



SANTA FE SCHOOL FOR THE
ARTS & SCIENCES

Elementary School
Parent & Family Handbook
2024-2025

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Welcome to Santa Fe School for the Arts & Sciences! All the teachers and staff are looking forward to a wonderful year with you and your children. Please read our handbook carefully. Feel free to call if you have any questions.

Arts & Sciences Mission

Santa Fe School for the Arts & Sciences achieves academic excellence in an environment of respect, inclusion and diversity, utilizing Expeditionary Learning, global perspectives and a multicultural art and science enriched curriculum.

Arts & Sciences Vision

Each child's talents are fully developed, leading to a life-long passion for learning and exploration in a caring environment where each child has opportunities for self-expression and growth. The school exemplifies and encourages the values of compassion, leadership, world citizenship and service.

Santa Fe School for the Arts & Sciences is a non-profit, independent expeditionary learning school committed to providing a challenging, engaging education for children ages 3 through 8th grade. We are committed to providing stimulating and enriching educational opportunities in a nurturing, child centered environment. We welcome children who have learning differences, including gifted and talented. We have inclusive classrooms where children's individual learning styles and unique strengths are fostered. We celebrate the joy of play and learning that occurs when children are encouraged to explore and question the world around them at their own pace.

Guiding Principles

Our Guiding Principles are based on six character values: Respect, Trust, Courage, Honesty, Compassion and Stewardship

Non-Discrimination Statement

The Santa Fe School for Arts & Sciences does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, gender, national or ethnic origin, language(s) spoken, sexual orientation, or disability, in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, financial aid programs, and other school-administered programs.

Sanctuary School

We consider ourselves to be a Sanctuary School, where all students and families may find compassion, understanding and a safe haven from discrimination.

EL Education

El Education, or expeditionary learning, is an approach to learning that combines rigorous academic content and real world projects, called "learning expeditions". Learning expeditions are in-depth, interdisciplinary learning units, which require students to engage in sophisticated research, and connect to the community in authentic ways. Students document their learning with high quality products and portfolios, which are presented to families and teachers. The energy and sustained creativity of the staff is what helps make expeditionary learning school successful.

EL Education schools create a culture of respect and high expectations for staff and students alike. Teachers in EL schools receive intensive professional development in curriculum and teaching practices and are able to model ongoing learning to their students. At Santa Fe School for the Arts & Sciences, teachers, parents, staff, and students work together to create a school culture of collaboration, respect,

and high expectations.

Classes and Classrooms

Our elementary classes are Kindergarten through 6th grade. First through sixth grades are taught in mixed-age classes:

- Grasshoppers: Kindergarten - located in the Grasshopper Room
- Stargazers: 1st & 2nd grades - located in the Unigazer Building
- Centaurs: 3rd & 4th grades - located in Willow Hall
- Badgers: 5th & 6th grades - located in Willow Hall

School Events

Certain school events are mandatory for parents to attend.

- September - Back-to-School Night
- October- Parent-Teacher Conference
- December - Wintercomes: A Celebration of Student Learning
- February - Optional Parent-Teacher Conferences
- May - Portfolio Conferences
- May - Summercomes (Graduation)

As these events approach, more information will be communicated from your child's teacher or the administration.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Conferences are scheduled up to three times a year, as noted on our school calendar. Conferences typically run approximately 30 minutes. Teachers are also available after school hours to check in with you whenever needed. Please call, text or email your child's teacher to set up a time to meet at any point throughout the school year. This ensures a more focused time to discuss your child. Please don't ever hesitate to arrange a meeting with your child's teacher!

Ongoing Communication

Anytime you need to speak with a teacher during the school day (for example, you will be late picking up your child, there is a family emergency, you need to give your permission for a different person to pick up your child at the end of the day, etc.) please call the school at **505-438-8585**. This phone will almost always be answered during the school day. If we miss your call please leave a message on our voicemail; we check for messages regularly. If you are unable to reach the office, or you need to contact the principal after school hours, please call our Principal's cell phone: **505-670-6657**.

Open and honest communication is essential to a positive school experience for your child. Please let us know as soon as possible if there are any major changes in your child's life, so we can be supportive at school. All information is confidential. We, in turn, will keep you informed of any events, which may have impacted your child's school day, or any significant changes in the school environment. We value your feedback and concerns and will do our best to facilitate daily communication so that we all can flourish in an atmosphere of honesty, integrity and kindness.

