

Updated as of 8/16/2022



**Student/Parent
Handbook
2022-2023**

Handbook Verification Sheet

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We require that you review the Student/Parent Handbook with your child and initial the spaces below to acknowledge that you have read and understand the following sections of the Handbook:

_____Community

_____Routines & Procedures

_____Communications

_____Expected Behavior & School Policies

_____Health, Safety, & Emergency Procedures

_____Policies Mandated by Law

My child, (print name) _____ and I have reviewed and understand the 2022-2023 Student/Parent Handbook and understand STARS Academy's rules, policies, and procedures.

X _____ X _____
(Student Signature) (Parent/Guardian Signature)

**Please return this form to the STARS Academy Office, or it can be scanned and emailed to info@starsacademyschool.com.

STARS Academy's Directory 2022-2023

Address: 7353 Valley Circle Blvd.
West Hills, CA 91304

School Number: (818) 835-4962

Head of School.....Shayna Turk Dovitz (sturk@starsacademyschool.com)

Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion..Rose Beemer (rbeemer@starsacademyschool.com)

Director of Community Relations.....Jennifer Dollins (jdollins@starsacademyschool.com)

Educators.....Melisa Mendez (mmendez@starsacademyschool.com)

Eedan Shwartz (eshwartz@starsacademyschool.com)

Teachers Assistants.....Angela Echeverria (aecheverria@starsacademyschool.com)

Stacie Gracie (sgracie@starsacademyschool.com)

Jenny Romero (jromero@starsacademyschool.com)

Elective Educators.....Lily Maase (lmaase@starsacademyschool.com)

Magaly Castellanos (mcastellanos@starsacademyschool.com)

Dance Coach.....Gabi Milman (gmilman@starsacademyschool.com)

PE Coach.....Dan Schneider (dschneider@starsacademyschool.com)

Samantha Ducharme (sducharme@starsacademyschool.com)

Staff email addresses are written as the following:

firstinitiallastname@starsacademyschool.com.

NOTE:

STARS Academy does not discriminate on the basis of sex, gender expression, age, marital status, disability, race, religion, creed, color, or national origin.

STARS Academy is a private non-profit organization, and all donations are tax deductible.

If you have questions which are not answered here, please call STARS Academy at (818) 835-4962, email info@starsacademyschool.com, or visit our website at www.starsacademyschool.com.

Important Dates for the 2022–2023 School Year

Note: Subject to Change

2022

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| August 25 | Welcome Back Event |
| August 31 | First Day of School |
| September 5 | Labor Day - Pupil Free Day |
| September 26–27 | Pupil Free Days |
| September 29 | Back to School Night |
| October 5 | Pupil Free Day |
| October 21 | Picture Day |
| November 1 | Parent/Teacher Conferences |
| November 11 | Veterans Day - Pupil Free Day |
| November 17 | Parent Meeting |
| November 21–25 | Thanksgiving Break |
| December 23 | Winter Performance |
| December 26–31 | Winter Break |

2023

| | |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| January 1–8 | Winter Break |
| January 16 | Pupil Free Day |
| January 26–27 | Student-Led Conferences |
| February 2 | Parent Meeting |
| February 20 | Pupil Free Day |
| April 3–14 | Spring Break |
| May 13 | STARS Academy Gala |
| May 23 | Parent Meeting |
| May 26 | Spring Performance |
| May 29 | Pupil Free Day |
| June 1–2 | Student-Led Conferences |
| June 7 | Graduation |
| June 8 | Last Day of School |

STARS ACADEMY ACADEMIC CALENDAR 2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR

*updated 7/13

| | M | T | W | TH | F | M | T | W | TH | F | M | T | W | TH | F | M | T | W | TH | F | # | | | | | | | |
|-------|---|---|---|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Aug. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 | | | | |
| Sept. | | | | 1 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 19 | | |
| Oct. | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 31 | | | | | | | 20 |
| Nov. | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 28 | 29 | 30 | | | 15 | | |
| Dec. | | | | 1 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | | 17 | |
| Jan. | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 31 | | | | | | | 16 |
| Feb. | | | | 1 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 26 | 27 | 28 | | 19 | | | |
| Mar. | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 23 | |
| Apr. | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | | | | | | 10 | | |
| May | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | 22 | | |
| June | | | | 1 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 6 | | |

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| First/last day of school | Conferences | Parent Meetings | Board Meeting |
| Pupil free day | Fundraising | School Events | Testing |
| School Breaks | Professional Development | STARS' Theatres | Open Houses |

Daily Schedule

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 8:00–8:25 AM | Drop off |
| 8:30–8:45 AM | Morning Meeting |
| 8:45–9:30 AM | Humanities OR Math |
| 9:35–10:00 AM | Movement |
| 10:05–10:30 AM | Recess |
| 10:35–11:20 AM | Math OR Humanities |
| 11:25–12:00 PM | Writing OR Science |
| 12:05–12:50 PM | Lunch |
| 12:55–1:25 PM | Writing OR Elective/Research |
| 1:30–2:00 PM | Science OR Elective/Research |
| 2:05–2:40 PM | Humanities OR Study Skills OR SEL |
| 2:45–3:00 PM | Closing Circle |
| 3:00–3:30 PM | Pickup |

HEAD OF SCHOOL WELCOME

Dear Parents,

A special welcome to our new families and welcome back to our returning families! This handbook is a guideline for community practice and policy. Our school remains committed to ensuring an enriching educational and social-emotional experience for all students. Together, we will connect, explore, grow and learn how to be our best selves. As a community, I know that we will make this year truly meaningful.

Best,

Shayna Turk Dovitz

Head of School

ABOUT STARS ACADEMY

Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information about STARS Academy for families and staff. It contains important information about the school as well as policies and procedures that are designed to ensure that the school functions as an effective learning community. Thus, it is important that all members of the learning community understand the expectations.

Please read this handbook carefully and refer to it throughout the school year. If you have questions about anything in the handbook, or if something is not covered in the handbook, please ask the administrators.

As our school is a place of learning, our handbook reflects our values and practices. We are always in the process of developing and refining the handbook and the policies and procedures described in it. We welcome feedback about our handbook so that we can improve it each year.

Mission

The mission of STARS Academy is to successfully educate all students through meaningful academic inquiry guided by the influence of the arts (musical theater integration) at a rigor that is tailored to meet the needs of each unique learner. Through individualized, small group, standards-based instruction, we ensure students master concepts before moving on to new ones. Within the STARS Academy's model, students develop positive self-esteem, respect, empathy, and respect for cultural diversity led by caring educators. We foster a safe learning environment in which we instill intrinsic motivation rather than external rewards. STARS provides students with the opportunity to problem solve, self express, be autonomous, and empower them to take initiative in their learning experience.

