

STAR School

Parent and Student Handbook

2012-2013

The STAR School
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We welcome suggestions for Handbook improvement from all STAR School community members. Please give your ideas to the Director for inclusion in future editions.

The Mission of the STAR School is:

To inspire each other to do our best
in service to all our relations.

Our Vision is:

Our school community members will develop the character, skills, self-awareness and attitudes to live in balance in the world and to serve all our relations.

The following policies have been adopted by the STAR School Governing Board with the aim of providing the best possible education in our community to prepare our children for success and harmony in life.

*Policy on Open Enrollment

The STAR School is a public charter school. This means that the school provides a free and public education and does not charge any tuition. The STAR School K-8 enrollment is open to anyone regardless of gender, race, or disability, provided that there is space. When the number of students who wish to enroll exceeds capacity for a classroom, a lottery will be established to determine who will be accepted for enrollment. When openings become available, students who have brothers or sisters already enrolled in the STAR School will be given preference for enrollment when space is available.

*Policy on Preschool Enrollment

The STAR School provides a high quality, Montessori-based preschool program for 3 and 4 year old Indian children. This preschool is funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Enrollment is available on a first come, first served basis, space permitting. Returning students are given priority in the class. Children must be potty-trained and three years old by September 1st to be eligible. Students who are not three by September 1st but will be three by November 1st may be admitted if they have a parent volunteer present to help out in the classroom every day until the child is three years old.

*Multi-age Approach

Each STAR School class, except for kindergarten, has two grades. Research has shown that students tend to learn more when they work cooperatively in small groups. They benefit from having more advanced role models and learning through helping others. If students transferring to the STAR School need to catch up, they can usually do this without being held back a grade. If they are ready for more advanced studies beyond their grade level, we challenge them to go as far as they can with individualized learning plans and self-paced programs covering the Arizona State Standards. We welcome parents to come in and talk to us about the abilities, interests and learning styles of your children, and the goals you would like them to achieve. Teachers and parents are encouraged to work together to design individualized educational plans and monitor progress.

*Class Size Limited

To meet the needs of each student, the STAR School provides an exceptional amount of individual attention. Research has shown that smaller class size (below 20 students per class) is strongly related to student

success. From the beginning, this school has been committed to an outstanding student: teacher ratio. Most classes have no more than 20 students, with fully qualified teachers plus teaching assistants. Students wanting to enroll after the class limit is reached will be placed on a waiting list. Exceptions may be made for returning students or in cases where there are other students in the family. We plan for the school to stay small so that all of our community members can relate to each other personally. Kids don't get lost in a sea of faces here—our teachers and administrators know most of the children in the whole school by name, and we would like to get to know their family members too.

*School Atmosphere Focused on Having Fun Learning

Children naturally love to learn. Unfortunately however, many children and adults have suffered times in school where their enthusiasm was discouraged, where they were bored with dry material, rigid teaching methods, or where they were given messages that they weren't very smart or capable. Many have even had traumatic experiences that made the learning process painful.

We are dedicated to bringing the joy back into education! All STAR teachers provide a rich variety of hands-on learning experiences and creative opportunities. In turn, we expect students to participate whole-heartedly and focus on their studies, and help others to learn also. We ask for a commitment from students and family members to support this policy (refer to Commitments, signed as part of the registration process).

*Place-based, Multicultural Curriculum

The STAR School's curriculum covers the Arizona State Standards in a way that takes advantage of our unique place in the world. We emphasize studies related to our environment and local issues. We integrate Navajo language and traditional knowledge in academic content areas such as writing and science. Our students go beyond the classroom to learn about the land, plants, animals and people in our community. We include field trips as a regular part of our program.

*Extracurricular Program (3:00-4:30 Mon-Thurs)

Sports: The STAR School's teams compete in volleyball, cross-country, basketball, football and softball. We have had outstanding success for such a small school. There are no fees charged for sports, but we ask all parents to pitch in as STAR Sports Supporters and help our teams.

Clubs and Academic Challenges: Student Council activities, clubs, and service learning activities can be scheduled after school. Also, we have enjoyed family science nights, prizewinning science fair projects and other academic challenges. Contact teachers if you would like to coordinate activities or participate.

After school tutoring, homework assistance, and technology: After school help is available for students who need assistance keeping up with their studies. We also welcome students who would like to have extra time to work on projects, go further in their studies, or expand their technology skills.

Creative Arts: STAR students have explored traditional arts and crafts, beadwork, drawing, painting, mosaics, sculpture, music, drama, expressive movement and dance, photography, video making, and many other art forms. Creative arts are integrated into the academic program as well as being offered after school. For 2010 we received a grant to expand our art program and other funds are available for creative activities that involve students and families. We welcome community members who would like to teach or learn together.

*Extracurricular Activity Eligibility Policy

The STAR School encourages all interested students to participate in sports, music, art, and other extracurricular activities. Students may speak to their teacher, coach or the Director of the school if they have any questions about joining a team or activity. Seventh and eighth grade athletes are required to have a physical exam before participating in the sports program.

Our Coaches work closely with teachers to ensure that as many students as possible get the benefit of our outstanding sports program. While sports participation takes some time away from the classroom (usually part

of one afternoon per week), eligibility requirements have also motivated many students to stay current with their assignments. In order to make sure that these responsibilities are clear to students, the STAR School has adopted the following policy:

Sports practice, extracurricular activities, and homework/tutoring sessions run from 3:00-4:30 M-Th. Competitive meets are held as scheduled by the League for each sport. Also, students are sometimes taken to special events such as tournaments, concerts, or art events. The Eligibility policies may apply to all of these activities except for tutoring and homework assistance.

