

PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK

Manzanita School and Institute

2023-24

(Ver1, as of August 4, 2023)

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CORE VALUES MISSION STATEMENT

At Manzanita, we teach *interpersonal competence* and expect *rigorous effort* because we value *collective responsibility*.

We believe that all people are born with an *intrinsic gift*, awakened through *mentoring relationships* and cultivated through *symbiotic education*.

Symbiotic education emphasizes the interdependence of subject matter. This interdisciplinary approach is presented through three learning domains: biological-evolutionary, historical-cultural, and aesthetic-numinous.

Through a multi-year, sequenced curriculum, students are able to effectively answer three central questions: (1) Where have I come from? (2) Who am I?; and (3) Where am I going? ([return to top](#))

ADOLESCENCE

Adolescence is a critical time in the human lifespan. Other than infancy, there is no more important developmental period. Throughout human history this powerful time of youth has demanded a very deliberate and conscientious attention by adults. At Manzanita, we are committed to guiding youth meaningfully through this transitional age and across the threshold into adulthood.

PURPOSE

Although we live in a time of change and unpredictability, it is also a moment of tremendous possibility and opportunity. The present moment is both fragile and emergent, and life on earth is at a remarkable crossroads. The 21st century calls on each of us to step fully into our unique strengths and capacities. In this promising yet challenging time, education has an obligation to teach with new models and paradigms that will inspire the full breadth of human possibility. At Manzanita, we are committed to just such an approach, one that will guide youth confidently across the threshold to a meaningful and engaged life.

DEEP NATURE CONNECTION

Deep nature connection evokes a set of personal attributes necessary for living a full and meaningful life. These attributes include empathy, reverence, commitment to service, vitality, earth stewardship, joyfulness, and a quiet, mindful awareness. Through a very specific set of practices called ‘core routines,’ one grows a ‘deep nature connection’ and the associated attributes. Developing Deep Nature Connection in our youth is a commitment of Manzanita School and Institute.

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GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Intrinsic Gift

*Inherent Genius * Skill and Knowledge Building * Cultivate Identity*

At Manzanita, we teach toward something that is coming out of our youth, rather than something we must feed into the youth. This is a different educational paradigm because it is no longer our agenda, but a belief that each young person has an agenda already, waiting to be discovered and nurtured by mentors. We structure our curriculum to call forth that individual genius that seeks its first clear expression during adolescence. We then support our students in building the skills and capacities they need to develop this unique gift in the world.



Mentoring Relationships

*Personal Connection * Active Listening * Strategic Questioning*

One of the gifts of age is the capacity to mentor a younger person. This is done by leveraging relationship to inspire another's growth. When we know someone well and call out their gifts, we help to awaken their deep inner greatness. Adolescents need ongoing mentoring to germinate the seed of their genius. For millennia, elders were the mentors of youth, and all generations benefited from this. At Manzanita, we train our teachers to serve as mentors. In the context of strong personal connections, we use the ancient arts of observation, questioning, and follow-up to inspire emotional and cognitive development in youth.



Symbiotic Education

*Big-picture Understanding * Interdependence of Knowledge * Natural Cycles of Learning*

Symbiosis in nature concerns the ways that organisms depend upon one another. A prominent feature of symbiosis is the *mutual benefit* that constitutes the bulk of symbiotic relationships among organisms. An enduring idea in Symbiotic Education is that 'one cannot receive a gift without giving something in return.' All indigenous peoples, and all human ancestors understood the importance of reciprocity. At Manzanita, our community acknowledges the gift of teaching, mentoring, and service through a commensurate gratitude and recognition of that which is given. Students and those who are mentored, are receiving the mentor's gifts, and it is important that something be given in return.

This can include attention, engagement, rigor, respect, and gratitude. Finally, we separate the commodification of learning (eg. tuition in exchange for instruction), from the offering of one's gifts (mentoring) and the relational reciprocity that this requires (respect, rigor, and gratitude).



Collective Responsibility

*Personal Efficacy * Commitment to Service * Global Understanding*

Most people seek to be of service, to make a positive contribution. This natural calling awakens very strongly in adolescence. At Manzanita, we describe a world in transition,

yet with a flowering of great hope and possibility. Through our curriculum blending science, humanities, and art, we reveal a human story of promise and healing. This story invites each young person to answer the core questions of: (1) where have I come from, (2) who am I, and (3) where am I going? As students form a strong personal narrative through their years of study with us, they help to grow a shared narrative for our world that is hopeful and transformative, and they position themselves well to contribute to a positive future for everyone.



Interpersonal Competence

*Emotional Intelligence (EQ) * Empathy * Conflict Resolution*

One of the great predictors of a successful and fulfilling life is the capacity to know how our actions will be perceived, and how others will respond and react to our choices. At Manzanita, we develop strong empathetic skills in adolescents. We encourage a reflective understanding of our emotional lives, and teach youth how to approach and resolve conflicts non-violently and effectively. We highly value interpersonal skills and competencies, and build them into our school culture.



Rigorous Effort

*Physical Work * Emotional Resilience * Cognitive Engagement*

We want our young people to grow into adults who can forge ahead in life, even when things get difficult. Whether challenged physically, emotionally, or intellectually, adolescents should be able to endure with focus and commitment. At Manzanita, students engage in regular physical work such as building trails and maintaining the campus. They face emotional obstacles with clarity, competence, and a set of conflict-resolution skills taught by mentors. Intellectually, they become articulate speakers, forceful writers, and rigorous problem solvers. Creative and artistic pursuits, and the intuitions these build, will inform students' physical, emotional, and intellectual engagement. [\(return to top\)](#)

SCHOOL HOURS

Office	7:45 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Morning Drop Off	8:00 a.m. earliest
<u>Instructional Hours</u>	
Kindergarten through 1 st Grades	8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
2 nd through 12th Grades	8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
FRIDAY EARLY DISMISSAL	8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.(all grades)
After School Pick Up	3:45pm latest
<u>OAK Tree Club Hours</u>	
Kindergarten through 1 st Grades	2:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
2 nd through 8 th Grades	3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Any additional school closings or early dismissal days will be noted on the school calendar and will be announced via email. ([return to top](#))



