



# Parent and Student Handbook

## 2021-22

North Park Elementary School  
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## FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL: THE ESSENTIAL JOY OF INQUIRY

Research has found that children between the ages of three and five-years-old ask, on average, *seventy-six questions per hour* (this will likely not come as a surprise to anyone who has spent even a day with a child). As Michael M. Chouinard notes in a University of California monograph:

*When children encounter a problem with their current knowledge state (a gap in their knowledge, some ambiguity they do not know how to resolve, some inconsistency they have detected), asking a question allows them to get targeted information exactly when they need it. This information is available to them when they are particularly receptive to it, and because it comes as the result of their own disequilibrium, it may have depth of processing benefits. In that questions allow children to get information they need to move their knowledge structures closer to adult-like states, the ability to ask questions to gather needed information constitutes an efficient mechanism for cognitive development. The ability to ask questions is a powerful tool that allows children to gather information they need in order to learn about the world and solve problems in it.*

Wondering, then questioning--then understanding, synthesizing what we've learned into our existing knowledge in ways we find interesting, satisfying, or even joyful--before wondering and questioning again, this is how we all learn and grow, and always have. Yet children, as the individuals in almost every society who possess the least amount of power over their lives, while they wonder the most and verbalize their questions the most, in reality, they exercise the least amount of control over what they learn and when and how they learn it.

But at North Park Elementary School, our talented and dedicated faculty inspire curiosity, teach children to think creatively and critically, and encourage self-expression from the earliest ages, empowering and coaching all to express their wonderings, thoughts, and feelings authentically for the greater good. Our school sees the enormous potential for intellectual and personal growth in questioning, and in valuing and being responsive to student interests, adapting curriculum whenever possible to reward organic curiosity, seeking not to provide answers that block the process of wondering but that engender new and deeper questions from which all children present can benefit. This measure of student voice in curriculum and instruction--and the resulting benefits that students come to see their studies as relevant to them personally, as they develop self-confidence and esteem, as well as considerable skill in self-expression--is an essential component of the student experience at NPES. And this is precisely why our 2021-22 school-wide theme, ***Inquiry***, is such an exciting one which will be visible in many areas of the school this year.

We invite you as parents and guardians to join us and your children this year in consciously seeking to expand your own wonderings about the world, anything and everything of interest to you, whatever you're curious about...to question and to understand deeper, so that you can share with your own family and others, and then wonder and question and understand some more. Consider it a form of self-care. Of renewal and restoration. Of self-fulfillment, expression, or exploration. And of modeling for your own family and friends just how rewarding and joyful curiosity, learning, and growth

can be. On behalf of our exceptional administrative team and faculty/staff, I wish you and your children a healthy and meaningful school year, rich with inquiry. It is our great privilege to work with your children, and to partner with you

John Novick, Jr.  
Head of School

## REGARDING THE PANDEMIC

With the COVID-19 pandemic continuing into the 2021-22 school year, please note that any policies, procedures, and protocols announced by the school as result of the pandemic take precedence over the ordinary policies, procedures, and protocols described in this Handbook.

## PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

The procedures and policies detailed in this Parent and Student Handbook are grounded in the mission and values of North Park Elementary School. They have been established formally as norms for our school so that employees, students, and parents--note that throughout this Handbook the term *parents* refers not to biological parents alone, but to all legal guardians--can work together to maintain a safe, healthy, respectful, inclusive, and vibrant learning community in which all members may present their authentic selves and thrive. Healthy boundaries and clear expectations for all members of a community, adults and children, are critical to children developing the foundational sense of safety and stability needed to grow intellectually, emotionally, and socially to their fullest potential. In the broadest sense, this is the purpose of the North Park Handbook, along with providing families with a resource for common questions that arise throughout a school year and an understanding of the school's mission, values, structure, and operations. As new policies are adopted, they are added, with or without notice. Some policies and procedures might be effective immediately due to unforeseen circumstances. This Handbook is updated annually by the administrative team.

## OUR MISSION

North Park Elementary School is dedicated to raising confident, self-reliant individuals, in partnership with families, while instilling a sense of curiosity, a passion for learning and a commitment to having an impact on the broader community.

### Student Experience

- Our rigorous academic curriculum is built on small class sizes and authentic, hands-on experiences that develop essential skills for life beyond the classroom.
- Art, Drama, Music, Physical Education, and Spanish Language and Cultures are central to the experience and afford each student important opportunities to develop and excel.
- The modeling and teaching of healthy social-emotional skills enables personal growth and full utilization of our academic curriculum; we value each student and focus on the habits of heart and mind together to develop resilient, empathetic, and confident learners.

- The North Park commitment to excellence begins with our faculty and staff's deep care for the well-being of children, combined with specialized instructional expertise and extensive professional development.

## **Community**

- Students and parents are active and invested in the learning process, and partner with faculty and staff to help students become the very best versions of themselves.
- The North Park community is vibrant and inclusive, sustained by lasting friendships, with all working toward a common purpose: supporting the growth and well-being of every student.
- Diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives are a critical source of strength in the community.
- North Park provides an extraordinary educational value, with resources directed thoughtfully to impact the student experience. As such, parents' charitable giving is essential for new program development, curricular enhancements, the professional growth of faculty and staff, and capital improvement projects to keep our program current for the benefit of every student.

## **Character**

- North Park students are kind; they are good citizens and demonstrate open-mindedness, respect, empathy, and responsibility everyday.
- Our students learn to see beyond themselves through a commitment to service, and understand the value of being a part of a larger community.
- They are collaborators, working effectively in teams to solve problems creatively, and participating in multi-age collaborative learning activities.

## **Outcomes**

- North Park graduates are recognized easily for their critical thinking, confident public speaking, self-awareness, compassion, creativity, and motivation to succeed.
- Our students are proud of their academic achievements and are well prepared to succeed at the high school of their choosing.
- North Park alumni highly regard and value their experience at the school, and remain connected to the community. They also are grateful and invested to the point where they offer us valuable and useful input about how we might improve the student experience.

## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

At NPES we believe that diversity, equity, and inclusion are integral parts of how we live, learn, and grow together. Our welcoming community supports and honors the unique members of our families and staff, as we all gain a deeper understanding of and appreciation for our world together. This is reflected in our curriculum, service learning, social-emotional learning, admissions, student and family support services, and interaction with the local Chicago community and world around us.

## **Community**

NPES is composed of students, faculty, staff, and families. As a community, we:

- celebrate the unique abilities, different learning styles, and characteristics of NPES students and their families.
- support diverse types of learners.
- provide opportunities for students to explore their identity in order to find and develop their voice and live their truth.
- honor and celebrate members of our community.
- foster a community that welcomes a variety of cultures, experiences, and life stories.
- develop a faculty with common values and beliefs around diversity, equity, and inclusion and community engagement, with professional development programming aimed at growing our cultural competence
- actively seek underrepresented applicants to our professional community and engage in conversations about diversity, equity and inclusion with prospective candidates and all current employees.

## **Student Experience**

As a community, we:

- strive to provide an experience-centered education, rich in diversity.
- aspire to include multicultural viewpoints across all classes.
- choose learning materials and experiences that represent the diversity of our city and our shared broader world.
- bring the city into our classrooms and take our students out into the community.
- commit to telling everyone's story, including the un(der)represented.
- continually reflect on our teaching practice and materials and are responsive to the changing world.
- aspire to utilize technology to have a global reach and interact in a connected world.
- provide students with the background knowledge and critical thinking skills that allow them to be a community of diverse, independent thinkers, and inclusive, mindful learners.
- provide opportunities for students to grapple with complex world issues that enable them to explore the roles, rights, and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic society as they work toward becoming engaged civic participants.
- ask that students recognize that they have a particular perspective, and that others may or may not share it.
- practice communication, debate, and dialogue in a productive and respectful way.

## **Character**

As a community, we:

- instill a sense of personal agency within each of our students through Responsive Classroom and Positive Discipline practices which empowers them to grow into active and aware global citizens.

- strengthen our students’ capacity to relate to one another, treat each other with respect and kindness and challenge behaviors that oppress, exclude, or demean the humanity of others.
- build a safe space that allows us to communicate and interact effectively across cultures.
- help students understand that differences and commonalities in experiences, opinions, ideas and identities, enrich us and empower us with the skills for living in a diverse world.
- cultivate an empathetic and inclusive climate that fosters relationships of integrity between all members of our community.
- foster globally competent students who are aware, curious, and interested in learning about the world and how it works.
- model for students the necessary skills to not just learn about the world, but also make a difference in the world.

## OVERVIEW, ACCREDITATION, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NPES is a preschool through 8th grade non-sectarian independent day school accredited by the highly-regarded [Independent School Association of Central States](#) (ISACS). In the summer of 2021, North Park was again granted full accreditation by ISACS for the next seven-year cycle following a comprehensive self-study and engagement with an ISACS visiting team composed of educators from other ISACS schools. At the time of this writing, enrollment is 245 students, with 38 full-time employees. Visit [this link](#) for a school history.

NPES provides a high-quality education to students while maintaining a value-based tuition and fee model supplemented by essential funds raised through an annual giving campaign and capital initiatives, such as *Project North Park*, which made the complete remodeling and updating of our campus interior possible between 2020 and 2021.

NPES is dedicated to advancing student success by utilizing proven instructional strategies based on best practices; integrating strong fine arts, Spanish language and cultures, physical education, and technology programs; supporting the professional development of NPES faculty and staff; maintaining a setting in which students feel safe, known, valued, and supported; and creating a community that values diversity and cultural competence, and in which all members are seen, respected, affirmed, and valued. North Park is governed by an independent self-sustaining Board of Directors which collaborates with the Head of School to establish overall school policies, ensure financial stability, and develop long-range strategic goals for the school’s continued success. The Board is not responsible for personnel decisions, apart from hiring and evaluating the Head of School, the Board’s sole employee. Nor does the Board manage day-to-day administration of the school’s operations. Board members are essential as fiduciary stewards of the school’s well-being, values, mission, effectiveness, and longevity.

