

Tierra Pacifica Charter School
Parent Handbook
2026-2027

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Dear Tierra Pacifica Community,

Welcome to a new school year! Tierra Pacifica is a unique learning environment, with an active, creative community and strong relationships with each other and the natural environment, and connected to the expansive needs of the world around us. I look forward to partnering with you all in service to the wonderful children, families and staff in our community.

Dr. Valerie Royaltey-Quandt
Executive Director

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MISSION AND VISION

Our Mission
Tierra Pacifica educates children in an inclusive community designed to nurture each child's individuality, curiosity, knowledge, and social, emotional and physical growth.

Our Vision
We are a vibrant collaboration between families and educators working to create a deeply caring and compassionate TK-8 school and multi-generational community.

EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

Tierra Pacifica Charter School is a high-standards academic school and an incubator for fostering creativity and innovation.

Attention to the Whole Child
Tierra Pacifica believes that children learn best in an environment that nurtures all areas of development: social, emotional, physical, and intellectual. Time to address children's emotional and social concerns, as well as their need for physical activity and a creative outlet, are all built into the daily schedule. Social and emotional intelligence skills are taught as subjects and are practiced in class meetings and throughout the day. Behavioral expectations are clearly defined and upheld. To address physical needs, each classroom incorporates short movement activities throughout the day, in addition to PE and recess.

The curriculum used at Tierra Pacifica is multi-sensory and differentiated to create multiple access points for the variety of learning styles found in every classroom.

Tierra Pacifica students experience a rich environment. In addition to classroom art and electives we often have music and art classes for all grades. Fundraising efforts augment the Arts program budget.

Developmentally Appropriate Instruction
Tierra Pacifica recognizes that children develop at different rates, and age is not always an accurate gauge of maturity or readiness for a particular task. The school's goal is to instruct students at their proper developmental level, using the Common Core Standards as guidelines. The academic progress of every student is closely monitored and the school's multi- grade classrooms allow teachers the flexibility to create learning groups based on current student needs and strengths for each learning area.

Innovation, Collaboration, and Creativity
Our practices are under constant review and revision as we work to create a school environment that fosters divergent thinking, passion for individual interests, and collaboration across ages.

Every aspect of our school reflects intentional design, from the decentralized format of parent, staff, board, and student meetings, to the implementation of parent and student teams for tackling school issues. Some of our most important curricular programs are aimed at celebrating the joy of individual differences and passions while fostering socially responsive, creative, entrepreneurial thinking. The following is a partial list of these practices:

- *Electives*—more than forty subjects each year, taught by staff, parents and children
- *Pods- T*K through 8th grade working together on a collaborative group project
- *Buddies*— leadership and bonding gatherings where each child has an older and/or younger buddy
- *You Be the Teacher*—each year every child 2nd - 6th teaches peers about a beloved subject
- *Class meetings*—group works, follows agendas, comes to a consensus, resolves conflict
- *Design Fair*—students invent something for which they've identified a need
- *Entrepreneur Convention*—child-run project creating and running a business
- *Reduced homework*—to provide time for family and extracurricular activities
- *Parent involvement*—opportunities for invention, collaboration, building relationships
- *Staff meetings*—decentralized structure, formatted as think tanks
- *Parent meetings*—opportunities for parents to brainstorm and to collaborate
- *Talent Share*—honoring each student's passion and accomplishments
- *Inspiring, rather than requiring, reading*
- *Providing choices*—within many school activities
- *Individualized discipline*—accommodate unique individuals – consider each unusual child is a gift (think of Steve Jobs, Robin Williams, Thomas Edison, Madonna)
- *Camping trips, park days and beach days* – facilitate family-to-family relationships and provide a community of support for each family

Parent Participation

Tierra Pacifica is different from other public schools because we are a school of parent volunteers and we operate at full capacity when families commit to taking a very active role in their child's education and in supporting the school. Parents are encouraged to give time and energy to the school weekly, or in a way that works for them. The result is a school that is a true community and an educational experience that is much richer because of the input from all of the families that are involved. All participation is voluntary.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Tierra Pacifica Curriculum is aligned with the Common Core Standards. Teachers are given a great deal of freedom in how they teach to the standards but are held to rigorous student outcomes.

Much of the instruction at Tierra Pacifica involves hands-on learning, is individualized and open-ended, allows for individual pacing, is personally relevant, and is based on real life. Curriculum in all subjects has been carefully chosen based on research and follows a logical progression TK-8th.

How to Follow Your Student's Progress

At the elementary level, most written work stays at school in portfolios. This can make it challenging for parents to track their child's progress. Here are suggestions for parents to stay abreast of their child's work:

1. You may come and look at your child's portfolio.
2. Make sure to attend the classroom meetings. Teachers will explain how and when you can look at the work that is kept in the classroom.
3. Read the periodic letter written by your child's teacher in ParentSquare to learn about what they are studying and to find out about ways to be involved in the classroom.
4. Trust. We formatively assess children frequently and every 6-8 weeks and we will contact you or ask you to come to a Village Success Meeting if we feel we need to adjust your child's learning

plan. We also have conferences twice a year and give report cards three times a year. In addition, you may always request a conference with the teacher or Executive Director or a team of us; just ask your teacher.

5. Fourth through sixth grade students bring home a homework folder every night. Check your child's folder every night to see their current homework.

Parent/Guardian/Trusted Adult Conferences

The school conducts bi-annual family conferences for each child. In the first conference, teachers meet with families to share information about their child's level of achievement in the different subject areas, and to set goals and decide on intervention strategies. Prior to this individual meeting, all parents and guardians have already attended a classroom meeting at which aspects of the curriculum and expectations for the year have been presented.

Student-Led Conferences

The second conference is held in the spring and is prepared, practiced, and facilitated by the student with teacher assistance. Each student shows samples of their work and shares their accomplishments and goals sheet. Students prepare for this conference by reviewing their portfolios and working with their teacher on self-reflection about their efforts, strengths, and weaknesses. Each student then sets several specific goals for themselves along with a plan for achieving these goals. This is shared with their parents/guardians during the conference.

Students take full ownership of this conference with the parents, guardians and teacher listening and commenting. Parents who wish to meet privately to talk with the teacher may schedule an additional conference to do so.

STUDENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Village Success Meetings

Within Tierra Pacifica Charter School's small school environment, students needing additional support are identified by teachers, staff, and parents and given extra support.

Parents are given regular communication regarding their child's academic progress through phone calls, emails, parent/teacher conferences, and informal meetings. In situations where students are struggling or feeling challenged, parents should ask for a meeting with the teacher to discuss the issues.

If more support is needed, a "Village Success Meeting" may be held. These meetings may be called for academic or other reasons, such as stress at home or emotional, social, and/or health issues. A team meets and may include the student's parents, teachers, resource teachers, and the Executive Director to create a plan of action to help the student.

