



Elementary School
Parent Handbook
2011-2012

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Santa Fe School for the Arts & Sciences

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Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Welcome to Santa Fe School for the Arts & Sciences! All of the teachers and staff are looking forward to a wonderful year with you and your children. Please read our handbook carefully and feel free to call if you have any questions.

SFSAS Mission & Vision

Mission

Santa Fe School for the Arts & Sciences achieves academic excellence in an environment of respect, inclusion and diversity, utilizing Expeditionary Learning, global perspectives and a multicultural art and science enriched curriculum.

Vision

Each child's talents are fully developed, leading to a life long passion for learning and exploration in a caring environment where each child has opportunities for self-expression and growth. The school exemplifies and encourages the values of compassion, leadership, world citizenship and service.

Santa Fe School for the Arts & Sciences is a non profit, independent Expeditionary Learning school committed to providing a challenging, engaging education for children ages 3 through 8th grade. Preschool and elementary classes are multi-age, (1st-2nd, 3rd-4th and 5th-6th) and we have separate classes for 7th and 8th grade in our Middle School. We are committed to providing stimulating and enriching educational opportunities in a nurturing, child centered environment. We welcome children who have learning differences, including gifted and talented. We have inclusive classrooms where children's individual learning styles and unique strengths are fostered. We celebrate the joy of play and learning that occurs when children are encouraged to explore and question the world around them at their own pace.

Non-Discrimination Statement

The Santa Fe School for Arts & Sciences does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national and ethnic origin, disability, religion, sex or sexual orientation in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Expeditionary Learning

Expeditionary learning is an approach to learning that combines rigorous academic content and real world projects, called "learning expeditions" with character development and community service. Teachers at Expeditionary Learning schools receive intensive professional development in curriculum and teaching practices and are able to model ongoing learning to their students. The Gates Foundation recently chose Expeditionary Learning as a model example of education and has funded the opening of over 100 EL schools.

Expeditionary Learning schools create a culture of respect and high expectations for staff and students alike. One of the hallmarks of the Expeditionary Learning model is an emphasis on high-quality student work that inspires craftsmanship and deeper learning. Building a culture of reflection,

critique and revision leads students to create better work. This work is created in conjunction with learning expeditions, which are in-depth, interdisciplinary learning units which require students to engage in sophisticated research, use the community in authentic ways, and represent their knowledge with high quality products which are presented to authentic audiences. The energy and sustained creativity of the staff is what helps make an Expeditionary Learning school successful.

Expeditionary Learning....

- Develops critical thinking and problem-solving skills as essential elements of the deep learning that prepares students for success in college and beyond.
- Expeditionary Learning works on developing the character -- as well as the intellect -- of students.
- Expeditionary Learning affects not only how students learn but also a school's culture. Expeditionary Learning supports our school standards, curriculum, assessment, and school organization and provides professional development for our teachers. At a successful Expeditionary Learning school, teachers, parents, staff, and students work together to create a school culture of collaboration, respect, and high expectations.

Learning expeditions draw together personal experience and intellectual discovery to promote self-discovery and the construction of knowledge. We believe that adults should guide students along this journey with care, compassion, and respect for their diverse learning styles, backgrounds, and needs. Addressing individual differences greatly increases the potential for learning and creativity of each student.

Expeditionary Learning harnesses the natural passion to learn and is a powerful method for developing the curiosity, skills, knowledge and courage needed to imagine a better world and work toward realizing it.

Parent Participation

Parent involvement is deeply appreciated, needed and encouraged. We would like our school to be a place where parents always feel welcome as partners in the education of their children. As a parent, we invite you to volunteer time to help out at the school- for example, driving on field trips, sharing your talents with a class, doing recess or lunch duty, joining a committee to help with the grounds, fundraising or construction, etc. We have a mandatory Back to School Night for parents each September during which all parents have the opportunity to meet their child's teachers and fellow parents. We also have a few events at which attendance is mandatory for both students and a parent such as Wintercomes, Graduation, Museum nights and our annual play performance.

Parent Sharing

We invite any parent to sign up for a talent/work sharing session in the classroom. Sharing about your job, demonstrating a craft or hobby, reading a favorite story, showing slides from a trip, baking a snack, etc are just a few examples of ways parents can share. Please be sure to fill out our parent volunteer form and let us know how you would like to be involved at our school.

Observations

Observations can occur just about any time during the school year and can help give you an idea of your child's day. Please schedule this day a week in advance, as we limit the number of other adults observing each day. We suggest that you first arrange to observe after October 1st to give all children a chance to acclimate. We do have an open door policy, however, if you wish to just pop in for a moment and check on your child or drop something off. Please be aware that children will sometimes behave differently when they know that a parent is watching.