If you have a concern or suggestion, please speak to an appropriate member of the staff at the end of the school day. Unfortunately, we will not be able to have conversations with parents when school is in session. If you have a concern or question about your child's school experience, please speak first with your child's teacher. If you feel that the issue needs further attention after speaking with your child's teacher, please speak with the Principal.

Family Participation

Family involvement is deeply appreciated, needed and encouraged. We would like our school to be a place where families & caregivers are always welcome and feel as though they are partners in the education of their children. As a family, we invite you to volunteer some time to help out at the school. Some examples are, volunteering to drive or chaperone on field trips and field work, sharing your talents with a class, joining a committee, helping with the campus and grounds, fundraising or construction, etc. We have many opportunities when family may join us to support our school community.

You are welcome to schedule meetings with any teacher or administrator at any time, in addition to the dedicated days for parent teacher conferences.

Parent Association

All parents and guardians are members of our Parent Association and are encouraged to participate in Parent Association meetings and activities. Meetings will be held throughout the year. Times and dates are shared in the weekly Dragon Dispatch.

Classroom Observations

Classroom observations can occur during the school year and can help give you an idea of your child's day. Visits will require approval from the Principal.

Arrival and Departure

Arrival

Arrival time for 1st-6th is between 8:10-8:20 am and 8:10-8:30 am for Kindergarten. Please do not come in or drop your child off prior to your scheduled drop off time. Exact drop off times for each class will be communicated prior to the start of the school year, and may be adjusted during the school year if needed. Please see your forthcoming daily schedules for more specific information. You can also refer to the [drop off & pick up schedule](#).

Kindergarten Arrival (Grasshoppers)

Please drive slowly into the outer circular driveway and park carefully in the area next to the Grasshopper deck. You must walk your child to the playground or deck area to drop off your child.

1st-2nd Grade Arrival (Stargazers)

Please drive slowly into the main parking area. Park in front of Underhill (main school office). You must walk your child to the main Stargazer classroom door and drop off your child with the teacher.

3rd-4th Grade Arrival (Centaurs)

Please drive slowly into the main parking area. You must walk your child to the main Willow Hall entrance and drop off your child with a teacher.

5th-6th Grade Arrival (Badgers)

You may drop off in the main parking lot or drive slowly into the outer circular driveway to the area near the outdoor Badger classroom. Please pull forward and drop off your child at the end of the fence. Always have your child walk in front of your vehicle to the classroom.

For All Elementary Parents/Caregivers

We respectfully ask all parents to be on time to ensure a smooth transition for all the children in the classroom. If you are running late, please call the school to let us know. All students need to be in their classrooms by their designated times. Being punctual will greatly help our drop off procedures.

If you are running late, please call the school and leave a message to let us know what is going on. Please tell the office if you know in advance that your child will be late or absent on a particular day. We deeply appreciate each student arriving at school on time in the morning. It makes a huge difference in their ability to have a successful day.

Departure

1st -6th Grade: School ends at 3:10pm and pick up is between 3:10-3:20 pm.

Kindergarten: School ends at 3:00pm and pick up is between 3:00-3:10.

Pick up areas are the same as drop-off.

For K-2nd grade, teachers will help make sure your child has their personal belongings in their backpack. Centaur & Badger (3rd-6th) students will gather their belongings on their own.

No child may leave school with anyone other than a parent unless designated in writing by the parent. We will ask for a photo identification if the person is new to us. No child may ever be picked up by a sibling or driver younger than 16 years of age. No child will be allowed to leave the premises without staff being informed. Please take a moment to check that your child has their daily take-home items.

If an emergency prevents pick-up on time, please inform us of that fact by calling the office at 438-8585 **prior to 3:00**. Your child will be admitted to aftercare and you will only need to pay the drop in fee. If you do not call to let us know you are running late, a late pick-up fee of \$1.00 per minute is charged. We do not have a late pick-up option for programs that end at 5:30. If you are late for the 5:30 pm pick-up, the charge is also \$1.00 per minute.

Inclement Weather Policy

We follow the Santa Fe Public School determination for snow delays and closures. Please listen to the radio, check online at www.sfps.info, or watch the TV for Santa Fe Public School delays and closures. We will also send an email and text message to the school community in the event of a delay or closure. When there is a 2 hour delay, school will start between 10:10-10:30 am.