Manzanita School Calendar 2023 – 2024

School Days & Expeditions	Important Dates
Mon Aug 21 - Fri Aug 25 - High School Unity Trip	Saturday, August 5 - Welcome Back Family Picnic
Thursday, August 24 - First Day of School	Monday, August 7 - School office opens
Monday, September 4 - Labor Day (No School)	Friday, September 1 - Parent Alliance Welcome Breakfast <i>(*PA - all parents & adults welcome!)</i>
Tuesday, September 5 - Pupil Free Day (No School)	Wednesday, September 6 - K-5th Grade Back to School Night
Wed Sep 13 - Fri Sep 15 - 5th Grade Expedition	Thursday, September 7 - 6th-12th Grade Back to School Night
Fri Sep 22 - Sat Sep 23 - 4th Grade Overnight on Campus	Sunday October 1st - Acorn Festival (*PA)
Monday, September 25 - Yom Kippur (No School)	Wednesday, Oct 11 - 6th-8th Grade Specialist Performances
Tue Sep 26 - Fri Sep 29 - 6th Grade Expedition	Thursday, Oct 12 - 3rd-5th Grade Specialist Performances
Mon Oct 2 - Sat Oct 7 - 8th Grade Expedition	Friday, October 13th - Family Overnight
Friday Oct 6 - 3rd Grade Late Night on Campus	Sunday, October 22 - Curriculum Brunch & Annual Giving Launch (*PA - adults only)
Mon Oct 16 - Fri Oct 20 - 7th Grade Expedition	Friday, December 8 - Seeds (K-2) Lantern Walk
Thu Oct 26 - Fri Oct 27 - Pupil Free Days for Parent Teacher Conferences (No School)	Wednesday, Dec 13 - 6th-8th Grade Specialist Performances
Thu Nov 2 - Thu Nov 9 - High School Expedition #2	Thursday, Dec 14 - 3rd-5th Grade Specialist Performances
Friday, November 10 - Veterans Day (No School)	Friday Dec 15 - 2nd Grade Celebration of Understanding
Mon Nov 20 - Fri Nov 24 - Thanksgiving Break (No School)	Tuesday, December 19 - Performances of Understanding Day 1
Wednesday, December 20 - Last Day of Semester I	Wednesday, Dec 20 - Performances of Understanding Day 2
Thu Dec 21 - Fri Jan 5 - Winter Break (No School)	Friday, Feb 2 - Funding our Future Beach Cleanup (*PA)
Monday, January 8 - Pupil Free Day (No School)	Wednesday, Feb 14 - 6th-8th Grade Specialist Performances
Tuesday, January 9 - First Day of Semester II	Thursday, Feb 15 - 3rd-5th Grade Specialist Performances
Monday, January 15 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day (No School)	Thursday, February 29 - 2nd-12th Grade Writing Celebration
Friday, February 16 - Pupil Free Day (No School)	Wednesday, Apr 17 - 6th-8th Grade Specialist Performances
Monday, February 19 - President's Day (No School)	Thursday, Apr 18 - 3rd-5th Grade Specialist Performances
Wednesday, March 6 - Pupil Free Day (No School)	Friday, May 3rd - Annual Gala (<i>tentative</i>) (*PA - adults only)
Mon Mar 25 - Fri Apr 5 - Spring Break (No School)	Wednesday, May 29 - 6th-8th Grade Specialist Performances
Friday, April 19 - Pupil Free Day (No School)	Thursday, May 30 - 3rd-5th Grade Specialist Performances
Wednesday, May 8 - Pupil Free Day (No School)	Monday, June 3 - Performances of Understanding Day 1
Fri May 10 - Fri May 24 - High School Expedition	Tuesday, June 4 - Performances of Understanding Day 2
Monday, May 27 - Memorial Day (No School)	Wednesday, June 5 - Forest Kindergarten Culmination
Wednesday, June 5 - Last Day of School	Wednesday, June 5 - 8th Grade Culmination
Thursday, June 6 - Pupil Free Day (No School)	Thursday, June 6 - High School Graduation
	<i>(*PA denotes a Parent Alliance Sponsored Event)</i>

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ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Arrival at school in an unhurried and peaceful manner helps set the tone for the day. Parents must provide transportation to and from school. We encourage all families to form carpools. Because of COVID, we encourage all students within carpools to wear masks and travel with windows open.

To ensure maximum safety for your children and the goodwill of the neighbors, we ask parents and carpool drivers to turn off cell phones and other electronic devices during arrival and dismissal periods, drive slowly and observe all traffic laws, be considerate of our neighbors at all times and observe the following procedures:

1. Please leave early enough to allow for potential morning drop-off traffic. Students should be dropped off between 8:00 a.m. and 8:25 a.m. each morning at the loading and unloading zone in the main parking lot off Old Topanga Canyon Rd. Most mornings, an adult will be there to greet students. Please pull all the way forward to the end of the cones and drop your student off at the creek side of the parking lot. Students will walk along the edge of the parking lot into the school.
2. Students will be dismissed according to the schedule of the day. Please be on time to pick up your child. If you are running late, please call the School Office. For grades 2 through 12, school is dismissed at 3:30 p.m. Monday – Thursday, and at 2:30 on Fridays. Kindergarten and 1st grades dismiss at 2:30. Vehicles will be directed to the loading zone in the main parking lot.
3. If you need to get out of your car for any reason, please park in the main lot away from loading and unloading zones. Parking on Old Topanga Canyon Rd. or Zuniga Rd. is not permitted at any time.
4. It is important for all students to arrive on time for the start of school, preferably no later than 5 minutes before the start of school. Connecting with classmates and teachers, as well as morning Council takes place during this time. If your child is late, you must bring him/her to the office to check in.
5. If you make arrangements for your child to go home with a friend, or someone other than you or their regular carpool, you must notify the office on that day, preferably by sending a written note or e-mail, regarding this change.
6. If you are late to pick up your student from school (after 2:45 for K-1 and after 3:45 for 2-12 grades), students will join the OAK Tree After-School Club. You will be charged \$5 per student anytime in first 15 minutes (snack will be provided) and \$1 per minute after that until your child is picked up.

Students will be released from the school grounds only to persons listed on the child's carpool or emergency forms. The School will insist on a written or verbal confirmation from the child's parent as to any change in pick-up. All notes must be delivered to the school office or called into the school office (emergency situations only) no later than 12:00 PM on the day of dismissal. Should a conflict arise, the child will be sent to the school office to call a parent for clarification while the driver is asked to park and wait for the outcome. Please do NOT send ride share (i.e. Uber, Lyft) cars for your student, if at all avoidable.

IMPORTANT NOTE TO HIGH SCHOOL: As per our Conditional Use Permit (CUP) which allows us to operate a business within a residential area, Manzanita high school students may not drive themselves to school, park on the property, nor enter the school grounds while driving a vehicle. There are no exceptions to this rule. Additionally, student drivers are not to park off-site and walk themselves to school. ([return to top](#))

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Regular daily attendance is expected of all students. The school community is most effective when everyone is present. A designated teacher takes attendance at 8:30 a.m. If a student is not present for this they are considered tardy and must receive a slip from the office before entering class. This helps to account for everyone on campus. Parents must sign their child in at the school office if they are late for school.

If your child needs to leave school early (prior to dismissal) for any reason, notify the school office ahead of time. Parents must sign their child out from the office if they leave prior to regular dismissal. Please inform the School Office, in writing or via e-mail, of the name of the person, if other than you, whom you authorize to pick up your child. If a student is regularly picked up by a carpool, the parent must notify the carpool driver as well.

Absences from school are recorded as excused when due to illness, family emergency, or religious holidays. We ask for a written note explaining the reason for the absence to be sent to school with the child (or e-mailed to the School Office Mgr.) when they return. Please notify the school when your child is absent.

If you plan to have your child out of school for three consecutive days or more, notification to the School Office is required at least two weeks in advance. This absence will be considered an independent study period and work will be sent with the child to be completed while they are away.

If a student needs to be excused for health reasons from physical and/or outdoor activity, please send a note either with the child or via e-mail to the School Office. If a child is ill and contagious, we ask that the child be kept home from school that day. **Also, we ask that all parents familiarize themselves with our [COVID mitigation protocols](#) so that potentially infected children are not at school.**

We ask that the school be notified when parents/family members plan to be out of town. Being in communication is important to best serve the child. Please send a note or e-mail to the School Office with the names of those individuals taking care of the child at home, as well as the telephone number where parents can be reached should an emergency arise. ([return to top](#))

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

MANZANITA HEALTH CLASS (HUMAN GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT)

Each year Manzanita School teaches a health class called Human Growth and Development to all students in grades 3-12. By sending your child to Manzanita School, you are giving permission for your child to participate in this class. Please direct any questions about the health class curriculum to Ms. Jenny at jenny@manzanaschool.org and Ms. Cecilie at cecilie@manzanaschool.org.

