

NEW SCHOOL PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK SCHOOL-AGE PROGRAM

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Welcome

Dear New School Family,

New School is a rich and diverse environment. We have a caring, involved staff, a large outdoor space, compelling activities, and a commitment to empowering children. The program is structured to allow a maximum amount of freedom for each child within the limits of responsibility. For kids and families to reap the benefits of our program, we need everyone's cooperation. Please read this handbook to understand how the school works and what your responsibilities are. At the end of the book you'll find the New School Top Five – the five things we need everyone to commit to in order to make the school run smoothly.

Before School Starts

- necessary forms and documents

Before your child enters the program, please be sure to fill out and return the following forms. They are required by licensing. **ALL FORMS MUST BE RETURNED BEFORE YOUR CHILD STARTS!**

- admission agreement
- parent or guardian contact information
- physician's form
- immunization record
- health history
- field trip permission/medical release
- parents' rights
- personal rights

We also need to receive your activities/materials fee and cleanup deposit, and we ask that each family participate in our e-scrip program which raises money for the Scholarship Fund.

It's the parent's responsibility to keep all forms on file up-to-date. Be sure to inform us of any changes.

New School Basics

- daily schedule
- sign in sheet
- clothes
- bulletin boards & pockets
- snack
- summer session

Daily Schedule

New School is open Monday through Friday from 7:15 a.m. to 6 p.m. We have a school-age program offering before and after school care for children in elementary schools. We serve a hearty snack at 3:30.

Please see the Annual Calendar for information on school holidays and closures. Please note that the school is closed the last week in August.

Sign-in Sheet

Always remember to sign your child in and out. Licensing requires that you use your signature, not initials or first name only. Please write legibly! In addition, we welcome notes about your child. Please let us know if someone else will be picking up your child.

Clothes

Please label all your child's clothing and personal items. Keep an extra change of clothing in your child's cubby. We recommend putting this in a box or backpack clearly marked with your child's name.

Bulletin Boards & Pockets

Please check bulletin boards daily for notices. Your newsletter as well as other school notices will be put in your parent pocket, which is in the main hallway.

Staff and the director also have pockets, located near the director's office. There is a pocket in the piano room (to the right of the kitchen area) where parents may leave tuition checks and other school communications.

Snack

Parents contribute to snack once a week. Parent contributions should be brought in by Wednesday and conform to our Food Policy (no sugar, no meat products, nothing with chemical additives). Please decide on a snack you can bring weekly and then check off your contribution each week on the sheet posted in the main hallway (across from the sign in sheet).

Summer Session

New School offers a summer camp for children 6 and older. Hours are 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. with care available at school before and after camp, from 7:15 a.m. to 6 p.m. Camp runs in ten weekly sessions and typically includes field trips, arts & crafts, sports, games, hiking, swimming lessons, and more. Children may be enrolled for camp only or camp plus full-time care. Please see the director for more information on camp offerings and fees.

Parent Responsibilities

- fundraising
- clean-ups
- parent meetings
- communication

Fundraising

New School holds two major fundraising events each school year, one in the fall and the other in the spring. Parents are responsible for participating. These events are our main source of income for scholarships and special purchases.

Clean-ups

General school clean-ups are held monthly. School-age families must participate in one per year. Sign-up sheets will be posted. Other housekeeping chores (mending, repairing, etc.) always need to be done and can be performed in place of a clean-up. Clean-ups can be bought out at \$100 each.

Parent Meetings

We hold two scheduled parent meetings during the school year, one in the fall and one in spring. Other parent meetings may be held from time to time as needed or desired. These are evening meetings and child-care is provided for a small fee. Parent-teacher conferences are also available and may be initiated as needed by either parent or school.

Communication

New School is a community of families caring for their children. Parents and staff need communication and feedback on the children they care for. This is especially true if there is a change in the family, or sickness, or a traumatic event. We also want to know about any falls or scrapes that occur out of school. Please discuss any concerns about your child or child development questions with the teachers. For an extended discussion, please make an appointment with a teacher or see the director.

There is an email list of parents and an online newsgroup you may sign up for to receive news and information electronically.

Policies

- food
- tuition & fees
- sick children
- medicine
- late pick-up

Food

We have a definite and strict food policy. We serve whole grains and food with no sugar, no preservatives, no artificial colorings or flavorings. We do not serve meat so that vegetarian children can partake freely. We ask that parents, when sending food for snack, follow our guidelines and send only wholesome food.