### Board of Directors

- |              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| ● President  | Laura Coy      |
| ● Vice Chair | Robert Verigan |
| ● Treasurer  | Jennifer Seitz |
| ● Secretary  | Susan Schuetz  |
| ● Director   | Ravi Kalhan    |

- Director Ted Moore
- Director Neepa Patel
- Director Joshua Samis
- Director Jessica Westhoff
- Associate Director Dana Weed
- Honorary Director Bob Hoelle
- Head of School John Novick, Jr. (Ex-Officio)
- Business & Operations Marshall Warren (Ex-Officio)

## FACULTY AND STAFF

### Administrative Team

Head of School	<a href="#">Mr. John Novick, Jr.</a>
Director of Admissions & Marketing	<a href="#">Ms. Anne Zagotta</a>
Director of Business & Operations	<a href="#">Dr. Marshall Warren</a>
Director of Development & Communications	<a href="#">Ms. Laura McCammack</a>
Director of Instructional Technology	<a href="#">Mr. Brad Riggs</a>
Director of Learning Services and High School	
Guidance Counselor	<a href="#">Ms. Kim Smith</a>
Director of Teaching and Learning	<a href="#">Ms. Emily Friend</a>

### Support Staff

Office Manager	<a href="#">Ms. Kerry Maman</a>
Student Services Coordinator/After Care	<a href="#">Mr. Elan Frankel</a>
Bookkeeper	<a href="#">Ms. Brenda Pantle</a>
Full-Time Substitute Teacher	<a href="#">Ms. Morgan Tate</a>
Facility Maintenance	<a href="#">Mr. Greg Basil</a>

### Preschool

Preschool Lead Teacher and 4s Teacher	<a href="#">Ms. Lauren Russell</a>
Preschool 3s Teacher	<a href="#">Ms. Nicole Smart</a>
Preschool Art Teacher	<a href="#">Ms. Anna Nardulli</a>
Preschool Associate Teacher	<a href="#">Mr. Paul Bulgajewski</a>
Preschool Associate Teacher	<a href="#">Ms. Megean Lundberg</a>

### K-5th Grade

Kindergarten Teacher	<a href="#">Ms. Zoe Ardito</a>
Kindergarten Associate Teacher	<a href="#">Ms. Sarah Woltmann</a>
First Grade Teacher	<a href="#">Ms. Nikki Lawrence</a>
First Grade Associate Teacher	<a href="#">Mr. Daniel Swanson-Nystrom</a>
Second Grade Teacher	<a href="#">Mr. Adam Litt</a>
Second Grade Associate Teacher	<a href="#">Ms. Kathy Weil</a>
Third Grade Teacher	<a href="#">Ms. Talia Blivaiss</a>
Third Grade Associate Teacher	<a href="#">Ms. Katie Kirelik</a>
Fourth/Fifth Grade Humanities Teacher	<a href="#">Mr. Connor Dillon</a>
Fourth/Fifth Grade STEM Teacher	<a href="#">Ms. Nicole Allen</a>
Fourth/Fifth Grade Associate Teacher	<a href="#">Elizabeth Schug</a>

## 6th-8th Grade (Middle School)

Language Arts Teacher  
 Mathematics Teacher  
 Science Teacher  
 Social Studies Teacher  
 Substitute Social Studies Teacher  
 (covering leave September through December)  
 Middle School Associate

[Ms. Melissa Payne](#)  
[Mr. Rhodi Hotaling](#)  
[Mr. Peter Tortorici](#)  
[Ms. Mary Wells](#)  
  
[Mr. David Hemak](#)  
[Przemyslaw Bosak](#)

## Co-Curricular

Art Teacher  
 Creative Drama Teacher  
 Librarian  
 Music Teacher and Band Director  
 Physical Education Teacher  
 Spanish Teacher Preschool - Third Grade  
 Spanish Teacher Fourth - Eighth Grade

[Ms. Janice Hovey](#)  
[Ms. Wendy Andrews](#)  
[Ms. Helen Rosenberg](#)  
[Mr. Justin Past](#)  
[Mr. Rob Hirsch](#)  
[Ms. Ariel Barbick](#)  
[Franko Mansilla](#)

## SOFTWARE USED AT NPES 2021-22

Software	URL	Contact
NPES Website	<a href="https://www.npeschool.org">https://www.npeschool.org</a>	<a href="#">Kerry Maman</a> and <a href="#">Laura McCammack</a>
Health Records	<a href="https://magnushealth.com">https://magnushealth.com</a>	<a href="#">Kerry Maman</a>
3-8 Assignments	<a href="https://npes.schoolology.com">npes.schoolology.com</a>	Your Classroom Teacher
PK-2 Daily Activities/ Learning Journal	<a href="https://app.seesaw.me">app.seesaw.me</a>	Your Classroom Teacher
Donations	<a href="https://npeschool.bigsis.com/portal">npeschool.bigsis.com/portal</a> >> Donations	<a href="#">Laura McCammack</a>
Admissions: Contracts & Re-enrollment	<a href="https://npeschool.bigsis.com/portal">npeschool.bigsis.com/portal</a> >>Admissions	<a href="#">Anne Zagotta</a>
Student Directory	<a href="https://npeschool.bigsis.com/portal">npeschool.bigsis.com/portal</a> >>Parents	<a href="#">Kerry Maman</a>
Tuition Management	<a href="https://npeschool.bigsis.com/portal">npeschool.bigsis.com/portal</a> >> Student Billing	<a href="#">Marshall Warren</a>
Address Changes	<a href="https://npeschool.bigsis.com/portal">npeschool.bigsis.com/portal</a> >>Profile	Self-Service update contact info as needed
Report Cards	<a href="https://npeschool.bigsis.com/portal">npeschool.bigsis.com/portal</a>	<a href="#">Brad Riggs</a> or <a href="#">Kerry Maman</a>
Before and after care	<a href="https://www.procaresoftware.com/">https://www.procaresoftware.com/</a>	<a href="#">Marshall Warren</a>

## SCHOOL-DAY OPERATIONS

### Arrival and Dismissal Times

- Beginning on September 8 school doors open at 7:30 a.m. for the before care program (pre-bell extracurricular programming will begin later in the month).
- Drop off and pick up times are staggered across the school to alleviate traffic congestion and to ensure a safe arrival and dismissal for all children.
- All K-8 students who arrive *after their designated attendance time* must check in at the main office before proceeding to their classrooms.
- **Preschool students** enter through the Minnow Gate on the Playlot at 8:35 a.m. when class begins. Half Day Preschool students are dismissed from the front door for 11:15am. Full Day students are dismissed from the playlot at 3:00pm.
- **Grades K through 2** enter the building at 8:30 a.m., attendance is taken at 8:40 a.m. (students who arrive after 8:40 a.m. are marked tardy), and K-2 students are dismissed at 3:10 p.m. K-2 students are dismissed from the playlot.
- **Grades 3 through 5** enter the building at 8:25 a.m., attendance is taken at 8:35 a.m. (students who arrive after 8:35 a.m. are marked tardy), and are dismissed at 3:15 p.m. 3-8 students are dismissed from the front door.
- **Grades 6 through 8** enter the building at 8:20 a.m., attendance is taken at 8:25 a.m. (students who arrive to class after 8:25 a.m. are marked tardy), and all middle schoolers are dismissed at 3:18 p.m. 6-8 students are dismissed from the front door.
- In regard to families dropping off children in multiple grades (and before care), all children dropped off between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m. enter the before care program for a fee. Children in grades K-8 who are dropped off at 8:00 a.m. or after (on the playground, supervised by school personnel) await their designated entry time into the building, and there is no cost for supervision beginning at 8:00 a.m. (in inclement weather, the supervision beginning at 8:00 a.m. takes place indoors). All preschool students who arrive before 8:30 a.m. join the before care program for a fee.
- Students not collected by 3:30 p.m. will be assigned to After Care and charged accordingly.
- Students are to remain in supervised areas before and after school.
- Students will not be allowed to visit their lockers or classrooms before or after school without supervision or prior approval from a faculty.

### Arrival and Dismissal Safety Reminders

- To maintain safety for students while also being good neighbors, cars may not stop in the middle of the street on Montrose, nor double park to drop off students. We appreciate your patience in the line.
- There is no parking in the drop-off zone, and parents cannot leave their vehicles while in the drop-off zone.
- If your vehicle is parked nearby, please do not leave your car idling.
- The school schedules a team of Safety Patrol Students supervised by a faculty member who assists students exiting cars during drop off.
- When they are dropped off at school, children should come into the building or go to the playlot.

- Students remain in the building until after 8:00 a.m. At 8:00 a.m. Kindergarten through 8th grade students are taken to the playlot and will remain there until dismissed to their classrooms.
- If students are dropped off after 8:00 a.m., K-8 students will not be signed into before care. Preschool students are dropped off at the front door and signed into before care until 8:35 a.m.
- Students are to remain in supervised areas before and after school. Students will not be allowed to visit their lockers or classrooms before or after school without supervision or prior approval from a faculty member.

### **Extended Day Care (Before and After Care)**

In regard to families dropping off children in multiple grades (and Before School care), all children dropped off at North Park between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m. enter the Before School program for a fee. Children in Grades K-8 who are dropped off at 8:00 a.m. or after (on the playground, supervised by school personnel) await their designated entry time into the building, and there is no cost for supervision beginning at 8:00 a.m. (in inclement weather, the supervision beginning at 8:00 a.m. takes place indoors). All preschool students who arrive before 8:30 a.m. join the Before School program for a fee, and beginning Monday, September 13, preschool parents do not enter the building with their child in the morning, but drop-off on the playlot.

Before care is available from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. After Care is available from 3:10 to 5:45 p.m. for Kindergarten through 8th grade and from 3:00 to 5:45 p.m. for preschool. Childcare is generally offered when the school has half days or early dismissal. The cost for care is \$10.00 per hour per child. Any student not picked up by 3:30 p.m. will be signed in to After Care and charged accordingly. Students attending after school activities must be picked up at the conclusion of their program (generally 4:30 p.m.). If these students are not picked up by 4:30 p.m., they will be signed in to After Care and charged accordingly.

Late fees are assessed if a child is picked up late: the first 15 minutes (5:45–6:00 p.m.) is \$15; then \$1.00 per minute is charged thereafter. Please call the school if a late arrival is anticipated (773) 327- 3144.

Usage and resulting billing will be administered through Procure. All charges must be paid in full each month.

Sometimes students forget books or materials in their classrooms. If students come early to get their work or materials, they need to sign into before care and then go to the office to have one of our personnel open the classroom or check with the classroom teacher. After school, students may not go into the classrooms after 3:30 p.m. because many teachers are meeting or conferencing there.