- The Sixth through Twelfth grades participate in a program covering essential information to their health and well-being including, but not limited to: sex education, HIV/AIDS awareness, pregnancy prevention, gender, and drug safety.
- The Third through Fifth grades participate in a program with a somewhat more limited scope as the nature of some health topics can be sensitive. We are dedicated to honoring this age group by limiting their exposure and have designed the class specifically for them. The topics primarily focused on are: natural body changes, onset of puberty, social-emotional changes, personal hygiene, gender, and anatomy.

First Aid: The School follows all universal precautions when administering First Aid. Members of the faculty have been instructed in First Aid and CPR and have received their certification. Parents will be called if their child requires immediate pick up from school.

Injuries and Illness: Emergency information and Medical Authorization Forms must be completed prior to the start of each school year. The information on these forms assures that in the event of an emergency, and the parents cannot be reached immediately, the school will be able to provide medical care and attention to a child. In such emergencies the school will call for paramedic assistance using 911. Trained school personnel will treat minor injuries.

If a child is ill, the parent should call and inform the School Office. For a child's protection, as well others, parents should not send a child to school if there are any symptoms of illness. If a child is complaining or displaying symptoms of illness at school, a parent will be called to pick up the child. A child should remain at home for 24 hours in the case of a fever. The School may request a written note from the child's doctor indicating that the symptoms are in treatment and not contagious (rash, red eyes, etc.) before the child will be allowed to return to class. Also, we ask that all parents familiarize themselves with the LA County Department of Health's [COVID mitigation protocols](#) so that potentially infected children are not at school, and that proper quarantine measures are taken following possible exposure to COVID.

Illness Impacting Participation in School Activities:

If a student has an injury or illness that restricts, prohibits, limits, or otherwise significantly impacts the student's ability to participate in our Vitality or Hawk Day programs (hiking, walking, playing sports, working with tools, certain movements, etc.), the student/family must provide the school with a copy of a doctor's note which clearly describes: (1) the nature of the injury or illness; (2) what activities by the student are

restricted or prohibited; and (3) the length of the restriction on student activity, including the date when normal activity can resume. Students seeking restricted participation in activities without a note from a doctor may be sent home from school.

Slings, Braces, Crutches:

Students having special slings, braces, or crutches restricting movement of a part of their body must have a note from a doctor describing: (1) the nature of the injury or illness; (2) what activities by the student, if any, are restricted or prohibited; and (3) the length of the restriction on student activity, including the date when normal activity can resume.

Students coming to school wearing slings, crutches, braces, etc., without a note from a doctor, may be sent home from school.

Allergies: Parents should notify the school and teachers if a child has any food restrictions, allergies, asthma or any other persistent conditions.

Medications: As a rule, medication should be administered at home. For the protection of the child, the school will not supervise the taking of prescription medication without the permission of the child's physician and a signed authorization form. Forms for this purpose are available in the Office. Please label medications with your child's name and leave it in the Office along with the required forms. All medications that need to be taken at school (prescription and over the counter) will be administered by the School Office only.

Students may not bring medication with them to class. This includes inhalers, antibiotics, analgesics, etc.

Head Lice: Periodically there are incidences of head lice among students. This is a common situation in schools, and although it is a nuisance, it is not a serious health hazard. In cooperation with the L.A. County Health Department, Manzanita will follow suggested preventative routines at school. Students found to have head lice will be sent home. The child may return to school after adequate treatment. Nits must be absent and the child must be inspected by the School Office. Parents must notify the School immediately if their child has head lice to help prevent further problems.

Absences: Please notify the office when your child will be absent for an extended period of time. Schoolwork will be provided to the child when the absence is due to illness, family emergency or religious reasons. If your child has a communicable disease please notify the school at once so that the parents of other children exposed can be notified.

Special Situations: If a family situation arises that may affect your child's emotional well-being (e.g. death or illness in the family, parents on a trip, parental separation, etc.), please notify the Head of School or one of child's teachers. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. ([return to top](#))

ALL GENDER RESTROOM POLICY

At Manzanita School, we are committed to fostering an inclusive and respectful environment for all students, staff, and visitors. As part of our dedication to creating a welcoming campus for everyone, we have implemented an all-gender restroom policy. This policy aims to accommodate the needs of all individuals regardless of their gender identity or expression. Our goal is to

provide a safe and supportive space where all members of our school community feel valued and respected.

Definition: All-gender restrooms, also known as gender-neutral or inclusive restrooms, are facilities that are available to all individuals, regardless of their gender identity or expression. These restrooms are designed to be inclusive and accommodating to everyone, providing a comfortable and safe environment for all users.

Purpose: The purpose of having all-gender restrooms at [School Name] is to promote a more inclusive and diverse campus culture. This policy aims to eliminate potential discomfort or exclusion experienced by individuals who do not identify within traditional gender binary norms. By providing all-gender restrooms, we strive to create a space where everyone can feel comfortable, respected, and supported.

Availability: Throughout the campus, Manzanita School will provide all-gender restrooms in addition to traditional gender-specific restrooms. These facilities will be available in easily accessible locations to ensure convenience and inclusion for all students, staff, and visitors. All-gender restrooms will be equipped with the same amenities and standards as other restrooms on campus.

Privacy and Safety: Respecting the privacy and safety of all individuals is of utmost importance at Manzanita School. All-gender restrooms will be designed with privacy features, including fully enclosed stalls and secure locking mechanisms, to ensure the comfort and security of those using these facilities. Any incidents of discrimination, harassment, or inappropriate behavior related to the use of restrooms will be taken seriously and addressed promptly in accordance with our school's policies and procedures.

Confidentiality: At Manzanita School, we respect the privacy and confidentiality of all individuals. We understand that some students, staff, or visitors may prefer not to disclose their gender identity. To uphold their rights, we will not require anyone to disclose their gender identity to use an all-gender restroom. Everyone is encouraged to use the restroom that best aligns with their gender identity or comfort level.

Responsibility: The entire school community shares the responsibility of upholding this all-gender restroom policy. We expect all students, staff, and visitors to respect the rights of others and to treat everyone with dignity and consideration. If anyone witnesses or experiences any form of discrimination or harassment related to restroom usage, we encourage them to report it promptly to a teacher, administrator, or other trusted school personnel. ([return to top](#))

POLICY ON DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO

Drugs, alcohol, and smoking or chewing tobacco are prohibited in the school, on the school campus, or at any off-campus school sponsored or school related activities and functions. Possession and/or use of drugs or alcohol, or smoking or chewing tobacco, in the school, on the school campus, or at any off-campus school sponsored

or school related activities and functions are grounds for discipline, up to and including expulsion.

The school's Policy on Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco is rooted in our concern for the well-being of our students and is designed to 1) educate and support students to make wise, healthy and life enhancing choices at all times, including both during and after school, 2) keep the school free from drugs and alcohol, and 3) support students who have already used drugs, alcohol, and tobacco and are struggling to make better choices and refrain from using drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

Rules of Conduct

The school strictly prohibits students from engaging in any of the following conduct in the school, on the school campus, or at any off-campus school sponsored or school related activities and functions:

- The possession, use, distribution, or sale of drugs or alcohol, or drug paraphernalia.
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- The misuse of prescribed medication. Medication should not be administered other than in accordance with the labeled use as prescribed by the physician.
- Promoting illegal drug use.
- Promoting use of alcohol.
- Promoting use of tobacco.