On Friday the teachers will announce the Extracurricular Eligibility list for their classes. This applies to activities that are held during the following week, so students and families can plan ahead. Eligibility is based on each teacher's standards for being up-to-date with class work and homework assignments. Students who are not on the Eligible list need to make sure they understand what to do to regain eligibility, and talk to their teacher if necessary. At the end of each week progress reports will be sent home stating whether or not a student is eligible.

There are two common sense additions to this eligibility requirement:

*If students are absent from school due to illness or any unexcused absence, they will not be allowed to participate in sports that day.

*Students may not participate in extracurricular activities during a time when they are suspended (in or out of school) or working on a restitution project (see Discipline Policy).

*STAR Sports Supporters

There are no charges for extracurricular activities except for personal items and optional tournaments. The school provides uniforms, equipment, coaching, athletic program fees, and transportation. As a small charter school, however, it is vitally important that families pitch in to support our teams. Here are some things we'd like help with:

- Show up and cheer our athletes!
- Assist coaches at practice sessions and meets
- Chaperones-- female chaperones are especially needed when teams are traveling.
- Provide healthy (non-sugary) snacks and drinks for the kids
- Pay for things that aren't covered by the program budget by helping with fundraising: food sales at meets, snack sales, bingo nights, raffles, t-shirt sales, and other parent-sponsored efforts.
- Coordinate with other families to give students rides home after sports events.
- Take advantage of the Arizona Extracurricular Tax Credit of up to \$400 per couple per year. This applies to any Arizona taxpayer, whether they have a student at the STAR School or not. Talk to Bea or Kate if you would like to make this donation at no cost to yourself. Your donations, plus those of friends and extended family members, could really help.
- Get together with other families to put your ideas into action!

Student Athlete Contract

(For all students participating in sports- cut, sign, and return to the school)

I have read and understand the Extracurricular Activity Eligibility Policy. To benefit myself and the team, I agree to take responsibility for maintaining my eligibility.

Student Teacher

Parents/Guardians

*Community Celebrations

The STAR School staff, students and parents host a yearly round of holiday celebrations, starting with our Kick-off Cookout on the Sunday before school starts. Would you enjoy talent shows, bingo, family art workshops, a coffee shop with live music, camp-outs, or other fun events? All of these things and more can happen, depending on how families decide to get involved.

*Opportunities provided for student empowerment

If students have an idea for something they want—or want to change something they don't like—they can make a difference. Talk to Student Council representatives, teachers, or the Founders of the school to get started.

We want to give students as much responsibility as they can handle. We are happy to support student and family ideas for making the STAR School great.

*Technology

From the beginning, the school has provided computers and high-speed Internet access to our community. Our teachers have been trained with the latest techniques for enhancing learning with technology. We have computer learning centers and SMART Boards in each classroom. Students can learn photography, video production, blogging, website production, and more. The STAR School is committed to staying on the cutting edge and supporting students in their use of technology.

*Policy on Parent Involvement

We recognize that families have choices about where to enroll their children, and we work hard to earn their confidence. We know that the school must team up with families in order for students to reach their potential. We are genuinely eager to meet with families of our students, and will do our best to work around your schedule. Family members are encouraged to contact teachers and other staff members any time they have a concern, a need, or an idea for improving the school. You can stop by, or call Dr. Sorensen at 602-412-3533. Parents who come to the school for meetings or student activities are invited to join us for breakfast or lunch. Family members are invited to join advisory groups and project teams, and to pitch in with school events. School Board meetings are always open to the public. This is your school, and we can do much more when we all work together.

*Schedule: also see School Calendar

- Breakfast will be available from 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. Monday through Friday.
- Classes, preschool through 8th grade, are held from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Monday through Thursday, with modifications as listed on the annual School Calendar for holidays, snow days and professional development days. Friday is an Early Release day ending at 1:00 to allow for staff in-service training time.
- The After School Program runs from 3:00 until 4:30 Monday-Thursday. This includes sports, homework/tutoring, art, music, student clubs, and other special programs.
- Lunch breaks are between 10:45 a.m. and 12:15 p.m., at various times for each class (younger students eat earliest).

*Transportation

Regular bus routes currently run in the local area near the school, and between the school and Leupp and Tolani Lake as well as a designated location in East Flagstaff. Bus pickup in Winona, Cosnino, and Doney Park may also be available depending on student needs.

*Transportation provided by parents

In cases where students live more than one mile from school bus routes, families that provide transportation may be eligible for payments to cover their transportation costs. . Families on special extended bus routes (e.g. Flagstaff) are not eligible for mileage payment. See the Administrative Assistant, Marie Monroe, for policy details and forms.

We ask parents who bring their own children to arrive no earlier than 7:30 a.m., and to make sure that there is someone at the school to take responsibility for the child. If students are delivered later than 8:00 a.m., a parent or guardian needs to come into the office and sign them in. Those who are picking students up at the school need to come to the office and sign them out. Parents and others who wish to visit classrooms are asked to sign in at the office first.

Unless they are enrolled in an after school program or have arranged for supervision, students are expected to go home immediately after school, either by bus or family transportation.

*Snow Days

Snow days (no school) will be decided by 6:00a.m. on mornings when there is snow that affects the ability of students to come to school. On days when there is a light snowfall, a snow day schedule (one or two hour delay) will be announced to allow time for hazardous road conditions to clear up before taking the buses out. The school will report late schedules or snow days on KAFF Radio 92.9 and/or on the school website. Please listen to the radio and check the school's website on questionable mornings, and do not bring your child to school early on days the snow day schedule is in effect, because supervision will begin later than usual.

Attendance

*Absences and Tardies

The STAR School emphasizes consistent attendance for the academic success of each student. Most of our students have very good attendance, but students with poor attendance often struggle to keep up. Unless a student is excused because of sickness or a family emergency, they are expected to be in school on time every day. A student is counted as tardy if they are not present in their class at roll call first thing in the morning.