Homework Help is provided Monday through Thursday from 3:30-4:30 p.m. for students who are signed in to After Care. Homework Help provides a quiet time for students to complete assignments or read silently. A teacher associate supervises and is available to assist students during this time. Students who do not exhibit appropriate behavior may be asked to return to general After Care. School iPads may be used for homework but will need to be put away once the student returns to the general After Care setting.

There is no use of personal electronic devices or school iPads for entertainment purposes in Before or After Care. Devices will be confiscated and must be picked up by a parent or guardian in the office. Any contact via cell phone by students with their parents should occur with staff supervision.

### **Lunch**

Families may choose to order lunch from the lunch program vendor (Gourmet Gorilla) at additional expense or send children with their own lunch. Lunch and recess are tech free times for all students. Students are expected to clean up after themselves. No lunches or snacks should contain items that include nuts or nut derivatives in order to keep all children safe from severe allergic reactions.

### **Attendance Policies and Procedures**

If your child will be absent for the day, please email your child's teacher and the school's office manager ([maman@npeschool.org](mailto:maman@npeschool.org)) by 8:25 a.m. to report an absence. Each teacher records class attendance in the morning. If a child is not in class and the parent has not called in, the school will contact the parents to determine the whereabouts of that child.

NPES requires students who are enrolled to attend school daily during the school year. Exceptions to this policy include cases of illness, death in the family, observance of a religious holiday, or an emergency. Excessive absences not related to these exceptions may result in administrative follow-up. NPES discourages parents from taking children out of school for vacations during the school year. If a student is absent from school, they cannot attend or participate in after school activities.

### **Early Dismissal Requests for Students**

A written note/email or phone call from a parent requesting an early dismissal must be provided to the teacher and the office manager the morning of the requested dismissal. Parents should email the teacher and the Office Manager ([maman@npeschool.org](mailto:maman@npeschool.org)). A child will not be released to anyone other than those listed on their pick-up permission form without the proper authorization.

### **Early Dismissal for Faculty Planning and Professional Development**

Faculty and staff participate in professional development activities throughout the year that may necessitate early-dismissal days. Preschool will be dismissed at 11:15 am, Grades Kindergarten through second will be dismissed at 12:00 p.m., and grades three through eight will be dismissed at 12:15 p.m., unless otherwise announced. Consult the current school calendar for early dismissal days. Paid after care is available to families who register.

### **Schoolwork After Absences**

Work for students who are ill may be picked up upon their return to school. Teachers are not expected to prepare work in advance for students who will be going on vacation during school days. Makeup work will be provided upon the student's return. It is the responsibility of the child to complete missed work according to classroom policies. Students and parents of students in grades three through eight are encouraged to utilize Schoology access for information regarding missed assignments.

## **Celebrating Birthdays and Holidays**

Due to food allergies and food safety concerns, NPES does not allow edible treats for birthday celebrations. Teachers share their grade level plan for non-food celebrations at each grade level at the start of the school year.

At NPES, we strive to make holiday celebrations inclusive and respectful. These celebrations are an excellent opportunity to provide a window into a culture or understand more about a group of people, as well as reinforce the diversity of all community members' experiences. Parents who are involved in organizing holiday parties are asked to consider carefully that the celebration is representative of many experiences. Depicting a diversity of beliefs and customs is important when celebrating with students, as is being culturally respectful and sensitive to the risks of engaging in or encouraging cultural appropriation.

## **THE PARENT ROLE AT NORTH PARK**

Parents at North Park Elementary School play a vital role in the educational experience of students, and always have. All parents are members of the *NPES Association* and share the following responsibilities:

1. Participate in the three regularly scheduled Association meetings:
  - a. Fall: meet the NPES Staff, learn about new initiatives for the coming school year.
  - b. Winter: presentation of the 2022-2023 budget.
  - c. Spring: vote on slate for Board of Directors.
2. Contribute in whatever way possible: donating money, goods in kind, and services.
3. Participate in annual fundraising events such as Auction, Chili Cook Off and Fun Run.
4. Volunteer time and skills; serve as committee or task force chairs and participants.
5. Assist teachers and staff as requested.
6. Improve the facilities when opportunities to help arise.
7. Interact positively with teachers and the Head of School about the growth and development of their child/children.
8. Commit to growing cultural competence just as our faculty and staff does, so that all members of our community feel included equitably in the life of the school.
9. Treat one another and all NPES employees with respect and dignity.

## **Committees/Task Forces/Volunteers**

Committees and task forces rely on the volunteerism and expertise of NPES parents who are encouraged to join a group based on their areas of professional knowledge or interest. For more information about the menu of volunteer opportunities offered at NPES, please contact Director of Development and Communications Laura McCammack

## **ADDRESSING CONCERNS AS A PARENT**

All parents at NPES agree to these norms for behavior in addressing any concerns that arise, as they have proven useful in addressing concerns effectively, promoting a respectful and healthy community for all, and modeling for children how to communicate and collaborate with an open mind to resolve misunderstandings or disagreements.

1. First, communicate with the classroom teacher, since you can resolve most questions or concerns that affect your child with the educator who knows them best, and who spends the most time with them. The teacher nearly always has a fuller, richer perspective to offer.
2. When collaborating with school employees, listen for understanding, not debate, and they will strive to do the same.
3. The teacher is to be regarded as the authority for conducting classroom activities and making academic judgments. Please respect their training, experience, professional judgment, and expertise.
4. Accept that some challenging situations in human development are more process-oriented, and take time; there isn't always an easy answer, or a quick fix. And there is much to be gained in terms of growth and development through patience, flexible thinking, and time to reflect and process before acting. See the big picture.
5. Raise issues respectfully and thoughtfully. If an issue involves your child/children, bring concerns to the classroom teacher first, and do so as someone seeking information and understanding. If you've been triggered by your child's emotions, that is understandable. But perhaps that is not the best time to send a long email or drop by the room for a moment...when the conversation may deserve much more thought and time.
6. Recognize that it is not always possible for a faculty or staff member to return a call or email quickly, and in some instances, may take a day to do so. If it is time sensitive or urgent on a school day, please call. While it is fine to email after hours or over the weekend when necessary, please recognize that you may not hear back until school resumes, unless it is a safety issue.
7. If the issue is not resolved, or if perceived to be widespread beyond the classroom, bring your concerns to the Head of School to discuss further.

In regard to the Board of Directors: while the Board encourages parent communication and interaction on appropriate topics, the Board is not responsible for the administration of day-to-day operations of the school. If the situation does not present a school-wide concern or challenge existing school policy, the Board will defer to the teacher/Head of School for resolution. Issues concerning student or teacher conduct, academic achievement, or discipline usually do not constitute a school-wide concern or challenge to warrant Board involvement. Confidentiality policies may prevent Board members from having all the pertinent information about a given situation and thus cannot responsibly respond to parents on some matters.

## **SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Student Directory**

Each year a Student Directory is made available to NPES families. This is for family use only and not intended to be used or shared with others for non-school related commercial or charitable solicitations. Please log in to <https://npeschool.bigsis.com/portal/> to access the directory.

### **Changes to Contact Information**

Please notify Office Manager [Kerry Maman](mailto:maman@npeschool.org) (maman@npeschool.org) of any changes to

your contact information. Your family is responsible for updating any changes to your home address, work address, phone numbers, or email addresses in Schoology, Magnus, Seesaw, Procure, and BigSIS. If you're having difficulty making changes, please contact Ms. Maman.

### **Contacting Faculty and Staff**

Parents, administration, and faculty work together to support all NPES students. NPES staff will make every effort to respond to emails and other phone messages within 24 hours. We pride ourselves on our responsiveness and care for our students, and we also want our school employees to lead balanced and healthy lives away from school with their own families. We don't see this as an *either-or* proposition, but instead as an intentional balance we seek to maintain for the well-being of our community, and to model for our students. The goal of all communication with parents is to build a strong and positive partnership to help students achieve their greatest personal success. Respectful and appropriate communication between home and school is expected from all stakeholders.

### **Teacher Office Hours**

K-8 teachers at NPES will hold office hours for a total of one hour (before and/or after school) each week. Teachers will post their schedule for office hours in Schoology or Seesaw, however, the schedule is subject to change based on student needs. Any changes to the schedule will be communicated.

Office hours are scheduled to allow students to receive small group academic support outside of class time. Student needs take priority during a teacher's office hours; however, parents may also use this time to conference with a teacher by appointment. If a student will be utilizing office hours, the teacher must be notified by the parent (and the student when appropriate) by email in advance of the scheduled office hours.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parent-teacher conferences are a vital component of the relationship between home and school. It is important for parents to attend conferences to discuss a student's areas of strength and of growth during the first reporting period and in mid-March (see school calendar for dates). Students in 3rd through 8th grade attend conferences with their parents as they practice the skills of reflection and self-advocacy, developing their own goals for growth. Parents are expected to sign up in a timely manner for conferences when notified via *Shark Bites* (our weekly electronic newsletter).

At any time, teachers or parents may request a meeting. Appointments are required and should be made at least 24 hours in advance of a school visit or virtual conference.

### **Shark Bites**

The school's weekly electronic newsletter, *Shark Bites*, is distributed community-wide via email most Fridays throughout the school year and periodically through the summer.

## **MEDICAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **IMPORTANT NOTE REGARDING COVID-19**

Pandemic related medical protocols, procedures, and requirements will be communicated separately in writing by the school, based on the most current CDC,

CDPH, IDPH, and ISBE guidelines for schools--and the counsel of North Park's own medical committee--as always, with the safety of our students, personnel, and families foremost in mind. All pandemic-related medical policies and protocols communicated by NPES for and during the 2021-22 school year are extensions of this Handbook, and thus are official school policy applicable to all members of our community.

