

Tree of Life Charter School

2023-24

General Policies and Procedures

Attendance and Absence Policies

The amount of revenue the school receives from the government for its operating expenses is dependent upon attendance of its students. The school receives less money when students are absent from school for any reason. To ensure both that the school receives enough funds to operate optimally and that students do not miss important educational opportunities, it is essential that students are not absent unless they are ill. Absent students risk missing important lessons, demonstrations, field trips, and other learning experiences that cannot necessarily be repeated or duplicated.

Independent Study Plans

When a student must be absent from school for any reason other than serious illness, including medical or dental appointment or reason, family emergency, or trip that could not be scheduled during regular school breaks, the student, student's family, and Guide are expected to set up a temporary Independent Study Plan which qualifies as school attendance. This ensures that the student does not miss out on learning time or skills practice, and that s/he stays current with any assignments that have due dates. To set up Independent Study, parents/guardians should notify the office, and the office will relay the message to the Guide, who will contact the parent/guardian about the work plan. The attendance secretary can create the independent study plan or the Guide can choose to create it. The work plan will be available in the office for the parent/guardian to sign and pick up. Completion of the plan must be documented by the student and parents/guardians in the Independent Study work log, journal, or by work samples. An Independent Study Plan form must be prepared and signed by student, parent/guardian, and Guide that states the work to be done and date due. This must be turned in to the office in a timely manner. The Guide will verify whether or not the student completed the plan successfully with the minimum number of hours of study to qualify for attendance. The Principal will also review and sign the plan and verify attendance credit. The number of independent study days is limited to 14 days per school year, unless approved by the Principal.

Notifying the School of Absence or Tardiness

Parents/Guardians should call the school as soon as they know their child will be absent or tardy, preferably before 9 AM. The attendance record of a child who arrives thirty or more minutes late will be marked officially tardy. If staff members are unable to answer the phone, parents/guardians should leave a message on the answering machine stating caller's name, absent child's name, reason for absence or tardiness, and expected length of absence. A call needs to be made each day that the child is absent or tardy. Students arriving after 8:30 AM need to be signed in at the office by the parent or other adult who brings them to school.

Excessive Absences Policy

The intent of the Excessive Absences Policy is to notify parents/guardians when their child has been excessively absent, and absence is affecting the child's learning. Postcards with positive messages and encouragement will be sent out monthly to families whose child has missed more than one day during that month. Through communication by phone call, letter, and/or conference with parents/guardians, the family will be notified initially when the student's absence is over 5% or 10 days of the school year, and again when it is over 10% or 20 days. Independent Study will be encouraged for students who are not seriously ill in order to facilitate continuation of education during absences. Students who do Independent Study work are not considered absent. Parents/guardians must have a medical note faxed, mailed, or delivered to the school for students who are absent 5 or more days consecutively due to illness. This verifies serious illness, and it

alerts the school to any action or notification it should take to prevent spread of disease. A maximum of 10 absences due to illness are excusable each year, unless a Chronic Illness Verification Form is on file with the school. In the case that a student is absent for more than 20 days of the school year and was not seriously ill, or if the student has excessive trancies, the staff may notify Child Protective Services of a possible neglect issue. State law requires parents/guardians to have their children attend school full time every school day unless the child is ill, has a medical appointment, is attending the funeral of an immediate family member, or is participating in an authorized religious activity. Students with unexcused absences of three (3) days or more are truant, and a truancy notification letter will be mailed to the family along with an appointment date for a meeting with the Principal.

Preventing Tardiness

Students arriving at school late often interrupt on-going activities and other students who are already working, miss important parts of class meetings or lessons, or miss out on the long work period that helps develop concentration, so our school has a proactive tardiness policy. Tardiness can be prevented by preparing lunch and clothing the evening before, making sure that students get enough sleep, and having a family planning meeting to get suggestions from family members about what strategies will help them be on time.

When any student is tardy three (3) times, a truancy notification letter will be mailed to the family and a meeting will be held with the student, the student's family, and the Guide to discuss measures to prevent further occurrences. As a way of learning about the natural and logical consequences of tardiness, students may be asked to make up the missed school time during break times or after school.

Appointments, Early Pick-up, Late Pick-up

Families need to notify the school about appointments or changes in pick-up times at the beginning of the day by note or phone call to the office, so staff will be prepared and not puzzled! Students arriving or returning after 8:30 AM or being picked up before dismissal time need to be signed in/out in the office by the adult transporting them. We ask that family members do not enter the classroom before dismissal time to pick up their child early unless needed for an appointment or emergency. Students arriving more than 15 minutes early or picked up later than 15 minutes after dismissal time will be checked in to child care, and the family will be responsible for drop-in child care fees. An attempt to contact families who are unexpectedly late for pick-up will be made after 15 minutes.

Mid-Day Break

1. Mid-day break is a relaxation period, and students have several choices of activities, including sports, games, conversation with others, reading (if they remembered to bring their book outside), gardening, committee meetings, and resting alone. However, the general school policies apply, and items brought from home, such as games, toys, items with violent or grotesque themes, etc. are not allowed on the playground.
2. Games during mid-day break should be announced and players recruited before teams are formed. If this procedure is followed, games may be closed to newcomers.
3. Students who arrived tardy to school may be asked to use mid-day break time to do make-up work for their tardiness. Students who have not completed assignments by due dates may use mid-day break time to work on their assignments. However, they need to remember to bring the materials they need outside with them at break.
4. The classroom doors will be locked during mid-day break to facilitate a non-interrupted break time for off-duty staff, and to ease supervision during break.
5. It is the staff's responsibility to ensure that the community meal is a time when good manners are observed, and polite conversation takes place. If necessary, grace and courtesy lessons may be given to students by the staff. Staff on duty should be sitting with the students and conversing