*Reporting Absences

If your child is going to be absent, please call the school before 8:00 a.m. There is usually someone at the school by 7:30a.m., and if you need to call before that time, you can leave a message on our voicemail service. Then, if your child does not arrive on the bus, we will know that he or she is in good hands. We appreciate if you can let the school know ahead of time when absences are foreseen, so the bus won't be waiting in front of your house. If a child is absent, and a parent has not reported that absence, parents will be contacted at their place of employment or at home.

All schools are required by law to keep careful records of why a child is absent, including illness or doctor's appointments. It is important that your message include the child's first and last name, his or her teacher, and the reason for absence. Parents should contact their child's teacher to request missed work.

Unreported absences will be verified as required by state law. If a student has ten or more unexcused absences per semester, they face the possibility of not being promoted to the next grade. Students with ten unexcused absences in a row are legally considered to have dropped their enrollment and must apply for re-admittance.

*Tardies

Students need to be present in class and ready to learn at 8:00a.m. Families who are bringing a student to school late need to accompany that child to the office and sign him or her in. Late students need to receive an admit slip from the Office before going to their classroom. In cases of excessive unexcused absences or tardies, students and parents will be asked to meet with the Director to work out a plan for improvement.

*Changes in Going-Home Routine

The school is responsible for ensuring that students are returned home to the place where their parents expect them to be. If a change in bus transportation is requested, such as someone else picking up the child, or the child being given permission to spend the night at a friend's house, the student must bring a note signed by a parent or guardian and give it to the Parent Liaison. The only other way transportation changes are permitted is if parents or guardians call in the morning and talk to a person who can recognize their voice.

*Signing Students Out of School

If a parent wishes to take their child out of school during class time, they must come to the office and sign their child out before removing that child from the classroom. They will be given a slip to be taken to the classroom teacher when picking up their child. Students who are signed out before 1:00 p.m. have to be counted absent for that day, so families are asked to make appointments outside of school hours whenever possible.

Only persons listed on the school's emergency card will be allowed to sign a child out of school. Please remember to keep this card updated. A telephone call on the day in question may or may not suffice. If the person answering the phone does not know the caller by voice and can confirm who is making the call as a parent or guardian, a telephone call will not allow us to release your child to a party not listed on the emergency card.

*Students Staying After School

All students staying after school need to be involved with school activities, or directly supervised by their family members. Unsupervised students will be assigned tasks in an area where they can be monitored and parents will be contacted.

*Children Left at School after 5:00p.m.

In cases where no family members are home, students will not be dropped off and left unattended. In cases where parents discover that this has happened, they need to call the school (602-412-3533) immediately to find out where their child is and make arrangements to get them home. If the school is unable to deliver a child home by 5:00 p.m., reports may be made to Child Protective Services according to state law. This also applies in cases where parents ask that children remain at school and then don't come to pick them up. The school doesn't ever want to find itself in this situation, so we ask parents to always have someone home when children are to be dropped off.

*Meal Programs

It is the policy of the STAR School to provide nutritious meals for our students at breakfast and lunch, in a cheerful environment. Our goal is to offer food that is tasty and presented in an appealing way so that students are likely to eat it. We ask for parent's support in our school's efforts to provide healthy, balanced meals, and that may include encouraging children to at least try some new foods.

The climate of the cafeteria is friendly, clean and safe. Suggestions for changes that students or parents would like to have in the cafeteria may be submitted to the Food Manager or the Director's office. The school will provide meals free of charge to all students, although free lunch applications are required from each family. Visitors and parents who have business at the school are welcome to get a free meal ticket from Dr. Sorensen or Beverly Paddock, Receptionist. Parents, students and staff are encouraged to provide feedback and helpful suggestions to Food Service employees the Wellness Team, or to the Director of the School on how to better accomplish the above goals.

*Office Procedures: Records

For communication with families and protection of students, it is important that we have complete and up-to-date contact information. This includes, if available:

1. Address and home phone number
2. Cellphone numbers for all parents/guardians
3. At least one work phone number
4. E-mail addresses for all parents/guardians
5. Name and phone number of an additional person to contact in case of an emergency.

If you move or change your phone number or e-mail address, please inform the office immediately.

*Illness, Injury, or Drug/Alcohol Overdose

Parents are expected to keep children home who are clearly ill or injured. Students who have a fever or who have a contagious illness are required to be kept home and should not get on the bus to come to school until

they no longer have a fever or are no longer contagious. If a student comes to school and is determined to have a fever (over 99 degrees) or if the student shows signs of illness that could be contagious, the child's parents will be called to pick the child up. It is in the interest of the health of all students that children who are contagious not be in school where their illness can spread to other children.

In the event of student injury or illness, or if there is a reason to suspect that a student is under the influence of a drug or alcohol, priority will be given to immediate care of the student, and following actions will be taken.

1. The school will attempt to communicate with the student to gather relevant information.
2. The Director of the school or a person designated by the Director and trained in first aid will assess the student's condition and institute measures to handle the situation.
3. Every attempt will be made to notify the parents and/or guardians.
4. In life threatening situations: an ambulance will be called immediately for such conditions as profuse bleeding, cessation or obstruction of breathing, deep shock, injury with unconsciousness, electric shock, and heart attack. Limited emergency care will be administered until the ambulance arrives.
5. In emergency situations of a less critical nature:
 - Students will be transported by ambulance or private car to the clinic or hospital. Examples of this type of emergency are fractures, lacerations requiring sutures, severe sprains, or burns.
 - If the parents/guardian cannot be contacted to accompany the student, school personnel will accompany the student to the clinic or hospital.
 - A Student Accident Report will be submitted to the Director of the school or his/her designee at once in the event of student injury at school. A copy will be sent home for the parent or guardian.

