

JOURNEY SCHOOL

2009-2010

SCHOOL HANDBOOK

JOURNEY
SCHOOL
A Public Charter School



Where education is
a journey, not a race

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Adopted by Council, Fall 2009

PARENT-SCHOOL-STUDENT COMPACT

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To provide a safe, nurturing, drug-free learning environment, with classroom communities that are well-furnished with high-quality materials.
2. To provide an excellent team of educators committed to Journey's mission as stated in the Journey School charter, including:
 - Waldorf-inspired philosophy and methodology, appropriate to the age level they are teaching
 - The ability to implement its core principles
 - To model peaceful, proactive behavior
3. To partner with parents, understanding they are their child's first and most important teachers. To do this as effectively as possible, school staff will:
 - Appreciate the uniqueness of each child and family
 - Respect the cultural and personal differences of all community members
 - Facilitate effective communication with parents (using 13 Habits of Trust Leaders)
 - Solicit solutions with parents and students to the greatest extent possible
 - Solicit needed and appropriate parent involvement in school and classrooms
 - Provide continuing parent and staff development opportunities
4. To always strive for excellence and self-improvement.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

5. To attend school regularly and be on time.
6. To come to school prepared with homework and necessary personal supplies.
7. To follow the school's guidelines on behavior, dress, etc. as laid out in the School Handbook.
8. To come to school well-rested, having eaten a nutritious breakfast, and ready to focus on learning.
9. To accept responsibility for my own actions.
10. To respect cultural and personal differences of others.
11. To respect and care for myself, other living things, and the environment.
12. To resolve problems in peaceful ways.
13. To try hard with a good attitude every day in school.
14. To respect my teacher and all adults on campus.
15. To respect my fellow students at Journey School and abide by the Code of Conduct.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To assure my child attends school regularly;
2. To assure my child arrives at school calm and ready to learn by:
 - Having had an adequate night's sleep and eaten a nourishing breakfast
 - Having very limited or no access to media during the school week (except for age-appropriate middle school assignments)
 - Ensuring a nutritious lunch and snack
 - Bringing all required and completed homework (including Thursday envelopes)
 - Wearing appropriate clothing (see dress code)
 - Establishing healthy rhythms and habits at home
 - Delivering students to school before the school day begins
 - Picking students up immediately after the school day ends
3. To follow the policies set forth in the School Handbook and to support the school staff and administration as they serve all Journey students.
4. To learn about my child's education by attending family participation or education events, parent- teacher conferences and community functions, and by studying more about Journey's vision for learning and teaching.
5. To support my child's learning by communicating regularly with school staff (using 13 Habits of High-Trust Leaders), and by supporting my child in positive ways to complete all homework assignments.

6. To follow the school's communication and conflict resolution guidelines, including working pro-actively with the staff and/or with my child when there are problems; to question rather than criticize; to refrain from gossip; to model respect for all; to help my child resolve conflicts in peaceful ways; and, to support the school's mission, philosophy, and core values even if it means compromising personal opinions or desires at times.
7. To volunteer in an area of school need, with a minimum of 5 hours per month on average, and to provide other support to the school as appropriate.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The signatures below indicate that we have read and agree to the Journey School Parent-Student-School Compact.

Parent Name(s) (please print): _____

Student Name(s)/Grade(s) (please print): _____ Grade
 _____ Grade

 Parent signature(s) Date

 Student signature (grades 6 and up) Date

 School Administrator signature Date

 Additional Student(s) signature(s): Date

NOTE: Only students in grade 6 or above should sign this document. For younger students, parents should sign for them as evidence that the family has discussed our school rules and expectations in age-appropriate ways.

Please sign and return this compact to the school. Retain a copy for your records.

VOLUNTEER STRUCTURE

Parents who have chosen Journey School for their children have chosen to commit to and become involved in their children's education. Each Journey School family is required to give an average of 5 hours per month or 50 hours over the course of the school year in volunteer service. Many families joyously give well over 100 hours per year to make Journey School available to children and the community at large. Possible volunteer activities include, but are not limited to:

- Playground supervision before and after school and during recess
- Assisting in the classroom or the school office
- Site maintenance and beautification
- Hospitality (welcoming new families, organizing food or hosting a visiting teacher)
- Service as a "class parent" or a "class representative"
- Serving on a school Committee or Council
- Serve as a parent member of the Social Inclusion Coordinating Committee
- Support the class teachers with preparation tasks
- Clerical or research tasks that can be done from home

We recognize that volunteer time requirements can be challenging to manage, however, without the past parent volunteers, Journey School would not exist today. Our charter school emphasizes service and children benefit from experiencing their parents' community service. The Parent Cabinet, the Volunteer Coordinator(s), along with the Administrative staff, will work with each family to ensure the smooth fulfillment of responsibilities. The intention is to focus on the joy of service while recognizing that Journey School truly needs and appreciates the active support and gifts of its volunteers.