History

Shayna spent a majority of her childhood in plays which inspired her later career. Shayna started STARS musical theater program in 2003, and has produced and directed over 50 productions since. In 2014, Shayna brought a modified version of STARS to Heschel Day School. In 2017, Shayna brought the STARS program to CHIME Institute where she saw the potential to integrate a fully-inclusive educational environment and the arts. After teaching for five years, she stepped down from her teaching position to open STARS Academy.

Themes and Instructional Focus of STARS Academy

Critical and Creative Thinkers

- Generate questions and employ creative approaches to problem-solving
- Identify connections in content and integrate knowledge
- Exhibit in-depth knowledge across disciplines
- Solve problems independently and collaboratively

Self-Reflective Learners

- Apply goal-setting strategies that support educational outcomes
- Examine and reflect on learning experiences
- Adapt to an increasingly complex and ever-changing world
- Receive feedback and implement change as needed

Effective Communicators

- Articulate using academic language and an informed point of view
- Employ active listening skills
- Evaluate and utilize forms of argument in both oral and written context
- Develop the necessary skills to navigate through social interactions

Responsible Citizens

- Recognize accurate information and understand current local and global issues
- Take accountability for actions
- Establish disciplined work habits and manage time effectively
- Demonstrate respect and empathy for all

Empowered Individuals

- Self-directed learners

- Take a proactive approach to their current academic pursuits and future goals
- Assume ownership for their life-long learning
- Express ideas and information confidently and creatively

STARS Academy's curriculum consists of core subjects (Humanities [Language Arts, Writing & Social Studies], Math, Science) and elective/research times. We align our curriculum to the California State Content and Performance Standards, including the Common Core Standards, English Language Development (ELD) standards, and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). All students participate in the full core academic curriculum every year: Humanities, Math, and Science. There is also research time twice a week, and language study (grammar instruction) three days a week. All students access enriched subject content and arts with a minimum of one dance class a week (with up to five days for students who wish to dance for all forms of their physical education), and a minimum of one music class a week (with up to three for students who want to participate in all music electives). Instructional minutes are maximized as there are no free periods. Technology is integrated into all subject areas.

Our instructional focus is based on the belief that educating the whole child includes the integration of dance, drama, music, and the visual arts. The arts are a bridge for understanding differences, culture, identity, communication, and respect for our common humanity. Based on research performed at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing arts, "Arts Integration is an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form [and] engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both" (Silverstein, Layne, 2010). STARS Academy's vision is a hands-on curriculum with an arts-rich emphasis. It is based on the best progressive teaching practices as well as educational research.

STARS Academy focuses on three main tiers as an instructional approach: arts-integrated education, student-centered learning, and project-based learning.

Arts-Integrated Education

STARS Academy engages students in an academically rigorous, equitable education program through arts integration and interdisciplinary study. Our school includes dedicated dance, visual arts, and music teachers as a way to effectively engage visual arts, dance, music, and theater into the curriculum. This integration allows creative expression for students through both mind and body, as they bring their ideas and dreams to life. STARS Academy believes that exposing children to the arts helps them become more successful students, better connected to their communities, more confident in their personal development, and better prepared for their careers.

Our school days include opportunities to play, invent, discover, and design. Through these opportunities, students become well-versed in a wide range of art media and techniques. They ultimately enhance their core skills through this integration. STARS Academy believes in an active learning process, rather than passively receiving teachers' knowledge. Lessons integrate multiple content and performance standards, build upon prior knowledge, and allow for reflection, self-assessment, and metacognition. STARS Academy brings learning alive as students apply classroom learning to tangible problem-solving. Students learn about and value academic disciplines by connecting the arts with core subjects such as math, reading, and science. As the arts require so many valuable qualities such as imagination, creativity, critical thinking, self-discipline, and confidence, at STARS Academy students are able to develop strong cognitive habits that continue with them into adulthood and their careers.

In addition to the academic benefits of the arts, they also impact emotional and social understanding. A benefit of the arts is that they remove boundaries. By doing so, students are able to experience and understand the increasingly complex world around them in a safe and creative way. Additionally, the arts promote positive social development and joyful learning through dance, music, theater, and visual arts, keeping students engaged in their education and school. Ultimately, through an arts-integrated school, educators are able to provide their students with both an indispensable and invaluable opportunity to learn. These students have goals that enable them to become competent, self-motivated, and life-long learners.

Student-Centered Learning

STARS Academy's student-centered learning focuses on a personalized approach to learning. We see arts integration as fundamental to our educational program. However, it is not the entirety of our program. Our goal is individual student success, both academically and socially. At STARS Academy, teachers come to know students individually and work as a team to address each student's academic and social needs. We embrace learning as a dynamic experience in which children actively participate in inquiry processes with their teachers. Additionally, our goal is to develop student leaders through peer practice partnerships and collaborative creation.

STARS Academy provides our students with opportunities to showcase their learning in public through family events, presentations, and publications. Our students are empowered to take on responsibility, advocate to affect and create change, and develop a sense of self. They constantly reflect on their own learning across all subject areas. This extensive reflection lies at the base of cognitive development. It also builds critical thinking skills in children that allow students to examine and make sense of the world. To help students develop the qualities of a 21st-century learner, we push students to develop the skills and motivation they need to become life-long learners. We believe

that learning occurs when students' mental models are adjusted, as are their existing set of beliefs, to accommodate new experiences.

Project-Based Learning

Many of our classes employ project-based learning to help students understand the multifaceted relationships among academic subjects, technical and life skills, and the greater world. Project-based learning integrates multiple subject areas into a topic of study. A single project has an overarching theme, but students approach it from a multi-disciplinary perspective. By focusing on the project as a whole, students learn competency skills such as reading, writing and arithmetic where the emphasis is placed on these skills as tools, not as ends to the process. As they work through the project, students also acquire and exercise problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. The project-based learning process engages and motivates students to accomplish multi-level achievements. They increase core competencies and improve practical skills, as well as complete a tangible project. Project-based learning promotes self-motivation and competence through the interests of students, enhancing their propensity to become lifelong learners. These approaches also encourage many modalities of expression.

Full-Inclusion

STARS Academy utilizes/incorporates non-discriminatory and inclusive policies, practices, and pedagogies at all times. All students see themselves as vital components of the school culture. STARS Academy employs the practice of co-teaching in order to better serve our students, some of whom have disabilities and can remain in their class all day due to this model. "The rationale for inclusion is based on the belief that important academic, social, and ethical skills and attitudes are developed when students with various abilities, needs, and backgrounds learn together. A well-established body of research supported by federal and state law indicates that inclusion of

children with disabilities benefits both students with and without disabilities alike” (Research collected by CHIME Institute’s Schwarzenegger Community School).