These meetings are informal and highly effective. Sometimes they lead to further testing and the development of an IEP (Individual Education Plan). To request a Village Success Meeting (VSM), email or talk to your teacher.

Special Education

In the event that available general education interventions are not successful, the school can provide a

detailed assessment conducted by qualified staff. Parents are consulted prior to a formal assessment. The school has a resource teacher and a speech and language specialist who supports children with IEPs.

Addressing the Needs of High Achieving Students

The format of Tierra Pacifica is geared toward enabling high achieving students to be challenged. Many classes are multi-age, with differentiated levels being taught throughout the school day. Social Studies, Science, Electives and You Be the Teacher are project-based and often open-ended.

SCHOOL CLIMATE AND DISCIPLINE

The aim of the TPCS Positive Behavior Policy is to ensure that all children have the opportunity to experience the benefits of the curriculum in an environment that fosters their potential, self-esteem, and well being. Prevention is the foundation of our approach. Teachers strive to form strong relationships with each student. Rules and expectations are clear, and appropriate behavior and procedures are discussed, modeled, and practiced many times throughout the day in the classroom and on the playground. Teachers and staff recognize and support positive student behavior and address negative behavior using conflict resolution and a variety of discipline techniques through communication, expectation-setting and restorative interventions.

Parent/Guardians' Role in Positive Student Behavior

All Tierra Pacifica Charter School parents are expected to play an active role in supporting positive student behavior. This means upholding and modeling the school rules and reminding students (both their own and others) to do so, reporting inappropriate behavior on campus to the teacher or Executive Director, and following through supportively when the school is redirecting or correcting their child's behavior.

General Tierra Pacifica School rules are:
Be Nice
Work Hard
Follow Instructions
We often say to the children:
Demonstrate kindness
Own your actions
Value everyone
Engage respectfully

At school, when an adult asks a child to do something, we expect children to stop, listen, and do what they were asked.

Potential Consequences

If a student has difficulty conforming to behavioral norms and expectations, some or all of the following steps and consequences may be implemented:

1. The student will be given a reminder.
2. The student may be asked to move to another location within the learning group.
3. The student may be asked to move to another classroom.
4. The student may be sent to the office to meet with the Executive Director and/or to call their parents.

5. The student may be required to miss an activity, particularly if it is difficult for the student to follow rules for that activity.
6. Behavior contracts and agreements.

Hitting, Kicking and Biting

In order to maintain the clear understanding that Tierra Pacifica is a physically and emotionally safe environment for all children, students who hit or kick with the attempt to harm or who use physically harmful behavior are dealt with immediately. Parents are called and the child may be sent to another classroom or detained in the office for the remainder of the day.

Suspension and Expulsion Policy

For serious offenses, Tierra Pacifica has established a "Student Suspension and Expulsion Policy" in order to promote learning and protect the safety and well-being of all students. For more detailed information, please see the "Student Suspension and Expulsion Policy and Administrative Procedures." These documents are also available in our charter petition and upon request from the Office Manager.

Bully Prevention Policy

Tierra Pacifica follows the guidelines and definitions provided by the California Department of Education regarding Bullying and Harassment. Bullying can be physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, or racial, in person or virtual.

The definition of bullying is different from fighting or conflict. Abusive situations that are defined as bullying have three main characteristics. Other situations can certainly be abusive or harmful, but it is the combination of these three characteristics that makes bullying especially damaging.

1. HARM – Someone gets hurt physically, socially, or emotionally.
2. UNFAIR MATCH – One person or group does not have the physical, social, or verbal skills to effectively contest the other person or group.
3. REPEATED – The harm and unfair match are repeated over time.

TPCS will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student including: direct physical contact such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults, such as ongoing teasing or name-calling; cyber-bullying; and social isolation or manipulation.

Anyone witnessing or experiencing what they believe is bullying is encouraged to report the incident. TPCS expects students, parents, and staff to report incidents immediately to the Executive Director or any staff member. Retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process is prohibited. Staff are expected to intervene immediately when they see an incident. Once reported, each complaint will be investigated.

This policy applies to students on school grounds, while traveling to and from school or a school-sponsored activity, during the lunch period-- whether on or off campus, during a school-sponsored activity, and, in the case of cyber-bullying, whenever a student is online, all of which are also defined under California Education Code.

The procedures for intervening in and reporting bullying behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Interrupt the event and intervene as appropriate.
2. Alert TPCS staff as soon as possible so follow through is timely.
3. Record the event in writing and submit it to a TPCS staff member.

One intervention we employ to address bullying is a very effective and innovative process called Solution Team in which a staff member works with a group of students who become up-standers rather than by-standers.

COMMUNITY AGREEMENT

As a member of the TPCS community, it is understood and agreed to follow all school rules and model expected behavior at school.

As a student at Tierra Pacifica Charter School…

- I will listen to and cooperate with the teachers, staff, and parents in charge. I understand failure to cooperate may result in a cool-off period, time-out, or other consequence.
- I will move around the classroom and campus with awareness of myself and of others.
- I will walk in the classroom and courtyard.
- I will keep my voice at an appropriate volume.
- I will work and play safely in all areas indoors and outdoors.
- I will not harm or exclude others, call people names, or use words that may be hurtful or unkind.
- I will clean up after myself.
- I will use school materials and equipment as designed.
- I will stay where I am supposed to be on campus, always within sight of supervising adults, and respond immediately when I am called to stop or come back.
- I will follow school rules on campus and at off-campus school activities, including field trips and nature days.
- I will not engage in rough play such as hitting, kicking, pushing, grabbing, tackling, etc.
- I will not climb trees or fences on campus or enter areas or group activities of the neighboring schools.
- I will not remove my shoes or my clothing except for specific school activities.
- I will not bring toys, valuable items, pets, play equipment, etc., to school unless specified by a school employee.
- I will keep smartphones and smart watches turned off and in my backpack at school.

As a parent/guardian of a student at Tierra Pacifica Charter School…

- I will model expected student behaviors and will assist my student (and other students) to follow them.
- I will engage in our parent participation school as I am able.
- I will help redirect student behavior using positive language.
- I will seek the assistance of a staff member when student discipline seems appropriate.
- I will seek the full context of a situation from the teacher/administrator rather than escalating or responding without all the information.
- I will attend community gatherings, classroom meetings, and behavioral intervention meetings.
- I will work on my child's social skills at home and if necessary I will support my child with counseling and/or other medical/professional services.

- I have read the Family handbook and discipline policy. (Find both in the ParentSquare Resource Hub.)

