

Schoolcraft Learning Community



Family Handbook 2010-11

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Mission Statement

Schoolcraft Learning Community exists to help develop individuals to be self-directed, lifelong learners who have the skills and knowledge to confidently and compassionately navigate in the world.

Application/Enrollment Process

All openings at all grade levels will be filled from a waiting list established by state-mandated lottery to be held each February for the following school year. Applications can be completed on the website at www.schoolcraft.org, or a hard-copy application can be acquired through the office. Priority will be given to those applicants with siblings currently attending Schoolcraft Learning Community. Placement of students and class sizes/make-up will be at the discretion of the Director. Kindergarten students must be 5 years of age on or before September 1st of the school year for which they are applying. Once offered a spot, the enrollment process begins, including acquiring additional information about the student and family, followed by request for records and actual enrollment in the school. Once enrolled, the student remains enrolled until completion of 8th grade or withdrawal.

Equal Opportunity Statement

Schoolcraft Learning Community is an Equal Opportunity Employer and educational provider. It is our policy to comply with all applicable Equal Employment Opportunity laws and regulations. Therefore, recruiting, hiring, training, promotion, discipline, compensation, benefits and all other employment or enrollment decisions will be made without regard to race, creed, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, actual or perceived sexual orientation, status with respect to public assistance, or other protected class status.

Expeditionary Learning and Outward Bound

The ten design principles are our best short statement of the philosophy of education and core values of Outward Bound and Expeditionary Learning. Drawn from the work of Outward Bound's founder Kurt Hahn and other educational leaders, the principles focus our attention on what is important and give us something to return to when we need guidance.

Learning is an expedition into the unknown. Expeditions draw together personal experience and intellectual growth to promote self-discovery and construct knowledge. We believe that adults should guide students along this journey with care, compassion, and respect for their diverse learning styles, backgrounds, and needs. Addressing individual differences profoundly increases the potential for learning and creativity of each student. Given fundamental levels of health, safety, and love, all people can and want to learn. We believe expeditionary learning harnesses the natural passion to learn and is a powerful method for developing the curiosity, skills, knowledge, and courage needed to imagine a better world and work toward realizing it.

1. THE PRIMACY OF SELF-DISCOVERY

Learning happens best with emotion, challenge, and the requisite support. People discover their abilities, values, "grand passions," and responsibilities in situations that offer adventure and the unexpected. They must have tasks that require perseverance, fitness, craftsmanship, imagination, self-discipline, and significant achievement. A primary job of the educator is to help students overcome their fear and discover they have more in them than they think.

2. THE HAVING OF WONDERFUL IDEAS

Teach so as to build on children's curiosity about the world by creating learning situations that provide matter to think about, time to experiment, and time to make sense of what is observed. Foster a community where students' and adults' ideas are respected.

3. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEARNING

Learning is both a personal, individually specific process of discovery and a social activity. Each of us learns within and for ourselves and as a part of a group. Every aspect of a school must encourage children, young people, and adults to become increasingly responsible for directing their own personal and collective learning.

4. EMPATHY AND CARING

Learning is fostered best in small groups where there is trust, sustained caring, and mutual respect among all members of the learning community. Keep schools and learning groups small. Be sure there is a caring adult looking after the progress of each child. Arrange for the older students to mentor the younger ones.

5. SUCCESS AND FAILURE

All students must be assured a fair measure of success in learning in order to nurture the confidence and capacity to take risks and rise to increasingly difficult challenges. But it is also important to experience failure, to overcome negative inclinations, to prevail against adversity, and to learn to turn disabilities into opportunities.

6. COLLABORATION AND COMPETITION

Teach so as to join individual and group development so that the value of friendship, trust, and group endeavor is made manifest. Encourage students to compete, not against each other, but with their own personal best and with rigorous standards of excellence.

7. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Diversity and inclusivity in all groups dramatically increases richness of ideas, creative power, problem-solving ability, and acceptance of others. Encourage students to investigate, value, and draw upon their own different histories, talents, and resources together with those of other communities and cultures. Keep the schools and learning groups heterogeneous.

8. THE NATURAL WORLD

A direct and respectful relationship with the natural world refreshes the human spirit and reveals the important lessons of recurring cycles and cause and effect. Students learn to become stewards of the earth and of the generations to come.

9. SOLITUDE AND REFLECTION

Solitude, reflection, and silence replenish our energies and open our minds. Be sure students have time alone to explore their own thoughts, make their own connections and create their own ideas. Then give them opportunity to exchange their reflections with each other and with adults.