***Pediculosis (Head Lice) - No Nits Policy**

It is the policy of the STAR School to do what is necessary to protect the health of all students. Therefore, in accordance with state law (A.R.S 62-629) all students with evidence of head lice will be excluded from school until treatment has been started and students are free of lice and nits. The school can provide information about treatment of this condition, including alternatives to toxic lice-killing shampoos. The Director or designee will make decisions about exclusion and readmission.

***Soiled Clothing**

When young children are known to have occasional toileting accidents and soil their clothing, parents are asked to send in two pairs of clean pants for teachers to have on hand. The school also keeps some replacement clothing on hand, but the supply is limited and we can't guarantee that we'll have pants that fit every student. Cases where clothing is not available cause students to be taken home—please make sure your child has extra clothing at school if there's a chance that they'll need it.

***STAR School Sexual Harassment Policy**

The STAR School prohibits sexual harassment of, or by, any of its students, employees or visitors. It is our policy that all individuals associated with the STAR School, including but not limited to the Governing Board, employees, students and visitors, have a right to work, learn and visit in an environment free of sexual harassment, discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, and sexual harassment. Employees, students and visitors must avoid offensive or inappropriate sexual and/or sexually harassing behavior.

Governing Board members, employees, students and visitors have a right and responsibility to report harassment experiences. There will be prompt and equitable resolution of sexual harassment complaints. The school will provide access to any needed information and materials concerning harassment, how to file a complaint and a step-by-step process which will guide those involved, whether they be the accused or the victim.

Verbal or physical sexual advances may include touching, pinching, brushing against, or subtle pressure for sexual activity. This also includes comments on physical characteristics of a sexual nature and sexually oriented "teasing," derogatory or pornographic pictures, cartoons or drawings, double entendres and jokes. Where these actions are unwelcome, they can become sexual harassment.

Generally, sexual harassment occurs when:

- The behavior is unwelcome and sexual in nature.
- The behavior is ongoing, creating a hostile environment.
- The behavior leaves the victim feeling uncomfortable.
- Submission to or rejection of behavior affects employment, academic status, or benefit.

Reporting procedures:

- Complaints may be verbal or written
- Students: Report sexual harassment to a teacher, teaching assistant, counselor, or the Director, and to your parents.
- Employees: Report sexual harassment to the Director or his/her designee.
- Do not report the sexual harassment to the alleged harasser, but do tell them that you are uncomfortable with their behavior and ask them to stop.

Computer Use

A longstanding goal of the STAR School has been that all students have access to computers for use at school and for projects at home. At the same time, it has been a challenge to keep the school's computers in good working order. In order to take advantage of computer privileges, training is offered to students on how to use the computer, how to use MS Office and the Internet, what can and cannot be used on the computer at school.

*Restitution

State law stipulates that parents are held responsible for theft or damages to public or private property by their children. Students/parents are required to pay for damaged or lost textbooks, library books, computer equipment, and other school property. Teachers will refer students to the office to determine the cost of damaged property and make arrangements for payment or other restitution. Volunteer work at the school may be accepted instead of money due. The Student Council administers a fund that can be used for student rewards if it is not needed to pay for loss, theft, or damage to the school.

*The STAR School is a "Drug Free School Zone"

This means that alcohol, illegal drugs, non-ceremonial tobacco, and controlled substances are prohibited in or near the school buildings, playground, parking lot, and entire 40 acre fenced school property. Appropriate action will be taken to enforce the drug free zone.

*Dress Code

Students are required to follow basic guidelines that contribute to a positive learning environment.

Wearing apparel needs to be weather-appropriate. Jackets, hats and gloves may be required on chilly days, as children will be playing outdoors for recess, PE, and sports. We also ask that our students appear at school dressed in a way that shows respect for community standards. The following may not be worn:

- Short shorts and revealing tops, halters, crop tops, and clothing that doesn't cover the midriff, or allows underwear to show, may not be worn.
- Any apparel that has unwelcome commercial messages, profanity, obscene language or symbols, drug and/or alcohol related symbols or gang-related symbols.
- Apparel offensive to other members of the STAR School community.
- Hats, caps, and beanies are not allowed to be worn in classrooms.

The Director or his designee will make decisions regarding questions of attire that are not clear. Appeal may be made to the Student Council in cases of disagreement.

*Navajo Tribal Clothing program

Clothing will be distributed annually at the school to all qualified Navajo tribal members with census numbers.

*Prohibited Items

Items that have safety risks or are likely to disrupt the educational environment are not allowed. Teachers may establish their own classroom procedures, but the following articles are not allowed to be visible or to be used school-wide or on the bus:

- Skateboards or rollerblades
- Any kind of guns, including toy guns
- Gum, candy, or sodas (according to law—refer to Arizona Dept. of Education Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value policy)
- Squirt guns or water balloons (except for organized events with special permission)
- Cell phones must be kept out of sight and used only outside of class.
- iPods, personal cameras, electronic games or other valuable items, unless approved by the teacher. These may have educational value, but also involve risk of theft.
- Large amounts of money, unless needed for special purposes.
- Weapons of any kind
- Other items determined to be a threat to physical or emotional safety, or disruptive to the learning process

The school cannot be responsible for damaged or lost articles. Students bringing valuable items (e.g. electronics) do so at their own risk. Weapons, including knives, are not allowed on campus, on buses, or at school events at any time.

Prohibited valuables will be temporarily confiscated and locked up according to school-wide rules and parents will be notified. First time: until the end of the day. Second time: end of week. Third time: end of the school year, or until parents come in for a conference.

Arizona Dept. of Education Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value policy prohibits potato chips, candy, sodas (and other non-juice drinks like Gatorade), and any item with high sugar content. Consequently, we ask that parents not allow students to bring any of these type foods to school. After school parties, special events, and community feasts are not subject to this policy.