OTHER STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Homework

At Tierra Pacifica we are careful about the amount of homework we give so that students have time to pursue other interests at home. The homework that we do assign is extremely important, and it needs to be well done and completed on time every time. To ensure that students do not fall behind, feedback is given immediately. Students who do not turn in all of their homework will stay in at recess, lunch, or after school to do their homework. Unfinished classwork is to be completed at home. ***100% Homework and Class Work Completion: 4th -8th Grade***

Class work

During class, students are expected to be involved, cooperative, and productive, and to do all assignments to the best of their ability. Students who do not maintain this level of cooperation and academic accomplishment may be asked to stay in during recess. If this continues to be a problem, the student and their parents may be invited to a Village Success Meeting, and ultimately explore what at home and at school supports may help.

Dress Code

P.E. (Physical Education) and/or movement activities are planned for every day, so students are required to wear athletic shoes and comfortable clothing rather than open-backed shoes and clothing that restrict movement. Think “shoes that my child can run a mile in and clothes for turning cartwheels.”

Inappropriate apparel includes clothing that compromises safety or is disruptive to the school environment or instructional process. The school staff shall have discretion in determining which clothing is inappropriate.

Specific clothing that is considered inappropriate includes:

- Clothing with slogans or pictures that are considered disruptive, offensive, or hateful, at the discretion of school staff
- Jewelry or accessories with spikes or other potentially unsafe features
- Clothing that exposes undergarments
- Any shoes other than athletic sneakers; such as, boots, sandals without front and back straps, anything with heels or without support for active movement

Items from Home

We ask that children share their toys outside of school time—please no toys or trading cards, etc., at school. Toys distract from learning activities and focus. Although some toys may have educational value, the inherent peer pressure to purchase the same toy will be removed if toys are not present in the school setting.

Technology from Home

We teach and use appropriate technology at school but, in an effort to create an optimal educational

environment free of distractions, we prohibit students from using personal devices at school unless teacher permission has been given.

Cell phones, iPods, Kindles, iPads, etc., if brought to school must be turned off and kept in backpacks or out of sight unless approved by their teacher or supervisor of the event.

When necessary the personal device will be confiscated and placed in the office where it will be kept until after school. The student's parent or guardian may retrieve it at this time. This policy applies at school, on field trips, in cars on the way to and from field trips, and at all school events.

TPCS will make every effort to keep confiscated devices safe; however, the school will not be responsible for loss or damage.

Cell phones may be used after school dismissal at the end of the school day.

Lunch and Snacks

Making nutritionally sound food choices is essential to living a healthy, happy, and successful life. Learning is enhanced by good nutrition and, to that end, we ask that families prepare healthy lunch food and school snacks. Our aim is to be a no-sugar school. This means no candy, cookies or cupcakes, or sodas. We support each family's unique nutritional choices by asking children not to share or trade their lunches with one another. Tierra Pacifica is a waste-free school, so please pack food items in reusable containers.

Birthdays & Celebrations: If you plan to share your student's birthday or celebration with classmates, we appreciate alternatives to cakes, cupcakes and cookies. Thank you!

Hot Lunch Program

Tierra Pacifica utilizes the Live Oak School District's hot lunch program. Menus can be found at losdnutrition.com

THE SCHOOL DAY

Drop off, Pick up & Tardiness

On-Time Arrival

Being on time for school is an agreement that everyone who comes to our school makes. We allow a large period (starting at 8:00 a.m.) for drop off in the morning. This is to accommodate families so that they can allow for the irregularities that happen in Santa Cruz traffic and still arrive on time. Yard duties supervise students in the courtyard from 8:00 a.m. to class start time.

Afternoon Pickup

At the end of the school day, parents of Polliwogs (TK), Hearts (K), and Oaks (1/2) classes park their car and meet their children at the classroom door. For Suns (2/3) through Spots (7/8) classes students are excused from class and meet their parents in the courtyard, at the pick-up gate, or at Green Acres circle. They may also walk or ride bikes home leaving through our side gate. For safety reasons, we ask all ages to hold hands when walking in the parking lot.

Releasing Students
Students are released only to parents, guardians, and persons listed on the emergency forms. If your child is leaving with someone who is not listed in the Student Information System after school, call the office or please send a note to the teacher stating your permission with the legal name and phone number of the person/people that you are authorizing. Please make arrangements before school to minimize phone calls during the day.

Please provide the school with documents about restraining orders or custody limitations. Notify your child's teacher and the office if there is any concern that an individual with restricted access to the child might attempt to contact or pick up the child from school.

Bicycle Rules
All cyclists are asked to walk bicycles when crossing the campus. Bike access is not allowed through our parking lot for safety reasons: bikes can be wheeled along the north side access walkway (the entrance located next to the middle grades classrooms) when entering/exiting campus. There is no bike riding or wheel riding of any kind on the Tierra Pacifica/Green Acres site. We provide a bike rack for convenience and ask that bikes be locked to the rack for security purposes. Children must wear bike helmets and adults are asked to wear them also.

Skateboard Rules
There is no skateboarding allowed on campus. Skateboards may be used as transportation off campus. Please carry skateboards on campus.

Field Trips
At Tierra Pacifica, we believe that learning extends beyond the four walls of the school. Santa Cruz, the Monterey Bay area, and beyond, have many resources to offer our children. At the beginning of the year, a field trip permission form is signed by parents/guardians and authorizes the student to attend any and all classroom or school field trips.

Parents will often be asked to chaperone and drive for field trips, which makes them possible. Parents and guardians will be required to fill out the appropriate documentation and show insurance coverage and get fingerprinted.

Telephone Use
School telephones are primarily for business use by the staff. Please help us keep phone use to a minimum by making after-school plans before school. If for some other reason you need to communicate with your child during the school day, do not call or text their cell phone. You may call the office at (831) 462-9404 0# and office staff will send a message to your child's classroom.

Visitors
Parents are encouraged to visit the school often and are always welcome in the classroom. We ask that when you visit the school, you respect the instructional time of teachers and students. Please do not disturb lessons or students and teachers who are working. If you have a matter to attend to with a teacher, please find a mutually agreeable time to discuss the matter outside of instructional time.

Visitors, in addition to parents and guardians, are welcome and are required to check in at the school office, sign the visitor log, and wear a nametag. Phone calls in advance are appreciated to set up an appropriate time to visit. Call (831) 462-9404.

Play Areas

Recess happens on the fields and playground. The courtyard is available before school for a limited number of uses such as jump rope and hula hooping. Playground equipment is to be used only for the purpose intended:

- Jump ropes – jumping only
- Hula hoops – hula hooping, rolling, tossing, and catching are OK. Tug of war, horsey or anything else that harms kids or hoops – not OK
- We do not run in the courtyard except for teacher supervised games on black top area.

Courtyard Tables and Benches

- Children enjoy lunch and snacks on the tables and concrete benches, so shoes are not appropriate on these surfaces.
- Do not stand on the concrete benches.
- Do not sit on tables.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance Philosophy

We expect consistent attendance from our students. Of course, if your child is sick or has a communicable illness, they should stay home to rest and recover. Since attendance equates directly to funding for our school, attendance is monitored closely and consistently.