Health and Wellness Policy

We have learned that the best way to keep our students healthy is by keeping students who are ill at home. Please do not send your child to school if any of the following symptoms are present: fever, diarrhea, severe rash, persistent cough, yellow or green mucus, vomiting, sore throat, or other contagious illnesses such as conjunctivitis, lice, RSV, Covid-19, or chicken pox. If your child comes to school with any of the above symptoms, we will have them rest in the school office, away from other children to keep any illness from spreading, and we will call you to come immediately and take your child home.

If your child becomes ill with a communicable disease, please let us know right away. ***For cases of fever, vomiting, and diarrhea, your child must be symptom-free without medication, for a minimum of 24 hours, before returning to school.***

Our greatest priority is the health and safety of our students, families and teachers. We ask that families keep students home if they are ill, as it is the best way to keep other students and teachers healthy.

Communicable Illness and Disease

For any contagious illness or disease, it is important to consult a doctor or physician to determine the level of contagiousness and determine when it is safe to return to school. For some illnesses, a minimum of 24 hours is recommended for safe return (as determined by your physician) to school and as with Covid-19, five days is the recommended time. Please contact the office with any such illnesses so we can do our best as a community to stay healthy and keep each other safe.

Medication

Medication (prescription, over-the-counter, or homeopathic) is administered only with the written consent of the parent. We will give the medication at the requested time and will note the amount, time, date, and person giving the dosage. **Do not put medication in your child's backpack or lunch box. Please always hand it directly to your child's teacher.** Please note any allergies to medication on enrollment forms.

Field Trips and Field Work

We will have field trips this year that will follow all recommendations and requirements for transportation safety as stated in the PED Covid-safety guidelines. We do take small group and classroom field trips occasionally to supplement and enhance our classroom curriculum. Children earn the opportunity to participate in field trips by demonstrating safe, appropriate and responsible behavior in the class and on the playground. Prior to a field trip, we will send home a notice with all the pertinent information. We have a field trip fee which covers the cost of our field trip program. While all student files will contain a Field Trip Authorization form giving overall consent for field trips, we will still inform all parents when a field trip is planned. When parents decide not to give a student permission to participate on a field trip, the student must not come to school that day (or during the time of the trip) since all staff will be supervising the students on the trip.

Transportation

We will either use our school bus(es) as transportation for these trips. On occasion, parents may support by driving their vehicles as well. Drivers are responsible for the students they are driving. Cars must be equipped with functioning seat belts for each student, and be in good working condition, with plenty of gas, good tires and a spare. All vehicles used for transportation of children must be equipped with a first aid kit. All drivers must have current liability insurance on their policy. Only children over the legal height limit are allowed in the front seat, and if there are airbags, only children over the age of 12 may sit in the front.

Birthday Celebrations

Each class celebrates birthdays differently. Your child's teacher will let you know their particular birthday ritual. Please let us know a week in advance if you would like to do something special for your child's class in honor of your child's birthday. Children with summer or vacation birthdays will be invited to choose another day during the year to celebrate their birthday.

Toys and Items from Home

Toys from home are hard to share and it is difficult to keep track of them. Children may bring a cuddly toy or a special comforting item when their teacher invites them to, but please be sure your child does not bring anything breakable or valuable. For sharing times we encourage children to bring homemade items, things from nature, stuffed animals, photos, books, musical instruments, etc, but please keep home any store bought toys or toys from TV or movies. Children are not allowed to bring items from home unless they are a part of the curriculum and the teacher has requested it. Items such as game cards, dolls, toys, action figures, cars etc. are not allowed at school. Tablets/devices, video games, toy weapons and water

pistols are also not allowed. Students in elementary school may not bring iPods or cell phones to school. If they do, they must be kept turned off in their cubbies.

Attendance and Notification of Absence

Absence

If your child is going to be absent for any reason, including medical appointments and illness, please notify the staff by calling the school and leaving a message before their arrival time letting us know why your child will be absent that day.

Vacations

We strongly encourage families to take their vacations and trips during school holidays and breaks and not during regular school days. When a student misses school for a vacation it can create hardship for the teacher and the student. The teacher often needs to make up extensive work for the student which can not possibly replace the hands-on learning that happens in our school.

Absences can sometimes cause students to fall behind their peers and they may miss vital curriculum experiences that can not be repeated. This includes field work, films, hands-on science experiments, guest speakers, the introduction of new math concepts, etc.

Please speak with the principal and your child's teacher before you make your plans, if you are planning to take a vacation during regular school days. We would like to let you know in advance about any events and learning opportunities that your child will be missing.