Alternative snack foods that are encouraged include nuts, whole grain crackers (like Triscuits, Wheat Thins, Honey Graham Crackers), cheese, granola bars, fruit, veggie sticks and dips, popcorn, tortilla chips and salsa. Parents and students can talk to Louva Montour if you need any other suggestions.

*Restrictions on Software, Videos, etc.

Videos, computer software and other media used in classrooms must comply with federal regulations and school-wide technology guidelines regarding appropriateness for children

*Selling/Trading

In the interest of health and educational focus, students are not allowed to sell or trade items at school during school hours, including the after school program, other than for a school-sponsored project. However, handmade items may be sold after school and during breaks, and entrepreneurial students or family members are encouraged to contact teachers and administrators for sponsorship and support in fundraising or producing income. We especially welcome creative endeavors such as arts and crafts, or services needed in the community. Fundraising involving items containing sugar may be done only by special permission from the Director.

The STAR School 4R's

Respect, Responsibility, Relationship, and Reasoning

These four words identify the values that we hold most important when it comes to how we treat ourselves and one another. The three values of Respect, Responsibility, and Relationship have ancient roots; they are the nearest English approximations to the fundamental Navajo set of values called K'e. The fourth R, Reasoning, is a primary focus of education. The following discussion highlights what we mean when we say Respect, Responsibility, Relationship, and Reasoning, and provides the basis for discussions that families can have with their children.

Relationship

Relationship is a value because we recognize that who we are as persons in our culture and society is strongly influenced by how we think and act toward each other. There's an old saying that "No man is an island"; we are all interrelated. In fact, there is evidence that we are interconnected with all things around us. Sometimes the impact appears great, sometimes small, but it can be shown scientifically that just our being present and observing has an effect on the outcome of precise physical experiments. How much greater is our impact on people close to us?

Our primary relationships are within our families, and these relationships have a great impact on how we interact with others beyond our family. When relationships are based on love, we have a wonderful model for how to interact in a way that honors ourselves and others. We all learn by example how much better it feels to treat others as we would really want to be treated.

Respect

Respect is a value because it is the way everyone would like to be treated. Respect requires that we don't just focus on expressing our own thoughts, emotions, and viewpoints; it means that we also appreciate other viewpoints, and encourage others to express themselves. In our school, respect also means allowing others to have the time and space to learn as they learn best.

Part of the definition of respect is honoring your own emotions and the emotions of others, helping to create a sense of safety in the expression of feelings. We emphasize that all basic emotions (fear, anger, sadness, joy) can be expressed in ways that tell others how we feel without hurting them. We can do this by stating "I feel". It seems that expressing emotions only becomes dangerous when people do not express them appropriately and emotions build up until they explode in a sudden burst.

Responsibility

Responsibility is a value because it gives us personal power without taking power away from anyone else. We define responsibility as the ability to respond. Assuming responsibility can mean we commit to solving a particular problem. It can also mean that we recognize that we have made choices to get to whatever situation we find ourselves in, and that we can make other choices to get ourselves through that situation.

Taking responsibility for our own actions and thoughts is needed in becoming a mature individual. When we blame others for our situation we give up our power. By taking responsibility we take back our power. Taking responsibility does not mean feeling guilty or putting ourselves down; it means that we accept that we have made choices and that we can, from this point, make other choices. Responsibility means that we are free to choose and that we know that our choices are a great part of what got us to this point.

Reasoning

Through Reasoning we can think clearly and become skillful in solving problems that are presented to us every day. Reasoning is necessary for success in academic areas, but it is not only necessary in school. Through reasoning we can sort out problems and find solutions. We can also present our ideas to others in a clear, understandable way. Reasoning is especially important as our students learn how to be of Service To All Relations. To resolve the many challenges of our society and world, students must learn how to focus their minds to discover solutions to these problems and to work together with others to put ideas into practice.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

The STAR School supports these Student Rights

1. Students have a right to a safe school with safe classrooms, buses, equipment, food service, and rules that promote safety.
2. Students have a right to be respected and treated with kindness. This means that we are considerate of each other's feelings. For instance, no one is to call students names or embarrass them in front of the class.
3. Students have a right to be an individual at school. We're here to appreciate individual differences rather than label, criticize, or pretend that some people are better than others.
4. Students have the right to focus on their work. Nobody has a right to bother or distract students who are making efforts to learn.
5. Students have the right to express themselves. They are encouraged to talk freely about their ideas and feelings at appropriate times.
6. Students have the right to expect to be listened to. They may tell their story when a conflict or problem arises. Also, if they need to talk about something, the teachers, counselors, Director, and other staff members want to hear from them.

Student Responsibilities

The STAR School is built upon the "4 R's": Respect, Relationship, Responsibility, and Reasoning. If each person acts with responsibility, they will benefit personally and the school as a whole will succeed. Here are some things that students are expected to do, as a commitment to their own learning and to our school community.

1. Students have a responsibility to respect the rights of others to learn and teach. That's what we're here at school for!
2. Students are responsible for consistent attendance. This means to come to school every day, on time, unless sick or excused.
3. Students are expected to practice personal hygiene and cleanliness.
4. Students help take care of property, using school property with care and respecting the property of others.
5. Students have a responsibility to live up to their agreements to observe safety, playground, and classroom rules.
6. Students have a responsibility to complete classroom and homework assignments and hand them on in time, and ask for help if they need it.
7. Students have a responsibility to take messages home and return communication from the family to the school. It is important for parents to get information from the school.
8. We all have a responsibility to help make the STAR School a great place to be. This includes being respectful, helpful, and courteous to others, and offering our creative ideas and actions. Please keep in mind that we are all role models. Kindness is contagious!

I will uphold my Responsibilities and act in ways that respect the Rights of students, teachers, and all STAR School community members.

Student Signature: _____

Bus Safety

The bus driver has the same responsibility for the discipline and general conduct of each child as a teacher has in a classroom. From the time a child boards the bus until she/he reaches school in the morning, and between school and home in the afternoon, the bus driver is in charge.

