



Middle School
Parent & Student Handbook
2010-2011

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Santa Fe School for the Arts & Sciences provides a strong academic, arts and science enriched education for students from preschool through middle school in multi-age classrooms that foster a love of learning, creativity and community.

We are committed to:

- ❖ High academic and behavioral standards, along with personalized support and guidance.
- ❖ Challenging each student to maximize their potential and graduate with the desire, vision and skills to follow their dreams.
- ❖ Supporting and encouraging the development of individual abilities in a culturally and ethnically diverse learning community.
- ❖ Providing opportunities for enriched real life applications of educational knowledge and connecting our students to the world at large.

Our school is a community in which parents, teachers and students work together to create a caring, safe environment where all students can learn from one another, develop respect for one another and acquire an acceptance for individual differences.

Guiding Principles

Our Guiding Principles are based on six character values:

Respect, Trust, Courage, Honesty, Compassion and Stewardship.

We agree, as a community, to resolve conflicts without resorting to any kind of physical aggression, fighting, intimidation, or verbal harassment.

We refrain from the use or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco or weapons of any kind

We treat each other with kindness, respect, and honesty by:

- ❖ Maintaining personal and academic honesty
- ❖ Refraining from cheating and lying
- ❖ Treating teachers, staff, parents and peers respectfully
- ❖ Not damaging or stealing school or personal property
- ❖ Not disrupting classes

We take full responsibility for our actions and for ourselves by:

- ❖ Refusing to tolerate unkind, or dangerous behavior by peers
- ❖ Acknowledging and learning from our mistakes

We all share responsibility for our school community by

- ❖ Keeping the school grounds clean indoors and out
- ❖ Taking actions to make our school safe and comfortable for all

Non-Discrimination Statement

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. We consider ourselves to be a Sanctuary School, where students and non-traditional families may find a safe haven from discrimination due to sexual orientation or ethnicity.

Attendance Policy

One of the most important elements of a good education is consistent, daily attendance. Students should not miss school except when it is absolutely necessary.

When a student is absent due to illness, the parents should call the school by 8:15 am to explain the absence. If a parent does not call or send in a note the following day explaining the absence, the absence will be considered unexcused. Teachers will explain to students their individual policies for making up missed work and parents should call teachers to make sure that all missed work is completed. If your child is going to be late to school due to medical appointment, please notify the staff by calling the school and leaving a message between 8:00 and 8:15 a.m. stating that your child will be absent.

Students who have more than two unexcused absences will be required to have a family conference to discuss the situation. Students who miss more than six classes in a semester, even for excused absences, risk academic consequences.

Students will be allowed to participate in after-school activities only if they have attended more than half of their classes on that same day.

If a student has a doctor's appointment in the middle of the school day, parents need to inform Rayna Dineen or Geeta Holdsworth, prior to taking their child out of school. Parents also need to come into the office first when they come to pick up their child during the school day.

Students who come to school with a fever or a contagious condition will be asked to call their parents and return home until they are better. Students who become ill during the day will call their parents or a guardian to come and pick them up. Parents must call to excuse a student from Physical Education class and a note from a doctor is needed if a student needs to miss more than two days of PE.

Students who miss school due to illness need to call or e-mail the school and receive their assignments as soon as they are well enough to work. All missed assignments will need to be made up unless the teacher involved gives an exemption. Depending on the situation, students may be exempted from homework. Extended absences (vacations, illness) must be clearly communicated with the principal and head teacher and appropriate plans for classwork and homework will be made. In all cases, however, previously announced tests, papers and projects will remain due as scheduled.

We strongly request 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 family vacation it can create a hardship for the teachers and the student. The teacher often needs to make up extensive work

packets for the student which can not possibly replace the hands on learning that happens in our school.

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 if you are planning to take a vacation during regular school days. We understand that there will be times that everyone has to miss school due to illness or family events such as funerals, or 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 so they can get work together for your child.

Arrival

Please drive slowly around the far right driveway and park carefully in the parking lot to the right of the middle school building. Students and parents may follow the sidewalk into the building. Students may also be dropped off in the drop off area near the middle school plaza.

Arrival time is 8:00-8:10 for middle school students. Please do not arrive prior to 8:00 am. Middle School students must sign themselves in upon entering the building, noting the time of arrival.