Conferences

Conferences are scheduled up to three times a year, as noted on the school calendar. The conferences run approx. 30 minutes each. All conferences are typically scheduled a couple of weeks in advance. A sign up sheet will give several choices of dates and times. Please call your child's teacher if you would like to set up an additional time to meet. All teachers are also available at the end of each school day to check in with parents as needed or to set up a time to meet. Please don't ever hesitate to arrange a meeting with your child's teacher!

Ongoing Communication

Any time you need to speak with a teacher during the school day (for example, you will be late picking up your child, there is a family emergency, you need to give your permission for a different person to pick up your child at the end of the day, etc.) please call our school office phone, **438-8585**. This phone will almost always be answered during the school day. If you are unable to reach us, or you need to contact the principal after school hours, please call 920-9709 (our school cell phone).

Open and honest communication is essential to a positive school experience for your child. Please let us know as soon as possible if there are any major changes in your child's life, so we can be supportive at school. All information is confidential. We, in turn, will keep you informed of any events which may have been upsetting to your child at school or any significant changes in the school environment which might affect your child's sense of well-being at school. We value your feedback and concerns and will do our best to facilitate daily communication so that we all can flourish in an atmosphere of honesty, integrity and kindness.

If you have a concern or suggestion, please speak to any member of the staff at the end of the school day or call a teacher or a board member at home. Unfortunately, we will not be able to have conversations with parents in the classroom when school is in session. Anonymous complaints/suggestions may be mailed to the school or left in the rolltop desk in the middle school lobby.

Arrival and Departure

Arrival

Arrival time is 8:10-8:25 am for Stargazers and Centaurs. Please do not come in or drop your child off prior to 8:10 am. Please do not drop off your child prior to 8:10 am. If they are carpooling with middle school students, they can wait in the middle school between 7:50 and 8:10 am. Your child will first drop off his/her lunch, backpack etc in their cubby. All students leave their shoes in the cubby room area and wear slippers or socks inside.

For 1st-2nd Grade (Stargazers)

Please drive slowly into circular driveway near the entrance and park carefully in the main parking lot which is in between the Unigazer & Underhill Hall buildings. Please always walk your child into the building and help them sign in.

For 3rd-4th Grade (Centaurs)

Please drive slowly to the right around the property, past the office, and park in the area behind Barcelona Blue or in the area near the fence across from the dumpster. Please always walk your child into the building and help them sign in.

For 5th-6th Grade (Badger) Parents

When you pull into our driveway, please drive slowly around the circular driveway to the right, past the office parking area and park either behind Barcelona Blue or in the parking area near the gaga pit and the dumpster. You may accompany your child inside and help make sure they sign in or you can

drop off your child at the drop off rope area next to their building. Please note that this area is for drop-off only, and is not used for pick up at the end of the day. Please do not park in the drop off area.

Arrival time is 8:10-8:25 am for Badgers. Please do not come in or drop your child off prior to 8:10 am. Please do not drop off your child prior to 8:10 am. If they are carpooling with middle school students, they can wait in the middle school between 7:50 and 8:10 am. Upon entering the building please sign your child in or remind your child to sign themselves in. Your child will first drop off his/her lunch, backpack etc in their cubby. All students leave their shoes in the cubby room area and wear slippers or socks inside.

For All Elementary Parents

Arrival: At 8:25 am, all children will enter their elementary classes and any remaining parents will say their goodbyes. (Parents are also welcome to stay in the gazebo or courtyard during the morning.) We ask all parents who would like to socialize and share with each other to please do so outside, or quietly in the hall if it is inclement weather. As the morning is the most important time of your child's day at school we ask all parents to do their best to be on time. If you are running late, please call the school and leave a message and let us know what is going on.

Morning Late Arrival Policy: All students need to be in their classrooms by 8:25 am. School begins at 8:30 am sharp. We deeply appreciate each student arriving at school on time in the morning. It makes a huge difference in their ability to have a successful day.

Departure

School ends at 3:00 pm. Children may be picked up between 3:00 and 3:10 pm. No child may leave school with anyone other than a parent unless designated in writing by the parent. We will ask for a photo identification if the person is new to us. No child may ever be picked up by a sibling or driver younger than 16 years of age. No child will be allowed to leave the premises without staff being informed.

Please take a moment to check that your child has their daily take home items and that you pick up any notices from your mailbox or your child's cubby.