### **Health Records**

The State of Illinois and the City of Chicago require schools to maintain current health records for all children. North Park Elementary School uses Magnus Health to collect, evaluate, and store student health records. Parents will be given login instructions prior to the start of the school year. Requirements by grade level and forms requested by NPES include:

#### **ALL Preschool 3-year-old Students and NEW Preschool 4-year-old Students:**

- Child Health Examination
- Complete Immunization Record signed and stamped by a doctor\*

#### **Kindergarten Students (K):**

- Child Health Examination
- Complete Immunization Record signed or stamped by a doctor\*
- Dental Exam on Illinois form
- Eye Exam on Illinois form dated within one year of the first day of school

#### **Second Grade Students (2nd):**

- Dental Exam on Illinois form

#### **Sixth Grade Students (6th):**

- Child Health Examination
- Complete Immunization Record signed and stamped by a doctor\*
- Dental Exam on Illinois form

#### **New Students K-8**

- Child Health Exam on Illinois form
- Complete/Current Immunization Record stamped and signed by health care provider
- Dental Exam on Illinois form
- Eye Exam on Illinois form dated within the last 12 months

[Illinois Physical Health & Immunization Exam Form](#)

[Illinois Dental Exam Form](#)

[Illinois Eye Exam Form](#)

[Minimum Immunization Requirements Entering a Child Care Facility or School in Illinois, Fall-2019](#)

Immunizations not given due to medical reasons (i.e., allergy, adverse reaction, immunodeficiency) or not at scheduled times must be documented by a healthcare

provider. The parent must document immunizations not given based on religious grounds. Documentation can be included directly on the medical form or in a separate letter accompanying the form.

### **Medicine Dispensing Authorization**

If your child needs to take medication during school, a new medication authorization form is needed each school year. Complete the Permission for Prescription Medications form in your Magnus Health account. No medications are given to students without proper authorization from a parent or health care provider. If your child uses an inhaler for asthma or requires an emergency EpiPen for allergic reactions, contact the office manager. An allergy and/or asthma action plan form should be completed in your Magnus Health account.

### **Allergic Reaction Protocol**

Parents who have children with allergies are encouraged to meet with the child's teacher early in the school year. Together, teachers and parents working cooperatively may prevent severe reactions and the school will be better prepared, in case of a severe reaction. Please note that any allergy will require an action plan signed by a physician.

### **Nut Allergy Awareness and Safety Policy**

NPES makes every effort to maintain awareness of students' allergies to nuts, and the effect that proximity to nuts and nut-based products can have on those students (physically, emotionally, and in terms of inclusion/exclusion). Each enclosed space in the school is designated as a "nut-aware" zone. The school aims to be nut and peanut free at all times, including lunches and snacks. **No student should come to school with food items that contain nuts or nut derivatives.**

Food brought to school for class parties or activities must be nut free, store bought, and not manufactured on equipment or in a facility containing nuts. It is also most inclusive for students when a gluten-free option is provided at such gatherings, so that no child is left out of the celebration. The ingredient list of any food item sent to school to share among students should be examined carefully for nuts and/or ingredients manufactured in facilities that also process nuts and nut products. Sharing of foods by students themselves is prohibited so that all remain safe.

### **Health Services**

The NPES office has first aid kits available. NPES contracts with professional personnel to do speech/language screenings and hearing screenings during the school year. Other testing that is indicated by student performance can be referred to the appropriate specialist in cooperation with the parents. The parents are responsible for covering the costs of any such additional testing.

### **Health Policy**

**Please see the most recent communications from the school regarding COVID-19 for important updates to this policy. Policies related to the pandemic take precedence.**

The regulation of the State of Illinois Department of Health shall be observed regarding the exclusion from school of children when there is a contagious disease diagnosis.

Students are sent home if their temperature is 100.4 degrees or above. Students must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school. Parents are to notify the office when a child has contracted a contagious disease. Students must be vomit- and diarrhea-free for 24 hours before returning to school.

### **Lice**

Students are professionally checked for head lice at least twice during the school year. If a child is sent home due to lice, they will need to be nit-free before being allowed to return to school. Hair re-checks will be done prior to returning to the classroom.

### **Student Accident Insurance**

NPES provides student accident insurance which is supplemental to parent's primary health insurance. The insurance will not duplicate benefits paid by any other plan. Accidents must be reported to the school within 20 days of the incident. Questions regarding claim procedures should be directed to First Agency, Inc at 269-381-6630. Claim forms are available in the school office.

### **Excuses from Physical Education**

If a student is to be excused from gym class, a written note is necessary. If the child needs to miss more than one week, a doctor's note is expected.

### **Concussions and Head Injuries**

Students and student athletes must comply with the Illinois' Youth Sports Concussion Safety Act when participating in any athletic activity, including practice or competition. Staff members will notify the parent/guardian of a student who exhibits symptoms consistent with that of a concussion. In the event of a concussion or head injury, a student must be removed from participation or competition at that time and that such student will not be allowed to return to play unless cleared to do so by an Illinois licensed physician. Parents who have children who participate as student athletes are required to review and consent to the school policy on concussions and head injuries in the Magnus Health system as directed by the Illinois State Board of Education.

### **Care of Students with Diabetes**

If your child has diabetes and requires assistance with managing this condition while at school and school functions, a Diabetes Care Plan must be submitted to the school through your Magnus Health Account. Parents/guardians are responsible for and must:

1. Inform the school in a timely manner of any change which needs to be made to the Diabetes Care Plan on file with the school for their child.
2. Inform the school in a timely manner of any changes to their emergency contact numbers or contact numbers of health care providers.
3. Sign the Diabetes Care Plan.
4. Grant consent for and authorize designated school representatives to communicate directly with the health care provider whose instructions are included in the Diabetes Care Plan. For further information, please contact the Office Manager.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

In addition to birth certificates and documentation of health examinations, NPES is

required to maintain records regarding the academic growth of each student. These records are available to parents to review in the company of the Head of School and/or Director of Learning Services, by appointment. Should parents enroll their student in another school, they can request that NPES send academic records to the student's new school. Unofficial records will be sent by NPES to the new school within ten (10) days of the parent's request provided the family account is paid in full and the outstanding due NPES balance is zero. For faculty or staff at NPES to communicate with any outside providers who may be working with a student, NPES must have a current Consent to Release Information on file with the Director of Learning Services. This document must be updated each academic year to include contact information of any provider that the parents wish to include on their child's academic team.

## **TUTORING**

NPES families may employ the school's teachers to provide tutoring and/or childcare services outside of the regular school day. Compensation rates are set between the employee and hiring family and billing for these services is transacted outside of the purview of the NPES Business Office. Students are encouraged to utilize office hours prior to engaging in a tutoring relationship with any employee.

Should a parent choose to engage a tutor outside of the NPES faculty, it may be possible to use space within the school building for those services. The Director of Learning Services should be contacted in the event of interest by a family.

## **ROOM PARENTS**

One way for parents to participate at NPES is to become a Room Parent. Tasks include helping the teacher with class-related duties, including contacting other parents for help on projects or field trips, arranging for parent involvement in class parties, organizing teacher appreciation week activities, and hosting the year-end luncheon. Optimally, each class will have two to three room parents. Parents interested in serving as a room parent should contact the Office Manager Kerry Maman.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Each classroom teacher plans field trips during the year. A field trip fee is included in school fees, so NPES will not collect money for most local educational trips. However, parents might incur an additional fee for optional special field trips. Upon signing of the contract, permission is granted for student participation in field trips. Seesaw, Schoology, and the school calendar will be updated to inform parents of field trips.

Parents may be asked to help supervise students on a field trip. Parents are not to bring other children along.

NPES schedules several multi-day overnight field trips for middle school students during the school year. There is a fee for participation and families may opt out of these trips.

## **SERVICE LEARNING**

Through service learning, students acquire and use academic skills to become leaders, perform needed service and increase civic participation, reflect on and learn from their experiences as they define who they are, and provide tangible benefits that serve the

community. Service learning brings together the five competencies of self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.

At NPES we feel strongly about connecting with our community, from relationships within the school to the broader neighborhood and city. Our students are learning on campus, in the surrounding and nearby neighborhood and across the city. Students gain a deep knowledge of a topic; the learning piece is what sets service-learning apart from volunteering and what makes for meaningful work. We make intentional curricular connections in our work and have content resources in place at each grade level so that teachers are implementing specific lessons around their topic. There are clear service or action components at least twice a year, and our students are frequently out in the community working with partners.

All NPES students are expected to behave in a way that represents the school in a positive light when out in the community. Students should be respectful and engaged during service learning experiences.

NPES Service Learning Topics are:

- K: Project Kindergarten
- 1st: Project Generations
- 2nd: Food Insecurity
- 3rd: Immigration Insights
- 4th: Project Local Heroes
- 5th: Environmental Stewardship
- Middle School: Varied based on student interest

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

NPES promotes environmental sustainability within our school with the support of all members of our community. NPES partners with WasteNot to compost our organic waste. Students should place food scraps in green bins in classrooms or the large compost bin in the atrium during snack and lunch. Recycling bins are also available in each classroom and should be utilized throughout the school day.

## **SECURITY AND SAFETY**

### **School and Classroom Security**

Parents and guests are required to sign-in upon entering the school, doing so at the check-in window in the front vestibule on Montrose Avenue. Parents and students may not open the door for visitors without permission from the main office. All persons shall abide by the regulatory signs posted on school property.

Any persons violating the provisions of the school's policy with respect to visitor registration will be asked to leave the school premises. The school utilizes security cameras to monitor the public areas of the campus.

### **NPES Employees are Mandated Reporters**

All employees of the school are mandated by law to report, or cause a report to be made, to the Illinois Department of Children & Family Services whenever they have reasonable

cause to believe a child, known to the employee in their official or professional capacity, may be abused or neglected. The Illinois DCFS also requires NPES employees to acknowledge that privileged communication between NPES professional and client is not grounds for failure to report. Reporting is done by calling the DCFS Hotline at 1-800-252-2873 or 1-800-25ABUSE.

### **Mandated Reporting of Firearm Incidents and Drug Offenses to Law Enforcement**

All weapons are prohibited at NPES. Illinois State law requires the Head of School to report to Chicago Police Department and the Illinois State Police, the following events:

- Firearm incidents in, on, or around school property.
- Instances of drug violations in, on, or around school property.

If you or your child become aware or suspicious of any of the above events, you are urged to immediately contact the Head of School and your child's homeroom teacher.

### **Background Checks and Fingerprinting of Employees**

All employees of NPES are required to undergo fingerprinting and a background check at time of hire. Volunteers who will have occasion to work with students without NPES staff present must first pass a fingerprint background check. Fingerprinting forms can be picked up from the Office Manager.