Students need to be at school on time. More than two unexcused late arrivals will result in a parent/teacher meeting to discuss the problem. Students are also expected to arrive to their various classes on time.

Departure

School ends at 3:15. Students may be picked up between 3:15 and 3:25. No student 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 student may ever be picked up by a sibling or youth younger than 16 years of age. No student will be allowed to leave the premises without staff being informed, including parental pickup.

When students need to leave school for a medical appt., please inform the office ahead of time and come into the office to sign out your child. Please always park during pick up times. Please do not wait in the driveway or the morning drop off area.

We ask all parents to please take a moment, at least once a day if possible, to check your mailboxes for important school notices and papers.

If a student is picked up late and the parent has not called the school to let us know, then the parent is charged \$1.00 per minute. If an emergency or work situation prevents pick-up on time, please inform us of that fact by calling us on the school cell phone, 920-9709. Your child will be admitted to an afterschool program or homework club and you will only need to pay the drop-in fee for afterschool (\$8/hour). Please let us know if our hours are difficult for you due to work hours or sibling pickup responsibilities. We will work with all parents to help make it work!

Students who are staying for an afterschool activity or club must be signed up at the beginning of each semester and payment made for the semester up front. Payments may also be made month by month.

Computers and the Internet

All middle school students have the privilege of using our computer network for research, classes and the internet. Students may not check or 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 send print images from the computer without teacher permission. Students may not change settings or backgrounds on the computers. Any inappropriate computer usage will result in cancellation of computer privileges. A meeting will be arranged with the student's teacher, family and the school principal to address the issue and the student will appear before the Student Court Council (SCC)

Dress Code

We trust that our middle school 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 alcohol, drug, or tobacco products or may be offensive to anyone. Students may not carry items that might be construed as drug paraphernalia including, but not limited to, lighters and pacifiers.

We ask that all middle schools students have shoes or slippers that will only be worn inside. All students must wear sneakers for physical education class.

Students may not wear extremely short skirts or extremely baggy pants that may impede movement. Hats are always removed during community service work, some field trips, guest speakers and when asked by a teacher.

Make up may not be applied in school. Nail polish and hair styling products may be worn, but not applied in school. Perfume and strong aftershave 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.

Items to be left at home

Students may never bring to school the following items: knives of any kind, beepers, computer games, matches, lighters, items of value, large amounts of money, laser pointers, pets or other items that may distract students from work. Gambling and card trading is not allowed at school. If such items are brought to school, they will be confiscated and then returned to parents.

Cell phones must remain turned off at all times. Cell phones may only be used with the teacher's permission when it is essential that a student make a call and the school phones are being used. Cell phones may not be used for taking pictures or texting. Messages may be checked at 3:15 pm. The first time a student has a cell phone in school that is turned on, the phone will be kept in the office for the rest of the day. The second time, only a parent may retrieve it at the end of the day. The third time, the student loses the privilege of having a cell phone at school.

Student Lockers

Students may decorate their lockers with magnets and items that can be easily removed. Stickers and tape that would be difficult to remove are not allowed.

The school principal will keep a list of all student's locker combination numbers in the event that the student forgets their combination or their locker needs to be opened by a teacher. Lockers remain under school control at all times and a search can be authorized if the principal feels there is a risk to student health or safety or if a cell phone is ringing in a locker after hours. Students may only open and decorate their own lockers.

Eating in the Middle School

Food is not permitted in the Humanities class (Middle Earth), the Science Room (Cave) or the lobby. Eating inside the building is allowed only in the Da Vinci Room. Students are also permitted to eat at the picnic table area outside their building. Students need to be within view of a teacher at all times.

Visitors to Campus and Parent Visits

Students must receive permission from the principal at least 24 hours in advance if they wish to bring a guest to school. All visitors will need to check in at the office with their parents to fill out vital information forms before visiting at the school.

Parent Participation & Visitation

Parents are welcome to schedule visits for any class as long as the visit has been pre-arranged with the teacher. Visits can occur at any time during the school year and can help give you an idea of your child's day. Please schedule your visiting day at least one week in advance, as we limit the number of 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.