If an emergency prevents pick-up on time, please inform us of that fact by calling us in the office at 438-8585 or on the school cell phone, 920-9709 **prior to 3:00**. Then your child will be admitted to the afterschool program and you will only need to pay the drop in fee for afterschool (\$8/hour). If you do not call to let us know you are running late, then a late pick-up fee of \$1.00 a minute is charged.

At the end of the day, all Unicorn, Stargazer and Centaur parents must park and come in for their children. Badger and Middle School students may walk out to their parent's car when they or the office has either received a call or when they see their parent is out there. Please do not wait in the drop off area or in the driveway.

Students who walk home or to the bus must walk along the edges of the driveway and not in the driveway. We do not have a late pickup option for programs that end at 5:30. If you are late for the 5:30 pm pickup, the charge is also \$1.00 a minute, payable to our afterschool director.

Snow Days

Whenever you are wondering if school is closed or delayed due to snow or icy roads, please listen to the radio or watch the TV for Santa Fe Public School delays and closings, or call 467-3541. If the Santa Fe Public Schools are closed, we are closed (or delayed). When there is a 2 hour delay, school will start at 10:30 am. We will also send snow day emails as soon as we have the information.

Health and Wellness

We have learned that the best way to keep our students healthy is by keeping the ill students at home. Please do not send your child to school if any of the following symptoms are present; fever, diarrhea, severe rash, persistent cough, yellow or green mucus, vomiting, sore throat, pink eye, pinworms, lice, chicken pox or other contagious illnesses. If your child comes to school with any of the above symptoms, we will call you to come immediately and take your child home. If your child becomes ill with a communicable disease, please let us know right away so we can alert others.

We would like all children to be healthy enough to fully participate in every aspect of their school day. If your child is not well enough to play outdoors, your child should not come to school as outdoor time is an important part of each day. Children who are not well enough to attend morning classes should not come to school for afternoon specials or afterschool classes.

Medication (prescription or homeopathic)

Medication is administered only with the written consent of the parent. We will give the medication at the requested time and will note the amount, time, date and person giving the dosage on a form located in your child's file. Do not put medication in your child's backpack or lunch box, please always hand it directly to the child's teacher. Please note any allergies to medication on all admission forms.

Field Trips

We will take small group and classroom field trips occasionally to supplement and enhance our classroom curriculum. Children earn the opportunity to participate in field trips by demonstrating safe, appropriate and responsible behavior in the class and on the playground. Prior to a field trip, we will send home a notice with all the pertinent information. We have a field trip fee which covers the cost of our field trip program. While all student files will contain a Field Trip Authorization form giving overall consent for field trips, we will still inform all parents when a field trip is planned. When parents decide not to give a student permission to participate on a field trip, the student must not come to school that day (or during the time of the trip) since all staff will be supervising the students on the trip.

We will either use our school bus, or we will need at least 4-5 drivers per trip with seatbelts for each student. Drivers are completely responsible for the student's you are driving. Please make sure your car is in good working condition, with plenty of gas, good tires and a spare and functioning seatbelts. All vehicles used for transportation of children must be equipped with a first aid kit. All drivers must have current liability insurance on their policy.

Only children over the legal height limit are allowed in the front seat, and if you have airbags, only children over the age of 12 may sit in the front.

Birthday Celebrations

Each class celebrates birthdays differently. Your child's teacher will let you know their particular birthday ritual. Please let us know a week in advance if you would like to do something special for your child's class in honor of your child's birthday. If your child is having a party outside of school hours, please send all invitations to the children's homes by mail (see the class list) unless you are inviting everyone in the class. If everyone is invited, invitations can be placed in the school mailboxes and/or we can email invitations out to everyone in the class. Children with summer or vacation birthdays are invited to choose another day during the year to celebrate their birth.

Toys and Items from Home

Toys from home are hard to share and it is difficult to keep track of them. Children may bring a cuddly toy or a special comforting item when their teacher invites them to, but please be sure your child does not bring anything breakable or valuable. For sharing times we encourage children to bring homemade items, things from nature, stuffed animals, photos, books, musical instruments, etc, but please keep home any store bought toys or toys from TV or movies. Ipods, cell phones,

gameboys, toy weapons and water pistols are also not allowed. If your child would like to bring a toy from home to share with the class and you are unsure about it, please just ask a teacher before bringing it in. Children are not allowed to bring items from home unless they are a part of the curriculum and the teacher has requested it. Items such as pokemon cards, dolls, toys, marbles, action figures, cars etc. are not allowed at school.