10. SERVICE AND COMPASSION

We are crew, not passengers, and are strengthened by acts of consequential service to others. One of a school's primary functions is to prepare its students with the attitudes and skills to learn from and be of service to others.

The above principles have been informed by Kurt Hann's "Seven Laws of Salem" by Paul Ylvisaker's "The Missing Dimension," and by Eleanor Duckworth's "The Having of Wonderful Ideas" and other essays on Teaching and Learning (New York: Teachers College Press. Columbia University. 1987

Attendance: Notice of Absence to School

We cannot stress too greatly the importance of your child being in school everyday and on time, if he/she is to achieve the greatest success in his/her work. Regular attendance is expected of all students. It is impossible to completely make up everything that is missed. A typical school day is filled with learning that is not limited to books: i.e. group projects, discussion, lab work and project work. Paper work can be made up, but the valuable learning opportunities cannot. However, when children are sick, they should stay home from school. If your child will be absent or tardy, please call (586-3284) or email the attendance desk (tracy@schoolcraft.org) before 9:00 am. Absences will only be excused within two days of the absence. If a student has missed three consecutive days due to illness, parents must provide a Doctor's note in order for the absences to be excused. It is the parent's responsibility to contact the school in order to excuse any absence. If no contact is made, the absence is automatically recorded as an unexcused absence.

If a student has 10 absences during a semester, contact is made with parents either through a letter or phone call. If a student reaches 12 absences during a semester, a meeting will be scheduled with the parent, teacher and director to discuss an action plan to improve attendance. If a student reaches 15 absences in a school year, a meeting will be scheduled with the parent, teacher, and director to consider whether retention is necessary due to poor attendance. If attendance continues to be an issue, we are obligated to contact agencies including, but not limited to: Department of Human Services, County Attorney, Public Health, and Juvenile Court Services.

Excused Absences

We only excuse the following absences **with parent notification**:

- Illness, after 3 consecutive days a note from the doctor is required.
- Religious holidays – please provide a calendar of holidays if different from already scheduled within the school calendar.
- Court or Judiciary appointments
- Death in the family or other extreme family emergencies
- Medical/dental/mental health appointments – please try to schedule during non-school hours.
- Pre-Approved Family Vacations are discouraged during the school year. Please make every attempt to schedule during non-school vacations. Our policy is to excuse only 3 consecutive absences for vacations. Anything over that will be recorded as unexcused absences unless a written appeal is submitted to the Director.

Unexcused Absences

The following are examples of unexcused absences:

- Staying home to babysit, work, or student is needed at home
- Missed the bus, no way to get child to school
- Overslept
- Student having a bad day, or needing a day at home

It is the parent's responsibility to contact the school in order to excuse any absence. If no contact is made, the absence is automatically recorded as an unexcused absence.

Monthly attendance reviews will be held and the following documented interventions will take place:

- 3 unexcused absences – families will receive a phone call or letter from the school.
- 4 unexcused absences – Director will contact family.
- 5 unexcused absences – Director will arrange a home visit.
- 6 unexcused absences – A second home visit will be attempted.
- 7 unexcused absences – a referral will be made to Social Services.

Please also note that 3 unexcused tardies will be counted as 1 unexcused absence.

Tardy

Please make every attempt to have your child at school on time. Classes begin at 8:50 AM. This means your child should be in their classroom before that time...not just getting dropped off at Paris.

Every student that arrives late to school must be checked in at the office by a parent/guardian. Students arriving at school from 8:51-11 a.m. will be recorded as tardy. Students arriving after 11 a.m. will be counted absent for ½ a day.

Parents must notify school office personnel of late student arrivals by phone or written note. Three tardies will equal 1 unexcused absence.

It is not acceptable to just drop your child off late and not notify an adult. This is for your child's safety and our awareness that your child is on campus.

Withdrawing Students

We are required to drop student enrollment after 15 consecutive days of absence. Depending on circumstances, the student's spot in Schoolcraft may be forfeited. Communication and prior arrangements made with the school will help in this process. We ask that at least two (2) working days notice be given before a student withdraws.

School Hours

Classes begin at 8:50 AM and end at 2:45 PM. Students are supervised by school personnel from the time they depart the bus in the morning until they board the bus in the afternoon. School personnel will be available to supervise students during all school-sponsored events. If a child needs to be taken out of school during school hours the **parent must first check in at the office to sign out the child.**

We do not have staffing to supervise kids before 8:30 am or after 2:45 pm. Please make pick up/drop off arrangements accordingly.