Studies from the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, Indiana University, and the Center on Education and Lifelong learning, exploring the impact of inclusion on students who don’t have disabilities have found that nondisabled students have achieved improved academic outcomes as a result of being in an inclusive class (Cole, Waldron, & Majd, 2004; Ghandi, 2007). From research at the University of Kansas Schoolwide Integrated Framework for Transformation Education Center, it is noted that the implementation of inclusive practices such as Universal Design for Learning, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and co-teaching have the potential to result in reduced special education referrals school-wide because struggling students receive assistance before they fall too far behind (Sailor, 2008). Evidence also suggests that students with disabilities demonstrate improved academic and social outcomes as a result of increased time spent in general education classes (Cosier, CaustonTheoharis, & Theoharis, 2013; Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002; Vaughn, Moody, & Schumm, 1998; Wilson., Kim, & Michaels, 2011). Based on the book, *What Really Works in Elementary Education*, Positive social outcomes, such as improved social skills, communication skills, and increased interactions with typical peers are also attributed to inclusive settings (Boyd, Conroy, Asmus, McKenney, & Mancil, 2008; Carter, Siseo, Brown, Brickham, & Al-Khabbaz, 2008).

Peer supports aid in the development of positive social relationships while reducing reliance on adults. This strategy involves an arrangement in which typical peers provide social and academic support to a classmate with significant disabilities while receiving guidance from trained adults (Assessment and Intervention; Carter, Cushing, & Kennedy, 2008). Although

these arrangements often begin with some adult facilitation (and students must willingly participate), students with and without disabilities generally become comfortable with one another over time, and often develop friendships as a result (Carter, Bottema-Beutel, & Brock, 2014; Carter, et al 2008.) Moreover, in a recent meta-analysis conducted by Waldron, Cole, and Majd (2001) both students with disabilities and those without made significant academic gains in inclusive settings. For students with disabilities, these gains were superior to those of similar students with disabilities in segregated settings. Typically developing students gained academically in the same way as peers in non-integrated classrooms, but did make gains in other ethical and social dimensions of learning (Waldron, Cole, and Majd 2001). However, despite the extensive supporting evidence from the educational research community, state and federal legal mandates, and curricular best practices, the availability of inclusive educational options is very limited.

STARS Academy's pedagogical philosophies and methodologies have been developed specifically to support the Mission, Vision, and Values of the school. These include Reciprocal Teaching, Parallel Curriculum (differentiation), Multiple Points of Entry, and Cognitive Learning.

COMMUNITY

Standards for Student and Parent Conduct

STARS Academy is a community of students, teachers, parents, and staff. We share a common purpose: to create a safe and caring atmosphere for growth, learning, and community bonding. Therefore, it is essential that we are all partners in this community.

A Caring Community

The STARS Academy community is made up of people with diverse backgrounds, ideas, and styles. We must work together to foster tolerance, compromise, reciprocity, generosity, and ways to respond in a respectful and caring manner. Reaching out to one another in a time of celebration and in a time of need will also foster a strong and thriving community. Through these efforts, our students will develop life skills to know and value the importance of community.

SEE – Social, Emotional, and Ethical Learning

SEE is an innovative K-12 education program developed by Emory University. It represents the state of the art in education by enhancing SEL programming with key additional components, including

- Attention training
- Compassion and ethical discernment
- Systems thinking
- Resilience and trauma-informed practice

This program provides educators with a developmentally-staged curriculum consisting of easy-to-implement lessons, the conceptual framework used to design the curriculum, and resources for educator preparation and development. SEE Learning empowers students to engage ethically as part of a global community and provides educators with the tools to support student well-being.

Family Involvement

Family involvement and collaboration are central to the mission of STARS Academy. Families may participate in several different ways, depending upon their preferences, strengths and resources.

Understanding and Supporting The School Mission

All parents/guardians are expected to support the mission of STARS Academy. The development of an inclusive learning community requires the support of families. Therefore, it is essential that all parents/guardians fully understand and are committed to supporting the mission, vision, and goals of the school.

Involvement in Their Student's Educational Programs

All parents/guardians are expected to be involved in their children's educational programs. STARS Academy supports a family centered approach, which honors parents' and/or guardians' priorities, concerns, and goals for their children. Family members are valued members of the educational team, contributing knowledge about their individual children's characteristics, learning styles, needs, and preferences. Ongoing communication between home and school, as well as a respectful and collaborative approach, helps to assure meaningful participation by families.

The Governing Board

The governing board of STARS Academy is the Board of Directors of and is organized as a 501(c) 3 nonprofit corporation whose purpose is to establish and maintain programs for children and their families in community settings.

The STARS Academy School Board of Directors governs STARS Academy according to its bylaws. The Board of Directors' major roles and responsibilities include establishing and approving all major educational and operational policies, approving all major contracts, approving the school's annual budget, overseeing the school's fiscal affairs, and selecting and evaluating the administrative staff.

ROUTINES AND PROCEDURES

Starting School

Attending a new school can be stressful for both parents and students. We want to recognize and support the emotional needs of each student, but at the same time support his/her/their independence and successful adjustment to school. We encourage you to do everything possible to help your child feel comfortable in his/her/their new environment, but also to recognize that sometimes it's best to leave and allow the teacher and other students to begin the inclusion process. If you have concerns about your child's adjustment on the first day, please discuss them with your child's teacher(s) so that a plan may be implemented to facilitate the transition.

The Importance of our Schedule

Our daily schedule is planned so that we check in with our students academically and emotionally at the beginning and end of the day. This helps us to better prepare the students and ourselves for the current day as well as the following day. It is very important for students to be on time and stay until the end of school to participate in these activities which can make a big difference in how our teachers and staff are able to support them.

Attendance and Absences

If your child will not be attending school, you must either call the office or email info@starsacademyschool.com by 9:00 AM that morning. If your child is absent for more than five consecutive days due to illness, you must have a note from a physician for them to return to school. Additionally, if your child has **three** unexcused absences or **five** tardy days, a meeting will be setup to address your child's attendance.

If your child is out sick, we strongly believe that they should take the time to recuperate, and we will not provide work for them to complete at home. However, if you know that your child is going to miss 3 or more days of school, please email the office at least 1 week in advance, and we will provide you with work for your child to complete during the time that they are out. At this time, we are not allowing students to use Zoom to participate in school from a remote location.

Late Arrival & Tardy Policy

School begins promptly at 8:30 AM. A consistent schedule is key to the social-emotional and academic success of your child as well as smooth transitions throughout the school day. If your child arrives at school after 8:30 AM, they must be walked to the office by a parent/guardian and signed in.

Picking Your Child Up Early

Please make every attempt to schedule appointments or vacations outside of school hours and school days. In the event that this is not possible, please email the office to notify the office of your child's schedule change or anticipated days that will be missed ahead of time. If you will be picking your child up prior to our normal dismissal time, please come to the office to sign them out, and we will have them meet you outside the office. Please refrain from going directly to the classroom to pick them up, as this disrupts the learning environment.