In addition to the school prohibiting students from engaging in any conduct that promotes illegal drug use, use of alcohol, or use of tobacco, because students frequently interact across grade levels, students are discouraged from engaging in any discussions about the use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco, that are or may be inappropriate, confusing, or damaging for younger students. If a student engages in such discussions in the school, on the school campus, or at any off-campus school sponsored or related activities and functions, a meeting with the student's parents may be scheduled.

Report of Violation of Policy

If any employee, volunteer, parent, or student reports any violation of the above Rules of Conduct to a faculty member, staff member or administrator, the person to whom the violation was reported will notify the Head of School, who will take appropriate action under the relevant circumstances, which may include evaluating the report and/or if deemed appropriate, investigating the report and/or contacting the parents/guardians of the student reported to have violated the above Rules of Conduct.

Disciplinary Action

If a student is determined to have violated the above Rules of Conduct, that student may be subject to disciplinary action, which depending on the relevant facts and circumstances may range from one of the lesser disciplinary sanctions to suspension or expulsion from school. The Head of School makes the final decision in all cases.

When appropriate, the school will refer violations of this Policy on Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco to the applicable federal, state, or local agencies. [\(return to top\)](#)

POLICY ON WEAPONS

No weapons are allowed on Manzanita's campus at any time. Any student found in violation of this policy may be subject to expulsion. A weapon is defined as physical object (such as a gun, knife, club, or bomb) that is used for fighting or attacking someone or for defending yourself when someone is attacking you. The exception to this concerns 'sharps' under our school knife policy, as described below. ([return to top](#))

SAFETY

Manzanita is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all students, school families, faculty and staff.

Earthquakes, fires, and natural disasters

Manzanita School has established an emergency plan to deal with a catastrophic event should a major earthquake or other disaster occur during the school day.

The School's earthquake/disaster procedure involves all aspects of earthquake preparation including short-term and long-term care of students, evacuation procedures, first-aid treatment, etc.

Should an earthquake or disaster occur, parents on site would be expected to join task teams and follow school procedure as directed.

Parents not at school and coming to Manzanita to pick up their children should observe the following:

1. Do not call the School. Phone lines will be needed for emergency communication with city officials, emergency services, etc.
2. Pick up your child as soon as possible.
3. Students, faculty and staff will be evacuated should the facility become unsafe.
4. No child or employee will be released until the entire emergency situation has been assessed, all emergency stations are up and running, and first aid is being administered.
5. No parents will be allowed on campus unless their child is injured. At that point, the adult will be escorted on campus to her/his injured child.
6. All other parents are to park and line up at the entrance to the main parking lot off Old Topanga Canyon Rd. Staff attendants at the gate will write down the name of the child, adult picking up the child and the time.
7. Check out at the command station when leaving. A staff member will pull the child's emergency form to verify the adult's authority to release the child.

Children will be released only to authorized adults on the child's emergency form.

PLEASE NOTE: Children will be released to the first person listed on the emergency form that comes to the School.

Earthquake Emergency Packs

Each child MUST bring a completed emergency pack on the first day of school. The Manzanita's Earthquake/Disaster Plan requires each student to have individual packs of food and medication. These packs are designed to provide both psychological and physical nourishment. Please follow the directions below in preparing your child's pack:
FILL A ONE-GALLON ZIPLOC BAG WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

- 1 5"x7" file card with your child's name and the date written in large letters with a permanent marking pen. Place this card facing out so it can be easily read to identify the bag.
- 5 small containers of protein your child will eat. This could include tuna, canned chicken, beef jerky, or anything else your child likes which has been commercially vacuum-packed and preserved. Please avoid packing any peanut products. No loose snacks, which could spoil, melt, or attract pests, should be included in a child's earthquake kit.
- 2 canned juices
- 5 fruit rolls or unopened dried fruit
- 1 package of your child's favorite crackers, biscuits, or cookies
- a space blanket (can be purchased from any sporting good store)
- a mini-flashlight with extra batteries
- If your child frequently requires special medications (i.e. inhalers, nighttime medications, epi pens) please include a 3-day supply with directions for administration.
- If your child wears prescription glasses, and you have an old pair, please include them in the bag.
- a pre-addressed postcard to an out-of-state contact. Make sure the postage is up-to- date!
- a family photograph ([return to top](#))

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

If we are suspending classes early due to an emergency, a message will be sent to you, via e-mail, detailing specific pick-up procedure. In the case of an emergency, we ask that you do not call the School, as we would be trying to keep the lines open for authorized emergency services. ([return to top](#))

CHILD ABUSE

Any school employee who reasonably suspects child abuse has occurred, or is occurring, is required by law to file a child abuse report. These reports are filed with the appropriate child protective services agency, which is then required to investigate. Complaints filed against a school employee of an alleged act of child abuse are also subject to investigation by that agency and, if substantiated, the agency will inform the Manzanita administration and Board of Trustees. ([return to top](#))

HARASSMENT/DISCRIMINATION/RETALIATION PREVENTION POLICY

Manzanita School is committed to maintaining a working and educational environment that is free of harassment, including sexual harassment, discrimination, and retaliation. This may include behavior that occurs off-campus or via social media, or other electronic communications, if that behavior impacts or affects the School community. Violations of this Policy will not be tolerated and will result in corrective action, up to and including expulsion from the School.

A. Harassment

This Policy prohibits harassment based on actual or perceived sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, gender identity, gender expression, age (40 and over), military

and veteran status, or any other basis protected by federal, state or local law (“Protected Classifications”), as applicable, or in association with an individual who has an actual or perceived protected classification. This Policy prohibits both harassment by students and parents towards students and employees, and harassment by others in the community towards students and employees. Harassment violates this Policy and will not be tolerated. Harassing conduct by students and/or parents will result in appropriate corrective action, and corrective action includes discipline up to and including suspension or expulsion from the School. Harassment of students by employees will result in appropriate corrective action, up to and including termination of employment, and is addressed in a separate Policy in the Employee Handbook.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

Examples of Harassment

Harassment can take many forms, and may include verbal, physical or visual conduct.

- Verbal, written, and visual harassment includes: making disparaging statements, telling jokes, using epithets, slurs, stereotypes, insults, or labels based on an individual’s Protected Classification(s), threats of physical harm or statements designed to intimidate, abuse or humiliate another, whether communicated verbally, in writing, electronically or in posters, cartoons, drawings or gestures. This may include comments on appearance including dress or physical features, or dress consistent with gender identification, or stories and jokes, focusing on race, national origin, religion or other Protected Classifications identified below in this Policy. Physical harassment includes: intimidating conduct, such as touching of a person or a person’s property, hazing, assault, grabbing, stalking or blocking or impeding a person’s movement.