School Closing

School closings are announced over the following area radio stations: FM 92.1, 95.5, 98.3, 99.1, 101.1, and 103.7; AM 1360 and 1450. School closings are also posted on the television channels KVLV 11 and WCCO 4. If you have provided the school with an updated email address, email notification will also be sent. Please make it a point to check with these options for school closing and early dismissal announcements in the event of severe weather conditions.

Illness or Injury at School

If a student is injured or becomes ill at school, he/she is to report to his/her teacher and ask to report to the office. If necessary, the office will try to contact the parents. **All students who are injured or become ill must check out through the office before leaving school.** When a student is transported by school personnel to the hospital or clinic, the parent is responsible to meet the driver and student at the health facility.

Medication Policy

If your child needs to take medication during school hours, the school requires it to be turned over to the school nurse/office staff by the parent/guardian. Parents/guardians must also adhere to the following:

1. All prescription medications, including rescue inhalers for the treatment of asthma, must be accompanied by a signed order from the child's health care provider which includes the following:

- a. Student name
- b. Name of medication, dosage, route to be given
- c. Time to be given
- d. Diagnosis (optional)
- e. Possible side effects
- f. How long the medication is to be given.

2. Written consent from the parent/guardian requesting school personnel to give the medication.

3. All medication must be brought to school in a pharmacy labeled container. School personnel may refuse to give medication that is sent to school in odd bottles, plastic bags, foil, envelopes, or if the medication is unidentified.

4. By state law, all rescue inhalers (Albuterol, Proventil) for the treatment of asthma must be checked and the child's ability to correctly use their inhaler evaluated by a school nurse before a child may carry them during school hours. A nurse will be available to do this during the first week of school. If the inhaler is started during the year, please notify the school immediately so this can be done.

5. Over the counter (non-prescription) medications will only be given with the written consent of parent/guardian and must be provided in the original manufacturer's container and labeled with the child's name.

Immunization Policy

The school complies with Minnesota State Regulations regarding childhood immunizations.

Children without an immunization record or with an incomplete record may not be allowed to attend school.

Please note that all incoming kindergartners need to have completed the Hepatitis B series. All seventh graders need to have completed the Hepatitis B series, 2-MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) immunizations, and a current DT booster. Parents/guardians of both returning and new students should send updated copies of immunization records, if appropriate, either to the school or with their child on the first day of school. Waivers for parents/guardians that object to certain or all immunizations may be obtained from the school office or on the Schoolcraft website. Further information about immunizations may be obtained from the school, your physician, or a local public health office.

Other Required information

A forms packet is given to every family with students enrolled in Schoolcraft Learning Community. These forms are a required component so that we can best serve your students. **It is of utmost importance to complete and return the informational postcard. For two-household families, please provide information for both households.** All Kindergarten students are required to have a copy of their birth certificate and Kindergarten screening information on file prior to the start of the school year.

Trespassing

Minnesota Statute 609.609 makes it a gross misdemeanor for a group of three or more persons to be found on school property unless the persons.

1. Are enrolled students or are parents of enrolled students.
2. Have reported to the office and have permission to be on school grounds.
3. Are attending an event to which the public, or individuals, have been invited.

Pets

Students should not bring pets to school unless arrangements have been made with the teacher for a special occasion. Please notify the office if you are bringing your pet to school for such occasions.

Visitor/Volunteer Policy

All persons visiting the school are asked to first check in at the front office. Parents are cordially invited and encouraged to attend school programs and visit with teachers and administrators. Student visitors from other schools are welcome to follow the class schedule of their student-sponsor with prior written permission (at least one day in advance) from the Director.

Volunteers at the school will be asked to comply to a background check to help ensure the safety of our students and staff. Forms will be included in beginning of the year packets, or can be requested at the reception desk. There is no charge for these background checks.

Confidentiality of School Records

The directory information that can be made available for inter-school use includes:

- Student's name
- Date and place of birth
- Dates of enrollment and attendance
- Previous school attended
- Grade classification

Student records and files are not available to anyone other than persons working directly with the student.

All information gathered will be used solely by Schoolcraft Learning Community in providing a quality education and by the Minnesota Department of Education upon data submissions. Basic information such as student/parent names, address, birthdate, emergency contacts, work numbers, etc. may be shared with ISD #31 for

transportation purposes. Schoolcraft Learning Community will not release any information to any outside entity unless requested by signed authorization.

Student name, address, and phone number may be released intra-school (i.e. to families for birthday invitations, etc.) with a signed authorization.

Schoolcraft Learning Community Expectations

The behavior policies of the Schoolcraft Learning Community are intended to promote safety and learning for all students. Any behavior that detracts from this objective is deemed inappropriate.