### **Permission for Pick Up**

At the time of registration/re-enrollment, parents identify those who have permission to pick up a child other than a custodial parent or guardian. It is important to notify the child's teacher and the office should pick up procedures or the party responsible for pick up change. Any person outside of the custodial parent or guardian picking up a child should be prepared to provide photo identification to match the notification by the custodial parent or guardian.

### **School Functions Off Campus**

The Winter Showcase, Graduation Ceremony, and theater performances are held at a venue other than the school. For children's safety, the school's legal responsibility, and for insurance reasons, these guidelines must be followed:

- Parents/guardians must attend the school functions with their children.
- All students, unless otherwise notified, are to sit with parents/guardians.
- Children must stay in the designated area unless accompanied by a parent/guardian.

## **ELEVATOR**

Students may not use the elevator unless accompanied by an adult or with adult permission. Students with injuries will need a doctor's note stating the length of time accommodations may be needed.

## **BICYCLES**

There are bike racks on the sidewalk adjacent to the main entrance of NPES. Students are responsible for ensuring their bicycles are securely locked to the rack. NPES is not responsible for loss, damage, or theft of bikes stored at the racks.

## PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

All personal electronic devices are brought to school at the student's own risk and are to be turned off and kept in backpacks (K-3) or lockers (4th-8th grade) during school hours unless the student has asked a teacher for permission. If permission is granted by a teacher, the student should use the device responsibly and for what the teacher granted the use for. Due to the disruption to class, devices must remain off until a student exits the building. Should you need to contact your child, please call the Main Office. If a student's cell phone or personal electronic device is confiscated by any faculty or staff member, a caregiver must retrieve it from the Main Office. After repeated offenses, the student will be prohibited from bringing electronic devices to school.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

### Emergency Communications

North Park utilizes the SchoolMessenger system to deliver text messages straight to your mobile phone with important information about events, school closings, safety alerts, and more. You can participate in this free service by sending a text message of "Y" or "yes" to our school short code number, 67587. A test communication is sent to all families by October 31 to ensure proper contact information.

### Campus Evacuation Plan

In the event of an emergency that causes the need to evacuate the NPES campus, we will go to the Ravenswood United Church of Christ gym (2050 W Pensacola Ave), Welles Park (2333 W Sunnyside Ave), and/or Sulzer Library (4455 N Lincoln Ave).

### Fire and Disaster Drills

Fire and disaster drills are important safety precautions. Fire drills are performed monthly under the guidance of the Chicago Fire Department. In the event of a storm warning or civil defense warning, no child will be dismissed early unless the parent or guardian comes, in person, to the school for the child.

### Crisis Plan

Teachers will discuss with their students the different situations that may affect our school. Drills for lock downs will be held at regular intervals. Each teacher has a complete Crisis Plan document to follow in case of an emergency.

## ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The curriculum at NPES is rooted in our mission of “instilling a sense of curiosity, a passion for learning, and a commitment to having an impact on the broader community.” Core elements of our guiding principles keep us focused on the overarching mission and inform our curricular and pedagogical choices.

### NPES Habits of Learning

Preparation/Participation/Self-Advocacy: Taking responsibility for learning and using feedback to become a more effective learner.

NPES students show:

**Preparation** by

- coming to class prepared with necessary materials/supplies
- handing in assignments on time without reminders and meeting deadlines
- preparing for assignments and assessments
- managing materials in an organized way, knowing where assignments are and when they need to be turned in
- prioritizing tasks and devoting an appropriate amount of time and attention to work

**Participation** by:

- demonstrating active listening and monitoring air time
- staying focused on the topic at hand
- avoiding side conversations or inappropriate interactions
- adding new, valuable information, or questions to a discussion
- articulately expressing ideas
- demonstrating resourcefulness and independence while working

**Self-advocacy** by:

- seeking out teachers with questions
- following routines independently
- taking initiative by making corrections and trying to solve problems or answer questions
- being a self-starter, understanding what is expected, and doing your best when working independently
- following up after an assessment, paper, or project is handed back to understand how to learn more effectively

**The use of teacher feedback to be a more effective learner** by:

- utilizing rubrics/assignment descriptions to improve work
- applying advice given in writing conferences to improve a piece of writing
- using feedback from assessments/homework to improve
- responding quickly and appropriately to redirection from the teacher or peers

**Emotional and Physical Health Curriculum**

NPES provides each student health education on the following topics based on the guidelines from the Illinois State Board of Education and our school's values and mission: human ecology and health; human growth and development; prevention and control of disease; age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention education; public and environmental health; consumer health; safety education and disaster survival; mental health and illness; medical and legal ramifications of alcohol, drug and tobacco use; cancer prevention and detection education; and cultural competency, including gender identity and gender expression (in partnership with Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago), and other aspects of human identity, like race, ethnicity, faith, body shape, physical differences, neurodiversity, and more.

## **Curriculum**

While NPES integrates critical thinking, collaboration, social-emotional well-being, self-confidence and self-reliance, empathy, resilience, study skills/habits, technology skills, design thinking, creative problem-solving, cultural competency, digital citizenship, and self-expression into instruction across many areas, our core academic subject matters taught include Literacy (reading and writing), Mathematics, Science (Laboratory and STEM), Social Studies, Spanish Language and Cultures, Creative Drama, Visual Art, Music, Library and Information Literacy, and Physical Education.

In addition to the core curriculum, students in grades 6th through 8th have a weekly elective each trimester which is interest-based. The middle school and co-curricular teams facilitate the electives, providing students with course descriptions and allowing students to choose their elective.

## **Student Confidentiality Policy**

NPES provides each student and their family rights to privacy that will be protected to the fullest extent possible. The school acknowledges that both state and Federal law protect such rights to privacy with respect to student records and other sensitive information. All employees of NPES are expected to respect these rights, as well as comply with all applicable rules, regulations and laws, completely. Willful violation of the applicable rules, regulations and laws will result in disciplinary action being taken by the school.

## **Learning Services, Support for Neurodiversity, Coordination with CPS**

The Learning Services Program at North Park is grounded in the belief that all students are capable and can be successful. We strive to accommodate students with diverse learning needs--social-emotional, behavioral, and academic--to encourage them to reach their highest potential. We value and employ a team approach in caring for the whole-child. Throughout a student's educational experience, from PK3 to 8th grade, we partner with families to understand, identify, and support diverse learning needs. Should needs be identified, the Director of Learning Services works with classroom teachers and outside providers (paid for by the parents) to develop and institute the appropriate learning plan, which includes determining accommodations for success, monitoring progress, and providing opportunities for feedback.

The Learning Services Program may refer a student for a comprehensive evaluation (neuropsychological, speech, occupational therapy) or interventive support (tutoring) based on the specific learning need, challenge, or difference. NPES is committed to working with the family and the provider(s) in a transparent manner and as a condition of enrollment. While North Park does not have learning specialists on staff who can work 1:1 with children, we understand that a student's academic, physical, or social-emotional needs may require specialized support paid for by the parents and provided by professionals outside of our school, so we have designated spaces on campus for providers to work with a child during school hours. North Park is committed to working with families and the provider(s) in a respectful and transparent manner, with a collaborative approach, and as a condition of enrollment. Parents are required to make NPES aware of any evaluations or diagnoses and provide consent annually for relevant faculty, administration, and providers to communicate regarding the provision of educational care and to support the well-being of the student. Any communication

and/or documentation will be kept confidential in accordance with the Student Confidentiality Policy.

Our faculty are encouraged to refer students to the Learning Services Program, are provided guidance in accommodating the varied learning styles of students within their classroom, and are expected to provide appropriate support as outlined by the Director of Learning Services. Faculty also utilize the Student Advocacy Team (SAT) composed of 6-8 faculty members for problem solving and to explore opportunities for supporting students and families. Students are encouraged to understand their needs as learners and, when developmentally appropriate, advocate for themselves.

When appropriate and/or at the request of the family, the Director of Learning Services seeks documentation through Chicago Public Schools for the student. Following assignment of an IEP or a 504 Plan, the Director of Learning Services coordinates any services provided via IDEA grant funding and necessary documentation to maintain compliance for IEP or 504 Plans.

The school's Student Advocacy Team (SAT) is responsible for creating and embedding systems of support, as well as providing training and resources for those who will be implementing the systems. This team, which meets weekly, is comprised of the Director of Teaching and Learning, the Director of Learning Services, and six faculty members, allows NPES to more clearly articulate a referral process, streamline and systematize the documentation of student concerns with a focus on data-driven information, and create a collaborative space in which to problem solve and set goals for students. Following notification to parents of intent to refer and submission of a referral via a standardized process, the teacher of record works with the team to develop specific and measurable goals for students of concern. During subsequent meetings, progress toward the established goals is monitored and informs decisions as to changes that should be made for the student in order to promote achievement. The Student Advocacy Team affirms NPES's commitment to providing support not only to students but also to educators through professional development, provision of resources, and opportunities to collaborate with colleagues on strategies to promote achievement.

Students are admitted to and retained by North Park if their diverse learning needs can be supported within our program. Many of our academic routines and practices allow for differentiation based on individual student needs and progress. The curriculum and teachers are responsive and adaptive based on student levels or needs as determined by ongoing assessments and observations. While we provide accommodations and differentiate instruction in the classroom, we do not modify the grade level expectations for individual students (it is not possible to do so given how interactive and collaborative our instruction is). In the rare case that a student might require more intensive or individualized support than we can provide, we work with families to find a more appropriate school placement.

### **School Materials**

Textbooks and non-consumable educational materials are considered the property of the school. If a student misplaces or damages these materials, the family will be responsible

for any replacement fees.

## **Homework**

The purpose of homework is to reinforce instruction and provide students with opportunities to explore outside of class. Following are the general expectations for homework in the different grades. As individual students work at different speeds, the estimated times are offered as guidelines rather than specific requirements.

Daily reading is invaluable for students in all grades, and we encourage parents to establish reading as a habit. Parents should encourage children to read independently and/or read aloud to them every day. On occasions when other homework is lighter, students are expected to spend homework time reading books or magazines of their choice.

If parents have concerns regarding their children's work, work habits, and/or homework assignments, they should contact their child's teacher directly.

