

PATHFINDER SCHOOL

A Self-Directed Learning Community



Began: September 16, 2020

Most recent amendment: April 2025

We are a self-governed community and have established the following Agreements as the standard of behavior for all members of the Pathfinder School community. We will abide by these Agreements during School Days, School Events, and any time we are doing the important work of learning.

1. General

These Agreements are in effect at any time that 2 or more members of our community are interacting, whether verbally, in writing, or while meeting in person or virtually.

1.1 - Physical or emotional violence (such as yelling) is never acceptable.

- A. Rough play (like football) is only allowed outside: those playing rough need to set out cones to mark the area where rough play is happening. The coned-off area cannot be more than 50% of the outside space available. Those playing rough must ensure everyone playing has consented to rough play.

1.2 - Each of us must respect each person and their boundaries.

- A. This includes respecting gender identity and pronouns.
- B. This also means that you must have clear consent to take a picture, video, or voice recording of any other learner or Guide.
 - a. You may not share pictures, video, or voice recordings of another learner with another person without consent of the learner and their adults; you may not share pictures, video, or recordings of a Guide with other people without the Guide's consent.
 - b. You may not post pictures, video or recording of another learner or Guide to social media, without clear consent. For other learners, you must have their consent and the consent of their adults. For Guides, you must have their consent.
 - c. These agreements regarding picture, video, or voice recordings are to protect everyone's privacy, and for legal and safety reasons.

1.3 - Do not use things that make a mark (paint, marker, pens) of any kind on a person or their clothing or belongings, unless consent is given.

1.4 - Do not touch another person with any material or put an object on another person without their consent.

1.5 - Each of us must use kindness in any interactions with one another at all times; this includes written and verbal interactions.

- A. Do not make fun of another person's ideas or suggestions.
- B. Do not use words to hurt another person.
- C. Remember our Guiding Values! Any language that contradicts any part of our Values is not allowed.
- D. Be respectful when making remarks about an individual's appearance or belongings.
- E. No rude hand motions or symbols. Hand motions such as 'finger guns' are allowed as long as you aren't upsetting anyone.

F. Making hurtful or insulting comments to another person is not OK, even if you say it in a joking manner.

1.6 - All interactions must be PG rated or below.

G. Cursing is not allowed (in any language).

H. The following words/phrases have been voted as ok to be used:

I. "God" as in "Oh my god", sucks, crap

I. The following words/phrases have been voted as NOT ok to be used:

I. "Hell", any words considered "curse" words

J. If you want to talk about something that is violent, scary, or horror, you have to make sure that everyone in the discussion circle, or who can hear you, is comfortable with it.

1. Pay attention to the ages of the people around you.

K. No private or public adult content is allowed.

1.7 - Each of us must be honest and truthful in all of our work.

1.8 - Each of us must be honest and truthful in all interactions with another person.

1.9 - We have a reasonable expectation for learners to pay attention at all times.

A. It is not acceptable to intentionally ignore another learner or Guide.

B. When we are having group discussion-- playing music on headphones/earbuds is not allowed, however, sensory/noise reducing headphones are fine. When overwhelmed, learners may take a break if needed.

C. Learners can draw or use fidgets as needed.

D. If you're going to use your phone/tablet, etc, you have to be able to remain engaged and contribute to the discussion/activity as appropriate.

a. You should make sure you aren't distracting other people. If you are, you may be asked to put it away.

b. If you are using your device to take notes, follow along with the material, or to help you stay engaged, that is ok.

1.10 - Each member of the community should clean up their lunchbox and lunch mess after they eat, before they can have free time.

1.11 - When you cough or sneeze into our hands, you must wash your hands and not touch anyone or anything until you have washed your hands.

audit stopping point

1.12 - During each school day learners are expected to complete at least one job, in order to keep our school clean and running smoothly. Jobs are rotated every Session, every learner will have a label with their name-- across from the chore they are assigned to.

A. If a learner wishes to switch jobs with another learner they must both agree on the switch, then they must get the approval of one of the Jobs Team Leaders.

- B. If a learner does not complete their job or refuses to do their assigned job they are in violation of Community Agreements and can be written up in JC.