General Expectations

- * Schoolcraft Learning Community bans weapons of any kind on our campus. See our Violence/Weapons Policy.
- * Schoolcraft Learning Community will not tolerate any sexual harassment/assault, and such conduct will be disciplined as outlined in our Sexual Harassment Policy.
- * Schoolcraft Learning Community will not tolerate any bullying behavior.
- * Students must stay off of the fountain and the miniature Eiffel Tower. These structures belong to Concordia Language Villages and must be treated with respect.
- * Following our natural world design principle, we hope that students would take care of our natural environment, protecting the trees, shrubs, and all other natural features from human harm.
- * Throw garbage and recycling in the proper receptacles.
- * All adults and fellow students will be shown the proper respect.
- * CD players, game boys, cell phones, walkman tape players, IPODS, and MP3 type players are not allowed during school hours. It is highly recommended that students do not bring these items to school at all, and Schoolcraft will not be responsible for lost or stolen items.
- * Inappropriate music and literature will be confiscated.
- * Please do not bring toys to school, unless special arrangements have been made with the classroom teacher.
- * Wheelies (shoes with wheels in the soles) are not allowed on the Schoolcraft campus.
- * Use of skateboards is not allowed on the Schoolcraft campuses. Skateboards must be checked in at the office if brought to school.
- * Riding of bicycles is only allowed on approved/supervised class outings.

Lunchroom Expectations

Keep the lunchroom neat.

Use good table manners and help others at your table.

Food must remain in the lunchroom – no food is allowed on the playground.

Playground Expectations

Playground supervisors are in charge.

All students will take turns with all equipment.

Hitting or shoving is not allowed.

Snowball throwing is not allowed.

“White-washing” is not allowed.

Tackle games of any kind are not allowed.

Students are not allowed to play/congregate in the “laundry area” at the foot of the steps by Paris, or play on or near the stairs on either side of Paris.

Appropriate School Clothing

Students should dress according to the weather and school environment. Clothing that distracts from the learning process, reflects illicit language, drug or alcohol use, or gang affiliation (refer to Violence Prevention and Weapons Policy) is not allowed. This includes hats and coats. We all benefit when students and staff dress in a manner that promotes a safe and comfortable learning environment.

Student Use of Telephones

Use of the telephone by students is limited to emergency calls only. If students need to use the phone, **they should come to the office.** Students will not be called out of class to answer phone calls. A message will be taken for the student. Intra-school phones (phones located in the classrooms) are to be used for official school communication. Student cell phone use is not permitted during the school day.

Internet Usage

Internet Usage Guidelines

The purpose is to set forth policies and guidelines for access to the school's computer system and acceptable use of the Internet. A copy has been provided to all families with 2nd – 8th grade students, which needs to be signed and returned to the school.

Discipline Policy

Disciplining actions for violations of these rules of conduct may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

- Meeting with the teacher or director.
- Loss of school privileges.
- Parent contact.
- Parent conference with school staff.
- Suspension from extra-curricular activities.
- Modified school program
- Removal from class
- Referral to police or juvenile authorities
- Out-Of-School-Suspension/Expulsion
- Compensation for Property Damage

The discipline policy applies during normal school hours, as well as at extra-curricular activities, field work, and all other school sponsored or sanctioned programs.

The following policies are available upon request.

1. Sexual Harassment
2. Violence Prevention and Weapons
3. Pupil Fair Dismissal Act
4. Internet Usage Guidelines
5. Bullying Policy

Food Services Policy

Schoolcraft Learning Community serves well-balanced family style lunches for \$3.35 per student meal. Adult meals are available for \$3.70. Free and reduced lunches are available to qualifying families. Families may apply by completing the Application for Educational Benefits form distributed to all families at the beginning of each school year. If there is a change in income/family situation during the course of the school year, families may request an Application for Education Benefits form to amend their qualifying status. We recommend that these forms be filled out immediately upon such change as we are not able to retroactively offer free and reduced lunches. Any balances acquired prior to receiving notice of qualification are the family's responsibility. **Applications for Educational Benefits are not shared between districts. Schoolcraft must have a separate application on file.**

Schoolcraft Learning Community will continue offering a balanced breakfast for all students at no charge to the families. We feel that offering breakfast has made quite a difference in the performance of our students, so will continue as long as it is cost-effective.

Schoolcraft Learning Community does currently offer meal alternatives for different dietary needs. Changes in dietary needs must be requested in writing and approved by our nurse and food service personnel. We reserve the right to increase the lunch charge for a student if the dietary needs warrant such a change.