Parent involvement is deeply appreciated, needed and encouraged. We would like our school to be a place where parents are always welcome and feel as though they are partners in the education of their children. As a parent, we invite you to volunteer some time to help out at the school- for example, driving or chaperoning on field trips, sharing your talents with a class, joining a committee to help with the grounds, fundraising or construction, etc. We have many committees that parents may join to help us in supporting our school community.

Parents are welcome to schedule meetings with any teacher or administrator at any time, in addition to the bi-annual parent teacher conferences.

Student Discipline

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 expect that our students will behave appropriately in school and at school events. Falling short of these expectations will result in a disciplinary conferences with parents and teachers. Our priority is the safety of our students. Teasing and other disrespectful behavior are not a part of our school culture and will result in immediate consequences.

The following actions will result in an immediate phone call to arrange a principal, teacher and family conference: cutting class, being dishonest or cheating, plagiarizing, exhibiting violent or harassing behavior, and possession of illegal drugs, alcohol or weapons at school. In some cases the student will be sent home prior to the conference occurring. This conference will determine the appropriate consequences for the student's behavior. The student may also be sent to the Student Court Council. The Student Court Council (SCC), a rotating panel of peers, will be given the authority to help determine appropriate consequences for students who have behaved inappropriately through a process of review, discussion and consensus.

If, in the opinion of the school's teaching team and board, a student endangers the safety or well being of another student, or if a student 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 student whose presence is a danger to the safety or well being of another student 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.

Substance Abuse Policy

Any student showing evidence of possessing or having consumed drugs or alcohol at any time at the school, on the grounds, or during a school sponsored event, is subject to suspension and an immediate parent, teacher and Principal conference, after which the student may be subject to suspension and/or disenrollment.

Drugs refers to all substances that are illegal, as well as prescription drugs that are not prescribed to that student and other intoxicating substances, such as glue. Use of tobacco is also prohibited at Santa Fe School for the Arts & Sciences.

Santa Fe School for the Arts & Sciences recognizes the seriousness of drug and alcohol use among young people and will work together with the student's family to address this issue. The student would be required to undergo an alcohol/drug assessment by a school-approved facility or counselor. The financial cost for the assessment is the parent's responsibility, and the student's possible ongoing enrollment at Santa Fe School for the Arts & Sciences is dependent upon successful completion of the assessment and any recommended follow up care.

We place a high value on truthfulness and individual responsibly. Any student who self-reports a drug or alcohol incident will be appreciated and assisted in

addressing this issue. We encourage students who are concerned about a friend's use of drugs or alcohol to seek out a trusted adult at home or in the school community and share that concern.

Community Service

We connect our middle school students to the community through supervised community service projects. We strive to embody the values of citizenship, leadership, compassion and service. All middle school students will perform community service on Fridays from 8:30-10:30 during either the fall or spring semester.

Our service-learning based community service program gives our students the opportunity to make a difference in their community and experience the personal benefits of service. Students need to arrive at school prior to 8:15 to get a ride on the school bus to their community service location.

Mentorship

All 8th grade middle school students will participate in a community based, structured mentorship on Fridays from 8:30-10:30 during the Spring semester. Students work with teachers in the fall to determine a career area of interest which they would like to explore. During the second trimester, Fridays will be spent at school working on related internship research and life skills classes. During the second and third trimester, students may be dropped off at their internships at 8:30 on Fridays, or they will need to arrive at school prior to 8:15 to get a ride on the school bus to their internship location. Students will complete a project and a report related to their mentorship which will be presented at our mentorship festival in May.

Homework

All Middle School students will receive an average of 1-2 hrs. of homework each night. Students need to plan their homework assignments for the week each Monday evening in order to ensure that all work will be done by the due date. There will be times during each semester when projects, tests and research papers may require more than the usual homework or study time. Students need to speak with their teachers if they are having a hard time organizing their homework schedule. For each class, if homework is late or is not completed three times, the student's grade for that class will be lowered one letter grade.

Students who participate in after school activities should remember that these activities are in addition to their academic responsibilities and are appropriate only if they are able to complete their homework. Students and parents need to communicate with teachers if a particular homework assignment is not understood and/or is taking an inordinate amount of time.

Students may sign up for Homework Club, Monday - Thursday, to receive homework assistance at school. Students may also sign up for afterschool tutoring. They may also ask their teacher to assist them either during a break time or after school.