Dismissal

- The instructional day ends at 3:00 PM for all students.
- Students may be picked up no later than 3:30 PM. Each staff member has cleaning and planning duties to attend to promptly at 3:30 PM, and any child left on campus past that time will delay this process that is put in place.

- Please note that STARS Academy does not provide supervision outside the gate after it is closed and locked. Students are never permitted outside of the campus gate or in the neighboring areas after school hours. STARS Academy is not responsible for off campus supervision (i.e. anywhere outside of school gate).
- Our grace period for pickup ends at 3:30 PM. If families arrive after 3:30 PM more than 3 times, a plan will be put in place where they will be charged \$1.00 per minute past 3:30 PM that they pick up their child.

Emergency Pickup

In cases of emergency or changes in pickup (sudden sickness, carpool changes, playdates, etc.) that happen during the school day or after school, your child will only be released into the custody of those people whom you have previously identified on the emergency forms. Persons not identified on the emergency forms can pick up a student only if the parent has sent a written notification to the school (info@starsacademyschool.com) specifically authorizing that they are allowed to take their child(ren) home on that date. Then, the person picking up your student will be asked to verify their identity. Please note that no one under the age of 18 may pick up a student.

Security

Our campus is surrounded by a gate and guarded by security for maximum protection of the property. All cars driven on campus must display a security sticker in the lower corner of their front, driver's side window which is color-coded to verify that they are on campus for STARS. There is a list of those who are allowed to pick up students (emergency contacts) at the gate, and if anyone temporarily needs to be added, we can do so, but they will need to show identification. If someone will be picking up your child up on a regular basis, you can request additional security stickers, please contacting our office.

Backpacks and Book Bags

Backpacks and bookbags are a desirable and necessary part of school life. However, there are times when they pose certain problems. Students are asked to follow individual classroom teacher's directions as to where to keep bags. In order to keep the campus safe, we expect students to make sure that their bags do not block doorways. Students may store bags in the designated areas. Backpacks/book bags are considered the personal property of the student. No student may go into another student's bag without permission.

1. Backpacks/book bags are expected to be maintained so that they provide a positive form of organization for the student. In some cases, teachers will assist students in learning how to maintain an orderly book bag. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to also assist in this endeavor.
2. If the student's backpack is stolen, the parent/guardian is financially responsible for all content of the stolen backpack. STARS Academy is not responsible for any items brought to campus that are lost or stolen.

Lunch and Snacks

Please send a healthy snack and lunch each day. There will be an opportunity for children to eat their packed snacks in the morning during recess/nutrition. The following are suggested healthy snacks/lunches: fruit, vegetables, sandwiches, crackers, cheese, bread, fruit juice, milk, water, beans, pretzels, corn nuts, granola bars, nuts, and seeds without shells. Please do not send your child with soda, candy, or coffee drinks. **Please remind ALL students that they are NOT ALLOWED to share food at recess or lunch.**

Celebrating Birthdays

If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday in school, please call the school office in advance so that we can arrange our schedule for that day, and discuss options as well as certain restrictions based on students with allergies.. Please ensure that enough treats are brought for the whole school.

We celebrate birthdays during the last 15 minutes of school before the kids go to carpool. Parents are welcome to join our school community as we celebrate their child with the “birthday song” and birthday complements.

Off-Site Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are a highlight for children and are a wonderful way to celebrate community. Off-site birthday celebrations planned for children at STARS Academy are asked to keep in mind the inclusion of fellow students. Please keep in mind that our school has a close-knit community, so if your child is inviting more than 50% of the students in a class to a party, please invite the entire class.

Dress Code

All STARS Academy students shall be required to show proper attention to personal cleanliness, health, neatness, safety and suitability of clothing and appearance for school activities. In every case, the dress and grooming of each student shall be clean and shall not:

- cause actual distraction from or disturbance in any school activity
- interfere with the participation of a student in any school activity
- create a hazard to the safety of him/herself or others
- create a health hazard to others

The California legislature has determined that gang apparel is hazardous to the health and safety of the school environment, and therefore, the wearing of such apparel may be restricted. Our dress code is gender neutral; students will not be disciplined or prevented from wearing attire that is commonly associated with the other gender.

All students are required to wear closed-toe shoes. We will be engaging in movement activities daily, and all students must wear comfortable shoes

suitable for moving. Shoes with wheels are not permitted on campus. Students are welcome, but not required to bring additional clothes special for movement activities. Students who are prone to accidents should have a complete change of clothes (shirt, shorts/pants, underwear, and socks) in a bag in their backpack at all times. We will notify you if there is an incident that requires your child to use their change of clothes so that you can send a replacement the following day.

Fridays are STARS School Spirit Days. If you don't already have STARS Spiritwear, make sure to order some off of our website and click on Merchandise. Although we will have some designs and sizes available in the office, please plan ahead, as anything that we need to order can take 3-4 weeks to come in.

Homework

STARS Academy will not be providing any tangible homework, however, students will be encouraged to engage weekly in a few activities to solidify the fundamental skills of reading, math, and communication.

Reading

Students will be encouraged to develop a love of reading by reading 20 minutes nightly.. Teachers will support students in choosing an appropriately leveled book that aligns with your child's interests. They can check out books from our STARS Academy library or from the public library. We can also make recommendations from Amazon as well.

Math

We ask that students practice their math facts nightly for 20 minutes to reinforce their automaticity with fact fluency.

Discussion Topics

Each week, class discussion topics will be sent home to all families. We ask that you continue your child's learning by engaging in these discussion topics as a family.

Standardized Testing

Our students participate in MAP testing for ELA and Math three times a year to track student progress against other students of their age. We use this information to track school program effectiveness as well as keep more standardized forms of assessment for families and staff to evaluate. The results of all standardized test data, (MAP Testing), are analyzed by the faculty team.

Lost and Found

Please label all clothing, lunch boxes, and backpacks. All found, unmarked items will be placed in the Lost & Found located in the office. STARS Academy is not responsible for lost items. Students will be provided with the appropriate organizational tools and will be expected to be responsible for all of their belongings. At the end of each semester, all unclaimed items will be donated to a local charity.

After-School Enrichment Classes/Extra-Curricular Opportunities

STARS Academy after school enrichment classes are offered Monday through Thursday from 3:30 - 5:00 PM (except STARS Theater Program, which is offered Monday and Wednesday from 3:30 - 6:30 PM) and provide extended school day opportunities. It provides a time for students to explore an academic, athletic, art, or social interest outside of the school day. We offer these programs as a convenience for working parents, but they also provide the opportunity for any student to explore a new area of interest. The small class sizes allow for individual growth and accomplishment in a chosen area of interest. These classes are also open to non-STARS Academy students. Please

arrive to pick your child(ren) up from the after school enrichment classes at 5:00 PM promptly.