Examples of Sexual Harassment

California Education Code section 212.5 defines sexual harassment as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature made by someone from or in the work or educational setting, under any of the following conditions:

- Submission to the conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a term or a condition of an individual’s employment, academic status, or progress.
- Submission to, or rejection of, the conduct by the individual is used as the basis of employment or academic decisions affecting the individual.
- The conduct has the purpose or effect of having a negative impact upon the individual’s work or academic performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or educational environment.
- Submission to, or rejection of, the conduct by the individual is used as the basis for any decision affecting the individual regarding benefits and services, honors, programs, or activities available at or through the educational institution.
- Sexually harassing conduct can occur between students of the same or different gender.
- Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:
- Unwelcome verbal or written conduct, including by notes, letters, e-mails, text messages, social media postings, such as suggestive comments, derogatory comments, sexual innuendos, slurs, or unwanted sexual advances, invitations, or comments, pestering for dates, making threats,

spreading rumors about or rating others as to sexual activity or performance.

- Unwelcome visual conduct such as displays of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, posters, written material, cartoons, or drawings, graffiti of a sexual nature, or use of obscene gestures or leering.
- Unwelcome physical conduct such as unwanted touching, pinching, kissing, patting, hugging, blocking of normal movement, assault, or interference with work or study directed at an individual because of the individual's sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or gender expression.
- Threats and demands or pressure to submit to sexual requests in order to keep academic standing or to avoid other loss, and offers of benefits in return for sexual favors.

B. Complaint Procedure

Students and parents who believe that they have experienced, witnessed, or have relevant information about harassment should immediately report the matter to the School, either orally or in writing. Students and parents may report the matter to the Head of School or their teacher. Alternatively, students and parents may choose to report harassment or retaliation to any other employee of the School with whom they are comfortable, such as a counselor, or coach, all of whom must report the matter to the Head of School under this Policy. While the School does not limit the time frame for reporting, immediate reporting is important as the School may not be able to investigate as thoroughly or consider as wide-range of corrective actions the longer the time that has passed between the alleged misconduct and the report.

C. Interim Measures

The School may provide appropriate interim support and reasonable protective measures, if and as needed based on the particular applicable circumstances, to protect against further acts of harassment or acts of retaliation, to provide a safe educational environment, and/or to protect the integrity of an investigation. The School will, in its sole judgment and discretion, determine the necessity and scope of any interim measures.

D. Investigation Process

Upon receipt of a report of alleged harassment and any related initial inquiries, the School may request clarification and/or conduct an initial inquiry, to determine whether the oral report or written complaint alleges a potential violation of this Policy. To request clarification and/or conduct an initial inquiry, the Head of School, or his designee, may meet with the individual(s) who made the report and/or that was reportedly subjected to conduct that violates this Policy.

If the School has determined that the report pertains to behavior that may be in violation of this Policy, the School will undertake an investigation related to the reported conduct. Any investigation may be conducted by designated School personnel or by an outside investigator, in the School's sole discretion.

Students and parents are expected to cooperate in any investigation as needed. Any individual who is interviewed during the course of an investigation is prohibited from discussing the substance of the interview, except as otherwise directed by the investigator or the Head of School, as necessary in relation to any administrative or legal proceedings or as otherwise required by law. Any individual who discusses the content

of an investigatory interview or who otherwise fails to cooperate with the investigation may be subject to corrective action.

E. Confidentiality

Reports of harassment will be kept confidential, except as needed to conduct an investigation, to take interim measures, to take corrective action, to conduct ongoing monitoring, or as necessary in relation to any administrative or legal proceedings or as otherwise required by law.

F. Discrimination

Discrimination is treating an individual differently because of the individual's actual or perceived membership in a Protected Classification as defined in this Policy, by taking an adverse action against or denying a benefit to that individual. Students or parents who believe they have experienced, witnessed, or are otherwise aware of discrimination by the School, should immediately report the matter using the same complaint procedure provided for in this Policy under the above section on harassment and the above sections on interim measures, investigation and confidentiality for harassment reports, will also apply to reports of discrimination.

G. No Retaliation

The School prohibits retaliatory behavior against anyone who complains in good faith or participates in the complaint and/or investigation process pursuant to this Policy, regardless of the outcome of the investigation. Retaliation constitutes a violation of this Policy and may result in disciplinary or other corrective action. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, taking sides against an individual, spreading rumors about or shunning or avoiding an individual, or making real or implied threats of intimidation towards an individual, because that individual reported harassment or discrimination or participated in an investigation related to a report of harassment or discrimination.

H. Remedial and Disciplinary Action

Manzanita School will determine if the conduct violates School policy and if so, the appropriate corrective action. Any student determined to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion. [\(return to top\)](#)

POLICY AGAINST BULLYING

Purpose

Manzanita School believes that all students should have a safe and inclusive school environment. Bullying is inconsistent with the values and principles of the School and is not tolerated.

Scope

This policy covers conduct that occurs both on and off of the School campus, and includes use of technology that is not owned by the School. This policy applies to all students and prohibits other students, and any other member of the school community, including teachers, staff, parents, and volunteers from engaging in conduct towards students that is prohibited under this policy.

Prohibited Conduct

Bullying is defined by this policy as:

Any physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically (including, but not limited to, e-mail, instant messaging, text messages, blogs, mobile phones, online games, chat rooms, and posting on a social network),

directed toward one or more students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- Placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to that student's person or property;
- Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on his or her physical or mental health;
- Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with his or her academic performance; or
- Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with his or her ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the School.
- Conduct need not be severe or pervasive in order for the School to determine that there has been a violation of this Policy.
- Examples of bullying may include, but are not limited to:
 - Social exclusion;
 - Blocking or impeding a person's movement;
 - Threats and intimidation;
 - Stalking;
 - Direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving, or attempting to make physical contact or inflict physical injury;
 - Theft;
 - Public humiliation;
 - Destruction of property
 - Verbal or written insults, teasing, or name-calling;
 - Creating a false profile on a social networking website, for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed above.

Online (Cyber-) Bullying

As stated in the section "Policy Against Bullying," the act of bullying is prohibited by Manzanita School, and this policy extends to all forms of online bullying, or Cyberbullying. Cyberbullying occurs over digital means of communication, including but not limited to, cell phones, computers, and tablets, through SMS, Text, online social media, forums, gaming, and apps. Cyberbullying is the act of sending, sharing, or posting negative, false, or harmful content about another person. It also includes sharing, posting, or sending private, confidential, or personal information about another person which can cause embarrassment or humiliation. Under California law, some types of cyberbullying are considered crimes. Any witnessed or received cyberbullying should be reported to the school administration immediately.

Student Reporting

Students are encouraged to and should immediately report any incidents of bullying that they either observe or that is directed towards the student or others, to the Head of School, or to any teacher or administrator.

Investigation

After the School receives an oral report or written complaint, or otherwise learns of an alleged potential violation of this Policy, and also receives any clarification requested, the Head of School or designee, will determine the appropriate course of action, which may include initiation of an investigation. If the School initiates an investigation, it will conduct the investigation, as it deems appropriate, in its sole discretion.

The School will make reasonable efforts to protect students' privacy and confidentiality. Information reported will be shared only on a need-to-know basis with School personnel directly involved in an investigation or to the extent necessary to conduct an investigation and/or to take effective corrective action and any appropriate remedial action including any interim support or protective measures.

Interim Measures

The School will provide appropriate interim support and reasonable protective measures, if and as needed based on the individual applicable circumstance during the pendency of any investigation and/or to protect against further acts of bullying, and to provide a safe educational environment. The School will determine the necessity and scope of any interim support or protective measures.