Academic Requirements

The standard academic course load consists of five solid academic courses, P.E. and three electives. Requests to reduce the course load below the standard minimum should be directed to the head teacher and principal.

Mathematics- 2 years

Humanities- 2 years

Science- 2 years

Foreign Language - 2 years

Language Arts (English)- 2 years

Community Service- 2 semesters

Mentorship- 1 semester

Electives- 1-2 years (French, Spanish or Japanese, Digital Arts or Drama, Fine Art and Moving Images)

Electives are subject to change each semester.

Students who are failing a required course will be requested to receive tutoring in that course, attend extra study hall periods, repeat the class or complete approved summer or winter break work to make up for the failed class. A passing grade must be received in each required class in order to graduate from eighth grade.

Academic Freedom

Santa Fe School for the Arts_& Sciences is committed to the belief that teachers, with the approval of the school administration, have the freedom to choose the materials and activities they feel are appropriate for each course. Parents who feel these materials or activities are inappropriate should contact the principal.

Grades and Progress Reports

All middle school students will receive grades and written progress notes from each of their teachers during parent teacher conferences and end of semester reports. Grades are computed as follows: A= 90-100%, B=80-89%, C=70-79%, D=60-69% and anything below 60% is an F. Receiving a grade of F means that the student does not earn credit for the class. Pluses and minuses may be used to further indicate degrees of performance and effort.

Grades are determined by the combination of work quality, tests, quizzes, reports and projects, effort, class participation and attitude.

Solicitations

Please do not use our school phone/address list/e-mail or the student's/parent's cubbies to solicit business. E-mail addresses are provided for school-related and one-to-one communications only. Please do not use them to create any kind of list-serve that is not school-authorized, including commercial or political use. We always have space in our newsletter and space 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. Please check with the

principal before sending your child in with Girl Scout cookies or other items to sell at school.

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 the school at 438-8585. Please always call the school cell phone, **920-9709 if you were unable to reach someone in the office**. This phone will always be answered during the school day. Messages which can wait until after 3:00 pm may also be left on our answering machine, **438-8585**.

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 the principal 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 principal's mailbox.

Medication (prescription, over the counter 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. **Please do not put any medication in your child's backpack or lunch box: please always hand it directly to the child's teacher**. This includes Tylenol and other over the counter allergy or pain relieving medicine- please do not allow your child to bring these medications to school. 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. We have a \$80 field trip fee/year which covers the cost of our field trip program. Approximately 1 week prior to a field trip, we will email and/or send home a notice with all the pertinent information. 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 buses, or we will need at least 4-5 drivers per trip with seatbelts for each student. Drivers are completely responsible for the students

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.

Tuition Policy

Please see your individualized Santa Fe School for the Arts & Sciences tuition contract agreement.

Financial Aid

Full and partial scholarships are awarded according to financial need, and will be kept confidential by the executive director and the financial aid committee. If you apply for financial aid, you will be required to provide personal financial 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.

Fall Orientation Trip

Each fall, all 7th and 8th grade students participate in a 3 day orientation trip. All middle school students participate in a mandatory three day trip to 100 Elks in Buena Vista, Colorado, an experiential, outdoor science learning adventure center. The school and students usually raise the scholarship money needed for this exciting, educational trip. The orientation trip includes experiential learning, team building initiatives and active, challenging group and individual activities. 100 Elk offers opportunities for rock climbing, canoeing, ropes course, ecology studies and group bonding. This trip also provides an opportunity for teachers and students to get to know each other and begin the year as a team.

On alternate years, the middle school students may take a longer trip elsewhere in the country or in the world.

Afterschool Activities

Music Classes: Marimba, Piano, Drums, Banjo, Percussion Ensemble, Guitar and Recorder Ensemble, Voice, Guitar, Violin, Rock Band & Chorus.

Sports: Soccer, Track team, Lacrosse, Fencing & Basketball

Arts: Flamenco Dance, Tumbling and Tap, Irish Dance, Digital Photography, Moving Images, Fiber Arts, Comic Book Club, Fashion Design.

Language Clubs: French, Spanish, Chinese and Japanese Clubs.

Academic: Homework Club, Study Hall, India Club, Robotics & Peace Jam Club.

If you can imagine it, you can create it.

If you can dream it, you can become it.

-William Arthur Ward