Procedures for students while riding buses

- Students will recognize that the bus driver has been delegated responsibility for everyone's safety. The driver will handle and report discipline problems to his/her supervisor.
- Students will remain seated at all times and will not stand to disembark until the bus or van comes to a complete stop.
- To avoid unnecessarily long bus rides, the driver is not required to wait for students who are not ready at their morning pick-up stop. Two minutes is the maximum time to wait for a child during pick-up and following the principles of Respect, Responsibility, and Relationship means that students are ready when the bus arrives so everyone doesn't have to wait. After school, students need to follow procedures report directly to their school bus or they could be left behind. Teachers/teacher assistants are responsible for releasing the children on time.
- Riders are not to talk loudly or distract the driver.
- Riders are to keep all body parts inside the bus.
- Only open the windows with the driver's permission.
- Do not throw objects while on the bus.
- Do not leave any items on the bus. Students may be required to clean up their litter before getting off the bus.
- Do not touch the emergency door, exit controls or bus safety equipment.
- Large items will be held in student's laps and not be placed in a seat if this forces other students to stand. If items pose a hazard because of size, it will be the responsibility of the parent to transport these items.
- At times, the driver may assign seats to certain students. He/she has authority to do so for the general safety of all passengers.
- No glass is allowed on the bus. Bringing food and beverages onto the bus is not permitted unless prior approval is granted.
- Displays of passionate affection are not permitted.
- After getting off at their stop, students are to cross ten feet in front of the bus, never to the rear of the bus.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for intentional destruction on the bus and will be required to make restitution for damage caused by their child.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for making arrangements for picking up their child if they are not going to be home, and need to have a written statement on file at the school indicating a second drop-off point for their child. We are emphasizing this policy since the issue of students asking to change their drop-off place has continued to come up. It is important that students are taken reliably where their parents expect them to be.

Procedure for Behavior Problems during Transportation

The school, upon the recommendation of the driver, has the authority to take action to correct behavior problems so that the students can be transported safely. The following procedure will be used.

- The driver will report significant behavior problems to the school in writing. The driver will give the child's name, nature of violation and recommendation for action on the school's Incident Report form.
- The school will consider the matter and handle as necessary. In cases where bus safety is at risk, a student may be suspended from riding the bus for one or more days. The parent or legal guardian will be notified of the violation and action taken by the school, and the family will be responsible for finding alternative transportation during the suspension. The school will keep a copy of the discipline report and parent notification report citing the action taken.

Discipline Policy

The STAR School Approach to Maintaining a Harmonious and Safe Learning Environment

To fulfill our mission, the STAR Governing Board recognizes the necessity of maintaining an orderly and harmonious environment in the school. In all cases, it is the policy of the STAR School to promote the 4 R's (Respect, Relationship, Responsibility, and Reasoning) in student behavior.

Students are responsible for their own actions and must respect the rights of others. Opportunities will be provided for staff to develop skills in teaching decision making (Reasoning), responsible behavior

(Responsibility), how to honor oneself and others (Respect), and how to work together to help each other (Relationship).

Disruption by any student that interferes with the learning of other students will not be permitted. Disruption of the learning environment is defined as action or behavior that negatively affects the learning environment or violates the rights of others to focus on their educational activities.

Choices after disruption

In minor instances, when a student disrupts the learning environment s/he will be asked for the facts about what s/he is doing, and what school rule or expectation (4 Rs) that behavior does not match. The student will then be given the opportunity to rejoin the other students. If a student continues to disrupt the learning environment or refuses to answer questions asked of him/her, further steps will be taken.

Student fills out Reflection Form

In instances of repeated disruption, students will be removed from the area and sent to the Director's Office to fill out a Reflection Form. The Reflection Form is designed to allow students to reflect on what they did and on how their actions affect other people.

Student develops a plan

Students who go to the Director's Office remain there until they create a plan on the Reflection Form to align their behavior with group goals. Staff members are available to assist in the plan and to determine when the student is ready to return to his/her class. Students who complete the Reflection Form will return to the classroom for the teacher's approval of their plan.

Director decides whether to recommend Peacemaking

If on the Reflection Form it becomes clear that the student's behavior is related to a conflict with another person, Peacemaking may be proposed by the Director or the teacher.

A student may be referred to Peacemaking or to other school disciplinary methods for the following:

- A pattern of minor disruptions of the class or activity
- Conduct that intentionally causes major disruption of the learning environment
- Abusive or obscene language or gestures, including ethnic slurs
- Refusal to follow class procedures
- Physically violent behavior, including fights
- Selling or possessing obscene materials
- Engaging in sexually suggestive or inappropriate behavior
- Sexual harassment

The student may be referred directly to the school disciplinary methods when involved in:

- Selling, using, or possessing weapons, fireworks, or other dangerous instruments
- Selling, using, or possessing alcohol, drugs or other controlled substances or drug paraphernalia

Consequences

The range of consequences that may result after violations of school rules and behavioral expectations may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Practice of procedures until mastered
- Verbal correction
- Reflection Form
- Restitution, Community Service
- Call to parents notifying them of student's behavior
- Written notification to parents
- Meeting with parents, student, and Director

The school values every child and will work with students and their families to handle problems, whenever this can be done while still honoring the rights of others. However, threats to the safe and positive educational environment may result in the following:

- Suspension from transportation
- Suspension from athletic participation
- Suspension from social or extracurricular activities
- Suspension of other privileges
- Exclusion from a particular class
- In-school suspension
- Suspension, short or long term
- Expulsion

Peacemaking Alternative

The Peacemaking alternative exists in when the violation of school rules and behavioral expectations occur because of a conflict between the student and another person(s). For Peacemaking to work in the school setting, it must be voluntary for all involved and should be used only when, in the opinion of the administrator, there is not an immediate danger to any students involved in the conflict. The intent of Peacemaking is to regain harmony and seek healing in the relationship. When possible, Peacemaking should involve an elder Peacemaker through the Navajo Nation Peacemaking Program. This requires contacting the Peacemaker Liaisons at one of the tribal courts for a referral and needs to be set up with sufficient time for the Peacemaker to contact all concerned relatives to participate.