Students are responsible for making up work missed during an absence, and should contact their teachers for assignments.

Call School If Your Child Will Be Absent

All absences require appropriate documentation. **A parent or guardian must notify the school of an absence no later than 8:30 a.m. on the day of the absence** by phone, (831) 462-9404, ext 3 or by email, attendance@tierrapacifica.org

Contagious Conditions

The school office should be informed promptly if your child has a communicable disease so that we can notify other parents, by posting pink exposure notices on classroom doors and sending out an email. Call the school at (831) 462-9404, ext. 3. If symptoms appear on a weekend day, please email or call your class representative and she will email the class.

Illness Policy

Please keep your child home from school if any of the following conditions are present:

- Fever >100F within the past 24 hours
- Diarrhea within the past 24 hours
- Vomiting within the past 24 hours

- Rashes (until diagnosed as non-contagious by a doctor's note)
- Conjunctivitis (an eye infection also known as "pink eye")
- Contagious diseases (measles, chicken pox, strep-throat, impetigo, etc.)
- Contagious parasites (lice, pinworms, scabies, etc.)
- Symptoms consistent with COVID-19

A teacher will not accept a child who shows any of these signs of illness into the classroom. Please notify the school immediately of any infectious diseases or conditions your child may have, so other parents can be notified of possible exposure to a contagious disease. Staff is CPR and First Aid trained and will call 911 in a medical emergency. Refer to the "Medication" section under "Health and Safety" for school policy on medications to be given at school.

Early Dismissal

If your child must leave school early because of a health appointment or for any other reason, please notify the classroom teacher before school starts, and please sign your child out in the main office. Please try to schedule appointments during non-school hours whenever possible.

Absences and Tardiness

Students are defined as tardy if they arrive 30 minutes later than the designated start of school without a note from a physician. By law, chronic absences and excessive tardies must be eventually reported to the County School Attendance Review Board (S.A.R.B), which investigates truant students and their parents. Tardiness negatively impacts the classroom since it disrupts teaching and learning. Please be considerate of the teacher and each student and arrive on time. Students who are absent three or more times for reasons not defined as excused by the school attendance policy may be reported to the County School Attendance Review Board (S.A.R.B). Please review the Classroom Based Attendance Policy for more detail.

ADA and Funding

As a public school, Tierra Pacifica receives state funding based on ADA (Average Daily Attendance). For this reason, the school must keep detailed records of student attendance. Daily attendance is important for many reasons, but it also directly affects our revenue. We lose between $60-$77 dollars (depending on grade level) every time a child is absent, even if it is for a good reason!

Independent Study

Short-Term Independent Study is an optional educational alternative that may allow your child to complete schoolwork at home or while traveling. By completing an approved Independent Study program and the required learning activities, the school may continue to receive Average Daily Attendance (ADA) funding for eligible absences.

At Tierra Pacifica, Short-Term Independent Study may be available for absences of at least 3 school days, up to 15 cumulative school days during the school year. Completed assignments must be submitted by the deadlines established in the Independent Study agreement and reviewed by the supervising teacher.

Independent Study for pre-planned absences must be arranged 10 school days in advance. Applications are available in the Resource Hub in ParentSquare. Tierra Pacifica's Independent Study Policy can be found here.

REQUESTS OF PARENTS AT TIERRA PACIFICA

- I model speaking and acting respectfully to every person at school.
- I work cooperatively and respectfully with staff to support students' appropriate and cooperative behavior while at school.
- I will attend the All School Meetings.
- I will attend class meetings.
- I will model speaking and acting respectfully to every person at school.
- My child arrives at school at least five minutes before the start of school.
- My child is picked up within five minutes after school is out.
- My child completes all homework assignments on time.
- My child arrives at school prepared each day.
- I phone the school by 8:30 AM to report an absence or a tardy at 462-9404, ext. 3.
- My child gets the proper amount of sleep every night.
- My child gets proper nutrition every day.
- My child is given appropriate boundaries for their behavior.

Sleep Suggestions

1. Create a bedtime routine and a set bedtime.
2. Children need more sleep than adults – according to the National Sleep Foundation, children ages five to twelve need 10 –11 hours/night.
3. In order to get this much sleep, a child who wakes at 6:30 a.m. needs to be asleep by 7:30 or 8:30 p.m.

Nutrition Suggestions

1. Every single day, provide a plentiful and healthy breakfast, snack, lunch, snack, and dinner.
2. Make lunches the night before.

Homework Suggestions

1. Create a routine time and place free of distractions.
2. Encourage your child to check their resources and friends to clarify assignments and provide support before giving up.
3. Check your child's homework; your positive attention helps them stay motivated.
4. Make reading a daily family activity in order to instill a life-long love of it.
5. Help stimulate your child's creativity by providing rich extra-curricular opportunities.
6. Encourage play dates with other children from school, especially new students.

TIERRA PACIFICA PARENT PARTICIPATION POLICY

IMPORTANT NOTE: Prior to being cleared to volunteer, each parent should read through the 2026-27 TPCS Volunteer Handbook and complete the requirements listed therein.

Tierra Pacifica is a parent participation school. By enrolling your child, you are choosing a school with a dynamic and engaged parent community and acknowledging your desire to volunteer for the school. Without parent participation, our school would not be the vibrant and desirable learning community that prompted you to apply. Parent participation is voluntary and will not affect your child's eligibility to enroll or to continue enrollment. However, it is our intention to find a volunteer role that fits every parent's availability and skill set.
This policy covers:

- Our parent participation goals
- Why parent participation is important
- Commitment to community agreement
- Avenues for participation
- How to keep your commitment
- Parent participation leadership roles

Parent Participation Goals

Our goal is to have all families involved in the community in a way that is meaningful both to the family and the school. Parent participation is voluntary and will not affect a child's eligibility to enroll or to continue enrollment.

- Two-parent families are asked to volunteer 12-15 hours per month.
- One-parent families are asked to volunteer 6-8 hours per month.
- Regular attendance at the All-School and Class Meetings, as well as Family Workdays.

Why is it Important that Families Volunteer?

1. Every family brings with it a unique set of skills, talents, and resources. By drawing on all families, our talent pool is huge. We have experts in everything from farming to web design, mosaic art to Mandarin. Because of this talent pool we offer 60 unique electives, perform nearly all site maintenance, and run some of the back office with volunteers rather than paid positions. This frees up money that would ordinarily be spent on those tasks so that it can be spent on the educational program and materials.

2. Part of our mission is to develop a community that supports all families. When parents and staff work together towards a common goal, a network of relationships develops that supports not only the school but each family as well. This support network is priceless. By working together, parents, students, and faculty gain an extended family that can help them out during tough times.