Remedial and Disciplinary Action

Any student determined by the School, in its sole discretion, to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion. Any violation of this policy by a parent will be considered a violation of the School's parent behavior expectations, and may be grounds for expulsion of the offending parent's child(ren).

As a separate policy, harassment is also prohibited by the School's policy against Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation. ([return to top](#))

DRESS POLICY

Students should wear comfortable clothing that allows them to move safely and participate easily while outdoors, in art projects, sitting on the floor and/or rigorous activity. Specifically, Manzanita has a Hawk Day program requiring students to wear shoes with good treads for strong traction, and to have full rain gear available for inclement weather.

Clothing must not contain offensive graphics or language. Flip-flop style sandals are not allowed. We ask that students exercise reasonable discretion in the choice of clothing.

We understand that the popular media of our North-American culture often encourages styles of dress that may not be appropriately matched to the age of many of our students. Bare midriffs, short shorts and skirts, and overly revealing clothing are discouraged for both boys and girls.

Outdoor days, special activities, field trips and/or daily activity (P.E., swimming) may require a change of clothing. ([return to top](#))

HAWK DAY GEAR

All students are expected to bring a backpack daily. Students must also keep a number of items at school in order to be prepared for outdoor activities on Hawk Days and comprise "Hawk Day gear". Hawk Day gear must be brought to school at the beginning of the year and are intended to remain at the school so as not to be forgotten at home on days they will be vitally needed. These items are: a second, dedicated backpack, water bottle, appropriate hiking footwear as well as a full set of waterproof clothing including waterproof footwear in preparation for the rainy season. Please consult the supply list for a full inventory of these items. Due to the school's terrain, roller backpacks are not permitted. ([return to top](#))

TOOL USE

Hawk Day at Manzanita puts students of all ages in contact with tools, both modern and prehistoric, through our Stewardship and Canyon programs. Students learn how to use an array of tools including gardening tools, hand tools used in construction, and even some power tools as well as primitive tools such as a pestle and mortar. All students are informed that tool use is a privilege that comes with a commitment to competency and responsibility for any tool including appropriate use and maintenance. It is school policy that any tool use by students is conducted under direct supervision of a staff member until the student has demonstrated proficiency and an understanding of the applications of a tool. Students understand that permission must be obtained by an appropriate staff member to use any tool on campus. All students understand that any inappropriate or irresponsible use of any tool can lead the student to lose their privilege to use tools.

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KNIVES AND SHARP EDGES

At Manzanita, we strive to empower youth to learn how to provide for themselves within many domains of their education, including self-provision in the outdoors. Sustenance and subsistence in the outdoors becomes a very successful endeavor if there is access to a sharp-edged tool such as a knife. For this reason, Manzanita high school students can earn the privilege to use a personal knife on campus during school hours as a tool to accomplish tasks and work on projects that require a sharp-edged tool such as a knife. No students will be in possession of knives if they are not directly engaged or about to directly engage in a scheduled time where it is understood that a knife will be needed.

Earning this privilege to possess and use a knife is rigorous and thorough. Students must first express competency in safety, values and skills before they will be considered eligible to earn knife privileges and must pass a competency test that results with an award of certification and acknowledgement from school administration including the Director of Outdoor Studies. Certified students will inherently understand the value of their privilege through the certification process and acknowledge that the privilege can be revoked at any time for any reason by any staff member should an action, display or attitude contrary to the values of the certification process come into question. [\(return to top\)](#)

LOST AND FOUND

Manzanita maintains a lost and found throughout the school year. Parents should check regularly for missing possessions. Twice a year, unclaimed clothing will be donated to a local shelter or other non-profit. Please label all clothing with the name of the child.

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LUNCHESES AND SNACKS

Manzanita is committed to healthy, wholesome, good nutrition for both students and staff. We seek to avoid processed and refined sugars and foods, and serve organic, sustainably raised, locally sourced, and non-GMO foods. We offer a snack and lunch program served universally (without fee). Alternatively, students may bring their own lunches and snacks each day. Students and parents are not permitted to order food from restaurants and have it sent to the campus.

If you choose to pack lunches and/or snacks, please partner with us with the following:

Pack lunches and snacks in reusable bags or containers. Include a cloth napkin, a refillable water bottle and utensils that can be washed and reused. Avoid plastic bags, plastic wrap, aluminum foil and prepackaged foods whenever possible. Our goal is No Waste Lunches.

Candy, gum and soda are not permitted on campus. [\(return to top\)](#)

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

All students are expected to bring a backpack daily. Students are also expected to keep a “Hawk Day” backpack at school, with a water bottle, sunscreen, and other Hawk Day needs. Due to the terrain, roller backpacks are not permitted.

Students should not bring expensive or valuable personal items, such as jewelry or money to school. Manzanita cannot assume responsibility for the safekeeping of such property.

Cell phones are expected to be kept in backpacks while on campus. If used during school hours, they will be taken and then returned after the school day ends. Should a need arise, students will be permitted to use the office phone, when appropriate. In the event of an emergency, parents will be contacted. (Please refer to the Health & Wellness section.).

Electronic devices, such as tablets, laptops, iPods, handheld video games, Google Glasses, etc. will only be brought to school when students are so instructed. Cameras of any kind are also restricted unless otherwise directed. At times, phones are used at school, as cameras only. Teachers will inform students when such use is appropriate. For timekeeping, and calculating (Numeracy), students should use watches and calculators. [\(return to top\)](#)

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthdays will be acknowledged weekly or monthly. Teacher discretion will apply to class celebrations. Please be advised birthday treats are expected to be in accordance with the Lunch and Snack Policy.

Celebrations outside of school: Invitations may not be handed out at school. Gifts should not be brought to school either. When planning a party, please be sensitive to everyone’s feelings. [\(return to top\)](#)

CAMPUS VISITS

Visits to campus must be pre-arranged with the designated teacher or staff member for a specified time. All visitors must check in at the office upon arrival. [\(return to top\)](#)

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Setting behavioral guidelines for the common good of the Manzanita community is considered part of the learning process and students are expected to uphold Manzanita’s Six Guiding Principles. Consequences for failure to follow school behavioral expectations be left to administrative discretion and may result in discipline,

up to and including expulsion. Manzanita expects honorable conduct from students both on and off campus.

At the discretion of the Head of School, a student may be placed on behavioral and/or academic probation at any time during the year. Probation is a serious matter. The parents and student will be required to have a conference with the administration and the child's teachers, with whom a plan of action will be discussed and implemented. The administration, parents and student will determine in measurable terms what behavior will be required to end the probationary status. Long-term behavioral probation may result in not being invited to return to Manzanita for the following semester or next school year. ([return to top](#))

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

During the first days of school, all students are introduced to Manzanita's school-wide Agreements, which are:

Manzanita Student Agreements

As a Manzanita student we agree to abide by the following expectations:

1. Follow staff directions
2. Speak and listen respectfully; (*no profanity, name-calling or teasing*).
3. Use all spaces, equipment and facilities properly.
4. Our physical contact is appropriate.
5. We do not yell or scream on campus.
6. We are prepared for all learning experiences.
7. We clean up after ourselves and help clean up after others.
8. We do not use personal electronic devices on campus.