- with them to provide the proper role model example.
6. Students and staff will set their lunch place with a placemat, food containers, utensils, and napkin before eating. Lunch box containers will be closed and placed off the table. (extra placemats are available for those who did not bring them). Students who are having school lunch should bring a placemat from home to use.
 7. Students may only eat the food they brought in their own lunch container for lunch or personal snack. This prevents students from eating foods to which they may have allergies or sensitivities, or that their families prefer they do not eat, as well as preventing food bullying. Food that does not follow the school nutrition policy will be confiscated and a reminder note will be sent home to the parent/guardian.
 8. Students need to eat at tables or on lawn mats, together in one general area. This helps with ease of supervision and provides a community atmosphere. Students will stay at one spot until lunch time is over. Students will have a minimum of twenty minutes to eat and digest their food. At 5 minutes before clean up time, a 5-minute warning will be given with the silent sign, and a silent eating time will begin. At the proper time, staff will quietly let Lunch Inspectors know that it's time to start their job and quietly notify students to start cleaning up.
 9. Students need to put leftover food and trash back in their lunch containers. These may be composted and recycled in their classroom receptacles or taken home.
 10. Each student's eating area must be inspected by a Lunch Inspector before the whole table is dismissed from their table to line up. If a Lunch Inspector dismisses a table and it still has trash on or near it, the Lunch Inspector will need to clean up the trash. Staff will monitor to make sure the Lunch Inspector is thorough and will model actions and language for them. Each class will have table cleaners who clean assigned lunch tables/mats with cleaning spray and cloth.
 11. Play and sports equipment, as well as books and games, may not be taken out during meal time.
 12. In inclement weather, mid-day break is taken inside the classroom with classroom staff rotating their breaks in order to cover supervision. In general, rain and temperatures under 60 degree F and over 95 degrees F will initiate inside lunch time, but there are other factors such as wind. The supervising staff will contact the principal if they feel that lunch should be indoors. The school will follow county guidelines for Air quality guidelines.

Field Trips

Field trips are extensions of our classroom environment. All field trips should have an educational purpose connected with the class's current curriculum. Field trips for amusement purposes are not acceptable for school time, but may be arranged for weekends and breaks. Field trips of an athletic nature are permitted as part of the physical education curriculum. Best practice is for a list of field trips to be provided to parents/guardians at the beginning of the year.

1. Students need field trip permission forms, emergency information forms, and medical release forms signed prior to participation in a field trip. The staff member in charge must carry a copy of these for each student participating, along with a small first aid kit. Drivers should have a copy of medical release forms for each student in their car, in case of an accident. Emergency folders with all forms for all students should be made ahead of time.
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3. Field trips within Ukiah do not need to be pre-notified to parents/guardians unless they have requested it.
4. Field trips outside Ukiah need to be pre-notified in writing, Parent Square, or by telephone call to

parents/guardians. Written notices should have a return slip indicating the parent/guardian has received the notice. Parent Square notices and telephone messages need to ask for a reply that the message was received.

5. Drivers for field trips need to have safe cars, seatbelts, and proper insurance. Make sure drivers have insurance forms called “Private Vehicle Use” forms, a copy of current driver’s license, MVR (motor vehicle/driver report), and a copy of automotive insurance on file with the school before the trip. Visually check the car for good tires.
6. Have drivers and chaperones read and sign the Field Trip Chaperone Guidelines before participating in field trips. This should be updated and renewed each semester.
7. Make sure the drivers have a map or written directions, with the school phone number and, if possible, the destination’s phone number. For long trips, plan a stop every 1½ hours for bathrooms and driver breaks. It’s helpful to share cell phone number contacts, although parents/guardians need to be reminded that phones may not be used while driving.
8. If you are unsure of your exact return time, have a contact parent/guardian you can call to notify other parents/guardians about your ETA.
9. Remind students of appropriate behavior and good manners for each trip. Let them know what is expected of them and the trip plans.
10. On long trips, have a student activity pack. Let the driver know the behavior you expect of your students in the car, and the activities planned for them to do. Students prone to motion sickness should be able to look out of a window frequently and have access to fresh air.
11. It’s recommended that students do not eat or drink anything other than water in vehicles. This prevents both car messes and sometimes motion sickness.
12. Field trips involving any dangerous activities need special waiver forms for insurance purposes. These include swimming, other water sports, climbing walls, amusement park rides, boating, any trip to a body of water—ocean, lake, stream, etc. Some of these activities require additional insurance coverage or certificates of insurance from other programs. Field trips that include wading, swimming, or water sports must have a certified lifeguard supervising.
13. A cap or hat with brim must be worn by students and staff on outdoor field trips in which students will be exposed to the sun for more than ½ hour. For this purpose, each student should have a cap or hat with brim, marked with the student's name, that stays at school in the student's cubby when not in use. Students without hats can make and wear one out of paper or cardboard if necessary. Students may not participate in an outdoor trip of this length without a cap or hat. The purpose of the hat or cap is protection from sun damage, including heatstroke, sunstroke, sunburn, and skin cancer. Sunscreen is recommended.
14. Use of bicycles for transportation is permitted if a student passes a bicycle road safety test, has rear view mirrors and reflectors on the bike, and uses a helmet and bicycle in good condition.
15. Students under age 8 or 4'9” in height must use a car safety seat.
16. Guests/Friends of students or visitors to the school are not allowed to participate in field trips. Drivers may bring their own children or children they are caring for, if permitted by the Guide in charge, and the driver rather than the staff must supervise these children.
17. A school class may ask for donations or do fundraisers to raise money to cover the cost of field trips. This money may not be used to pay for gas or to cover expenses for drivers/chaperones who volunteer to drive or accompany a class on a trip. It may only be used to cover the field trip expenses of staff and students who attend Tree of Life Charter School.
18. Students who have shown responsibility and the skills necessary will be allowed to plan, arrange, and participate in “going out” trips, which are student-planned trips which they arrange themselves for the purpose of research. They may walk, use public transportation, bicycles, or

arrange for someone to drive them. Students using bicycles as a means of transportation must pass a road safety test, have their own helmets and bicycles in good condition with rear view mirrors and reflectors, and file a route plan with their Guide. All students who are “going out” must have parental/guardian permission for each trip and be accompanied by an adult.