3. Everyone at the school is busy. When a family does not volunteer, it impacts families' motivation to do their part. Knowing that everyone is playing a part inspires each of us when we are tempted to not honor our commitment. Many parents give more than is suggested. We encourage everyone to find some way to give.

Avenues for Participation

Classroom Participation

Parents who work in the classroom typically work a 1-4 hour shift each week. Tasks vary depending upon the teacher's needs but may include such activities as working with an individual student or small group of children, leading a learning center, "floating" to assist children as the need arises, or helping to prepare curriculum materials. Some parents take on a particular piece of the curriculum, such as Life Lab or PE, and prepare and teach a lesson each week.

At the beginning of each year, parents who will participate in the classroom attend training to learn conflict resolution and classroom management skills. Parents meet with their class teacher to discuss particular needs of the classroom and/or specific curriculum that will be taught.

Each teacher has a classroom representative who works to help each family find the right fit for their parent participation/support job or mix of jobs for the school year. The Class Rep is the designated "go to" person for any questions parents may have regarding their assigned job(s).

Teachers depend on parents and plan student activities based upon which parents will be in the classroom. For example, a teacher may plan three learning centers if they know they will have a parent and TA available. It is, therefore, essential that parents arrive on time when they are scheduled and stay until their end time.

Drivers/Chaperones on Field Trips

Parents and guardians are asked to participate in driving and supervision on field trips, and their support is greatly appreciated. Drivers are asked to fill out a form including licensing, safety, and insurance information, and to keep a current copy of insurance coverage on file maintained confidentially by the Main Office. Insurance minimums are as follows: Body Injury/Liability ($50,000/100,000), Property Damage ($25,000), and Medical Payments ($5,000).

As a driver of a car transporting students, you are responsible for providing a safe vehicle, including the following:

- No detours: please handle gasoline, coffee, and errands ahead of time; please do not stop for snacks or treats.
- Every child must wear a seat belt in the car at all times; no double-belting.
- Children under 8 years of age must ride in a booster seat or car seat on the back seat. Children 4'9" or taller do not have to use a booster seat if they can properly wear the seat belt.
- No children under 5'4" are allowed in the front seat with airbags.
- Follow all driving laws, including the posted speed limits at all times.
- Use extra caution on school trips - do not allow children to put their limbs or heads out the window and remind children to be careful when entering or exiting the car in parking areas.
- No talking or texting on cell phones while driving.

As a chaperone on a field trip, you are also serving as a classroom aide. Your job includes:

- Keeping track of your assigned group at all times.
- Helping the students and teachers with their assignments.
- Following all schedules and designated time frames set by the teachers.
- Being aware of and enforcing school rules and specific field trip site rules.
- Enforcing general public manners: no running or loud voices without permission.

- Ensuring bathroom safety by confirming the bathroom environment is safe before allowing children to enter and asking children to use the bathroom in pairs.
- Keeping cell phones on and available in case of emergencies.

Teams (Teams Vary and When Available Each Year)
There are many teams on which to serve: maintenance of facilities, tech, electives, vegetable garden, fundraising, after school sports, yard supervision, safety, courtyard landscaping, science, art, grandparents and friends, diversity, newsletter, yearbook, office support, talent share, Spanish translation, Spanish instruction, lunch program, crossing guards, performance and assemblies, grant writing, finance, classroom support, tutoring, enrollment outreach, before and after school supervision, facilities planning, cleaning classrooms, childcare. Some teams have monthly meetings and project deliverables. New teams are formed all the time and anyone with an idea is encouraged to talk with his or her parent rep or the Executive Director about forming a new team, starting a new project, or joining an already established team.

School Support Jobs
There are two types of school support jobs – “ongoing” and “on-call.” Ongoing jobs are activities that are scheduled on a regular basis, such as helping in the office 3 hours per week, picking up litter in the play yard each morning, regularly providing childcare for the younger sibling of a child whose parent is working in the class, or teaching a weekly elective.

On-call jobs include such activities as building a shelf for a classroom, replacing a broken board on the play structure, or attending a workday to help paint the classrooms. Parents who perform on-call jobs are listed in the school resource directory according to their skills and interests (plumbing, carpentry, computer, etc.). When a need arises, the Parent Participation Coordinator and/or designee calls a parent who has the skill or interest necessary to perform the task at hand.

Fundraising
Families at the school are asked to help with school fundraising events, such as the ones below:

1. The Parent Pledge
2. The Drive for Schools (or alternative fundraiser)
3. The Grandparent and Friends Campaign

Hours worked on fundraising activities are counted toward a family’s total volunteer hours for the year.

The money we raise pays for many wonderful school activities which would not be possible using only state funding. Tierra Pacifica is able to have instructional aides in every classroom due to your generous contributions!

PARENT COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

We are a vibrant collaboration between families and educators who are united in our intent to create a heartfelt TK-8 school and multi-generational community.

Tierra Pacifica Charter School is a parent participation school. We acknowledge parents as co-facilitators of their children’s learning and partners in their education. Parents’ active participation in the classroom, governance, and all other aspects of the school organization is vital to the challenging work of educating all children at Tierra Pacifica. Our aim is to have all families actively involved in the

community, as their time permits, in a way that is meaningful both to the family and the school.

We request that you partner with us to the best of your ability in the following ways:

- Respect and support the school in modifying your child's behavior to be appropriate at school.
- As a two parent family, we suggest, but do not require, that you volunteer 12-15 hours per month. This can be done working in the classroom, serving on a school committee or project team, and/or providing other supportive help to the school.
- As a single parent family, we suggest, but do not require, that you volunteer 6-8 hours per month. Volunteer hours are not mandatory.
- Attend every all-school meeting and every class meeting during the year.
- Stay informed using the school's website, reading school-related emails, and checking in with the classroom representative(s) if I have questions or need information.
- Attend all scheduled parent/teacher conferences, and communicate with my child/ren's teachers in ways that will be described by the teachers at the first class meetings.
- There is a gap between the state funding we receive and the cost of providing a superb education. We bridge that gap through our annual parent pledge campaign. Please note that the parent pledge is a request and will not in any way affect your child's experience at school.
- Be aware of community norms of communication and do your best to respectfully adhere to these norms during meetings

Parent Participation Leadership Roles

Parent Participation Coordinator

The Parent Participation Coordinator reports to the Tierra Pacifica School Board and oversees the functioning of the school wide parent participation program. Coordinator duties include:

- Work with the Executive Director, Teachers, and Classroom Representatives to identify families available for supplemental jobs
- Assists in establishing and implementing effective parent/community programs
- Collect data regarding participation in family and community engagement programs on campus
- Facilitate monthly Classroom Rep meetings

Classroom Representative

Each class has a classroom representative. The classroom representative serves as a liaison between the teacher and parent community of the class. Representative duties include:

- Scheduling classroom volunteers, monitoring their attendance, and supporting them in fulfilling their agreed-upon class volunteer hours.
- Finding volunteers for classroom support jobs such as field trip coordinator, childcare coordinator, etc. to other parents in the class.
- Integrating new families into the class and the school.
- Serving as a conduit for the dissemination of information from teachers to parents.
- Attending monthly organizational meetings with the parent participation coordinator.
- Checking in with the field trip coordinator about parent driver paperwork, driver packets for field trips, etc.
- Assuring that each parent gets a bulletin via email or other method.