Journey School reserves the right to obtain criminal background checks on volunteers who work directly with children. For more information on this, contact the school office.

MEDIA

The philosophy of Journey School is based upon an understanding of the developing child. While television and other media can serve as a source of information and entertainment for adults, children do not operate in the same developmental stage as adults. Recent research has shown that exposure to media entertainment for young children may have a detrimental effect upon their self-image, their ability to concentrate and develop attention span, their relationship skills, values, reading skills, physical skills, energy levels, psychological health, creativity and social behavior.

Because we believe that the impact of the electronic media can have detrimental effects on a child's healthy growth and development, we encourage families to incorporate our media free philosophy into their children's daily lives. To that end, we expect that our families significantly reduce or eliminate the use of media (television, videos, video games, computer games, i-pods, CD players, movies, etc.) for their children. We ask for complete elimination of electronic media during the school week, from Sunday evening to Friday after school, for grades K-5. We realize that limiting or eliminating media from your child's life might feel like a tall order. However, with support and reassurance, families may find that more free time means more creative and quality time together.

Concerns about the effects of television have centered almost exclusively on the content of the programs children watch. Many might argue that watching a nature program is educational and good for the child. However, as Marie Winn states in her book, *The Plug - In Drug*, "It is easy to overlook a deceptively simple fact: one is always *watching television* when one is watching television rather than having any other experience." Winn goes on to say that certain specific physiological mechanisms of the eyes, ears, and brain respond to the stimuli emanating from the screen regardless of the cognitive content of the programs. Television viewing requires the taking in of particular sensory material in a particular way no matter what the material might be. The sedentary mode of watching television does not match the active internal experience that occurs in response to what is being viewed. For example, one would not jump out of the way of an oncoming car that is on the screen, yet one may feel the anxiety, fear, and panic of the situation being viewed. There is, indeed, no other experience

Council Meetings

Council Meetings are held at least once each month. Regular meetings are announced in advance, and written agendas are posted outside of the office 72 hours prior to the meeting. Special meetings may be called when needed, and will have at least 24 hours public notice. Legal and financial matters are discussed and voted on when needed. Important issues are brought up and there are opportunities for members of the community to voice concerns, questions, make statements, etc. For dates and information please ask the office or check the school's master calendar. You are invited to any council meeting.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Festivals and Celebrations

Celebrating seasonal festivals at Journey School is a way of observing the recurring rhythms and cycles in nature; as the earth makes its way around the sun, the solstices and equinoxes become the four cornerstones of the year's rhythm. Sharing in the school's festival life is deeply nourishing to our individual inner lives and contributes to the integration and stability of the entire community.

As we return to school each year, the days begin to grow shorter and darker. During this contracted time much in nature appears to die. Yet it is during this time that the inner life of humankind is nourished and strengthened. During the fall, we celebrate the Harvest Festival and the Lantern Walk. As the holiday season approaches the children create treasures for other children to purchase as holiday gifts for loved ones in the magical and fanciful Fairie Market. With the New Year comes a gradual transition of winter to spring. The spring equinox marks this transitional renewal. We celebrate May Day in honor of nature's renewed growth and energy.

Journey School has a special tradition in our celebration of Halloween. Children should wear costumes that correspond with their course of study for that year. Weapons and scary costumes are not permitted.

Community Meetings

Community parent meetings are held throughout the year. These meetings are a venue to address topics of interest and hold discussions so that everyone including staff, parents and community members have input on the life of the school. They strengthen our school community and our understanding of Journey School's educational program. Parents are expected to attend at least two meetings a year. Please look for the announcements in the school newsletter and/or master calendar. In addition, all parents are encouraged and expected to attend each class meeting led by your child's teacher.

Enrollment Guidelines

As a public charter school, Journey School is open to any child residing in the state of California. We give enrollment preference to continuing students, siblings of currently enrolled students, children of full-time staff, and students residing in Capistrano Unified School District (CUSD). No student will be denied admission to Journey School based on race, ethnicity, national origin, gender or disability. If the number of eligible candidates exceeds the school's capacity, a public random drawing will be held.

Prior to admission, the family must submit an application and participate in an interview. The family will also be asked to read this handbook and acknowledge they have read the information and have made an informed choice when choosing Journey School.