We understand that the Student Agreements change each year, and that during the first months of school, school-wide agreements will be revised. We will abide by any new rules developed collaboratively by students and staff. ([return to top](#))

HOMEWORK

Students are expected to complete homework on a regular basis. Any work done outside of school is intended to support content being learned in class, or allow for further research and learning around a given topic. Generally, students in grades 4 and 5 have 30-45 minutes nightly, Monday through Thursday. Students in grades 6 and 7 have 60 to 80 minutes of homework, and students in grades 8 through 12, should not have more than 90-100 minutes of homework. ([return to top](#))

K-8th GRADE REPORTING POLICIES

In grades Kindergarten through 8th, Manzanita does not practice traditional grading; in which students receive letters from A through F. For these grade levels, our feedback to students and parents is described on detailed report card descriptions of both work performance and effort. Our student transcripts are carefully designed so that they can be both effectively evaluated by, and readily transferable to, the more traditional schools and educational institutions.

Assessments are designed to provide both students and teachers with important feedback on the learning taking place. Student assessment is based on rubrics which describe the performance and engagement expectations for a given instructional unit or activity. The rubrics are built upon the Six Guiding Principles. [\(return to top\)](#)

HIGH SCHOOL GRADING POLICY

In the high school grades (9 through 12), students receive letter grades of A through F. Any Manzanita student or graduate who completed high school classes while enrolled at Manzanita School prior to the 2018-19 school year may elect to have those classes marked on their official transcripts with a 'P' for passing rather than with a letter grade. Students may also elect to have letter grades for those classes, however the choice to receive letter grades or to receive a 'Pass' (or 'Fail') will apply to an entire year's worth of academic work. That is, students may not choose to combine letter grades and Pass/Fail within the same year. The credit for classes marked with a 'P' will not be configured into overall Grade Point Average (GPA) for students electing to forgo letter grades for a given year. Students may not elect to receive a Pass/Fail for graded high school classes taken at Manzanita after the 2017-18 school year.

Assessments are designed to provide both students and teachers with important feedback on the learning taking place. Student assessment is based on rubrics which describe the performance and engagement expectations for a given instructional unit or activity. The rubrics are built upon the Six Guiding Principles. [\(return to top\)](#)

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

In concert with Manzanita School's goal of supporting well-rounded and well-prepared citizens of the world, the school is committed to the development and nurturing of students in several areas, including the following:

- academic performance according to each individual's abilities and basic minimum standards established by the school,
- deep connection to and respect for nature, the land, and our planet,
- strong, self-initiated leadership skills, and
- academic integrity and ethics in interpersonal interactions.

In support of the school's commitment to its students, plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated on the Manzanita School campus. Plagiarism at MNZ is considered:

Plagiarism: the act of pretending someone else's written work is their original work

Direct AI Plagiarism: the act of using AI to write an assignment and submitting it as original work

Edited AI Plagiarism: the act of using AI to write an assignment, editing it, and then submitting it as original work.

Why is academic integrity important? Plagiarism robs students of the opportunity to learn and precludes deep understanding of presented topics. This violation also affects the school community by showing a clear disrespect for original and independent thought. Finally, our school community is built on a

foundation of trust and integrity: trust in an individual is fundamentally broken when they steal the work of others.

The school's plagiarism policies extend beyond the use of school equipment and include school assignments completed in any location, with any form of preparation, whether handwritten, electronically produced on personal computer equipment, verbally presented, or through any other form of communication. Therefore, by signing the Acknowledgement Agreement for this handbook, all Manzanita] students agree that all work presented will be original unless explicitly and clearly noted otherwise. This standard of ethics applies to all Manzanita-related assignments, activities, projects and presentations.

The consequences applied to violations of the plagiarism policy will vary depending on the scope and circumstances surrounding each instance. These consequences may include but will not be limited to one or more of the following:

- receiving a failing grade on the assignment(s);
- failing a class (High School);
- overall grade being lowered (High School);
- being asked to discuss the incident with their parent(s) and/or guardian(s), after which the parents/guardians will be requested to send an email to the appropriate member(s) of the faculty or staff acknowledging that conversation;
- meeting with the school's administrative team to discuss the incident;
- performing restorative measures tailored to the student and the reasons for having plagiarized;
- repeated acts of plagiarism may result in expulsion ([return to top](#))

CONFERENCES AND PROGRESS REPORTS

Individual conferences between parents and teachers are scheduled during the fall and winter. This is the time for reviewing student progress and for discussion of mutual concerns. Report cards will be presented by teachers. Parents are welcome to make appointments for additional conferences with the teacher at any time they feel the need for further information regarding their child's learning. ([return to top](#))

ASSESSMENT

At Manzanita School, we conduct regular assessments of learning, including Formative Assessment (monitoring learning) and Evaluative Assessment (evaluating learning). Having data about student learning is critical to program review and improvement. We do not utilize 'standardized tests', which are nationally normed, and often based on a standardized curriculum. ([return to top](#))

COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

Manzanita is committed to ongoing communication between families and the School. The school will be reaching out in a variety of ways including the school website, e-mail, social media, newsletter, parent meetings and board meeting. If you have questions, phone and e-mail is best.

E-mail communication between Manzanita staff members and parents should be used for the exchange of information, not for expressing emotion. We find that using digital communication (email and text) for issues with emotional implications, can often be misunderstood, and we ask that such communication be made in person, or on the telephone. Examples of information exchange appropriate for the digital format of text and email, include, but are not limited to, requesting phone or in person conferences, asking questions about classroom or school policies, providing information about upcoming absences of pick-up and drop-off, requesting forms, or clarification about homework assignments. If parents or staff members have concerns about student interpersonal relations, or about a teacher's behavior or conduct of instruction of students, the concerns should be discussed via phone or in a face-to-face meeting.

If parents have issues or concerns regarding their child's education or experience at school, or the teacher's instruction or dynamics with students, we encourage the parents to reach out to the child's teacher first, rather than to the administration, and to do this in person or over the telephone. It is appropriate to request a meeting via email, but we ask that the specifics of the issue(s) to be addressed be saved for the actual meeting or phone conference. If issues do not feel adequately resolved with the student's teacher, then reaching out to administrative liaison for that grade span is appropriate. Such communication policies and protocols are consistent with our Guiding Principles, specifically *Interpersonal Competence*, and *Collective Responsibility*. In all instances where a child has the capacity to advocate for themselves with the adults at their school, we encourage parents to support and encourage this self-advocacy. This is a critical life skill, and all of our staff are very responsive to issues brought forward by students themselves.

If parents need to communicate with their child during the day, the School will be happy to take a message to the student. However, the School will not call students to the phone except in the case of an emergency. All arrangements for pick-up, carpooling or play dates must be made in advance. The office phone is generally not available for personal calls.

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PARENT INVOLVEMENT & SPECIAL EVENTS

Manzanita builds its community and strengthens its growing vision through parent involvement with important aspects of our programs.

At Manzanita, all parents (including mothers, fathers, step-parents, and guardians) are required to participate in the following mandatory activities of the school on an annual basis as a condition of enrollment:

- (1) participate in at least one Parent Hawk Day
- (2) participate in at least one Parent Council
- (3) attend an Annual Orientation Meeting held in the fall

PLEASE NOTE: Failure to meet these minimum expectations for parent involvement can result in non-renewal of your child's enrollment contract.

We also strongly encourage attendance at the following school events: (1) Specialist Performances, (2) Performances of Understanding, (3) Movie Nights, (4) Manzanita Institute events; (5) Special Workshops, and (6) Assemblies. Our vision is held and promoted through parent involvement.