19. Students whose parents/guardians decide to exclude their child from field trip attendance will be expected to complete Independent Study work at home. Students who cannot attend a field trip due to accommodations needed by their IEP, 504 plan, or other reason determined by the classroom Guide may be allowed to attend school in another classroom if pre-arranged by the Guides and parents/guardians; otherwise, they will be expected to complete Independent Study work at home.

Driver and Private Vehicle Guidelines

Drivers and private vehicles being operated for Tree of Life Charter School purposes must meet or exceed the following guidelines:

1. All drivers must be approved by the school or site administrator.
2. The driver must be at least age 21 to drive for business purposes and age 25 if transporting students, possess a valid California driver's license, and have been continuously licensed for a minimum of 3 years.
3. Driver must be free of any medical condition that may affect his/her ability to operate a vehicle. No alcohol or drugs will be consumed prior to, or while operating the vehicle.
4. The vehicle will be in excellent condition and repair.
5. The number of passengers shall not exceed the capacity for which the vehicle was designed. 7. No one may transport more than nine (9) passengers plus the driver in any vehicle.
6. All occupants must wear seat belts whenever the vehicle is in motion.
7. All students who are less than 8 years of age or under 4'9" tall must be properly secured in a rear seat, in a child passenger restraint system, meeting applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards.
8. The use of cell phones or other electronic devices while driving is prohibited, including hands free communication.
9. Smoking a pipe, cigar, or cigarette/electronic cigarette in the vehicle is prohibited.
10. The driver accepts the added responsibility that comes from carrying extra individuals and, therefore, will be conscientious in obeying all driving rules and regulations in accordance with federal, state, and local laws. The California Supreme Court has eliminated protection of the former California Guest Law; therefore, a guest passenger may sue his/her host owner/driver.
11. The driver must provide an MVR (Motor Vehicle Report/Driver Record) dated within 30 days of filing an application to drive and have an acceptable driving record as determined by the Tree of Life Charter School policy. The Tree of Life Charter School reserves the right to require a current H6 Motor Vehicle Report (10-year MVR) and/or accident reports for determination of driver eligibility.
12. Driver must have an automobile liability insurance policy and assume all responsibility for all physical damage to the vehicle. When driving a personal vehicle while on Tree of Life Charter School business and involved in an accident, by law your liability insurance policy is used first.

The Tree of Life Charter School liability policy would be used only after your policy limits have been exceeded. Minimum liability limits of insurance required are:

Bodily Injury \$100,000 each person; \$300,000 each occurrence Property

Damage \$50,000 each occurrence

or

Combined Single Limit \$300,000 each occurrence

15. If the above conditions change and/or cannot be met, applicant will no longer participate as a driver until the requirements can be met.

Field Trip Chaperone Guidelines

Thank you for volunteering as a field trip chaperone. The purpose of the adult in the Montessori educational philosophy is to be a model and a guide for the children. Through our own enthusiasm for learning, our children learn to love learning. Through our own good manners and behavior, our children learn what behavior is appropriate in different situations. Through our own adherence to laws, rules, and regulations, our children learn to respect limits and government. Below are the school's guidelines that we expect field trip chaperones to follow. If you cannot agree to these, please let the Guide/Teacher know and we will find someone else to volunteer.

Please read carefully and initial each element you agree to follow:

_____ 1. Drivers must have a copy of their driver's license, proof of current insurance policy or Auto ID card, Motor Vehicle/Driver Record (dated within past 30 days), and Private Vehicle Use Application on file in the office. Vehicles must be in good repair.

_____ 2. Observe and pay attention to the students (rather than talking with the other adults on the trip OR talking/texting on your cell phone). Monitor their behavior and ask them to stop any inappropriate behavior. Model appropriate behavior.

_____ 3. Some examples of inappropriate behavior are: talking too loudly in a public place, interrupting a speaker, talking to someone else while the speaker is giving a lesson/presentation, touching or bothering someone during a lesson/presentation, using foul language, climbing on buildings or monuments, walking off pathways on garden or lawn areas or on private property, running inside buildings, running ahead of the group.

_____ 4. Follow rules and laws, and make sure the students follow them, including: refraining from use of cell phone while driving, refraining from texting while driving, crossing the street at sidewalks or corners (not jaywalking), adhering to speed limits, making sure all passengers are safely seated with seatbelts before driving, making sure all passengers keep their limbs inside the vehicle, signaling when turning or changing lanes, walking on sidewalks rather than in the street, walking facing traffic and close to the edge of the road when there is no sidewalk, following any rules that are posted.

_____ 5. Talking on cell phones or texting while driving is prohibited by school policy. This includes the use of hands-free or headset phones, as research has shown they affect a driver's ability to concentrate. We want our students to be as safe as possible. In general, leave your cell phones off during driving and while supervising children. (Leaving your cell phone on and glancing at it to find out who called may be dangerous while driving.) Check your messages and make brief calls, if necessary, when your group makes a stop. Then, turn off your cell phone again and attend to the children. This not only

Reviewed, updated, approved by Board Cabinet 8/9/23

helps prevent accidents, but it is basic respectful behavior.