Students in elementary school may not have ipods or cell phones on their person during the school day. Cell phones and ipods must be kept turned off in their cubbies or backpacks.

Attendance & Notification of Absence

Absence

If your child is going to be absent for any reason, including medical appointments and illness, please notify the staff by calling the school and leaving a message between 8:00 and 8:45 a.m. letting us know why your child will be absent that day.

Vacations

We strongly encourage families to take their vacations and trips during school holidays and breaks and not during regular school days.

When a student misses school for a vacation it can create a hardship for the teacher and the student. Absences can sometimes cause students to fall behind their peers and they may miss vital curriculum experiences that can not be repeated. This includes field trips, films, hands on science experiments, guest speakers, the introduction of new math concepts, etc...

Please speak with the principal and your child's teacher before you make your plans, if you are planning to take a vacation during regular school days. We would like to let you know in advance regarding events and learning opportunities that your child will be missing.

Excused Absences

We understand that there will be times that everyone has to miss school due to illness or family events such as funerals, or family reunions and once in a lifetime, positive opportunities and we are not referring to these absences. If you must miss school, please give your child's teacher plenty of advance notice.

Tuition Policy

Please see your individualized tuition agreement contract.

Financial Aid

Full and partial scholarships are awarded according to financial need, and will be kept confidential by the financial aid committee. If you apply for financial aid, you will be required to provide personal financial and tax information. Any scholarship awarded must be reapplied for each year. Receiving a scholarship one year does not guarantee a scholarship for the next year as funds may not always be available.

Fundraisers and Workdays

We will invite all parents to attend our fundraisers and workdays or join our fundraising committee or parent's association and we hope everyone will become involved as much as they can. We welcome any ideas you may have regarding ways you can volunteer!

Nutritional Policy and Snack times

The elementary students will each bring their own individual snacks for morning snack time. Please do not send any sugar laden items for snack. We request that soda and candy be consumed outside of school hours and off school grounds (except for special occasions). Please notify teachers and

indicate on all medical forms if your child has any food allergies or special food needs. Please do not send any glass containers to school.

Computers and the Internet

All elementary students may use our computer network for research, classes and the internet when given permission by a teacher. Students may not check Facebook, send personal e-mail, or download any music or information that is not directly related to their classwork. Students may not play computer games or print from the computer without the teacher's permission. Any inappropriate computer usage will result in a meeting with the student's teacher, family and school principal and may result in the cancellation of computer privileges. Only students in grades 5-8 may bring laptops to school.

Discipline Philosophy

Consistent, respectful role modeling by adults along with respectful listening and observing goes a long way toward creating a successful school environment. Staff actions and interactions, body language and voice level, help to set the tone for a respectful classroom. The major focus for the adults is to encourage positive pro-social behaviors; respecting yourself and others, respecting the materials, respecting the world around us.

We create an environment which is developmentally appropriate to the child's needs and is designed to support a child's positive interaction with others and the materials in a responsible way. A well-designed and well-equipped classroom helps to prevent frustration and hazards. In addition, our daily schedule provides enough time for play, rest, creativity, a sense of home and security, little waiting and few transitions.

We use positive reinforcement to encourage positive behaviors. We give children choices and help them develop tools to problem solve. Conflict resolution is a very important part of our school. We encourage children to voice their concerns, mediate conflicts, make restitution, work toward compromise and help develop internal control. Young children learn by experimenting, testing limits and experiencing the consequences of their behavior. Discipline is the external tool to help children develop internal control. We will maintain a consistent discipline approach throughout the year.

The teacher's job is to set clear limits that make sense to the age and developmental stage of the child with whom we are interacting. When a child needs direct guidance we use;

1. Problem solving- What can we do here? How can we make this better? I wonder what to do here? We use and ask questions to encourage problem solving. Teachers help children identify their needs, feelings, causes, alternatives and choices.

2. Redirection- Suggest an alternative behavior/activity to the child. Change the focus from the current negative to a desired positive behavior. For a child who may be throwing blocks because of anger, using redirection might involve encouraging the child to throw the bean bags into a tub, or to pound clay instead. A child may need redirecting to a one-on-one interaction with a teacher, quiet sitting together and rocking or reading. Sometimes children need to be encouraged to try and work together, "I wonder if the two of you can build a bridge together?"

3. Natural and logical consequences- When possible, we allow children to experience the consequences of their actions directly related to the behavior; for example, if a child does not come to sit in circle when puppets are being handed out, they miss the chance to immediately hold a puppet.

4. Focusing play- entering into play directly with the child and helping them refocus on ways to use the materials constructively.