Through the Manzanita Institute, parents are expected to be actively involved in vision holding, community engagement and cultural mentoring. Manzanita will be holding special events throughout the year in order to build community. This is a time for families to engage and participate. Parent involvement is strongly encouraged. ([return to top](#))

FUNDRAISING

Manzanita School and Institute is committed to a strong and nurturing educational experience, rooted in nature connection and mentoring. As a nonprofit organization, fundraising is vital, allowing us to provide meaningful programming while making a Manzanita education available to the broadest number of families. Therefore, like most independent schools, fundraising events and activities will be held throughout the year.

Annual Giving, our primary fundraiser, is applied across the budget to provide the finest teachers, an excellent curriculum, extracurricular activities and financial assistance. Annual Giving and our Capital Campaign are the two annual fundraisers in which we ask all of our families to participate. We have established the goal of 100% participation by all parents, families, faculty and staff.

All fundraising activities are coordinated through the office, with support from the Board of Trustees. ([return to top](#))

PARENT - SCHOOL COMPATIBILITY

Manzanita believes that a strong and positive partnership should exist between the School and a child's parent(s)/guardian. This relationship is vital to the achievement of the School's goals. Consequently, if the School determines that any action taken by a parent(s)/guardian makes such a relationship impossible or does not allow the School to carry out its educational mission, the School retains the right to terminate or not renew a student's enrollment contract. ([return to top](#))

MEDIA USE

Manzanita requests limited screen time during the week. This includes cell phones, television, video games, social media and Internet usage. This policy helps support Manzanita's vision to build deep nature connection and community. We also strongly encourage parents to monitor their child's use of Social Media and, in particular, group chats with other students at school or friends from outside of school. This is especially important for students in the younger grades where youth may not have the maturity or understanding to navigate complex social dynamics without adult support. At Manzanita, we strongly encourage all parents of students in grades 6th and below to monitor their child's cell and email communications, especially if those children wish to be part of group chats. There are several ways to do this, including having all sent and received texts and emails automatically sent to the parent's phone or email. ([return to top](#))

TECH ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Computers and the internet are essential tools in navigating contemporary culture, business, and education. The value of these systems is significant as they provide access to important tools and resources. Throughout the school year, Manzanita students in grades 3-12 make use of school

laptops and desktops and may access Google Classroom and the Google Suite (Sheets, Docs, Slides, Gmail), and any number of online reference materials. The privilege to use computers at school comes with enormous responsibility for both the equipment and its ethical use. Laptops should be treated with the utmost care to ensure they suffer no damage. Families are responsible for replacing damaged school computers due to irresponsible treatment by students. ([return to top](#))

STUDENT IMAGE USE

Manzanita School and Institute takes pictures and videos of students involved in various school activities. By sending your child to Manzanita School, you are acknowledging that your child's image and likeness may be used in Manzanita's own newsletters, public relations and professional development materials, including but not limited to: the Manzanita Message, social media, yearbooks, email marketing campaigns, and the school's website. ([return to top](#))

INFORMATION CHANGES

Parents should send written notification to the school office regarding any changes in the following: A) home address, phone number, cell phone number, email address, and/or fax; B) employment name, address, phone number; C) pediatrician name and/or phone number; D) persons authorized to be contacted in case of emergency and/or emergency contact phone number; E) persons authorized to pick up a child from school. ([return to top](#))

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees oversees the administrative, educational, and financial operation of Manzanita School. The Board has the ultimate responsibility for the establishment of school policy that is then implemented by the administration. The Board has the authority to formulate the School's corporate policies, set tuition, formulate the budget, and evaluate the Head of School. The Board is made up of interested people whose expertise is deemed to be of value to the school.

MANZANITA SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2023-24

Jo Ann Isken, Chairperson
Jonathan Nadlman, Secretary
Cecilie Stuart, Treasurer
Sara Baur, Board Member
Don Klein, Board Member
Nia Andrews, Board Member

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MANZANITA FACULTY AND STAFF 2023-2024

Administration

Head of School..... Paul Astin paul@manzanitaschool.org
Assistant Head of School..... Gabrielle Cartelli gabrielle@manzanitaschool.org
Director Director of Outdoor Studies..... Ira Christian Ira@manzanitaschool.org
Director of Special Programs..... Jenny Griffiths Jenny@manzanitaschool.org
Director of Operations..... Ariel Abt Ariel@manzanitaschool.org
Director of Manzanita Institute..... Jennifer Carey Jennifer@manzanitaschool.org
Director of Admissions..... Eva Sanchez-Calixtro Eva@manzanitaschool.org

Office Staff

Systems Director..... Emily Souza Emily@manzanitaschool.org
Office Team..... Jill Doolin Jill@manzanitaschool.org
Payroll Manager..... Ariel Abt

Faculty and Staff

Director of Instruction..... Gabrielle Cartelli
Arts Director..... Jenny Griffiths

Administrative Directors

Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd Grades..... Jenny Griffiths
3rd-5th Grades..... Gabrielle Cartelli
6th-8th Grades..... Jeremy Sands
High School..... Ariel Abt/Eric Esby

Faculty and Staff (continued)

Plant Manager..... Daniel Cruz
Assistant Plant Manager..... Abel Cruz
Forest Kindergarten..... Stephanie Share
Forest Kindergarten..... Serena Flores
1st Grade Co-Teacher..... Karla Mejia
1st Grade Co-Teacher..... Welner Trujillo
2nd Grade Co-Teacher..... Thom Vacca
2nd Grade Co-Teacher..... Chevy J Johnson
3rd Grade Unit of Study..... Brooke Ebner
4th Grade Unit of Study..... Jen Bridge
5th Grade Unit of Study..... Bridget Hanks
6th Grade Unit of Study..... Marie Ponce
7th Grade Unit of Study..... Jenn Allen
8th Grade Unit of Study..... Jeremy Sands
9th-12th Grades Unit of Study..... Jennifer Carey and Eric Esby
Arts Instruction..... Vicki Kahle

High School Counselor.....	Megan Brody
High School Spanish.....	Lisa Metzler
High School Numeracy.....	Mike Settele
High School English.....	Lisa Metzler
Vitality Program.....	Melissa Borjas
Manzanita Farm Program	Natalie Bartlett and Delmar Lathers
Compost Program.....	Chevy J Johnson
Food Program.....	Pam Nears, Hilary Boynton, Charles Barth & Team

Naturalist and Stewardship Staff

Stewardship Staff

Cecilie Stuart-Garcia
 Mark McMillan
 Delmar Lathers
 Chevy J Johnson
 Melissa Borjas
 Damon Bolder
 Pauline Allen
 Benjamin Schmid
 Dawn Geer
 Grégoire Thiry

Naturalist Team

3rd Grade: Chevy J
 4th Grade: Mark McMillan
 5th Grade: Benjamin Schmid
 6th Grade: Kassandra Wilsey
 7th Grade: Natalie Bartlett
 8th Grade: Delmar Lathers
 HS: Ira Christian and Mark McMillan

Specialist Classes

Ceramics	Delmar Lathers
Aerial Arts.....	Gabbi Beauvais
Music	Mark McMillan
Art	Vicki Kahle
Debate.....	Nish Selvalingam
Photography.....	Melissa Borjas
Tie Dye	Damon Bolder

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**MANZANITA SCHOOL PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

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