Tuition & Fees

New School is a non-profit organization that operates primarily on tuition fees. Tuition is calculated on a yearly basis and divided into 10 installments (for after-school care) paid by the month and due in advance. (This means you pay the same amount in June.) Fees are due on the first of each month. We will not bill you – it is your responsibility to pay on time.

There is an annual materials and activities fee of \$100 and a \$100 deposit for each school-age child (the equivalent of one cleanup). When you do your cleanup the deposit is credited toward your next month's tuition.

We charge a \$10 handling fee for any returned checks.

There are no refunds or exceptions for absences, including vacations. We require 30 days notice (or one month's payment) for withdrawal.

We reserve the right to raise fees with 30 days advance notice.

Sick Children

Children who get sick at school are isolated with a teacher and their parents are called. Children may not come to school if they have a fever, a rash that has not been checked by a doctor, or nits in their hair. You must tell school staff if your child has been sick. If a child has a stomach upset that includes vomiting and/or diarrhea, or has had a fever, we require that the child stay home for 24 hours.

We will give a child medicine that has been prescribed by a doctor. Please see our Medication Policy below.

Medication

We will give children a daily dose of medicine prescribed by the doctor. We do not give over-the-counter medicines. All medicine must be delivered directly to the teacher by the parent along with written instructions. Never put medicine in a child's backpack.

Late Pick-up

Pick-up time is 6 p.m. at the latest. If you cannot make it by 6 p.m., you must call. This is important to staff and to your child. If you do pick up after 6 p.m. you must pay the teacher who waits with your child \$5 for every 15 minutes (or part thereof) after 6 p.m.

Special Events

- potlucks
- holiday program
- Mendocino camping trip
- Fall & Spring fundraising events

New School holds a number of special events throughout the year where parents and families can come together and socialize. We have two parent potlucks – one in spring and one in fall. We have a holiday party in December with a potluck dinner and performances by the school-age children and the preschoolers. Our Fall and Spring fundraisers have live entertainment (often provided by our talented parents and staff) and fun activities such as games, face-painting, etc. And every year there is a family outing over Memorial Day weekend to Mendocino Woodlands Campgrounds. This is a lovely old campground with redwood cabins and stone fireplaces, just perfect for a family trip. Sign up for the camping trip is in the piano room.

Emergency Procedures

Each teacher or participating parent will escort the children in his/her room or area out the appropriate exit – the nearest, most accessible, unblocked exit – and into the north yard, or to the south yard and then into the north yard via the sidewalk or back connecting gate. All possible hiding places in the room or yard will be checked and the children will be brought as a group to the north yard. Once in the north yard, the children should sit down so roll call can be taken using the daily sign in sheet.

- If it is necessary to evacuate the premises, Berkeley Arts Magnet School (Milvia and Lincoln) will be our temporary relocation site.
- Each staff person has a designated responsibility in the case of a disaster, i.e., direct evaluation, person count, first aid, etc.
- Each staff person has been certified in CPR and first aid.
- Emergency supplies, first aid kits and emergency phone numbers are stored outside (in the peace circle storage compartment) in case the building is inaccessible.
- Emergency care and disaster plans are posted in each classroom.

New School Top Five

Can't remember everything in this handbook? Here are the Top Five things you can do to make your child's experience at New School a smooth one:

1. Always sign your child in and out. We use the sign in sheet in case of emergency so it is critical that the sheet be accurate and your signature clearly legible. Use the comments area for special pick-up arrangements, to give directions about medication, and so on. Teachers use the comments area to make special notes about your child's day.
2. Label all personal items and help your child practice good cubby habits. All clothing, shoes, spare clothes, towels, etc. need to be labeled with your child's name. Anything that is a personal item should be kept in your child's cubby. Check lost and found weekly.

3. Don't bring toys or special items from home. Books and CDs are fine as long as they are labeled with your child's name. Give them to a teacher to ensure their safe return. Check with staff if you have any questions about an item.
4. Bring in your snack contributions by Wednesday and check it off on the snack chart. Snacks need to follow our Food Policy.
5. Help keep your child and the New School community healthy by washing hands and teaching good health habits. And follow our Medication Policy if you need to send medication to school with your child.