_____ 6. Students are not to eat food nor drink beverages other than water in the car. This prevents the driver from being distracted with opening containers and spills, and in some cases prevents car sickness. The Guide/Teacher will indicate where or when to make a meal stop on long trips. Otherwise, we take trips that are short enough that students do not need to eat. Students may only eat and drink their own food and beverages - sharing is not allowed due to allergies and family food preferences. **DO NOT BUY FOOD OR DRINKS FOR CHILDREN IN YOUR VEHICLE.** Remember that you are being a model and guide, so please follow our school nutrition policy of no refined sugar or artificial sweeteners while on field trips.

_____ 7. Drivers may play music suitable for the age of children they have in the car. Movies/Videos are not allowed on school field trips. Students may have work packets or books, if it does not cause them car sickness. Quiet conversation and car games (alphabet travel games, I spy, license plate games, etc.) are encouraged. Students may not bring or use electronics, such as music players or games.

_____ 8. Model enthusiasm for learning by demonstrating active listening skills with presenters, reading information and pointing out interesting items in exhibits, and discussing with the children what they are learning about on the trip. If you have expertise about a particular subject, please share it with the group.

_____ 9. Let the Guide/Teacher know if there are any difficulties with particular students. Remember that some students may have situations or disabilities that are not common knowledge. You may not understand why they are misbehaving, but the Guide/Teacher may know. If the situation is handled in a way you don't understand, remember that there may be extenuating circumstances.

Thank you for volunteering to help our children as a chaperone. We really appreciate your service.

Driver's Signature _____

Date _____

Conference Procedures

Orientation (before school begins) conference:

1. Several weeks before conferences begin, send a Parent Square conference sign up to your class. They are a duration of 45 minutes starting at 8:00-11:00 and 3:00-5:15, running Tuesday-Thursday.

Each teacher may schedule at his or her own discretion depending on their needs or parent's needs, but please keep on this time interval for families with multiple children at the school.

2. This conference's purpose is to go over the Family Handbook with parents and students.

Highlight policies, especially specific to TOL, as you go through the Handbook. Be sure to speak directly to student, as well as parents.

3. Make a checklist and copy one for each family before conferences start, so you don't forget anything!

Here is a sample checklist:

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- a. Go over the Family Handbook.
 - b. Give student a tour of classroom
 - c. Did they get the supply list? Questions?
 - d. Sign up for classroom jobs. Have a list ready: lunch fundraiser helper, deep cleaning, field trip coordinator, laundry, etc.
 - e. Student's goals and interests: take notes for each student, so you can refer to it later. Go through all subjects, offering prompts when needed or asking parents for their observations. Most younger students will need lots of prompting about their interests and goals.
 - f. Any paperwork from the office filled out.
4. Don't forget to give your instructional assistant a list of jobs to do while you are in conferences, so their time is efficient. Your assistant will probably be working in the room while you are having conferences, so introduce them to families.

Student-led conferences (October/March)

1. Several weeks before conferences, send out a Conference Sign Up on Parent Square. Times are as follows: starting at 2:45 (school is out at 2:30) duration 30 minutes with 3 conferences simultaneously.
2. Have students prepare their portfolios. They should choose their best work from each subject to put in their portfolio. Give a lesson on how to sort work into subjects and choose their best work. Remind them that their work might be from the shelf, not on a piece of paper. For the primary class, their work will probably all be from the shelves. They could also be doing this throughout the 10-week quarter, so the work is spread out.
3. They should put their work in a folder with fasteners. These can be bought at the beginning of the school year when they are least expensive. They should be kept in their finished file, so they can be accessed easily.
4. Students should reflect on their work somehow, either on paper or, for younger students, orally. They should practice this before their conference. Give a lesson on how to present a portfolio. These points could be made:
 - a. Why they chose this work
 - b. What they learned
 - c. Next goals in that subject
5. During the conferences, the Guide is available to assist the students and answer questions. The Guide can be doing record keeping or another task while listening to conferences or rotating to each family while listening. Allow the student to lead the conference but offer assistance if they are struggling.

Guide-led conferences (January and End of Year)

1. Several weeks before conferences, send out a Conference Sign Up on Parent Square.
2. Times are as follows: For Guide-Led Conferences, starting at 1:45 (school is out at 1:30) duration 45 minutes.
3. Using Montessori Compass, create a progress report using the dates for either first semester or second semester, whichever is applicable.
4. Be sure to choose the Skills Report template (Primary or Elementary), assessment scale (Introduced, working, mastered), and display Summary tab OFF.
5. Turn display Attendance report off. Attendance records should be written/typed at the top of the

progress report using information given to you from the office.

6. Turn display curriculum descriptions, sub-category, and elements OFF.
7. Turn Skills report tab ON.
8. Create report.
9. Be sure that all lessons are entered. If done daily (11:30-11:45), this should already be done when creating report. If not, you should have written down lessons given and observations made daily so that you can record in Montessori Compass.
10. Write a general statement of progress for each student, including social emotional growth and academic growth. This should be about a paragraph. If you would like to see examples, please inquire one of the other guides or in the office.
11. Record Skills report tab scale for each skill. Comment where applicable. (ex. works and plays well with others: FREQUENTLY: Jimmy Joe often helps others to work out their differences. He is a peacekeeper.) Use observations, not judgements.