The jobs that need to be done will likely change as our community grows and our space changes. To help each new school year start more smoothly, the Guides will review the jobs board and make changes as needed, before each new school year begins. The community will approve the changes at a school meeting during the first week of school.

****JOBS UPDATE Nov. 2025: we will re-work our jobs process in January 2026. Until we make a new plan for jobs, this section will stay highlighted.****

2. School Meeting, Workshops, & Group Meetings/Discussions

2.1 - Learners must put their hand on top of their head or raise their hand, and wait to be given permission before talking.

- A. Everyone must sit where they can see the Meeting Chair. Do not sit behind the sofa.
- B. At the beginning of each school meeting or events the meeting chair will read a 'Land Acknowledgement'. **"Pathfinder school stands on land originally settled and occupied by the Caddo, Wichita, Tawakoni, Kickapoo, and Comanche people. We recognize harm caused by colonization and the forced removal of Indigenous people from these lands. We pay our respect to elders both past and present and offer our gratitude to the First Nations for their stewardship of the land and their teachings about the earth and our relations. May we honor those teachings"** ****add re stolen hands labor****
- C. When showing appreciation or excitement instead of clapping our hands and/or yelling - our community can use 'Jazz Hands' or any other silent form of applause as well as offering quiet verbal appreciation to an individual when applicable (example: someone receives a super-good human award and you walk up calmly and congratulate them in a normal volume speaking voice)
- D. When getting the community's attention you may hold your hand up in the "Listening Llama" symbol (or put your finger in front of your lips) to quietly get the attention of the room - once you see the symbol to be quiet you must put your hand up and stop talking as well.
- E. During School Meeting, if someone is suggesting to add/make a change to Community Agreements, they must ask the Meeting Chair if they can call a vote. The Meeting Chair will check to see if there is any discussion needed before giving permission to call a vote, so that everyone has a chance to ask questions or make suggestions.

2.2 - Meeting quorum must be met in order for school meetings to pass new agreements. For quorum to be met, 60% of the enrolled students must be present.

- A. School Meeting attendance is required.

2.3 - Learners are allowed to draw/doodle/color while we are meeting as a group, as long as they keep paying attention.

2.4 - If a learner speaks without being called on 3 times during a meeting/discussion, the 3rd time they will be given a warning; if they speak out of turn once more they will not be permitted to speak again during the rest of the meeting. The meeting chair will be in charge of keeping track of how many times a learner has spoken without being called on.

2.5 - During meetings and workshops learners should stay on topic and not talk about things not related to the current topic/session.

- A. If a learner wishes to bring up something off topic, they must ask the group and only continue if the group agrees to the interruption.
- B. On Thursdays, if there's time at the end of school meetings, anyone can share "Good Things" from their week so far.

3. School Day and Project Work Times

Learners are free to choose what to work on during Core Skills times. Over the course of each Session, we suggest that they try to keep a balance between time spent working on Math and time spent working on Language Arts. However, it is not required for learners to spend an equal amount of time on Math and Language Arts.

3.1 - Learners must inform at least 1 Guide when they are leaving, especially when getting picked up early.

3.2 - Learners are expected to do core skills during core skills time and work towards set goals.

- A. If you are getting frustrated while you're working, you may take a break from that work, however, you must let a Guide know you are taking a break.

3.3 - Learners must be mindful of using their school and art supplies responsibly and make every effort not to waste supplies.

3.4 - Learners must be mindful of their work area at school (or off campus) and be respectful by cleaning up their work area, especially after doing anything messy.

- A. If a learner is working on a project and would like to start working on a new one, they must clean up the old mess before they can move on.
- B. Learners must keep up with their personal belongings during school hours. All belongings, such as backpacks and lunchboxes, should be against the wall under the tree in the main room.
- C. No one is allowed to eat while sitting or laying on the gray chairs.
- D. Do not set a fire in the building.
- E. Eating is allowed in the Tree Room or the Back Room; eating on the leather sofa is allowed, eating on the church's sofa and chairs (cloth ones) is allowed.
- F. All soda cans must be put in the recycling bin next to the soda machine when you are finished. If the can isn't empty, please pour the rest down the sink and rinse the sink out, before putting the can in the recycling bin.

