Pennsylvania	<i>Pennsylvania Code, Title 55, Chapter 3270</i>
South Carolina	<i>South Carolina Code of Regulations, Chapter 114, Article 5, Subarticle 1</i>	Texas	<i>Texas Administrative Code, Title 26, Part 1, Chapter 745</i>
Virginia	<i>Virginia Administrative Code, Title 8, Agency 20, Chapter 780</i>	Washington	<i>Washington Administrative Code, Title 110, Chapter 300</i>

Handbook Acknowledgement Form

Student's Name (please print)

This Parent/Student Handbook was created to promote an understanding of the School's policies and procedures.

The information in this Handbook applies to all activities occurring on School grounds, School buses, and during any School-related activity. It is important that parents and students are familiar with these expectations.

This signed page will be added to your student's permanent file. Your signature means that you have received this Parent/Student Handbook and understand the policies and procedures of our School, and agree to abide by them, as will your child(ren).

Full Name

Relationship to Student

Parent Signature

Date

Full Name

Relationship to Student

Parent Signature

Date