5. Using positive statements- Instead of saying, "Don't throw the clay on the floor," we would say, "Please keep the clay on the table." When the children are using materials appropriately, we would consistently say, "Look how well you all are working with the clay and keeping it on the table!"

Behavior which is unacceptable is the result of the child's developmental immaturity. The staff work together to reinforce limits and teach alternatives. Acceptable behavior takes time to learn.

Opportunities to problem solve are a part of the curriculum, both individually and together as a group.

We do not believe in the use of any kind of physical punishment or a time out room. If a child needs to be separated from the group, s/he will be supervised by one of the teachers. Children are not denied food, rest or bathroom as punishment. Toileting habits, or lack of, will never be a cause for punishment in any form. If needed, a parent may be asked to accompany a child on field trips. Children will not be subjected to any form of emotional abuse, including name calling, ostracism, shaming, teasing, or using language that threatens, humiliates or frightens the child.

When a child is not adjusting;

When the teachers feel that the usual methods of discipline are not effective or the child's peers feel unsafe or other children's parents express valid concern to the teachers, the following procedure will be followed.

1. The child's behavior will be observed, recorded, dated and initialed by the staff member(s) involved.
2. Staff will meet with parents to discuss the behavior and develop a program plan to meet the individual needs of the child in question.
3. After one week, the teachers will again observe and record the behaviors. They will discuss with the parents the noted changes in the child's behavior, and the teachers will advise the parents if there has not been enough improvement. If substantial improvement has not occurred, the teachers and the board may then ask the parents to disenroll the child. In the event that disenrollment occurs, the teachers will do their best to help the family find alternative programs or services.
4. Any action taken regarding consultation of outside professionals will occur only with the written approval of the parents.

The Santa Fe School for the Arts & Sciences policy for suspension or disenrollment

If, in the opinion of the school's teaching team and board, a child endangers the safety or well being of another child, or if a child is unreasonably disruptive of the functioning of any class, the teaching team may take immediate action to remedy the situation. Such action is within the sole discretion of the team and board and may include suspension or disenrollment of any child whose presence is a danger to the safety or well being of another child or is unreasonably disruptive. Readmission will also be at the sole discretion of the team and board and may be contingent upon conditions the team deems need to be fulfilled before readmission. Failure to comply with conditions set by the team and/or above policies will be grounds for disenrollment.

Confidentiality policy

It is our intention to respect the privacy of children and their parents and caregivers, while ensuring that they access high quality care and education.

We aim to ensure that all parents and caregivers can share their information in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children.

To ensure that all those using and working in the school can do so with confidence, we respect confidentiality in the following ways.

Parents have ready access to the files and records of their own children but do not have access to information about any other child.

Staff will not discuss personal information given by parents with other members of staff, except where it affects planning for the child's needs. Staff training includes an awareness of the importance of confidentiality.

Any concerns/evidence relating to a child's personal safety are kept in a secure, confidential file and are shared with as few people as possible on a "need-to-know" basis. Issues to do with the employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, remain confidential to the people directly involved with making personnel decisions.

Solicitations

Please do not use the school phone/address/email list or the children's cubbies to solicit business. We have spaces in our newsletter, on our website and on our community board for parents to share about their work and network with other parents. Please do not bring chain letters or advertisements to school as well.

Fire Drills and Emergency Evacuation

Fire drills are held on a regular basis throughout the year. The drills are held at different times of the day and the children may be alerted that there will be a loud noise. Emergency evacuation plans are practiced so children know they will have to leave the building quickly, sometimes without shoes or coats. In an emergency, one staff person calls 911 while other staff supervises the children outside the building. In both cases, roll is called to determine that all children are present.

Dressing for School and Play!

Please dress your child for school and play! Plan on your child getting messy, muddy, painted, etc. We will not rinse or wash clothes. We will encourage children to change if needed. Please be sure your child has a change of clothes and shoes that are suitable for running around outside. Shoes that are easy to take on and off are also preferable.

Dress Code: We trust that our students will dress appropriately for school. All students are expected to wear clothing that is neat, clean and in good repair. Students may not wear clothing that advertises any products that may be offensive to anyone.

Students may not wear extremely short skirts or extremely baggy pants that may impede movement. Hats are always removed in class and on some field trips.

Make up may not be worn or applied in school. Nail polish and hair styling products may be worn, but not applied in school. Perfume may not be worn in school as a courtesy to those who are chemically sensitive.

Students who violate the dress code may be asked to change or return home to change into more appropriate school clothing.

If you can imagine it, you can create it.

If you can dream it, you can become it.

-William Arthur Ward