Clothing

1. Clothing must be clean, neat, and in good repair.
2. Clothing must be appropriate for the weather.
3. Good-fitting, supportive, closed toe shoes must be worn by the student to school for sports, walks, and play. If the student is not wearing these shoes to school, a phone call will be made to the parent/guardian to bring a pair of safe shoes to school. Students may bring an extra pair of hard-soled non-sports shoes to change into at school and wear inside.
4. A cap or hat with brim must be worn on walks and outdoor field trips longer than ½ hour to prevent sun damage and overheating. This cap or hat, labeled with child's name, should remain at school in the student's storage area. Sunscreen is recommended.
5. A sweater, jacket, or heavy long-sleeved shirt, labeled with child's name, must be worn outside if the temperature is below 55 degrees Fahrenheit.
6. Unmarked clothing that is not claimed from Lost and Found will be given to a charitable group at the end of each month.
7. A complete change of clothing, labeled with child's name, in plastic or cloth bag needs to stay in the student's cubby in case of accidents and spills. If used, a replacement set needs to be brought to school the next day.
8. If an issue arises about the inappropriateness of particular clothing for school, the class can hold a discussion about the issue and make a decision that applies to their class. This decision and any other change to the current Clothing Policy may be presented to Student Council, and if approved, sent to the Board for discussion and final approval or rejection.

Bringing Items from Home

In order to prevent distraction in the classroom and loss or damage to personal items, the school has developed policies for bringing items from home:

1. Toys, dolls, stuffed animals, balls, cards, games, cell phones, and electronic equipment other than computers or calculators may not be brought to school.
2. Exceptions may be made on Spirit Days when a particular type of item is allowed to be shared.
3. Books, recordings, or other items for curriculum enrichment may be brought to school after checking with the student's Guide to determine appropriateness.
4. Any item allowed to be brought to school must be labeled with the student's or family's name. The school cannot be held responsible for items that go missing or get lost. Bringing or wearing valuable items is not recommended.

5. If inappropriate items or excluded items are brought to school, staff will keep the items in a safe place until the parent/guardian and student meet with staff about it.
6. Due to health and safety or environmental reasons, animals may not be brought to school for sharing unless the Guide has determined that it is safe and has given permission.
7. State law prohibits a student from bringing a firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object to school unless the student has written permission from a teacher and the Principal agrees to it. This includes pocket knives.

Security: Closing the Facility

1. Make sure that all windows are shut tight and locked.
2. All computers, monitors, and printers need to be turned off or shut down, not left on hibernate or simply logged off.
3. Thermostats should be set to appropriate nighttime temperatures—55 degrees for heat, 85 degrees for cooling. Make sure all fans are turned off. If thermostats have 5 day/2 day settings, make sure the 2 days settings are set the same as the nighttime settings. For rooms with the Daikin Room Air Conditioners (Hunters Lodge, Sr elementary, and Secondary), if not on a setting, please turn off completely.
4. Make sure all lights, fans, music players are turned off, including storage rooms and hallways.
5. Make sure that students' belongings are not left outside.
6. Make sure all doors are locked, including the outside bathrooms, storage room, and office.
7. Lock the school driveway gate.

Orders and Purchases

1. Direct orders paid from the school's accounts are the preferred way for making school purchases.
2. Staff members may make personal purchases under \$200 in situations where regular purchase orders are inconvenient or not available. Have purchases over \$200 pre-approved by the Principal. Some staff members may be issued school corporate credit cards to use for orders and purchases that cannot be made by purchase order or invoice. Purchases over \$5,000 must be pre approved by both the Tree of Life Board Cabinet and the Beginning Project Board.
3. Receipts must be turned in and signed for items to be reimbursed on all personal purchases. Staff reimbursements will be processed monthly and are due to the Business Manager by the morning of the second Monday of each month. Please categorize purchases as books, instructional materials, supplies, maintenance, etc.
4. Receipts or shipping slips must be turned in for items on purchase orders and direct orders. The person accounting for the shipment or purchase must sign the receipt or shipping slip.
5. All purchases will be reviewed and approved by the Principal to ensure that the school stays within its budget.

Telephone Use

1. Students may use the telephone to make arrangements for "going out" trips or to obtain information needed for research, but personal calls will not be allowed. They may not use the telephone to call about forgotten items or to make arrangements for after-school activities or pick-up.
2. Students must get permission from a staff member before using the telephone.
3. Students are not allowed to use cell phones while at school, so it is preferred that they not be brought to school. If the parent/guardian needs the child to have a cell phone for after school use, the Guide must be notified and the cell phone must be given to office staff, a Guide, or After School staff for safekeeping until dismissal.

4. Staff, not student, will call parents/guardians about forgotten medication, illness, or after-school pick-up glitches.
5. We ask that parents/guardians not call their children at school unless it is an emergency. They may leave any necessary messages for students with office staff or on our answering machine, and they will be relayed to the student by the staff.
6. Staff may use the telephone for necessary short, local personal calls during their breaks or lunch periods when they are not on duty.
7. Employees are requested to ask their friends and family not to call them at work unless it is really necessary, as this is an interruption of employee's duties. If employees do receive phone calls to the school's number while they are on duty, the staff person answering the phone may take a message and leave it in the employee's box or relay it directly to the employee. Cell phones should be turned off and/or put away while the employee is on duty, unless the employee's phone has been designated for use for emergency procedures. Smart phone or tablet may be used for recordkeeping, as long as it does not become a distraction. Employees may check cell phones for messages and make calls during their breaks when they are off duty.

Harassment

It is the policy that employees, students, volunteers or guests at the school or wherever TOL students are present in accordance with official school schedule are entitled to a harassment-free work and learning environment and will have management support in reporting any type of harassment or related inappropriate behavior, including sex discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual violence they might encounter.

Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that has the intent or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's or group's work performance, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. The basis for harassment includes but is not limited to age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation.