SUPPORTING THE SCHOOL FINANCIALLY

Parent Donations

While Tierra Pacifica receives funding from the State of California, it falls short of what is needed to operate the school in a manner that allows us to achieve our vision and goals. Thus, in addition to supporting the school, by adhering to its educational philosophy and performing regular volunteer work, we suggest that families support the school financially through a parent pledge donation.

During the summer every family receives a letter that explains what the pledge is for and asks them to make a pledge to the school. Parent volunteers follow up the letter with phone call(s) to answer questions about the pledge and ask that the pledge form be filled out and turned in prior to the start of school. Pledge follow-up happens throughout the year in class and school meetings and also through direct asks.

Pledges can be met in one of several ways: with a single lump sum payment in the fall, two to five payments over the school year, monthly check, or via automatic monthly withdrawal from their bank account. (Forms and instructions for automatic withdrawal are available in the office.) Credit card payments are also accepted. Your completed pledge form indicates pledge amount, payment method and frequency.

Some families are able to pledge the suggested amount, others are able to pledge more and others are not in a position to pledge. Each family needs to consider its relative financial health and donate an amount that they believe appropriate, given the school's needs as determined by the Tierra Pacifica Governing Board. Individual donation levels will be confidential with the exception of the Executive Director, the Director of Finance, the Finance Specialist, and the members of the development team.

Your financial support is valuable to the operation of the school, as it funds most of our enrichment programs such as art, music, dance, and physical education. Pledging is voluntary, but by sharing our work, wisdom and wealth, we are able to model for our children what it means to intentionally create something incredible together that will benefit us all in myriad ways.

Donations from Friends and Relatives

As part of our development efforts, we ask families for contact information of their relatives, friends, colleagues, and neighbors who might like to support the education of a special child in their lives and are interested in the unique vision of Tierra Pacifica, or supporting education in general. These potential Friends of Tierra Pacifica are contacted via a letter or email, from one of our Development Committee members and are provided with information and updates about the school and its programs. Thank you for putting us in touch with the people in your lives who care about children and education.

Drive for Schools

Each fall parents are asked to sell tickets for the Drive for School Toyota fundraiser. This particular fundraiser is the only time we ask families to sell something to benefit the school. All proceeds from this fundraiser go directly to TPCS.

Other Ways to Help

Events: We conduct regular student-led tours of the school for interested community members. Please

let us know if your friend, colleague, relative, neighbor, or business associate might enjoy visiting Tierra Pacifica and being inspired by our students, teachers, and families.

AmazonSmile: Parents and friends can designate Tierra Pacifica as their charity of choice so that 0.5% of their eligible purchases come back to the school.

COMMUNICATION FOR A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

All School Meetings

All School Meetings are held twice a year. This provides an opportunity for information sharing and ongoing participation in the development of the school.

Childcare Guidelines for School Meetings:

- When offered, there will be a nominal cost for families that sign up and PAY by the Friday before the meeting.
- We have forms to fill out in the office if you qualify as low income. People who have filled out the forms in advance may request a reduced rate.
- During meetings, we'll let kids choose between watching a G-rated movie, doing homework, doing an art project, or playing board games.

All school rules and consequences apply. Students may be suspended from childcare for repeated misbehavior.

School Updates

School updates are published to apprise the TPCS community of what's happening in the school. Contributions and appreciations should be submitted to the bulletin box in the office or emailed to office@tierrapacifica.org or to the Executive Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director. The Executive Director makes the final decision as to what is appropriate update material.

Phone Tree

A phone tree may be utilized for special or last minute communications. Please keep the office updated with any change in address or phone numbers.

For important or urgent messages, the school will communicate using an automated system that will phone, text, or email parents according to their preferences. Contact the front office for more information.

Non-Disclosure Policy

Student contact information (telephone number, address, email) will be released in the form of class rosters, email lists, etc. If you wish for some or for all or your contact information to remain private please notify the school office in writing.

Please note that email lists for the school may not be used for any other purpose other than school communication. The same is true of addresses and phone numbers.

Collaborative Communication

Ongoing parent-teacher communication is important/helpful to your child's school/classroom experience. Concerns about your child should be directed to your child's teacher. Please check with your teacher to determine the best time for these communications. Ideas, suggestions, questions, or concerns regarding curriculum or general classroom issues should be directed to the teacher, either at a class meeting or a mutually convenient time. Concerns and suggestions can also be submitted to the Executive Director or Tierra Pacifica Governing Board, either in person or in writing. Inboxes are located in the school office.

Parent Square is intended for school-related communications only, and the school is ultimately responsible for its usage. If you wish to connect with a group of parents with staff involvement, please use your own email.

Our Tierra Pacifica staff work tirelessly to ensure the academic and social success of all of our students. Parents often reach out to teachers in-person, via ParentSquare, or email. To ensure their own personal wellness and to honor the commitment of their employment contracts, staff do not check and respond to any messages after 5:00 p.m. We encourage families to visit classrooms at dismissal, send a note, or schedule a meeting to speak with staff about your student's progress. Virtual meetings are an option, if needed.

Community Norms for Communication

- **Be curious/inquire:** ask questions to learn about perceptions, assumptions, and interpretations. Ask gentle open-ended probes such as, "I'd like to hear more about..." or "I'm curious about..." to increase clarity before advancing one's own ideas.
- **Pause:** before responding or asking a question to allow time for thinking.
- **Offer ideas:** Ideas are the heart of a meaningful dialogue. Label the intention of your comments. You might say, "Here is one idea..." or "Here is a possible approach...".
- **Take space, make space:** Think about those who do not share often. Sometimes this means stepping back and allowing others the opportunity to speak.
- **Paraphrase:** By using a paraphrase starter such as: "You're thinking..." or "I'm hearing you say..." and following the starter with a paraphrase assists members of the group to hear and understand one another as they formulate decisions.
- **Pay attention to self and others:** try to be conscious of your own tone and body language as well as how others are responding. Acknowledge that impact matters more than intent.
- **Acknowledge and respect differences:** use a lens of intersectionality by developing a deeper understanding for one another by remembering that each person has a different background, level of privilege, power and experience in the world.
- **Presume positive intentions:** Use positive intentions in your speech as one way to promote meaningful dialogue and prevent unintentional put-downs.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health Examinations

Each student enrolling in the school as a kindergartner will be required to provide evidence of a health examination by a medical doctor, and an oral health assessment, or a legal exemption from this requirement.