3.5 - Peer Review is important; when 2 or more learners are working together on a project, they can review each other's work and give constructive feedback.

3.6 - During the school day, personal electronic devices must be on silent or vibrate.

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4. Judicial Committee

The Judicial Committee (JC) serves the community and is used when a member feels that another member has violated one or more of the Community Agreements. In serious matters, a JC case may be referred to the Advisory Committee

4.1 - To bring a case to the JC for review, a learner must fill out a handwritten Charge Form (available in each classroom), they may ask for help from an adult or another learner.

A. If an adult or fellow learner helps to fill out the form, they must not edit or paraphrase the words of the person bringing a case to JC.

4.2 - Each session, 3 learners will be drawn at random to serve on the JC committee for the duration of the session. All learners are welcome to serve on the committee, however, for the learner's whose names were drawn- JC will be mandatory for the remainder of that session.

- A. JC Chair will be determined at the beginning of each JC session, by volunteers. If there is more than one volunteer the committee will vote between volunteers. Individuals cannot chair JC sessions two times in a row.
- B. A Guide will take notes during each case, so the committee members can focus on case resolution.
- C. The time limit for discussion on each case is 5-minutes. If the committee feels they need more discussion time, they may vote to extend the time limit.
- D. Contempt of JC is defined by a lack of respect for the proceedings, the committee, and the individuals on the case; Excessive joking, repeatedly derailing discussion/talking off topic, and using distracting materials like a cellphone or reading a book are all examples of 'Contempt of JC'. Contempt of JC is a serious offense and will result in a JC write-up.
- E. JC Committee will meet in the back room unless otherwise specified.

4.3 - The JC will read the charge and listen to the complainant, the person(s) accused of the violation, and any witnesses (if applicable).

The JC will then discuss the case and make a ruling:

- A. The case may be dismissed.
- B. A consequence may be assigned.
- C. Reparations may be assigned.
- D. A request may be given that a new Community Agreement needs to be formed, or that an amendment needs to be made to an existing Community Agreement.

4.4 - 123 Step to help resolve conflicts (123 step is not mandatory to use for all conflicts)

1. Notify the individual that they are violating community agreements and kindly & clearly ask them to stop. If that does not work,
2. Have a Guide or learner come with you to ask the individual to stop once more. If that still does not work,
3. Write a JC and take it to the committee

4.5 - If a learner is written up for the same offense 3 times within one semester (or at JCs discretion), it will constitute involving the learner(s)'s guardians/parents.

4.6 - Trial Periods and Student Probation

- A. If a trial student does not receive a simple majority vote (at least 51% in favor) at the end of their typical trial period, then the school meeting may vote to extend the trial period by 2-4 school days. It is not required to extend the trial period. After the approved and extended trial time is finished, the community will vote once more; in order for the student to be offered enrollment they must receive at least $\frac{2}{3}$ of the community's vote instead of a simple majority.
- B. If a current student is recommended for probation by the JC Committee or by the Pathfinder Advisory Committee, the student's guardians will be notified and the student will be entered into a 4 week probation period. The learner may be written up during this time and continue with their probationary period, the learner's accumulated JC's will be read and discussed before the final enrollment vote. After the 4 weeks the community will vote; for the current student to be re-invited for enrollment they will need to receive a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote.

4.7 Advisory Committee: The AC is made up of 3-5 individuals who have a minimum of 3 years experience working with both neurotypical and neurodiverse learners; members are not compensated, financially or otherwise. A case may be referred to the committee by the JC, a Guide (at their discretion, and with approval of the Executive director), or by request of the learner's adults. The purpose of the AC is to support the community in finding a resolution for unusual situations, such as:

- A. The JC process has not resulted in a positive outcome.
- B. The situation is not appropriate for being handled by a JC case.
- C. Anytime a learner, Guide, and/or the community would benefit from having the case resolved by people who do not have a close relationship with the learner or their family.

Note: the section pertaining to the Advisory Committee was not written by the community, as the AC was formed in Fall 2023, with approval of the Board of Directors. The current members are Banah Kono, Oliver Baker, and Nathan Collins.