Simplified Peacemaking

There may be times when a conflict is not major, but needs immediate attention and can be effectively resolved with a simplified version of Peacemaking. This is especially useful when working with young children. This simplified version can be conducted by the Director of the school or by a staff person knowledgeable in the processes and philosophy of Peacemaking.

The goal of simplified Peacemaking is the same as in the full version: To regain harmony and seek healing in relationships.

The steps listed below are the simplified Peacemaking version that can be used with younger children at school with great effectiveness:

Steps in School-Based Simplified Peacemaking:

1. Gather all students involved in the conflict together
2. Pause for a brief moment to ask for spiritual assistance (this can be done silently)
3. Ask each student and adult in the room to introduce themselves, or if they already know each other, to say how they are connected to each other. The Peacemaker can prompt this step by asking: "Are you all in the same class?" "Are you related to each other?" "Are you normally friends?" "Do you normally play or hang out together?" "Do you live close to each other?" The Peacemaker can also say how he or she is connected to each of the students.
4. Ask the student who has the grievance to talk first about the facts as they see them, expecting all others to listen and assuring them that everyone will get their chance to speak.
5. Ask the student who committed the offense to tell his/her side of the story. Make sure that all others listen while this student is speaking. If things get heated, ask everyone to stick to the facts and be respectful. Give everyone in the room a chance to say their side of the story, but have one person at a time speak. Seek common agreement on the facts.
6. Ask each student to describe how he/she would feel if they got treated the way they treated the other student.
7. The Peacemaker makes statements that seek common ground in what the students are saying about their feelings. (Example: "I notice that both of you would like to feel safe when you come to school.")

8. Look for the moment when the students realize how the other person got hurt and how what they did contributed to that hurt. Give each person a chance to say something to the other student(s) that could help make peace. Usually this comes in the form of a sincere apology.
9. Encourage everyone to shake hands or hug and look at the other person when they are apologizing.
10. If the conflict was severe or if many students were involved, write out the understanding of resolution and have students sign the agreement.
11. Express thanks in a heartfelt way for the regaining of peace and harmony.

At the conclusion of a successful Peacemaking session, a form either provided by the Navajo Peacemaking program, or a simplified form for the steps outlined above, should be filled out by the Peacemaker to indicate what resolution was reached.

Student Disciplinary Proceeding when Peacemaking is not used

Any teacher, administrator, Board Member, Parent, or other person may report a violation of student disciplinary rules to the Director of the school. The Director will then make an investigation of the charges and will institute appropriate proceedings. For violations that are more severe and when Peacemaking is not selected as the path to proceed, the following procedures apply:

Student suspension/expulsion/Due Process Rights

A student may be removed from contact with other students as a temporary measure.

The authority to suspend a student for up to ten days, after an informal hearing is held, rests with the Director. If danger to students or staff is present, the Director or his designee may immediately remove the student from school, with prior contact with the parents and with a notice and hearing following as soon as practical. The Director will report each suspension for 3 days or more to the Board within one day.

In all cases, except summary suspension where a clear and present danger is evident, the student will remain in school until applicable due process procedures are instituted. In no instance will students be released early from school unless parents have been notified.

A recommendation to expel shall be through the Director. The authority to expel rests only with the Board. All requested expulsions need to have supporting data indicating the required due process procedure.

Please refer to the STAR School Personnel Manual for details on suspension and expulsion procedures.

Behavioral Expectations

All teachers are responsible for working with students to ensure a safe, caring and productive learning environment. Teachers may have different ways of doing this at different age levels. Positive procedures, natural consequences and clear communication will be part of their strategies. Punishment will be avoided, but time-outs or, in serious cases, suspension will be used as needed to protect everyone's physical and emotional safety, and the rights of all students to learn without disruption. Teachers will help students understand group agreements and commit to living by them. All STAR teachers have developed classroom procedures that create cheerful, productive learning environments. They use practice and review, student reflection and cooperative problem solving, counseling, and parent-student-teacher conferences to handle ongoing disruptive patterns. Counseling and Peacemaking services are available in cases where teachers, parents and/or students would like help.

For disruptive classroom behavior, the following consequences are most often used:

- Verbal correction from teacher to student
- Name put on the board
- Check next to name

- Time-out in classroom, with Reflection Form (see following pages)
- Send student for time-out in a cooperating classroom, with Reflection Form and assignments
- Send to Director's office, with Incident Report. In these cases, a copy of the Incident Report will be sent home to parents.
- Repeated incidents will result in a conference with student, teacher and parents/guardians, where ways to handle the disruptions will be determined.

Certain school-wide procedures apply to all students. The purpose of these is to keep everyone safe from physical and emotional harm, and to create a productive learning environment. By enrolling in the school and signing for receipt of this Handbook, students and parents affirm that they are committed to these agreements. If they do not agree, they are free to suggest improvements to the procedures or choose other schools.

The following behaviors will not be tolerated at the STAR School, on buses or during any school-sponsored activities.