Pre-payment of lunch balances is preferred and recommended. Statements of account will be sent out at least monthly to those accounts with balances owed, with the expectation of payment upon receipt. Lunch balances are expected to be paid in full by the last day of school. Large outstanding balances at the end of the fiscal period (June 30) will be considered for legal action. For accounting purposing, lunch balances less than \$2.00 will be written off at the end of the school year.

Communication Model & Problem Solving Procedure

Communication Model: The ultimate purpose of a communication model is to encourage the growth and development of Schoolcraft as a healthy community. Dealing with conflict is a part of any development or growth process and may arise in any community. An effective problem solving and conflict resolution process is therefore an essential component of the communication model.

The Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution Procedure is a model for all members of the Schoolcraft community and is designed to address issues among the following: Between parents and staff, parents and administration, staff and administration, and staff and staff.

Four Major Areas of Communication: Conflicts may fall into one of four major areas (or may be a combination of these areas) as listed below.

1. Policies and Legal Issues

Current policies are available in the school office. Reviewing policies lends information that may at times solve a conflict. The Board at Schoolcraft has final approval of all governance policies. Issues of policy should be addressed directly to the Schoolcraft Learning Community Board.

2. Procedures/Daily Operations

The director shall establish procedures designed to carry out the policies adopted by the Board. Procedures pertain to anything regarding the daily operations of Schoolcraft. An office staff member or the director can clarify procedures. The director serves as the primary administrator of the school. Any daily operations/procedural issues should be addressed directly to the director.

3. Pedagogy

Pedagogical issues pertain to anything that occurs in the classroom, i.e. teaching, curriculum, classroom management, or teacher-student relationships. Pedagogical issues should be addressed directly to the class teacher.

4. Interpersonal Communication and Relationships

Concerns between people or communication breakdown should be directly communicated with the person(s) involved. In addition, communication and relationship issues can surface in conjunction with policy and procedural issues or pedagogical issues.

The overall purpose of this procedure is to perpetuate a climate of collegiality, mutual trust and respect by resolving differences in a timely, objective, and equitable manner.

If concerns or conflicts regarding policies and procedures, pedagogy, and or community members are not resolved after following the procedures described under “Four Major Areas of Communication”, direct communication lines should be employed.

These communication lines are the vehicles that Schoolcraft uses to resolve conflicts within our community as they arise. These pathways form a structure and process that encourage parties involved in a conflict to reach resolution. *It is emphasized that the first step in the resolution of conflicts in our community is direct communication with the involved parties.* The following steps should then be initiated if issues are not resolved.

Problem Solving Procedures

Goals: 1. Provide for effective handling of issues; 2. Provide a clear process to those who believe they have not been accorded a reasonable interpretation of their rights under current school policies.

Step 1: Direct Resolution: If staff/community members/parents have a question or concern, they are encouraged to go directly to the person(s) involved.

Step 2: Administrative Resolution: The administrative resolution process consists of a meeting between the parties involved with the director in attendance. An attempt at administrative resolution is to be made prior to requesting a formal resolution. If issue involves director, proceed to step 3.

Step 3: Formal Resolution: Formal resolution consists of the submission of a problem-solving report to the Schoolcraft Learning Problem Solving Committee. The Problem Solving Committee is an ad hoc committee consisting of 3 current board members, and is selected as needed. All board members will receive mediation training and will offer unbiased consideration on the issues brought before them. A problem-solving report may be submitted within 10 working days of the administrative resolution meeting. The Problem Solving Committee will then take one of the following actions within 5 working days of receiving the report.

- A. Determine that the issue calls for a change in board policy or procedures or that current policies have not been adequately followed. The committee will recommend a plan of corrective action to the board or director.
- B. Conclude that the issue is personal opinion by an individual or small group of individuals and that changing policy or taking action based upon this opinion would not be in the best interest of the school community.
- C. Seek further mediation on the issue.

Problem-Solving Report

Name _____

Date _____

Ground Rules for stating conflict in writing and in discussions

- Address the problem, don't attack the person
- State your "truth" with "I" statements
- Discuss the conflict when you are calm
- Focus on the stated problem
- Hear the other's "truth"
- Seek mutually beneficial solution

State the problem/conflict:

What steps have you taken to try to resolve this issue?

What do you want to have happen (include all options that would be acceptable to you)?

What effect will this action have on others in the school and/or the school culture (costs/benefits)?

Following the discussion:

If this issue has not been resolved, what plan is there to help resolve it?