5. Procedures Governing Community Agreements Formation:

To add a new Agreement, or change an existing one, these steps must be followed.

5.1 - Propose the new Agreement, or edit/change/update an existing Agreement, to the learners.

- A. Learners may do this by bringing it up in the Community Meeting.
- B. Learners may also email one of the Guides to have their suggestion read at the next Meeting time.

5.2 - The learners have the opportunity to discuss the proposed new or amended Agreement; each person who wishes to be heard will be given a chance to speak.

Once discussion is completed, learners will be given the opportunity to vote.

- A. Learners are not required to vote.
- B. A majority vote will pass and the proposed addition(s) or amendment(s) will take effect immediately.

6. Technology (Chromebooks, Tablets, Sphero Robots, Online Programs, Google Workspace Tools, Minecraft for Education)

These guidelines are in the Policies & Procedures Manual; some were not written by our community but are included in the CA's to keep everyone safe and ensure that we take good care of our devices.

Pathfinder School authorizes learners to use technology owned or otherwise provided by the school as necessary for instructional purposes. The school may place reasonable restrictions on the sites, material, and/or information that learners may access through the system. Learners are expected to use school technology safely, responsibly, and for educational purposes only, in order to avoid potential problems and liability. The entire Technology Policy can be found in our [Policies & Procedures Manual](#).

- The learner in whose name technology is issued is responsible for its proper use at all times. Personal email accounts may not be logged into school issued devices; only the "learner@pathfinderschooltx.org" email address may be used to login to Chromebooks and tablets.
- Learners shall not share their assigned online services account information, passwords, or other information used for identification and authorization purposes, and shall use the system only under the account to which they have been assigned.
- Each learner must sign a Technology Use Agreement.

add re: leaving the building

Minecraft for Education Community Agreements are copied here for reference:

Minecraft Community Agreements

Date: 09/26/2023

1. No griefing.
2. Don't say mean things.
3. Build at a minimum of 20 blocks away from each other, unless both people agree to build closer.
4. Be respectful of other peoples builds.
5. No spamming: mobs, splash/lingering potions, dropped items, XP, in the chat, TNT, boats, mine carts

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6. No asking for op.
7. No entering another player's house without permission.
8. Don't kill mobs with name tags or that look like pets.
9. No spleefing.
10. Please don't lag out the server.
11. Don't add/change to another person's build.
12. Before making a new world, ask permission.
13. Once the timer goes off STOP BUILDING.
14. Don't make inappropriate builds.
15. Stay in the server (unless you get disconnected).

The Virtual Schoolroom *This section will stay in the Community Agreements, and will be in effect if we return to virtual learning.*****

These agreements apply when we are meeting as a group, or 2 or more learners are working together using Google Meet or Zoom, even outside of the School Day.

7.1 - Do not use anything that flashes or makes noise, unless you are muted (makes noise) or the camera is turned off (flashes); and if it distracts you or others from working, you have to stop.

- A. Backgrounds may be used while you are in the Virtual Schoolroom, as long as they don't distract anyone.
- B. Pets can work with you in the Virtual Schoolroom as long as they don't distract anyone.
- C. Learners are allowed to draw/doodle/color while we are meeting as a group in the Virtual Schoolroom, as long as they keep paying attention.

7.2 - The morning meeting and any other group discussions will be facilitated by a Guide or a learner

7.3 - Learners must stay muted at all times, unless they have been called on to speak.

- A. Raise your hand and wait to be given your turn before speaking.
- B. If a learner has their camera off due to internet connection issues, they must use chat to indicate that they want to be called on to speak.

7.4 - Learners should try to stay on camera during group meeting times, and group workshops.

- A. This applies to Morning Meeting, Closing Conversation, and Workshops.

7.5 - Raise your hand and wait to be given your turn before speaking when we are having a group meeting or discussion.

- A. If a learner has their camera off due to internet connection issues, they must use chat to indicate that they want to be called on to speak.

7.6 - The chat on Google Meet/Zoom is not to be used for any discussion not related to the current topic.

- A. The exception to this is during lunch, when learners are free to use the Virtual Schoolroom for hanging out together.