Photography Policy/Release

STARS Academy expects that all students, families, and employees practice appropriate behavior with respect to photographing and posting photos/videos of students online or on social media apps. Individuals should not photograph students and post their images online or on any social media app without permission from parents. Families in our community have differing values and expectations regarding photographs on the internet, therefore the default position of community members should be to seek parental permission prior to posting photos/videos. Parents are provided with a photo/video release form that allows STARS Academy and its employees to post pictures/video of their child on the STARS Academy website and STARS Academy social media pages upon application to the school.

Payment Schedules in TADS

When you signed your agreement in TADS, you selected a payment plan option that accommodated your family's financial needs as well as acknowledged all fees associated with financial matters such as late payments and returned checks. All payments are due on the first of the month and have a 5 day grace period. If your payment is more than 5 days late, TADS will charge you a late fee that will be a separate charge billed on your account. If you have not fulfilled your payment by the 10th of the month, you will receive an email notification from STARS Academy notifying you that if your account is not current by the 14th, your child will not be permitted to attend school. Your child may return to school once you have made your tuition payment.

If you know that you need additional time to pay an upcoming payment, please submit a letter in writing to STARS Academy by the 20th day of the previous month that includes the date that the payment can be expected , so that we can stop the automatic payment. If a payment is not received by the expected date, your child will not be able to attend school until it is received. The TADS fees to be aware of are:

Late Payment Fee: \$40.00

Payment Returned Fee (Noon-Sufficient Funds): \$40.00

Payment Refunded Fee: \$5.00

Starting STARS Academy Mid-Year

If your child enrolls at STARS Academy after the first day of school, tuition will be prorated based on the time left in the school year. All other fees associated with enrollment are required in their full amount at the time of enrollment.

Moving on from STARS Academy

If the STARS administration and/or your family come to the conclusion that STARS Academy is no longer the best school for your child prior to the completion of the school year, you will be held financially responsible for the full month of tuition that your child left in, but will not receive further invoices from TADS for any additional months of tuition. Any remaining balance in TADS must be paid in full within 30 days of your child's last day of school or STARS may hire a collection agency to assist with collecting the funds. If necessary, these accounts will incur an additional 30% fee of the balance being collected in order to cover collection expenses.

Also, please note that if a student is dismissed from STARS Academy due to violation of any of our policies, parents are expected to pay the full year of the student's tuition and will not receive any refunds of payments already made.

COMMUNICATION

Calling the Office

The STARS Academy Office is open from 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM Monday through Friday. If you have any questions about anything such as tuition, upcoming activities, and school fundraisers, please feel free to call the office, and Jenn will be happy to assist you. If she is helping a child with something, and you reach our voicemail, please leave a message, and she will call you back.

School Information Email

If you want to send us a question, tell us that your child is not going to be at school, or to report changes in pickup arrangements, please email info@starsacademyschool.com.

SHOOTING STAR - School Newsletter

The school newsletter is sent out every Friday afternoon and includes information about important dates, classroom project updates, fundraisers, announcements, and so much more. If you have any information that you think should be included in the newsletter, please email Jenn Dollins at jdollins@starsacademyschool.com.

Updating Contact Information

Emergency Form (filled out digitally on TADS during registration)

We must be able to reach you at all times in the event of an emergency. Please alert us by email immediately if any of the following information changes:

- Home address
- Home, work, and/or cell phone numbers
- Doctor's phone number
- Names and phone numbers of people who are authorized to be called in case of an emergency or to pick up your child after school

Immunization Records

The school must have immunization records on file for all students. State law requires that we receive immunization records prior to the enrollment of the student. Please note that there are new immunization requirements for students entering the 7th grade – students must show proof of the Tdap vaccine or they will not be able to attend school (unless the student has a medical exemption.) If your child receives vaccines during the school year, please provide updated vaccination records in a timely fashion.

Home/School Communication

STARS Academy has a strong commitment to family/teacher collaboration. Families are encouraged to stay in contact with their child(ren)'s teacher(s) throughout the year.

Communication with Teachers

Families may also contact teachers/administrative staff by emailing or calling the school number and leaving a message or making an appointment for a conference in person or via Zoom. All email addresses can be found on our website starsacademyschool.com. Please allow 24-48 hours for STARS Academy faculty to return emails. No drop-in conferences, please. Please note that faculty/staff do not return emails Monday-Friday after 5:00 PM or on weekends, holiday, or extended breaks. Teachers are not available

immediately before or after school, as this time is reserved for co-planning or “debriefing” amongst staff members, which is an integral part of the STARS Academy educational program.

Communication with Students during the School Day

Per our Electronic Equipment Policy, STARS Academy prohibits the use of cellular phones by students on campus during normal school hours. If you need to communicate with your child during school, please call the office or email info@starsacademyschool.com. We will relay the message and have your child get in touch with you via the STARS Academy phone.

Assessing Student Progress

Parent participation will be expected in the following:

- Involvement in identifying goals and priorities for their children’s educational plan. These plans are based on an assessment of each child’s level of functioning and learning styles, and developed through collaboration between teachers, staff, and when appropriate, the student; One conference per year (Parent/Teacher)
- Two conferences per year to discuss goals and review portfolios; (Student-Led)
- Collaboration with staff when problems or concerns arise.

Our teachers complete a report card for each semester, which includes a check-list of standards for each academic subject and is evaluated based on whether standards are met; we do not assign letter grades. A detailed narrative that elaborates upon your child’s progress in all academic and social-emotional areas is also included at the end of each report card. Report cards are mailed home to parents/guardians the week after Student-Led Conferences.

In order to receive your child's report cards, you must be up-to-date on your tuition payments. For the end of year report card, you must have a zero balance in your TADS account.

Remind APP

STARS Academy asks that all parents register their cell phone number with the Remind App so that they receive a link to our weekly newsletter as well as reminders about upcoming events happening at school. We will send a link to your cell phone to help you set it up!

Social Media

STARS Academy maintains a presence on several internet properties, including social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram. These internet properties help the school communicate and market more effectively and encourage networking and connection with the community. Per our school agreement, parents are asked to give STARS permission to post photos, video, and audio records of students, their artwork, school work, performance, etc. In order to build our school, we would greatly appreciate you following us on social media, reviewing our school (if you feel so inclined), and reposting about upcoming Open Houses and School Tours.

EXPECTED BEHAVIOR & SCHOOL POLICIES

Expected Student Behavior

Students should always remember that their behavior at school and school-related activities is a reflection not only on themselves but also on STARS Academy. The following is what is expected from a STARS Academy student.

School Rules

1. Be safe
2. Be respectful
3. Be responsible

Be Safe Conduct

1. Wash hands before going outside to eat.
2. Be aware of your surroundings.
3. Stay in designated areas only.
4. Abide by the following prohibitions: gambling, lying, fighting, possessing inappropriate literature or material, trading cards, or involvement in verbally or physically abuse of another individual.
5. Display respect towards others by not tampering with cars outside campus, bringing matches, lighters, or any type of explosive device to school or any form of weapon on campus.
6. Students are held to the expectation of not leaving campus without permission.
7. Keep a safe and clean school that is free from graffiti, weapons, and drugs.