Immunizations

Each student shall present their immunization record certifying that he/she has received all required immunizations currently due, or shall present an exemption as allowable by law before he/she is admitted to the school. If an outbreak of a communicable disease occurs in the school community, students not immunized for that disease may be excluded from school for an extended period of time.

Health Testing

The school will administer tests for vision and hearing as required by law.

Medications

All medications must be kept in the office or other designated area at all times. If it is necessary for a student to take a prescription or over-the-counter medication during school hours, the following procedure must be followed:

1. Parent or guardian completes an authorization form, which includes the following;
    a. The student's name
    b. When medication is to be given
    c. How much and how often it should be given
    d. How long the student will be taking the medication
    e. Parent's signature and phone number in case of questions

2. Prescription medications must be in the pharmacy-labeled container. (Pharmacies will give you an additional container upon request if some doses will be taken at school.) Over-the-counter medications must be in the manufacturer's container with dosage and expiration dates. Remember to include dosing spoons or other necessary equipment.

3. Students with inhalers for asthma or related breathing disorders may keep their inhalers with them, either in their cubbies or in a place mutually agreed to with the class teacher. Teachers and the office will be notified if a student will have an inhaler at school.

4. Records are kept by school personnel stating the student's name, medication dosage, time taken, and signature of the person administering it.

Safety Reporting

In an effort to promote a safe school site, reporting of all injuries, near injuries, and identified safety concerns will be documented on a Student Accident Report. Any injury, near injury, or identified safety issue should be reported to the teacher, the Executive Director, or the Office Manager. Immediate action will be taken when necessary.

School Closure

Tierra Pacifica Charter School closure in cases of power outage, storm, *etc.* will follow the decision of the Live Oak School District.

No School Today

Providing for student safety when school is in session is a major responsibility of all Tierra Pacifica staff members. Part of this continuing process involves careful planning so that the Superintendent and staff are prepared to make prompt and responsible decisions in any situation that could disrupt the safety of students.

There may be times during the school year when extreme weather conditions, earthquake, power failure, or a national emergency will necessitate a decision for "No School Today" or an early dismissal. The Superintendent, upon the advice and consultation of the School District's Transportation and Maintenance Supervisors will decide if "No School Today" will be called for the Live Oak School District. If the decision is made that conditions are such that a "No School Day" is declared, this status will include all child care programs and facilities.

When a "No School Today" decision is made, radio stations, KSCO - 1080 AM, 99.1 FM; and television channels KSBW Channel 8 are notified by the Superintendent directly before 6:00 a.m. These stations will make the "No School Today" announcement beginning at 6:00 a.m. (Please don't call the stations for information.) Please assume that if no public announcement is made by 8:00 am, school will be open.

KSCO - 1080 AM	**KSCO - 99.1**	**FM KPIG FM 107.5**
KUSP FM 88.9	**KGO AM 810**	
KSBW, TV Channel 8	**KNTV, TV Channel 11**	

There may also be days during the winter when school must be dismissed early because of weather conditions. **Please listen to your radio or television on all days of unusually severe weather, especially on days when conditions worsen as the day progresses.** Please make thorough, advance plans in the morning if the weather conditions are variable. Be sure to discuss these plans with your child so that they will know what to do and where to go in the event you are not at home at the time such an announcement is made.

Because of the number of students involved, it is impossible to call each parent. Also, in emergencies, school personnel are needed to help with the evacuation, and phone lines should be kept open. Please note that the school telephones are electric and will not operate during a power outage; however, an alternative communication system is in place for evacuation purposes.

- **Tierra Pacifica Charter School (831) 462-9404 0**
- **Live Oak District Office (831) 475-6333 x200 or x202**

Other Numbers:

PG & E – Local Dispatcher (Santa Cruz)	(800) 743-5000
Sheriff's Dispatcher (Santa Cruz)	(831) 471-1121
County Transit	(408) 366-3101
Caltrans Hwys, 9, 17, 35: http://www.dot.ca.gov/cgi-bin/roads.cgi	

A copy of your child's emergency card will be kept on file with each homeroom teacher, who will have the primary responsibility of releasing students according to your written wishes.

Note: We strongly encourage you to have in your home: a radio that works on batteries, extra batteries, and a phone connected to your home number that works without electricity.

Nixle.com: Parents can consider signing up with this website, which will send urgent messages (text or email) from local police departments regarding road closures or other information.

Other: To register your home phone and mobile phone with Santa Cruz County 911 center during emergency situations or critical community alerts go to www.scr911.org and click "Code Red."

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

In the event of an emergency (fire, earthquake, storm, etc.), all staff will remain at the school until all children are home, in a place of safety, or released to parents/guardians unless directed otherwise. Teachers will keep their classes in their rooms unless directed otherwise by the Executive Director or designated lead teacher. Teachers will remain with their classes and are responsible for accounting for each child in their class. Teachers will be responsible for signing out children to parents or other designated adults.

Telephones/Communications

In the event of an earthquake, flood, or other natural disaster, tune your radio to KSCO (1080 AM or 99.1 FM) or TV to KSBW (NBC Channel 8) for advisory information. Please do not call the school, as we must have the lines open for emergency calls.

Dismissal

Should there be a major disaster, children will remain under the supervision of school authorities until parents or responsible adults can pick them up.

Student Release Procedure

Upon arrival at the school after a disaster, parents/guardians should:

1. Go directly to the entrance of the school or evacuation area.

2. Inform the teacher, teaching assistant, or adult responsible for that classroom that you are taking the child from the class.

3. Sign a student emergency release form from the classroom's emergency folder for each child you are taking, indicating the time and planned destination. Do not remove your child or any other child from school without signing the student emergency release form. This provides us a record of where each child is in case someone else arrives later looking for the child. Unless you are staying to volunteer, please leave as quickly as possible after signing out your child.

4. Adults will be needed to help with first aid, dismissing students, helping with classes, monitoring traffic, etc. If you are able to volunteer to help, go directly to the command center where the volunteer coordinator will give you an assignment. Volunteers should leave children with their

classes and not sign student release forms until they are ready to leave.

If You Can't Get to the School

Should a major disaster occur, it is likely that many parents will not be able to reach the school right away. If conditions make it necessary, we will release your child to the adult indicated on your child's emergency release form. We will keep a written record of the child and the adult to whom the child has been released.

The Executive Director, other administrator, or teacher in charge will determine the need to leave the building. In the event that the building cannot be reoccupied, or if a fire requires an evacuation of the school, we will transfer the students to the nearest available safe shelter.

If an unaccompanied child is on the way to school, it is recommended that they proceed immediately to school. Please review this important information with your child.