Sexual harassment includes any unwanted or unwelcome attention or action of a sexual nature when submission to such conduct is made a term or condition of employment; or submission to or rejection of such conduct by the recipient is used as the basis of employment decisions affecting the recipient; or the conduct unreasonably interferes with an employee's job performance or student's learning activities; or the conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Reporting Harassment:

TOL's Harassment Policy assures employees, students, volunteers or guests support in reporting any type of harassment. Persons experiencing or witnessing any type of harassment should use the following procedure:

- Deal with it immediately, advising the person that the behavior is inappropriate and must stop. • If the person experiencing or witnessing harassment prefers not to discuss the matter with the offender, or the offender fails to respect a request, report the incident to the Principal or to a Board or Cabinet member.
- Employees must report any information about student harassment to the Principal or to a Board or Cabinet member, even if a student or his/her parent does not want to file a complaint. Employees who have information about violations of this Harassment Policy or Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 but do not provide this information to TOL or do not cooperate in any investigation are subject to disciplinary action. Harassment prevention training is made available to

all employees annually.

TOL will promptly investigate all reported incidents and take any appropriate corrective or disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Information will be revealed only on a need-to-know basis. TOL will not condone retaliation against any employee who reports possible harassment or inappropriate behavior or who assists with an investigation.

Parent/Guardian Participation

At Tree of Life, parents/guardians are students too! Learning is a life-long activity. The best way to demonstrate this to our children (since parents are the first educators) is to continue learning and improving ourselves. This is one function of the Parent Council, along with school governance, and all parents and guardians are members of the Parent Council.

A goal of this school is to educate and support parents/guardians so that the children will have the optimum opportunity for development both at home and at school. To accomplish this, Tree of Life School Parent Council will hold a variety of Parenting and Family Support activities, such as discussion groups, speakers, workshops, and family gatherings. Parent Council also plans school events, elects a representative team to the Board Cabinet, and holds six meetings per year to address family suggestions and concerns.

We understand that there are occasionally calendar conflicts or illnesses that might prevent attendance at a Parenting and Family Support activity. In that event, we will have written materials or audio or video recordings that can be studied by those who could not attend. We have a Parents' Lending Library available in the office with many good books and recordings that may be borrowed.

The Friday Updates from the office on Parent Square will also include information to help families have a better understanding of their child's development. The school uses Parent Square messaging system to send group emails, texts, and phone calls. Parents Square messages will be sent between 7:30am-8:30pm. It is important to check daily for any notices, notes from staff, or newsletters that a child may bring home. Communication Folder will be sent home each day and should be signed and returned the following day.

Service to the School

Service to the community is another aspect of the children's curriculum which can be modeled by its adult members. By participating in service to the school, parents/guardians become a part of the school's structure and involved in a practical way in their child's education. It is expected that most families will enthusiastically want to help the school in whatever way they can. Thirty (30) hours per year are expected per family to be performed by the adults (students are welcome to help, but hours are not counted). Service activities are listed on Parent Square, and in Friday Updates. These may include classroom cleaning, grounds and building maintenance, field trip assistance, fundraisers, and promotional activities. Adults who wish to volunteer as specialty instructors (e.g. art, music, bike repair, gardening, sewing, etc.) or classroom helpers, under the supervision of classroom Guides, on a regular basis are required to attend a training session prior to working with groups of children at school.

Discipline Policy

Our Montessori environment encourages students to become **self-disciplined**. The physical
Reviewed, updated, approved by Board Cabinet 8/9/23

objects, the adults, and the students are all part of this environment. The adults in this environment are responsible for establishing a successful working relationship with each student. This is accomplished by being supportive, showing respect, and establishing rapport.

The adults show support by reflecting the student's feelings through paraphrasing verbal and non-verbal messages, by using conversation to relate event to relationship or feelings, to relate from general to specific, and to ask questions about specifics. Students are given acknowledgement and appreciation for help given, accomplishments, efforts, time taken to do a task well, and benefits of an action. The adults show respect for the student by: using constructive criticism and gentle reminders to point out what to do differently; expressing personal emotions through "I-messages" without attacking the child; and being non-judgmental by avoiding labeling, insults, prophesying, threats, accusations, bribes, bossing, sarcasm, and stereotyped responses. Rapport is established by sharing interests and warmth, and by using humor and a sense of fun.

A helping approach to discipline is used to encourage volitional, social, and emotional development of each student by allowing choices to be made by the student and by teaching social and emotional skills. The environment provides for the student's physical needs, safety and security, social development, self-esteem, and self-actualization. When a student's needs are not met, the student will show symptoms often termed "inappropriate behavior." These may include innocent behavior, volitional behavior, psychological outcomes, emotional expression, social need, rule testing, and rebellion. Some of these are the result of conditions at the student's home or previous psychological or emotional trauma, while others are a matter of developmental level. In any individual case, a student who is disruptive or violent will be removed from the situation, and an adult will help the student to find an appropriate activity and/or to process their feelings and needs. Students will be taught how to meet their own needs and how to handle their emotions in a non-violent way. Through the development of will, knowledge of appropriate behavior, and an environment suited to the student's physical, social, and emotional needs, the student becomes self-disciplined.

Children who have committed an act of physical violence or whose behavior continues to be unsafe or seriously disruptive will be removed from the classroom, and parents/guardians may be contacted to remove them immediately from the school. Parents/Guardians will be notified about the incident. Further actions per the following guidelines for suspension or expulsion may then be considered.

Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion (per Section 48900 of the *California Education Code*)

A pupil shall not be suspended from school or recommended for expulsion, unless the Principal of the school in which the pupil is enrolled determines that the pupil has committed an act as defined pursuant to any of subdivisions (a) to (r), inclusive:

- (a) (1) Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.
- (2) Willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except in self-defense.
- (b) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished a firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object, unless, in the case of possession of an object of this type, the pupil had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, which is concurred in by the Principal or the designee of the Principal.
- (c) Unlawfully possessed, used, sold, or otherwise furnished, or been under the influence of, a controlled substance listed in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11053) of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code, an alcoholic beverage, or an intoxicant of any kind.