We understand that there will be times that everyone has to miss school due to illness or family events such as funerals, or family reunions and once in a lifetime, positive opportunities and we are not referring to these absences. If you must miss school, please give your child's teacher plenty of advance notice so they can get work together for your child.

Tuition Policy

Please see your individualized enrollment contract.

Financial Aid

Full and partial scholarships are awarded according to financial need, and will be kept confidential by the financial aid committee. If you apply for financial aid, you will be required to provide personal financial and tax information. Any scholarship awarded must be reapplied for each year. Receiving a scholarship one year does not guarantee a scholarship for the next year as funds may not always be available.

Nutrition and Snack times

The elementary students will each bring their own individual snacks for morning snack time and for lunch. Please do not send any sugar laden items for snack. We request that soda and candy be consumed outside of school hours and off school grounds (except for special occasions). Please notify teachers and indicate on all medical forms if your child has any food allergies or special food needs. Please do not send any glass containers to school. Students will not have any utensils, cups, or plates kept at school. Please send appropriate utensils for your lunch.

Computers and the Internet

Elementary students may sometimes use our computer network for research, classes and the internet. Students may not check social media sites or send personal email, or download any music or information that is not directly related to their classwork. Students may not play computer games or print images from the computer without teacher's permission. Any inappropriate computer usage will result in a meeting with the student's teacher, family, and school principal and may result in the cancellation of certain computer privileges.

Please refer to your class's technology and/or internet agreements if provided.

Discipline Philosophy

Consistent, respectful role modeling by adults along with respectful listening and observing goes a long way toward creating a successful school environment. Staff actions and interactions, body language and voice level, help to set the tone for a respectful classroom. The major focus for the adults is to encourage positive prosocial behaviors: respecting yourself and others, respecting the materials, respecting the world around us.

We create an environment, which is developmentally appropriate to the child's needs and is designed to support a child's positive interaction with others and the materials in a responsible way. A well-designed and well-equipped classroom helps to prevent frustration and hazards. In addition, our daily schedule provides enough time for play, quiet reflection, creativity, a sense of home and security, and well-planned waiting times and transitions.

We use positive reinforcement to encourage positive behaviors. We give children choices and help them develop tools to solve problems. Compassionate conflict resolution is a very important part of our school culture. We encourage students to voice their concerns, mediate conflicts, work toward compromise and develop internal control. Children learn by experimenting, testing limits and experiencing the consequences of their behavior. Discipline is the external tool to help children develop internal control. We will maintain a consistent discipline approach throughout the year.

The teacher's job is to set clear limits that make sense to the age and developmental stage of the child with whom we are interacting. Often in the elementary grades, children and teachers create classroom guidelines together that are a shared agreement about positive social behavior and work ethic.

When a child needs direct guidance we use:

- Problem solving - What can we do here? How can we make this better? I wonder what to do here? We use and ask questions to encourage problem solving. Teachers help children identify their needs, feelings, causes, alternatives, and choices.
- Redirection - Suggest an alternative behavior/activity to the child. Change the focus from the current negative to a desired positive behavior. A child may need redirecting to a one-on-one interaction, or a new activity/space to work. Sometimes children need to be encouraged to try and work together.
- Natural and logical consequences - When possible, we allow children to experience the consequences of their actions directly related to the behavior; for example, if a child does not have homework, they may need to miss a recess or choice time to complete the missing work.
- Focusing play/modeling - entering into play directly with the children and helping them refocus on ways to use the materials constructively, or play fairly and respectfully.
- Using positive statements - Verbally reinforcing positive behaviors and actions.

Unacceptable behavior is often the result of the child's developmental immaturity. The staff works together to reinforce limits and teach alternatives. Acceptable behavior takes time to learn. Opportunities to problem solve are a part of the curriculum, both individually and together as a group.

Grasshoppers - We understand that kindergarten students are working on their ability to self regulate and control impulses. We will work closely with your child to support them, but please be aware that parents may be asked to take their child home for the remainder of a school day if their child is physically aggressive or intentionally mean to another child.

Stargazers, Centaurs, and Badgers - We do not believe in the use of any kind of physical punishment or a time out room. If a child needs to be separated from the group, they will be supervised by one of the teachers. Children are not denied food, rest or the bathroom as punishment. Toileting habits, or lack of, will never be a cause for punishment in any form. Children are not deprived of full participation in any significant portion of the program, although a parent may be asked to accompany a child on field trips. Children will not be subjected to any form of emotional abuse, including name calling, ostracism, shaming, teasing, or using language that threatens, humiliates or frightens the child.