Disaster Preparedness

- **On Site:** In order to be prepared in the event of a disaster, Tierra Pacifica has a supply of fresh water, packaged food, flashlights, first aid kits, and other supplies as dictated by the state and county.
- **Off Site:** A field trip backpack for each class is equipped with a first aid kit and emergency information on each child. All teachers carry a cell phone and have it turned on during field trips.

Emergency Communication

If a disaster happens while school is in session, teachers and staff will attempt to communicate with listed family/friends. If students/staff need to be moved off site for safety reasons, a sign will be posted at the site informing of where relocation has occurred.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Tierra Pacifica Charter School seeks to support the emotional and behavioral wellness of every student. To this end, TPCS has a Suicide Prevention Policy in place. This policy includes:

- periodic staff training on suicide awareness and prevention
- age-appropriate curriculum for 6th- 8th graders
- a plan for intervention, assessment and referrals
- a plan for post-crisis support for the school community

The policy is based on research and best practices in suicide prevention, and was developed in cooperation with Suicide Prevention Service of the Central Coast using a model policy from the California Department of Education (CDE). It has been adopted with the understanding that suicide prevention activities decrease suicide risk, promote and encourage help-seeking behavior, identify those at risk of suicide, and decrease suicidal behaviors.

Parents/guardians/caregivers are encouraged to notify a staff member if they become aware of a student experiencing emotional distress or suicidal ideation, and/or call the Suicide Prevention Service Hotline or 911 when appropriate: 831.458.5300 or TOLL FREE 1.877.663.5433 (1.877.ONE.LIFE)

Below is a parent resource recommended by the CDE:

Parents as Partners: A Suicide Prevention Guide for Parents is a booklet that contains useful information for parents/guardians/caregivers who are concerned that their children may be at risk for suicide. It is available from Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAVE). See the SAVE Web page at https://www.save.org/product/parents-as-partners/

See the Suicide Prevention Policy. A hard copy can be found in the policy binder in the school office.

TIERRA PACIFICA ORGANIZATION AND RESOURCES

Governing Board

The Tierra Pacifica Governing Board is composed of parents of current students. The board meets at least once a month. Schedules and agendas are posted on our website and also the school bulletin board. Meetings are open and anyone is welcome to attend.

School District

Live Oak School District - Although located on Live Oak School District property, Tierra Pacifica is an independent charter school and is not governed by the Live Oak District, the Live Oak School Board, or the Live Oak Superintendent.

Questions and concerns should be brought to the Tierra Pacifica Executive Director or the Tierra Pacifica Governing Board.

School Publications

Our Current Charter Petition: This document tells you everything you want to know about Tierra Pacifica Charter School: governance structure, discipline procedures, accountability, and more.

Updates: Posted on Parent Square

Grandparents Newsletter: Emailed twice a year

APPENDIX

Parent Resources

How Parents Should Receive Phone Call Regarding Student Behavior

All Tierra Pacifica Charter School parents are expected to play an active role in supporting student discipline. This means upholding and modeling the school rules and following through supportively when the school is disciplining their own child.

Receiving a call from the school can make parents defensive, cause frustration, or even anger. We all make mistakes and this is part of learning. Use calls from the school as an opportunity for learning with your student.

1. **Breathe and take your time:** Remind your child that you know they are a good person, but the choices they made in this situation were not appropriate at school.
2. **Apply some consequences:** Limit privileges for a day such as: no screens, no electronic equipment, no after-school activities, no play-dates, etc. Consequences send a strong message and allow for reflection time so children may learn from their experience and be successful when they return to school.
3. **Discuss future actions:** After time for reflection, ask your child how they can act differently the next time and make a plan together. Do not blame others or allow the student to blame others for their own reactions. Gently and firmly remind them that they are always responsible for their own behavior, no matter what others are doing.
4. **Apology:** Help your child to write a short Amends Letter. Or, as age-appropriate, create a drawing which illustrates their amends.

An Amends Letter Template - Four Part Apology

When an apology is necessary, we suggest the Four-Part Apology. This technique helps children understand consequences of their behavior. When they acknowledge what happened and figure it out and then describe a different way that they will act next time, we find that both individuals remain thoughtful and supportive rather than angry or defensive. If you and your child practice this tool with each other, apologies will be easier and more meaningful. Until children are skilled at this, adults can guide them through the process.

1. Acknowledge: Take responsibility for your actions and behaviors. Use "I" statements.
Example: "I called you a name when I was angry."

2. Apologize: Acknowledge the cost to others. If unaware of the cost, ask.
Example: "I am sorry for hurting you."

3. Make It Right: Deal with the consequences of behavior. Ask the person.
Example: "Is there anything I can do to make it up to you?'

4. Recommit: Make a commitment to appropriate behavior. Commit to not having the same behavior again.

Example: "Next time if I am upset, I will do my best to tell you or get help from a grown up. I will not call you a name again."

We are guided by and implement techniques from decades of research by experts in our field…

- Positive Discipline - “A practical guide to communicating boundaries to very young children and solving early discipline problems to set children up for success.”
- How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk - “Time-tested methods to solve common problems and build foundations for lasting relationships”
- And follow up book: How to Talk so Little Kids Will Listen: A Survival Guide to Life with Children Ages 2-7.
- Don′t Suspend Me!: An Alternative Discipline Toolkit - “Suspensions don’t improve behavior and they don’t address the social-emotional needs of students. There are better, alternative discipline methods that can create positive, meaningful long-term changes in the behavior of challenging students.” This toolkit focuses on a three part discipline process: Reflective, Restorative, and Instructional.
- Discipline that Restores- “The purpose of DTR is to guide teachers to respond to each conflict or misbehavior in ways that are life-giving and make things right as possible. DTR uses each conflict and misbehavior to help students learn respect, critical thinking, and cooperative negotiation skills. DTR responses recognize and respect individual freedom while improving relationships and building community life in the classroom.”

Sample Behavior Contract for an Elementary Student

(Student Name) is working on making good choices when angry. Teachers and IA’s are supporting (Student Name) to be successful and we believe they can do it!

(Student Name) knows they are getting mad when:

- they feel hot,
- their face turns a little bit red,
- their muscles feel tight,
- their voice starts to get loud.

(Student Name) agrees they will help themself calm down when angry by:

- Walking away from the situation
- Practicing their “stop, freeze, breathe” strategy so they can think and make a good choice before acting;
- Keeping their favorite small squishy or small stuffie in their pocket to help them remember to use the “stop, freeze, breathe” strategy.
- Asking an adult for help if needed

Each day that (Name) is able to calm down when angry rather than yell at the person who is making them angry, (Name) will earn 1 point.

(Student's Parent's Name) has agreed that if they are able to earn 5 points, they will be allowed to _____.

This behavior agreement is in effect until (DATE).

Student Signature: _____
Date: _____

Undocumented Student Policies

- Protection of Undocumented Students
- Response to Immigration Enforcement

Technology Policy

- Student Use of Technology Policy

Tierra Pacifica Board Policies