- **Kindergarten:** Kindergarten students do not typically have homework, except for a book buddy bag (with a reader) that goes home daily starting in October, with just a few minutes of reading to do (more about building the habit).
- **Grades 1-2** In general, students should work on homework (including reading) for about 15-30 minutes daily, with specific assignments two to three days each week.
- **Grades 3-5:** Students may have from 1/2 hour to 1 hour of homework each night (total) in one or more subjects. Homework expectations and requirements are listed in Schoology on a regular basis.
- **Grades 6-8:** Students will be given homework regularly and can expect up to 1.5 hours of daily homework. Students are encouraged to contact their teachers if work takes longer than 30 minutes per class. Homework expectations and requirements are updated in Schoology on a regular basis.

## **Assessment: Individual Strengths and Areas for Growth, and External Benchmarks**

AIMSWeb Plus is used as a universal screening tool for all students in Kindergarten through fifth grade and some students in grades six through eight. Based on the results of this screening, students may be identified for additional support and monitored for progress towards goals based on supports that are provided.

NPES administers the NWEA-MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) to students in grades 3rd through 8th each year. NPES utilizes test results to look for trends and identify goals for instruction, as well as to consider the effectiveness of its own teaching and learning. Results are sent home with students.

Students in 5th and 8th grade Spanish take the Assessment of Performance Toward Proficiency in Languages (Spanish) test in the spring. This is used to identify growth and inform instruction.

Students in Kindergarten through third grade participate in Fountas and Pinnell benchmark assessments in the fall and spring each year. Fourth and fifth grade students participate in Fountas and Pinnell assessments as needed based on teacher discretion. NPES utilizes these results to guide students as they choose "just right" texts for reading

independently and to ensure students are receiving instruction at a level that is appropriate for their skills.

### **Reporting of Student Progress**

The preschool utilizes Seesaw software for the posting of photos, blogs about child development, and weekly information and messages. Parents in grades K through 2nd have access to their child's learning journal via Seesaw. Seesaw is used to inform parents of areas for student growth and academic progress through the posting of midterm comments and report cards. Dates for cumulative reporting check-ins are listed on the school calendar. Questions about your child's progress should be directed to the teacher.

Via Schoology, parents in grades 3rd through 8th have access to grades and cumulative scores in an ongoing way. Grades are updated within one week of assignment submission. Dates for cumulative reporting check-ins are listed on the school calendar. Questions about your child's progress should be directed to the teacher.

Final report cards at the end of a marking period (Trimester 1, Trimester 2, Trimester 3) will be located for parents in the BigSIS portal.

### **Reporting Structure**

Preschool teachers write a comprehensive narrative report twice a year about students that focuses on social-emotional, fine and gross motor, number sense, and literacy skills.

Kindergarten through second grade students receive report cards with a comprehensive narrative as well. Kindergarten teachers also provide reading benchmark levels and a summary of achievement level for basic academic skills that include sight words, letter names, letter sounds, CVC decoding, and ability to count to 100. First and second grade student report cards identify whether the student is exceeding, meeting, approaching, or needs improvement in the reading benchmark and students are ranked in writing, word study, math, science, and social studies.

In third through eighth grades, report cards consist of a narrative report that highlights the key academic and social-emotional areas for growth and strength, as well as an academic grade for each content area.

The following is the grading scale used for academic grade reporting, with plus (+) or minus (-) indicating the top or bottom of the range:

#### **Grades 3-8**

- A = 90 - 100 Excellent Work
- B = 80 - 89 Very Good Work
- C = 70 - 79 Satisfactory Work
- D = 60 - 69 Needs Improvement
- F = 0 - 68 Unsatisfactory Work

#### **Co-Curriculars (6th-8th)**

- S = Superior
- M = Meeting
- A = Approaching

NI = Needs Improvement

At all grade levels midterms are *exception* reporting, meaning that teachers take the time to reflect on all students at the midterm date and contact parents if a concern exists or they'd like to share notable progress. As always, parents are welcome to reach out to teachers to discuss their student at any point during the year.

### **Promotion and Retention**

A student who finishes the school year and has shown satisfactory progress for the year shall be promoted to the following grade. Promotion and retention are handled on an individual basis by the Head of School, informed by the counsel of all who work with a student.

### **Student Leadership Roles**

Student Council is the student governing body of NPES. Representatives from each grade 3rd through 8th meet with faculty advisors. They plan philanthropic fundraising events as well as various activities throughout the year, including Spirit Week, school dances, a movie night, and talent show. The Student Council clears all fundraising ideas through the faculty advisors and the Director of Development. NPES does not encourage selling items door-to-door.

Students in grades 6th through 8th may also choose to volunteer to be on the Safety Patrol. Safety Patrol responsibilities include helping other students out of their vehicles during dropoff and helping the students and faculty during emergency drills.

Eighth grade students have the opportunity to work as admissions ambassadors for our Director of Admissions, as well as other leadership roles that develop.

### **Social Emotional Learning**

Our work on social emotional learning (SEL) is rooted in the belief that when children feel safe, recognized, and understood in the classroom, they can present their authentic selves and excel academically in our community. Social and emotional learning is the process of acquiring the skills to recognize and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging situations effectively. Our curriculum is deeply embedded in research and an understanding of the developmental needs of our students at various age levels. The framework and general structure for social-emotional learning at NPES is based on the research at the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). The five competencies on which we base our work with students are self-management, self-awareness, responsible decision-making, social awareness, and relationship skills.

## **BEHAVIORAL NORMS AND DISCIPLINE POLICIES**

### **Expectations for Student Behavior**

NPES students are expected to practice self-regulation skills and grow in their ability to do so as we strive to create peaceful and harmonious relationships in the community. Students participate in daily class meetings, demonstrate self-awareness, as well as awareness of others' feelings and physical space. Students show responsible

decision-making skills and make contributions to the NPES community through their daily practice as citizens and engagement in service opportunities.

**When mistakes or harm to the community happen, students are expected to:**

- tell the truth to the best of their ability
- own the impact of their behaviors (not only their intentions)
- reflect and problem solve, with faculty support
- listen to those who were harmed, seeking to understand and empathize
- take actions to repair, and demonstrate a genuine interest in restoration
- not repeat the harm

NPES requires that its students, faculty and administrators follow the rules and regulations of the school. The school also expects parents to recognize and follow these rules and regulations. Courtesy and civility are part of this, especially when it relates to dealings between parents and the administration or representatives of the school, including teaching staff. Parents not only have a contractual relationship with the school, but most importantly, they can set an example of respectful communication for students. Therefore, NPES places great emphasis on conduct of all members of the school community, including families and employees.

**Positive Discipline**

NPES uses Positive Discipline, which is based on the premise that human beings in community seek belonging and significance, and that “misbehavior” (the violation of school boundaries and norms) becomes the student’s solution to the problem of not belonging. Effective discipline seeks to connect and uncover the source of the disconnection, rather than only attempting to change behavior.

In NPES classrooms you will see students socializing and collaborating around academic choice, class meetings that encourage connections and problem-solving, a “think spot” area where students can gather their minds and bodies, teachers speaking in a positive and respectful way, the use of respectful and logical consequences, rules that were developed as a community around student hopes and dreams, students reflecting on their learning and thinking about their thinking, and teachers who are modeling expectations and setting clear paths to success.

As students enter middle school (and puberty) and their needs change, they transition into the advisory setting where our curriculum is authentic and responsive to the nuances of each advisor and advisory group (on average about nine students from 6th-8th grade) but framed by Positive Discipline. Advisory groups meet periodically throughout the week to build community, encourage one another, and solve problems within a democratic framework. Students discuss relevant hot topics, work on executive functioning issues, experience team and trust building activities, meet independently with the advisor and set individual goals, work with Lil’ Buddies from PK-5, and participate in a project fair experience that brings together service-learning and a passion project.

NPES’s advisory model builds the skills of community-based problem solving by asking students to explicitly learn and practice tools of self-regulation, communication, mutual respect, and focus on solutions instead of blame. Students learn about adolescent brain development to gain a deeper understanding of their development and to purposefully

seek to develop their own growth mindset, embracing mistakes and imperfection as the richest opportunities to learn and grow.

While specific goals and learning objectives are set in advisory, there is more autonomy and freedom to respond to the needs of adolescents, and the specific advisory group. The academic curriculum is still based on the domains of engaging academics, effective management, and positive community. As students move from class to class for academic subjects, they find a consistent and common approach that fosters a strong connection between academic and social growth.

### **Positive Discipline Framework**

The NPES Positive Discipline Framework provides all faculty, staff, and students a structure for discipline. This framework identifies the daily practices teachers are expected to engage in as they build a respectful and connected classroom community. Additionally, it provides possible responses faculty/staff might employ when students exhibit level 1, 2 or 3 behaviors. Underlying all NPES discipline policies is a belief that behavior has underlying causes that should be unpacked through a thoughtful, intentional process, and that the building of social-emotional skills is the responsibility of the school, students, and parents in partnership. Students are treated in a kind and firm way that holds them accountable and brings them a sense of belonging while also recognizing that mistakes and harm happen; it's how we respond to these mistakes and harm that defines who we are as a community.

<b>Expected Daily Practice For Teachers</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Build relationships of trust</li><li>❖ Firm and kind</li><li>❖ Student-generated guidelines with frequent check-ins</li><li>❖ Regular class meetings</li><li>❖ Ask vs tell</li><li>❖ Specific instruction in social skills</li><li>❖ Classroom greetings</li><li>❖ Regular whole class self-regulation</li><li>❖ Encouragement</li><li>❖ Focus on and teach respect vs compliance</li><li>❖ Clear routines, regularly practiced</li></ul>
<b>Level 1: Behavior/mistakes that are developmentally appropriate that can be efficiently redirected</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Connect before correct</li><li>❖ Visual or verbal redirection</li><li>❖ Proximity</li><li>❖ Use the "Cool Down Zone"</li><li>❖ Complete reflection sheet</li><li>❖ Process managed by teachers</li></ul>

**Level 2: Behavior/mistakes that persist despite repeated interventions or are significantly disruptive or are hurtful (but not a safety concern)**

- ❖ Self-regulate for adult and student
- ❖ Parent/guardian contact with an explanation of response
- ❖ Teacher/student problem-solving plan
- ❖ Make an agreement with the student
- ❖ Ask for administrative support/help/observation
- ❖ Bring the case to the Student Advocacy Team (SAT)
- ❖ Conference with specialist
- ❖ Managed by teachers with administrative support from Head of School or designated administrator
- ❖ Minor referral to track, if desired

**Level 3: Behaviors/mistakes that endanger self, others, property or that persists after level 2 interventions**

- ❖ **Ensure safety**
- ❖ Parent/guardian contact with an explanation of response
- ❖ Teacher/administrator & student problem-solving meeting to plan for repair
- ❖ Time out (sometimes from school) as appropriate
- ❖ Student removed from the situation (class or common area)
- ❖ Teacher/administrator calls the family to explain the incident, how repair made/will be made
- ❖ Major referral is submitted same day
- ❖ Managed by Head of School or designated administrator with support from teacher

**Bullying and Harassment Policies**

NPES is committed to fostering in each child an understanding and acceptance of all human beings, without discrimination against sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexuality, race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, personal appearance, physical handicap, age, ability, and economic status. Creating an inclusive, equitable, and just school community requires much diligence and guidance, and a communal effort. Any form of demeaning or disrespectful behavior toward others is unacceptable and is not allowed. Bullying/harassment is an intentional, repeated, hurtful act (verbal, nonverbal or physical) committed by one or more persons toward others. In addition, the school views as an important precept the maintenance of a learning environment that permits students of diverse backgrounds and characteristics to develop their unique potential. Bullying is strictly prohibited by Illinois law and contrary to North Park's policies.