- (d) Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell a controlled substance listed in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11053) of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code, an alcoholic beverage, or an intoxicant of any kind, and either sold, delivered, or otherwise furnished to a person another liquid, substance, or material and represented the liquid, substance, or material as a controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant.
- (e) Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
- (f) Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property.
- (g) Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property.
- (h) Possessed or used tobacco, or products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets, and betel. However, this section does not prohibit use or possession by a pupil of his or her own prescription products.
- (i) Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
- (j) Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell drug paraphernalia, as defined in Section 11014.5 of the Health and Safety Code.
- (k) (1) Disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.
- (2) Except as provided in Section 48910, a pupil enrolled in kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 3, inclusive, shall not be suspended for any of the acts enumerated in this subdivision, and this subdivision shall not constitute grounds for a pupil enrolled in kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, to be recommended for expulsion.
- (l) Knowingly received stolen school property or private property.
- (m) Possessed an imitation firearm. As used in this section, “imitation firearm” means a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.
- (n) Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault as defined in Section 261, 266c, 286, 288, 288a, or 289 of the Penal Code or committed a sexual battery as defined in Section 243.4 of the Penal Code.
- (o) Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a pupil who is a complaining witness or a witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for purposes of either preventing that pupil from being a witness or retaliating against that pupil for being a witness, or both.
- (p) Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.
- (q) Engaged in, or attempted to engage in, hazing. For purposes of this subdivision, “hazing” means a method of initiation or preinitiation into a pupil organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current, or prospective pupil. For purposes of this subdivision, “hazing” does not include athletic events or school sanctioned events.
- (r) Engaged in an act of bullying. For purposes of this subdivision, the following terms have the following meanings:
 - (1) “Bullying” means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including

communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, and including one or more acts committed by a pupil or group of pupils as defined in Section 48900.2, 48900.3, or 48900.4, directed toward one or more pupils that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

(A) Placing a reasonable pupil or pupils in fear of harm to that pupil's or those pupils' person or property.

(B) Causing a reasonable pupil to experience a substantially detrimental effect on his or her physical or mental health.

(C) Causing a reasonable pupil to experience substantial interference with his or her academic performance.

(D) Causing a reasonable pupil to experience substantial interference with his or her ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

(2) (A) "Electronic act" means the creation and transmission originated on or off the schoolsite, by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager, of a communication, including, but not limited to, any of the following:

(i) A message, text, sound, or image.

(ii) A post on a social network Internet Web site, including, but not limited to:

(I) Posting to or creating a burn page. "Burn page" means an Internet Web site created for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in paragraph (1).

(II) Creating a credible impersonation of another actual pupil for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in paragraph (1). "Credible impersonation" means to knowingly and without consent impersonate a pupil for the purpose of bullying the pupil and such that another pupil would reasonably believe, or has reasonably believed, that the pupil was or is the pupil who was impersonated.

(III) Creating a false profile for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in paragraph (1). "False profile" means a profile of a fictitious pupil or a profile using the likeness or attributes of an actual pupil other than the pupil who created the false profile

(iii) (I) An act of cyber sexual bullying.

(II) For purposes of this clause, "cyber sexual bullying" means the dissemination of, or the solicitation or incitement to disseminate, a photograph or other visual recording by a pupil to another pupil or to school personnel by means of an electronic act that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the effects described in subparagraphs (A) to (D), inclusive, of paragraph (1). A photograph or other visual recording, as described above, shall include the depiction of a nude, semi nude, or sexually explicit photograph or other visual recording of a minor where the minor is identifiable from the photograph, visual recording, or other electronic act.

(III) For purposes of this clause, "cyber sexual bullying" does not include a depiction, portrayal, or image that has any serious literary, artistic, educational, political, or scientific value or that involves athletic events or school-sanctioned activities.

(B) Notwithstanding paragraph (1) and subparagraph (A), an electronic act shall not constitute pervasive conduct solely on the basis that it has been transmitted on the Internet or is currently posted on the Internet.

(3) “Reasonable pupil” means a pupil, including, but not limited to, an exceptional needs pupil, who exercises average care, skill, and judgment in conduct for a person of his or her age, or for a person of his or her age with his or her exceptional needs.

(s) A pupil shall not be suspended or expelled for any of the acts enumerated in this section unless the act is related to a school activity or school attendance occurring within a school under the jurisdiction of the superintendent of the school district or principal or occurring within any other school district. A pupil may be suspended or expelled for acts that are enumerated in this section and related to a school activity or school attendance that occur at any time, including, but not limited to, any of the following:

(1) While on school grounds.

(2) While going to or coming from school.

(3) During the lunch period whether on or off the campus.

(4) During, or while going to or coming from, a school-sponsored activity.

(t) A pupil who aids or abets, as defined in Section 31 of the Penal Code, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person may be subject to suspension, but not expulsion, pursuant to this section, except that a pupil who has been adjudged by a juvenile court to have committed, as an aider and abettor, a crime of physical violence in which the victim suffered great bodily injury or serious bodily injury shall be subject to discipline pursuant to subdivision (a).

(u) As used in this section, “school property” includes, but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.

(v) For a pupil subject to discipline under this section, Principal may use his or her discretion to provide alternatives to suspension or expulsion that are age appropriate and designed to address and correct the pupil’s specific misbehavior as specified in Section 48900.5.

(w) It is the intent of the Legislature that alternatives to suspension or expulsion be imposed against a pupil who is truant, tardy, or otherwise absent from school activities.

For purposes of notification to parents/guardians, and for the reporting of expulsion and suspension offenses to the State Department of Education, the school shall specifically identify, by offense committed, in all appropriate official records of a pupil each suspension or expulsion of that pupil for the commission of any of the offenses enumerated in this policy.