Be Respectful Conduct

1. Be courteous and respectful at all times.
2. Wait to enjoy gum until after school.
3. Refrain from using profanity.
4. Cellular phones, radios, CD players, video games, iPods, iPads, MP3s, or other electrical devices must **not** be used during school hours (unless instructed by an administrator for school purposes only).
5. Students are to recognize the individual strengths and abilities of each person on campus by showing respect to all students and adults and

refrain from name-calling, using slurs, or engaging in other demeaning or potentially humiliating actions, including bullying.

6. Solve conflicts maturely, without physical or verbal violence.
7. Be a good role model and help to create a positive school environment.

Be Responsible Conduct

1. Eat first, then play.
2. Throw all trash away in a trash can, and recycle all recyclables.
3. Take care of our play equipment.
4. Learn and follow school and classroom rules.
5. Report any bullying, harassment, or hate-motivated incidents.
6. Attend school on time and be prepared to learn.
7. Keep social activities safe.

Examples of conduct NOT permitted:

- Bully/intimidate
- Possess weapons
- Fight, threat, and/or act violently
- Possess drugs and/or sell drugs
- Create graffiti and/or vandalize
- Participate in gang activity
- Cheat and/or plagiarize
- Forge and falsify
- Sexually harass and/or assault
- Blackmail and/or extort
- Be Prejudice and hate crimes
- Acts of Robbery and/or stealing
- Use Fireworks and/or firecrackers

Discipline Policy

The discipline policy of STARS Academy is based on concepts of positive behavioral support and a progressive discipline process that will involve the students, school staff, parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) and the student's caregiver(s). The discipline policy is guided by the notion that students should be held accountable for their behavior. STARS Academy takes a non-punitive approach to discipline, resolving conflicts through discussion, reparation, peer support, and reinforcement of community values. The climate of STARS Academy will be one of support, understanding, and respect. Every effort will be made to model appropriate behavior and to be proactive in preventing the need for students to engage in undesirable behavior. In short, STARS Academy is committed to providing its students with an opportunity to experience the benefits of the curriculum in an environment that fosters their potential, self-esteem, and well-being. Certain expectations of the students are therefore essential to achieving these aims.

This discipline policy will not be implemented in a manner that is discriminatory, arbitrary or capricious, and will follow general principles of due process. Students and their parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will sign agreements related to their understanding of and responsibility to the standards set forth in the discipline policy as explained in this Student/Parent Handbook.

The consequences when STARS Academy's School Rules are not followed are the following:

1. The student receives a warning.
2. The student receives a second warning.
3. The student gets sent to the office and needs to write an apology letter to the teacher. (This will be copied and saved for our records).

These consequences reset at the beginning of each class period, however, if a student is sent to the office to write an apology after the first time that day,

they will meet with the Head of School and create a plan for the remainder of the day. If school administration does not think the student will be successful being in a classroom, the student may need to complete their work in the office for the remainder of the day. The above are consequences for the first time these behaviors happen.

If these behaviors happen a second time (on another day), the consequences are the following:

1. The student receives a warning.
2. The student receives a second warning.
3. The student gets sent to the office and needs to write an apology letter to the teacher. (This will be copied and saved for our records).
4. An email is sent to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s).

The third time these behaviors happen (on another day), the consequences are the following:

1. The student receives a warning.
2. The student receives a second warning.
3. The student gets sent to the office and needs to write an apology letter to the teacher. (This will be copied and saved for our records).
4. An email is sent to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s).
5. If the behavior continues after these consequences, the student's parent/guardian will continue to attend school with them. If a parent/guardian is unable to attend school with their child, the student will not be allowed to return to campus until they are able to do so.

Parents/Guardians and students (when appropriate) will be asked to participate on the Student Success Team (SST) if a student's behavior is not

improving. The team will develop appropriate modifications and intervention strategies.

Students who habitually fail to comply with school policies by chronically engaging in rule violating behavior even after the positive behavioral supports have been implemented and/or who present an immediate threat to the health and safety of the community may face an alternative in-school placement (in-house suspension) or suspension from school depending upon the severity of the infraction. Individual behavior support or intervention plans will be designed for the most persistent rule violators.

If rule violating behaviors continue after intervention, the Student Success Team (SST) and/or Discipline Committee may determine that STARS Academy is not the most appropriate placement for the student (i.e. expulsion). It is important that the parent(s) participate on the SST and be active partners in these decisions.

Students who repeatedly defy behavior expectations may be dismissed from the STARS Academy's academic program. If a student is dismissed due to violation of rules, parents are expected to pay the full year of the student's tuition and will not receive any refunds of payments already made.

Harassment, Bullying, & Discrimination Policy:

STARS Academy is committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe learning and working environment that is free from harassment, bullying, and discrimination in any form. STARS Academy does not tolerate any behavior that infringes on the safety or well-being of students, employees, or any other persons within the school's jurisdiction; and will not tolerate retaliation in any form when bullying has been reported.

Harassment

Harassment of any student by any other student, or employee, is illegal according to Civil Code (California Educational Code 212.5) and is strictly prohibited. Harassment occurs when an individual is **subjected to treatment which is hostile or intimidating because of the individual's race, creed, color, national origin, gender identification, disability, or sex**. Harassment can occur at any time during school or during school-related activities. **Harassment includes, but is not limited to:** verbal harassment; derogatory comments and jokes; threatening words spoken to another person; physical harassment; unwanted physical touching, contact, assault, deliberate impeding or blocking movements, or any intimidating interference with normal work or movement; sexual harassment: unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Bullying

Bullying of any kind, including microaggressions, is unacceptable at our school. Microaggressions are statements, actions, or incidents regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group such as a racial or ethnic minority. Bullying is defined as aggressive behavior that involves an imbalance of real or perceived physical or psychological power among those involved. Typically, the behavior is repeated over time and includes the use of hurtful words or acts. Bullying behaviors may include, but are not necessarily limited to the following:

- Verbal: hurtful name-calling, teasing, gossiping, making threats, making rude noises, or spreading hurtful rumors.
- Nonverbal: posturing, making gang signs, leering, staring, stalking, destroying property, using graffiti or graphic images, or exhibiting inappropriate and/or threatening gestures or actions.

- Physical: hitting, punching, pushing, shoving, poking, kicking, tripping, strangling, hair pulling, fighting, beating, biting, spitting, or destroying property.
- Emotional (Psychological): rejecting, terrorizing, extorting, defaming, intimidating, humiliating, blackmailing, manipulating friendships, isolating, ostracizing, using peer pressure, or rating or ranking personal characteristics.
- Cyber bullying: Sending insulting or threatening messages or pictures by phone, email, websites or any other electronic or written communication.
- Creating unauthorized Facebook, Instagram, Twitter accounts

Discrimination

STARS Academy prohibits discrimination based on an individual's sex (including sexual orientation or gender identity); ethnicity (such as race, color, national origin, and ancestry); religion (including religious accommodation); disability (mental or physical disability or reasonable accommodation); age; or any other basis protected by federal, state, local law, ordinance, or regulation. Harassment based on any of the above-protected categories is a form of unlawful discrimination and will not be tolerated by STARS Academy.