Parents will be asked to take their child home for the remainder of a school day if their child is physically aggressive or intentionally mean to another child.

When a child is not adjusting

We take a team approach to support the growth of every child. When the teacher(s) feel that the usual methods of discipline are not effective or the child's peers feel unsafe or other children's parents express valid concern to the teachers, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The child's behavior will be observed and noted by the staff member(s) involved, including classroom teachers, Principal, and school counselor.
2. Staff will meet with parents to discuss the behavior and collaborate together on developing a plan to meet the individual needs of the child.
3. Any consultation of outside professionals will occur only with the written approval of the parents.
4. Teachers will again observe and record behaviors. They will discuss with the parents the noted changes in the child's behavior, and meet again if the child needs additional support.

Policy for suspension and disenrollment

If actions to support and address a child's behavioral issues are not adequate, and/or in the opinion of the teachers and the Principal, a child endangers the safety or well being of another child, or if a child is unreasonably disruptive to the functioning of any class, immediate action may be taken to remedy the situation. A child may not be permitted to return to school until the school has determined that the behavior has been adequately addressed and remedied. Failure to comply with conditions set by the Principal and Executive Director and/or above policies will be grounds for disenrollment. Such action is within the sole discretion of the Principal and the Executive Director.

Confidentiality policy

It is our intention to respect the privacy of children and their parents and caregivers, while ensuring that they access high quality care and education. We aim to ensure that all parents and caregivers can share their information in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children.

To ensure that all those using and working in the school can do so with confidence, we respect confidentiality in the following ways:

- Parents have ready access to the files and records of their own children but do not have access to information about any other child.

- Staff will not discuss personal information given by parents with other members of staff, except where it affects planning for the child's needs. Staff induction includes an awareness of the importance of confidentiality in the role of the key person.
- Any concerns/evidence relating to a child's personal safety are kept in a secure, confidential file and are shared with as few people as possible on a "need-to-know" basis.
- Issues to do with the employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, remain confidential to the people directly involved with making personnel decisions.

Solicitations

Please do not use the school phone/address/email list or the children's cubbies to solicit business. We have spaces on our weekly newsletter and website for parents to share about their work and network with other parents. Please do not bring advertisements to school as well.

Fire Drills and Emergency Evacuation

Fire drills are held each academic quarter. The drills are held at different times of the day and the children may be alerted that there will be a loud noise. Emergency evacuation plans are practiced so children know they will have to leave the building quickly, sometimes without shoes or coats. Emergency plans are clearly posted in each classroom and each classroom has emergency supplies for both sheltering in place and evacuating the campus.

Dressing for School and Play

Please dress your child for school and play! We spend as much time as possible outdoors during the school day. Plan on your child getting messy, muddy, painted, etc. We will not rinse or wash clothes. Please be sure your child has appropriate clothes for the day and shoes that are suitable for running around outside. Shoes that are easy to take on and off are also preferable. Since we will be spending much more time outdoors, appropriate clothing will be essential for many activities.

Dress Code

Students at Arts & Sciences are asked to dress in a manner that promotes a successful learning environment, encourages self-expression, and respects the rights, opinions and feelings of those around them. We ask students to dress comfortably for learning and in clothing that does not impede movement. We trust that our families will help our students to dress appropriately for school. Clothing should be comfortable, appropriate to the weather, and allow freedom of movement and engagement in any and all activities expected of students at school. All students are expected to wear clothing that is neat, clean and in good repair. Students may not wear clothing that advertises any products that may be offensive to anyone.

In general, for elementary students, clothing should cover your torso from your shoulders to your thighs or length of shorts.

Make up may not be worn or applied in school. Nail polish and hair styling products may be worn, but not applied in school. Perfume may not be worn in school as a courtesy to those who are chemically sensitive.

We ask that students remove their shoes indoors. Students may have shoes or slippers that will only be worn inside. All students must wear sneakers for physical education class.

Students who violate the dress code may be asked to change or return home to change into more appropriate school clothing.

Please feel free to contact us, and thank you!

We strongly believe in open, clear, and kind communication for the benefit of children, families, and staff. Please feel free to contact your child's teachers or the administration if you have any questions about the handbook or your child's school experience.

We look forward to our shared work and experiences, and we thank you for sharing your children's learning with us!

Thank you!