Uniform Complaint Procedures

Tree of Life Charter School recognizes that it has primary responsibility for ensuring that it complies with applicable state and federal laws and regulations governing educational programs. The school shall investigate and seek to resolve complaints at the local level. It shall follow the Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP) when addressing complaints alleging:

- Unlawful discrimination based on ethnic group identification, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, color, ancestry, national origin, physical or mental disability, or any other criteria protected by law, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972;
- Failure to comply with state and/or federal laws in adult education, consolidated categorical aid programs, migrant education, vocational education, childcare and development programs, child nutrition programs, and special education programs.

The school acknowledges and respects students’ and employees’ rights to privacy. Discrimination complaints shall be investigated in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the parties and the facts. This includes keeping the identity of the complainant confidential except to the extent necessary to carry out the investigation, as determined by the Board of Directors or its designee on a case-by-case basis.

The Board shall ensure that employees designated to investigate complaints are knowledgeable about the laws and programs for which they are responsible. Such employees may have access to legal counsel as determined by the Board or designee. Tree of Life Charter School recognizes that a neutral mediator can often suggest an early compromise that is agreeable to all parties in a dispute. The Board shall ensure that the mediation results are consistent with state and federal laws and regulations.

Compliance Officer

Tree of Life Charter School designates the Principal and/or the Chair of the Board of Directors as the Compliance Officer and Title IX Coordinator. The Compliance Officer shall receive and investigate complaints and ensure compliance with law. The designee appointed by the Compliance Officer may conduct the investigation.

The following is the contact information for the persons designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies and complaints:

Principal and/or Chair of the Board of Directors
Tree of Life Charter School
PO Box 966
241 Ford Rd
Ukiah, CA 95482
707-462-0913

Procedures

The following procedures shall be used to address all complaints that allege that the school has violated federal or state laws or regulations governing educational programs. The Compliance Officer shall maintain a record of each complaint as required for compliance with the California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 4632.

Level I

Any person expressing a complaint relating to a program activity, a possible violation of federal or state law, or the school's personnel policies is encouraged to discuss the matter with the individual allegedly responsible for the inappropriate activity, or to discuss the matter with the Compliance Officer. This should occur within three working days of the alleged act, and must be initiated no later than six months from the date when the alleged discrimination occurred or when the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination. (Title 5, Section 4630)

- If such a discussion does not resolve the matter or a discussion appears to be impractical, the complaint should be submitted in writing to the Compliance Officer.
- The written complaint should be filed within five working days of the alleged incident or knowledge of the incident. The written complaint should contain the specific details describing the alleged violation of the program, law or personnel policy, and the desired remedy.
- Within five working days of receipt of the written complaint, the Compliance Officer shall hold an investigative meeting and attempt to locally mediate the complaint.

Level II

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response or mediation attempt:

- The complainant should then, within three working days, request an appeal or direct intervention to the Board of Directors in writing, with copies to the principal. The signature can be handwritten, typed, or signed electronically. Upon receipt of the complaint, the Board of Directors shall

investigate and determine if inappropriate activity has occurred.

- Within sixty working days after receipt of the complaint, unless the parties have agreed to mediate and extend the timelines, the Board of Directors will respond in writing to the complainant with a report of their investigation and decision.
- The report, based on the investigation, shall state the findings of the complaint, what steps shall be undertaken to resolve or correct the problem, if any, notice of the complainant's right to appeal the decision to the California Department of Education, a detailed statement of all specific issues that were brought up during the investigation, and, in a discrimination complaint, notice of the right to seek civil law remedies no sooner than sixty days after filing an appeal with the California Department of Education.

Level III

If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint by the Board of Directors, the complainant may wish to contact a national or state agency. If so, the school will terminate the internal complaint procedure. The complainant may appeal in writing to the California Department of Education (CDE) within fifteen days of receiving the written report from the Board of Directors. An appeal to the CDE is accepted on a case-by-case basis. The CDE accepts appeals based on one or more of the following:

- Tree of Life Charter School (TOL) failed to comply with complaint procedures •
TOL failed to implement its final decision from a local investigation
- TOL failed to respond to CDE's request for information regarding the complaint •
No action was taken by TOL within sixty days of receipt of the complaint
- All concerned persons are not in substantial agreement with the facts or conclusions relating to the allegations in the report
- TOL refuses to conduct an on-site investigation
- Documents regarding the complaint indicate that TOL officials interpreted and applied pertinent governing statutes inappropriately
- Another compelling rationale

Civil Law Remedies

Nothing in this policy precludes a complainant from pursuing available civil law remedies outside of the school's complaint procedures. Such remedies may include mediation centers, public/private interest attorneys, injunctions, restraining orders, etc. For discrimination complaints, however, a complainant must wait until sixty days has elapsed from the filing of an appeal with the California Department of Education before pursuing civil law remedies. The moratorium does not apply to injunctive relief and is applicable only if the agency has appropriately, and in a timely manner, apprised the complainant of his/her right to file a complaint.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PROBLEM SOLVING

Issues can often be resolved by using non-violent communication and the problem-solving process. Staff, students, parents, and other community members are encouraged to use the following procedures for solving problems:

1. Invite the person(s) you want to solve a problem with to meet with you.
2. Honestly express what you are observing and feeling without blaming or criticizing. The listener responds empathically by checking that what s/he is receiving is what the speaker wants to

communicate.

3. Identify your needs, values, desires, or thoughts that are creating your feelings.
4. Clearly identify the problem. Gather and organize information about the observations, feelings, and needs through dialogue to identify the real problem or unmet needs of each person.
5. Make a request that would meet the needs of all parties. Share possible solutions, list criteria, predict consequences.
6. Agree to ideas/actions that would meet the needs of all parties and apply them.
7. Check in after applying the idea/action to examine its effectiveness. Meet again to find an alternative solution if the first solution is not working.