We also have a zero tolerance for hate speech or any kind, including racial slurs. It is subject to immediate suspension pending investigation. This policy is in the California Education Code for Student Discipline.

https://www.lbusd.org/uploaded/1-District/Departments/Instructional_Services/Documents/Student_Handbook_Section_7_California_Education_Code_for_Student_Discipline.pdf

If harassment, bullying, or discrimination does occur, all students should be able to report it and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that these behaviors are happening is

expected to tell the staff. Reports can be made by any individual in the STARS Academy community – parents, students, or staff. Individuals are encouraged to make reports to an administrator as soon as possible so that a proper investigation of the behavior can occur. Reports can be made in person or via email to any administrator at the school. The administrator will then appoint the appropriate person to conduct the investigation or do so themselves.

The school will treat allegations of harassment, bullying, and discrimination seriously and will review and investigate such allegations in a prompt, confidential, and thorough manner. Reports will be investigated thoroughly by administration or their appropriate staff designee and a determination concerning the nature and extent of harassment, bullying, or discrimination will be made.

Students who are found to have engaged in bullying, discrimination, harassment, microaggressions, or hate speech will be subject to both intervention plans as well as school consequences. Intervention plans will begin with restricted free time, additional adult supervision, and prescribed schedules of activities until the situation has been investigated and remedied. Consequences will include loss of school privileges, in-school suspension, or out-of-school suspension depending on the severity. Additionally, students who are bystanders to such behavior and do not either distance themselves immediately or report it, will be subject to consequences as well. Students who continue to engage in bullying behavior despite intervention and/or consequences may be subject to expulsion. School administration will use appropriate discretion in all such cases and the administrators have the final say on student dismissal from the program.

A charge of harassment, bullying, or discrimination shall not, in and of itself, create the presumption of wrongdoing. However, substantiated acts will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Students found to have

filed false or frivolous charges will also be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

The school administration are designated to handle all inquiries or complaints regarding its efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities related to discrimination or harassment based on a student's sex (Title IX); sexual orientation or gender identity (Title 5, CCR, §4910); race, color or national origin (Title VI); or mental or physical disability (Section 504).

All parties involved and their parents will be informed to the greatest extent appropriate of the outcomes of the bullying investigations, the plans/consequences put in place as a result of the investigation, and future changes to the specified plans when they occur. It is the expectation of the STARS Academy community that parents will cooperate, support, and partner with the school during the investigation process and the implementation of intervention and consequences. The success of each child and the promotion of a healthy school climate relies on the support and partnership of parents and families.

While we fully understand the developmental aspects of figuring out what to say and what not to say, there are certain phrases, words, and beliefs which when verbalized or expressed, constitute a form of harm. Each situation and student is always individually evaluated. Still, certain behaviors cannot be tolerated.

Students must also take responsibility for helping to create a safe environment:

1. Conduct him or herself in a manner which contributes to a positive school environment and treats everyone with respect.
2. Avoid any activity that may be considered discriminatory, intimidating, or harassing.

3. Do not engage in or contribute to bullying behaviors, actions, or words.
4. Be sensitive as to how others might perceive your actions or words.
5. Consider immediately informing anyone harassing him or her that the behavior is offensive and unwelcome.
6. Report all incidents of discrimination, bullying, or harassment to the administration or a trusted adult.
7. Immediately discontinue conduct when informed that it is discriminatory, intimidating, harassing, or unwelcome.
8. Never engage in retaliatory behavior or ask, encourage, or consent to anyone's taking retaliatory action on your behalf.

Administrators, staff, and parents are responsible for creating an environment where the school community understands that bullying behavior is inappropriate and will not be tolerated. Research has shown that if there is a commitment from all concerned, the incidence of bullying can be dramatically reduced. We firmly believe that a whole-school approach to anti-bullying can only be successful when there is a partnership between home and school, in which we are working together to provide the environment we wish for all our students.

Internet Use Policy

All students are expected to abide by the following internet behavior guidelines at all times:

1. Students will use good manners and appropriate language when using the internet.
2. Students will only use the internet during school hours for appropriate learning activities.
3. Students understand that any work done on the internet is not private.
4. Students will not plagiarize from the internet and use it as their own work.

5. Students will not post their work or work that belongs to someone else on the internet without permission.
6. Students will not share private information about themselves or another person on the internet. This includes names, phone numbers, addresses, and pictures.
7. Any email address registered through STARS Academy for student use is to be used ONLY for school purposes.
8. Students will not use any type of social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok) during school hours.

Penalties for Improper Use

The use of a school account is a privilege—not a right. Misuse will result in the restriction

or cancellation of the account. Misuse may also lead to disciplinary action, including restricted use, suspension or expulsion. STARS Academy will tailor any disciplinary action to the specific issues related to each violation.

Electronic Equipment Policy

1. STARS Academy prohibits the use of cellular phones by students on campus during normal school hours.
2. Students who need an electronic device to enhance their learning must have a parent or guardian sign a waiver releasing STARS Academy of all liability on file in the office.
3. Students are permitted to possess cellular phones or electronic signaling devices on campus provided that any such device shall remain off and stored in a backpack. Students may, however, be given permission to use their cell phones in the event of an emergency.
4. Students are permitted to use cellular phones or electronic signaling devices on campus before and after school or during school activities that occur outside of school hours.

5. STARS Academy is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged cellular phones or any other personal items of value including but not limited to iPods, cameras, electronic games, radios, CD players, computers, etc. at any time.
6. Cell phones and all other electronic devices will be confiscated by any STARS Academy employee if taken out during the school day.
7. Texting, video-taping, or picture taking during school hours is **never** allowed, and the school administration may request that parents/guardians check their student's cell phone activity.
8. Students may not have obscene or inappropriate pictures in their cell phones.
9. Confiscated cell phones will never be returned to students; cell phones will only be returned to parents, guardians, or another approved adult. Cell phones will be returned at the end of the school day after 3:00PM.
10. Radios, CD players, video games, game players, iPods, iPads, or any other electrical devices (not for school related use) may NOT be brought onto the campus. Laser pointers and beepers are also strictly prohibited at all times and will be confiscated.

Please note that parents/guardians should contact the school to get in touch with their children at any point during the day. Please do not call or text your child during the school day. With permission, students may use the school phones if they need to call home for any reason.