Bullying is defined as intentional, unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance and repeats over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally (including online) and excluding someone from a group on purpose. Bullying may occur on the Internet, in print or via telecommunications as well as in person. Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats,

intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is intended to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

Bullying includes cyber-bullying, which is defined as bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by social media, email and Internet communications. Cyber-bullying also includes assuming the identity of another person via electronic means.

Harassment is any gesture; written, verbal or physical act; or any electronic communication that hurts or intimidates another person based on the person's sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexuality, race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, personal appearance, physical handicap, age or other identifying characteristics. Harassment causes harm from discriminatory conduct that is pervasive or severe.

This policy prohibits any form of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, communicating unwelcome explicit words or images of a sexual nature or other verbal and physical conduct of a sexual nature.

This policy prohibits any form of hate speech. Hate speech is identity-targeted language including but not limited to racist slurs, gender-biased slurs, ethnic slurs, homophobic language and religious slurs.

The school views bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment, and hate speech--any conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's individual work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive school environment--as a major violation. Included in this is retaliation against students who have reported bullying.

Students who believe they have been the victim of bullying and harassment should report the incident(s) to a teacher, advisor, or an administrator immediately. A report of bullying or harassment may be made orally or in writing (paper or email). Anonymous reports may also be made in writing to the Head of School. Reports of bullying will be promptly investigated by the Head of School with assistance by the Head's designees. Reasonable efforts will be made to complete the investigation of bullying allegations within 10 school days after the date of the reporting. The school will follow up with students and families regarding actions taken. When warranted in the Head of School's judgment, disciplinary action will be taken. The appropriateness of the disciplinary action to be taken is the sole discretion of the school's.

### **School Attire**

The NPES community respects personal style and individuality of expression and dress. We are also conscious that dress codes historically have been inequitable, singling out female members of a community for more stringent scrutiny and regulation. We reject that approach. Instead, we believe it is the duty of the school to provide an educational environment that is safe, authentic, inclusive, and equitable, and that lends itself to the

academic focus and full engagement of all children, with as few barriers to that focus and engagement as possible.

Our guidelines on school attire were developed with children of all genders in mind. All students must wear clothing and maintain personal hygiene appropriate for a joyful and engaging but serious academic setting. It is expected that parents will monitor their child's choice of clothing. The school office will contact parents of children wearing inappropriate dress. Parents may be asked to bring other clothing to school for the student to wear.

To assist students and parents in determining clothing choice for school attire, the school has established the following guidelines for all students:

- Shirts must be of appropriate length (i.e. below the navel); low-cut, see-through or mesh shirts are not permitted.
- All clothing must cover undergarments.
- Clothing and footwear must not present a safety hazard (i.e. pants not longer than the heel of the shoes) or be disruptive or disturbing to others.
- Hats/bandanas should not be worn inside the building except on hat days.
- Sleepwear as outerwear is not acceptable except during spirit days.
- Attire may not have writing or pictures that advertise or promote alcohol, drugs, tobacco, obscenity, bullying or harassment, or violence.
- Faculty and staff, and ultimately the Head of School if disagreement exists, exercise final judgment on whether specific clothing is appropriate for school.

For gym class, all children must wear gym shoes, which are required in the gym. Other activity-specific requirements will be shared by the PE teacher.

### **Lunchroom Rules**

Students are expected to adhere to the following the lunchroom rules:

1. Each student is expected to remain seated during the lunch period.
2. Students are expected to maintain an appropriate tone of voice in the lunchroom (no yelling).
3. Each student should dispose of garbage by sorting appropriately into trash, compost, and recycling.
4. Students are expected to exit the lunchroom in an orderly manner.

Any pandemic-related policies about eating and drinking will be communicated to students and should be considered official school policy in addition to the above.

### **Expulsion**

Any activity by an individual student or group of students that interferes with the functioning of the school or that may be harmful to any individual or group of individuals within the school community or its environs is grounds for dismissal. A student is liable for expulsion for any serious violation of school policies, including but not limited to chronic disciplinary problems (including disruptive behavior); blatant disrespect of others; stealing; possession, use, or sale of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or other illegal substances; possession of a weapon; and bullying, cyber-bullying, and all forms of harassment, including hate

speech. No school Handbook can explicitly state every school rule or regulation. The school reserves the right to interpret and develop policies and regulations as necessary based on core philosophy and educational objectives. The decision to expel a student rests solely with the school's administration.

## **TECHNOLOGY USE POLICIES**

North Park Elementary School provides various technology resources, including computers and iPads, to authorized students to assist them in their classroom studies.

Each student has a responsibility to use the NPES computers/iPads and other technology resources in a manner that increases learning, enhances the school's public image, and is respectful of other students, teachers, and the school community.

Failure to follow the NPES policies regarding its computers/iPads and technology resources may lead to disciplinary measures, as well as suspension of access. All disciplinary measures taken as a result of violations of these policies are taken at the sole discretion of the school's administration.

### **Prohibited Use**

Students will be issued an email account for use at NPES. Sending, receiving, or accessing electronic mail outside the organization without faculty/staff permission is not allowed. In addition, access to logon sites such as Facebook, Instagram, or other social media, blogs, instant messaging, or chat sites is prohibited on NPES devices. Internet access at school is supervised by a teacher or staff member to the best of our ability.

Students will not change iPad settings or attempt to bypass the NPES web filter or firewall on shared devices. Tampering with settings may compromise the auto-backup features, and can result in a student's iPad privileges being suspended.

iPads are provided for school work only. These devices should not be loaned or shared with any person other than the user it is assigned to. No iPad should be left unattended.

Internet games, messaging services, downloading/installing apps will not be permitted on the NPES iPads unless requested by and supervised by a teacher or staff member.

Students are to respect copyright laws and should observe proper citing of accessed information. Students may not use any NPES computers/iPads for any illegal purpose. This will include the downloading of pirated materials or information of an inappropriate nature.

The presence on devices of guns, other weapons, pornographic images and material, inappropriate language, alcohol, drugs, gang-related symbols or pictures, or hate speech will result in disciplinary action by the school.

Only registered passwords are to be used on NPES devices.

### **Care Of Device**

Screens should be cleaned only with a soft dry cloth. No cleansers of any type are to be used. iPad batteries must be charged and ready for school each day. Cords and cables must be inserted carefully into the iPad to prevent damage. Care and caution must be

used when transporting the device. Avoid undue pressure or impact on the screen. No food or drink should be near the device. iPads must remain free of any writing, drawing, stickers, or labels that are not the property of NPES.

### **Software**

The software/apps originally installed by NPES must remain on the iPad in usable condition and be easily accessible at all times.

From time to time the school may add software applications for use in a particular class. Upgrades and additional installations of application software will be conducted by NPES.

If technical difficulties occur or illegal software is discovered, the iPad will be restored from a backup. The school does not accept responsibility for the loss of any software or documents deleted due to a reformat or a re-image.

### **File Storage/Printing**

Student files and work will require saving to a specified directory (Google Drive) that will be established by NPES. This access will allow students to save and retrieve their work from other devices and other locations, as needed.

Students are responsible for following proper procedures to ensure proper storage of work. Oversight, malfunctions, or accidental deletion are not acceptable excuses for not submitting required work.

Students will not have open access to printers at NPES. Printing of files at school will be supervised by the classroom teachers. This may include submission of work in .pdf format or collected by the teacher to be printed as required.

### **Damage**

Each student agrees to take reasonable care of the NPES computers/iPads and agrees that if they willfully or negligently damage any of these computers/iPads they shall be responsible for the cost of replacement or repair resulting from such damage as indicated by the Director of Technology.

Students are not responsible for damage caused by circumstances outside their reasonable control. All iPads have a glass protective covering. If that protective covering cracks, it needs to be replaced by the parents. NPES will install the covering by request.

Students may be provided with a substitute device while repairs are being made to their original, damaged device so they may continue their classwork. Backup of the files on the device should be made, if possible, before the device is submitted for repair. Utilizing Google Drive, Notability, etc. will ensure that necessary files are not lost. Once finished with an assignment, document, or project, students should put files in Google Drive or submit to Schoology.

In addition, missing adapter plugs or adapter cables will be the responsibility of the student to replace. We follow Apple's policy for AppleCare products, which gives two instances of Accidental Damage.

First and second cracked screen: \$75 each

Three or more cracked screens:\$250

Glass protector \$15

### **iPad/Technology Use at NPES**

iPads are learning tools and students must use them for that purpose and not for distracting themselves or others. NPES wants the expectations to be clear and known to all students, so they act responsibly and have their learning enriched by the available technology.

Should a teacher deem a student has misused technology or taken negligent care of their NPES-issued device, the student will be subject to a consequence as listed below and determined by the teacher or administrator (along with any payments needed to replace the device). Parents of the students will be notified.