1. Violent or offensive language, including cursing, unkind teasing, put-downs, or threats
2. Intentional or reckless damage to school property
3. Physical harm to self or others

Handling of instances of severe disruptions or intentional physical harm:

- Reflection form is filled out by all students involved. (See next pages)
- Immediate fact-finding discussion held by Director, or Director's designee with child and all involved with the incident, to get all sides of the story.
- If facts indicate a violation, plans for improvement and consequences are determined, including possible suspension.
- Parents contacted by phone or letter. Meeting happens as soon as possible.
- If a student is uncooperative, disruptive, or violent after the incident, the student can be suspended and sent home immediately, on the discretion of the Director or designee.
- In cases of suspension, child taken home, or to designated caretaker if nobody is at home, or to In School Suspension if no caretaker is available.
- Conference between parent, student, and Director or designee, including:
 - *Understanding of incident and consequences
 - *Plan for behavior change
 - *Restorative justice as needed, including apologies and forgiveness
- Peacemaking, if all parties agree
- Follow-up on agreements and behavior change plans
- Notes on incident will be kept in student master file.

In cases where restitution is part of the consequence for student behavior that is damaging to the school community, the restitution will take place during the 3:00 pm.- 4:30pm after school session and students will be taken home on the late bus. Efforts will be made to contact parents in cases where this affects the time that the student will arrive home. In cases where telephone contact is not available, we ask for your understanding regarding the necessary schedule change.

****For Student and Parent Information****

Reflection Form

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

1) Facts

When did it happen? _____

Where were you? _____

Who was involved? _____

What happened? Tell your story. Stick to the facts, things that anyone who was there could agree on.

Did this incident violate the 4 R's or a community agreement? How?

2) How do I feel about what happened? (examples: frustrated, angry, sad, worried, etc.)

3) How do the other people involved feel? (ask them, or take a guess if you don't know)

4) What needs do I have in this situation? (examples: need for respect, safety, fairness, fun, appreciation, etc.)

5) What needs do I think the other people might have?

6) What can I do now to improve this situation? (examples: talk to someone, apologize, do a community service project, repair or replace something, ask for Peacemaking, etc.)

7) What is my plan to make things go better in the same kind of situation in the future (what can you do and what can others do to help)?

8) What do I think will happen if I do not follow through on my plan?

9) What do I think will happen if I do follow through on my plan?

Reflection Form Page 2

Note: Copies of Reflection Forms are sent home to parents for their information and to get feedback. On the second page of the form there is a line for parents to sign, indicating that they have received it. Reflection Forms are also kept with student folders and reviewed at parent/teacher conferences.)

Teacher or other staff comments: _____

Restitution to the community: _____

___ Sweep sidewalks ___ Kitchen help ___ Office help ___ Cleaning help

___ Trash pickup ___ Classroom help ___ Repair damage/replace resources

Mediation or Peacemaking requested? _____

I will carry out my plan and ask for help if I need it. _____

Student signature

I will support this student in carrying out the plan. _____

Teacher/Staff signature

Parent/Family signature Director/Counselor/Other signature

Please sign and return this page to the school

Parent Contact: n/a ___ Phone ___ Mail ___ Home visit ___ Delivered by student ___

Parents/Family: If you would like to talk or set up a meeting, please feel free to contact your child's teacher or Dr. Sorensen at 602-412-3533

Parent/Family Comments (add comments on the back if necessary):

rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr

Follow-up meeting scheduled between (names)

(date/time) _____

Student Wrap-up: What did I learn from this?

Cycle Complete (staff initial)_____ Date: _____

Notes:

How to do a Reflection Form

The purpose of the Reflection Form is to encourage students to learn and grow from difficult experiences, and to bring the STAR community back into harmony after it has been disrupted. It is based on the 4 R's of Respect, Responsibility, Relationship, and Reasoning. The questions on the Reflection Form are meant to help everyone involved understand what happened, including how they feel about it and what needs might be behind what each person did. With this understanding, students can make more well-informed choices. The form has sections for plans to improve the situation and keeping track of what has been done to follow through on those plans.

Question 1 asks What happened? Here we're looking for "just the facts", things that everyone can agree on. Be specific. As an example, you might write "In math class George said "You're an idiot" and tore the paper I was working on. Then I tore his paper", rather than "He always picks on me and messes up my stuff and I was just defending myself." If you have any questions about how to state the facts in a situation, ask for help.

Question 2 says How do I feel about what happened? Here we're asking you to take a minute and check in to notice your emotions. Again, please be specific. Rather than saying "I feel bad", or even "I feel mad", try to find the words that really fit how you're feeling (for example, "I feel angry, embarrassed and hopeless"). Teachers have a list of words that describe emotions that you can look at. Question 3 "How do the other people involved feel?" is asking you to apply the same idea to others. You might not know for sure, but guess how you think the other person might feel, or imagine how you'd feel in their position.

Questions 4 & 5: Here we're looking for basic human needs that are shared by all of us. We've talked about these in class, and there is a List of Needs to refer to for more ideas. All of our actions, even the ones that seem crazy, come from trying to get our needs met. One purpose of the Reflection Form is to help find ways that are more likely to get your needs met, without interfering with the needs of others.

Question 6 and 7: What can be done to improve the situation now and in the future? The solution might be simple and obvious, or it might involve tackling a challenge and getting other people to work with you. Feel free to use your imagination and try something new.

Questions 8 and 9: What do you think will happen if you do, or do not, follow through on your plan? Consider these options. What decisions do you want to make for yourself now?

The second page is for the teacher (or other school staff members) and parents or guardians to have input, and to keep track of what is done to handle the situation. It includes the possibility of students doing restitution to contribute back to the community.

Signatures: "I will carry out my plan and ask for help if I need it." Only sign your name if you really mean it. The signatures of your teachers, parents, or others mean that they are committed to supporting you in carrying out your plan. Call on them if you need help.

Student and Family Signature Page

Please sign this only after you have read the complete Handbook.

I certify that I have read and understood the 2012-2013 STAR School Parent and Student Handbook, and will work together with the school to support these policies.

Parent(s) or Guardian(s)

Student

Comments, questions, or suggestions for improvement?

This page is to be returned to the student's teacher.

Thank you.