Things that may be constitute misuse:

1. Off task, watching videos, playing games, distracting other students
2. More than one cracked iPad screen in three years
3. Not charging the iPad overnight (so it is ready for school) multiple times
4. Forgetting iPad at home multiple times
5. Physically abusing the device

Possible consequences for technology-use infractions, at the discretion of the teacher or administrator, and depending on the misuse:

1. Loss of iPad for the day
2. Loss of iPad overnight
3. Limited access to Applications in Self-Service such as only Schoology and Notability
4. Create a public service announcement (PSA) to address an aspect of care of school property/use of technology to be shared with class, teacher, and tech committee.
5. Loss of study hall time to create PSA/write a letter to teacher about what happened
6. Loss of student elective/service choice time to create PSA
7. Loss of after school activity to create PSA

Public Service Announcement should be related to

1. The infraction such as negligent care, inappropriate content, or misuse of school resources such as using email not related to school
2. Relate to Six Pillars of Character as it relates to technology
  - Self-management
  - Responsible decision-making skills
  - Harmony in relationships
  - Knowledge of self
  - Awareness of others
  - Service in the community

### **Privacy**

Students should understand that computers/iPads at NPES are community property and should at no time expect files to be considered private. NPES may, at its discretion, inspect all files or messages on its computers/iPads at any time for any reason. The school may also monitor its computers/iPads at any time to determine compliance with its policies, for

purposes of legal proceedings, to investigate misconduct, to locate information or for any other business purposes.

### **Vandalism**

Any form of vandalism will not be tolerated. This will include the intentional deleting of other user's files, altering content, posting inappropriate material, changing settings or configurations of computers/iPads or otherwise creating mischief that would impede the proper use of any of the NPES technology and interfere with the work of the school.

### **Sexting**

Sexting is transmitting sexually explicit or suggestive images or messages via email, instant messaging, websites, blogs, or any other digital communication vehicle. Any NPES student caught in the posting or solicitation of such material involving themselves or any member of the NPES community, on or off campus, will be banned from access to computers/iPads at NPES. Parents will be contacted, the appropriate authorities will be notified, and the school reserves the right to take its own disciplinary action at its sole discretion. Sexting that also constitutes sexual harassment per the definition in this Handbook will include additional disciplinary action by the school.

### **Harassment/Cyber-Bullying**

NPES does not tolerate discrimination or harassment based on race, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, sex, sexuality, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, or any other status protected by state and federal laws. Under no circumstances may students use the NPES computers/iPads to transmit, receive, or store any information that is discriminatory (hate speech), harassing, or defamatory in any way or that may cause undue stress or harm to another individual or group of individuals. Under no circumstances may students intimidate, threaten, humiliate, mock, harass, or impersonate other students or employees, nor use their image or likeness without permission.

### **Security**

NPES has installed or may install a variety of programs and devices to ensure the safety and security of the school's information and technology resources. Any student found tampering with or disabling any of these security measures will be subject to discipline.

### **Acknowledgement**

All parties (students, parents, NPES) acknowledge and agree to the terms detailed in the policy above prior to the issuing of any devices or access privileges. A record of acceptance will be on file at NPES.

## **ADMISSIONS POLICIES**

NPES admits students of all races, sexes, gender identities, gender expressions, religions, national or ethnic origins, or physical disabilities to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities made available to the students at the school. On the same basis it does not discriminate in its educational policies, admissions policies, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

NPES is committed to providing equal enrollment opportunities to qualified individuals with disabilities, which may include providing reasonable accommodations within our

program where appropriate, provided the school can do so without fundamentally altering the nature of its programs or creating an undue burden. In general, the family is responsible for notifying the Head of School and the Director of Learning Services of the need for an accommodation, and submitting a signed NPES consent form so the school can partner with outside providers and the family to support a child's learning and growth. The Head of School or Director of Learning Services may ask parents for input on the type of accommodations that may be necessary, or the actual functional limitations caused by the disability. Generally speaking, requests for accommodations must be supported by diagnostic evaluations or written recommendations by qualified and certified specialists in the relevant field.

The school accepts students who are able to complete the curriculum with reasonable accommodations and support that are within the scope of the school's programmatic or financial resources. The school reserves the right to terminate enrollment if a student's needs exceed the capabilities of the school as determined by the Head of School. This is an ethical consideration for the school, as NPES takes its commitment to supporting the well-being, learning, and growth of every child seriously, and when a student's needs cannot be met by our program, we strive to be honest and clear with families in the best interests of the child.

### **Application Policies & Procedures**

All prospective students must complete the online application, submit the required documentation, and pay the application fee in order to be considered for admission. NPES relies on the information obtained in the student application for admission and, therefore, any inaccuracies or omissions will be grounds for NPES to terminate any contract. By executing an application, families authorize NPES to investigate the applicant's academic records and to secure information NPES deems pertinent. Parents release NPES, its employees, agents, Board of Directors, as well as the sending institutions from all liability resulting from or pertaining to furnishing of records, documents, and other information provided to NPES for admission.

Parents are aware of and agree to abide by the fact that students are admitted to NPES based on its professional interpretation and evaluation of the information gathered during the application process for the general welfare of the school. All recommendations and materials submitted and engendered by the application process are held in strict confidence. By signing the application, parents agree that they waive the right to review student recommendations and other materials submitted.

### **Student Acceptance**

PK3 students must be three years old on or by September 1st and PK4 students must be four years old on or by September 1st. Kindergarten applicants must be five years old on or before September 1st. NPES requires a certified birth certificate to be presented for each student who applies for enrollment. NPES staff makes a photocopy of the birth certificate and returns the certified copy to the parent.

The acceptance of a child to NPES is dependent upon:

- A satisfactory review by NPES of academic history (where applicable), including report cards, teacher narratives, and test scores, as well as teacher recommendation forms and a family questionnaire.
- A family interview (preschool applicants) or informal screening (or group evaluation for incoming Kindergarten students) including academic considerations (when age-appropriate) as well as in-person classroom visits with current students (1-8 grade applicants).
- The school's expectations for toilet training are [here](#).
- The final acceptance will be made upon completion of the student review and availability of space in the applicable grade.

## ENROLLMENT CONTRACT POLICIES

### Payment Procedure for Tuition and Fees

Each fall, NPES will contact parents about re-enrollment for the next school year at which time a \$150 per student pre-registration fee will be due. Parents who complete re-enrollment will then receive an email from the Director of Admissions with instructions on how to complete online enrollment.

One parent or guardian is designated as the person responsible for payment of tuition and fees. The designated person must make all payments in a timely manner through the student tuition billing system. Billing for the school year begins July 1 and goes through June 1. The student billing system accepts credit card, debit, and checks as payment. Credit card payments are subject to convenience fees. The student billing system will assess late fees to family accounts for payments not received within the grace period. The following schedule lists the annual tuition and fees for the academic year:

### Tuition/Fees (K through 8)

Oldest/Only Child in K– Gr 8	\$15,037
Second Child in K– Gr 8	\$14,285
Third + Child in K – Gr 8	\$13,533
K – Gr 8 Book & Tech Fee	\$900
Graduation Fee (8th Grade)	\$150

### Tuition/Fees (Preschool)

Half Day	\$10,689
Full Day Option Add-On	
Monday thru Friday	\$4,348
Mon/Wed/Fri	\$2,610
Tues/Thurs	\$1,740
Preschool Book & Tech Fee	\$165

## Other Fees

Association Dues (Per Family)	\$100
Facilities Assessment (New Family)	\$2,500 per family
Facilities Assessment (Existing Family)	\$700 per family
Re-Enrollment Fee (Per Current Student)	\$150
Extended Day Care Supervision	\$10 per hour

When families are offered an enrollment contract, a tuition deposit of \$500 per student is due within five (5) business days. This deposit is non-refundable.

### **Refund/Withdrawal Policies**

Withdrawal of students may be initiated by parents or by the school any time after acceptance. Once a contract is signed, there is no refund of the tuition paid and any subsequent tuition payments due for the school year must be paid. NPES families are obligated to pay tuition and all other charges for the entire school year and are not entitled to any reduction from these obligations if they leave the school. Enrollment contracts are binding, and the school's budget for the year is reliant on funding from the signed enrollment agreements. There are two additional reasons why the school will not make exceptions to this policy: making an exception for one but not others would be inequitable, as all have their reasons for the request, and second, it is essential for an independent school to maintain the validity and integrity of its contracts, or volatility in its funding results over time, undermining financial stability and ultimately disrupting the educational program for all children.

There is only one exception to this policy: if, after a contract has been signed for the upcoming school year, written notice of withdrawal has been delivered to Dire(email or letter) before March 15th of the preceding school year, the remaining balance of tuition and fees for the year ahead will not be charged. However, after March 15, all signed contracts of the preceding school year are automatically binding.

Upon dismissal of a student by NPES, the family is responsible for paying all tuition for the remainder of the school year, with no refunds possible. If tuition and fees remain unpaid, NPES will employ a collection firm to recoup the monies owed, and the parents will be responsible for all costs of collection, including attorney's fees.

Again, parents initiating a withdrawal after the contract binding date of March 15, 2021 are required to pay the full year's tuition and are not entitled to any reduction from any such obligations.

### **Late Fees and Insufficient Fund Charges**

NPES utilizes the BigSis tuition billing system for the administration of our student tuition billing. Payments are due paid in full each month on the 1st of the month. The system will charge late fees should payment in full not be received by the published deadline. Likewise, the system will assess an insufficient funds charge to the family account should a payment be declined due to insufficient funds. In both instances, the family is responsible for paying these fees.

### **Delinquent Accounts**

No child shall continue at NPES who has a delinquent account beyond the semester in which the account is delinquent, nor will the child be enrolled in a subsequent semester until the delinquent account is paid in full. In addition, one half of the tuition/fees for the following semester must be paid at the beginning of the semester. If a student has a delinquent account and decides to transfer to another school, records will not be released until the account is paid in full. The school's withholding of attendance shall not constitute dismissal and does not alter the designated parent's obligation under the contract to pay for the full school year's tuition and fees. All questions concerning student accounts should be directed to the Director of Business & Operations, Marshall Warren.

### **HANDBOOK ACCEPTANCE**

By accepting this Handbook in BigSIS, all parties, students, parents, and NPES, acknowledge and agree to the terms of this service prior to the issuing of any devices or access privileges. A record of acceptance will be on file at NPES. It is the responsibility of every parent, guardian, and student to be familiar with the policies detailed in this Handbook, and to abide by them. Questions about policies should be directed to the appropriate member of the NPES administrative team and/or the Head of School.