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND EMERGENCY

PROCEDURES

Illness

Please call the STARS Academy Office before 9:00 AM when your child is ill. For your child's protection and the protection of others, please do not send your child to school sick or if they are exhibiting ANY symptoms of illness. If your

child complains of feeling sick at school, depending upon the severity, you may be contacted to pick him/her/them up. After a five day absence, a doctor's note will be required for the student to return to school.

Medication

When you enrolled your child at STARS Academy in TADS, you chose the over-the-counter medications that we are able to give them under the appropriate circumstances for each medication.

Prescription medications cannot be administered by STARS staff unless the school has written authorization from your student's physician. The form for your physician to fill out can be requested from the office via email or phone call. Once filled out, the form along with all medication(s) must be handed to a STARS Academy staff member by an adult in the original container(s) with a prescription label. They will be stored according to the instructions on the bottle or those provided by the physician.

Plans for Emergencies that Require Evacuation

In the event that a disaster occurs that affects the normal operation of our school, the Head of School will be in direct contact with the Board to evaluate the circumstances and devise a plan that minimally disrupts student learning. If the school needs to close for a period longer than five days, there is a possibility that the school year may need to be extended in order to account for lost instructional time.

Earthquake/Fire Safety

School employees will:

- Participate in all emergency training and drills.
- Stay calm and direct students in the event of a real emergency.
- Follow the designated school plan.

Students will:

- Participate in all emergency training and drills.
- Remain as calm and quiet as the situation allows.
- Duck and cover in an earthquake situation until given the all-clear signal.
- Leave the building in a quiet and orderly manner when told to do so.
- Line up in the designated area for attendance to be taken.
- Follow all adult directions.
- Be on their best behavior until given the all clear or, in case of a major emergency, until a parent or guardian picks them up.

Major School Safety Regulations

To maintain the safety of the campus, the following major regulations have been adopted. Failure to abide by these regulations will result in dismissal from the program.

1. Drug use/abuse - the use, sale, or possession of drugs, tobacco, or alcohol on campus, during the school day, at after school functions, or school sponsored trips, are regarded as a severe breach of school rules. This includes students who attend school-related functions under the influence of a drug or alcohol. A student guilty of any of these infractions will be dealt with in the most serious possible manner.
2. Gang Involvement - Any type of gang activity or gang association will not be tolerated. Gang symbols on notebooks, book bags, etc., or gang clothing are not allowed on campus.
3. Weapons - Possession of firearms, knives, or any explosives on campus is expressly forbidden. This rule also applies to toy weapons, paintballs, darts and any ordinary objects that are used in a harmful or dangerous manner.
4. Theft and Vandalism - Students are expected to respect the school's property as well as property belonging to others on campus and in the

community. Taking property belonging to others and vandalism are considered serious offenses.

5. Leaving Campus without Permission – This is a serious violation. Parent(s) or guardian(s) and police will be notified immediately.

COVID-19 Policies and Safety Procedures

STARS Academy is monitoring the rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation carefully and taking proactive and prudent measures to protect the health and safety of every member of our community in accordance with the guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Los Angeles County Health Department, the California State Health Department, and other health officials. Our decisions are based on facts, science, and medical information, as the health and safety of our students, staff, and families is our priority.

- COVID Testing

Following the guidance of our medical advisors and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health – and subject to changes to County Health Officer Orders – STARS Academy will implement a new “response testing” protocol for the 2022-23 school year. Instead of requiring every student and employee to test weekly with a PCR test, only those who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or who have been in close contact with a person who has tested positive, will be required to test. All testing will be conducted with rapid antigen tests.

- If a student or employee is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or is in close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19, what do they need to do?

Students or employees who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or who are identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive will need to take and submit a rapid antigen test to STARS Academy.

- **Can an employee or student be tested by their own healthcare provider?**

Yes. Test results must be valid and should be submitted as soon as possible after the test date; employees and families can email test results to info@starsacademyschool.com

- **Is masking required during the 2022-23 school year?**

Indoor masking is strongly recommended, but not required, for all employees, students and visitors. Per LACDPH requirements, all individuals who are identified as close contacts are required to wear a highly protective mask indoors at school for 10 days after the last date of exposure. Students with mask accommodations who are identified as a close contact must quarantine at home for 10 days following the last date of exposure. Masking requirements are subject to change with updated guidance from the LACDPH.

- **Can students who are identified as close contacts and required to wear a mask for 10 days remove their mask indoors when eating or drinking?**

Per LACDPH, close contacts are permitted to take off their masks indoors to eat and drink. Close contacts are not restricted to eating only outdoors, although it is recommended to ensure distancing when eating indoors where possible. We have put into place and will continue to maintain the highest standards to ensure our classrooms and workspaces have the safest air we can reasonably provide.

COVID Safety Protocols

- **What should I do if I or anyone in my household has COVID-19 like symptoms?**

If you or anyone in your household has COVID-19 symptoms, it is important to test for COVID-19 as soon as possible. Persons with symptoms should self-quarantine pending the test results because COVID-19 is very contagious. That individual should also separate

themselves from everyone in their household, so they do not transmit the virus to any family members in the home. They should wear a mask and social distance if they must be in the same room as a household member. Follow hand hygiene recommendations and avoid sharing any personal items.

- **What happens if an employee or student tests positive for the virus?**

If a student or employee tests positive, the following instructions will be given:

Be sure the test result is emailed to info@starsacademyschool.com.

Stay home until at least five days have passed since symptoms first appeared and there is no fever for at least 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication). Symptoms such as shortness of breath and cough should also improve before going back to a school site.

Anyone who has a condition that severely weakens the immune system may need to stay home for longer and should consult with their healthcare provider.

The student or the employee should take a rapid antigen COVID-19 test on day five (the day the student or employee tests positive is day zero).

If they test negative on that test, have not had a fever for at least 24 hours, and have improving symptoms, they may return to school or work.

If a student or staff member who tests positive is asymptomatic, they still must stay home for at least five days after the positive test result and test negative on a rapid antigen test taken on day five.

If the test on the 5th day is positive, and/or they are still symptomatic, they should stay home for 10 calendar days.

After completing the isolation period and meeting the above criteria, the student or employee will receive clearance by submitting their test to info@starsacademyschool.com.

- **Does an employee or student who tested positive need to take another test before returning to work or school?**

Employees and students who tested positive can take a rapid antigen test on day 5 after their positive test. If this test is negative and they are asymptomatic, they can return to school or work on day 6. If they test positive, they should isolate for the full 10 day period after the initial positive test.

Employees and students who have tested positive for COVID-19 and completed their isolation period should not take another COVID-19 test for 90 days because of the possibility of a false-positive result. An individual who has recovered from COVID-19 may have low levels of virus in their bodies for up to three months and may continue to test positive although they are not contagious. After completing the isolation period and receiving clearance, students/employees should return to work or school.

If the individual does not take a test and they remain asymptomatic, they can return after day 10.

Employees and students who have tested positive for COVID-19 and completed their isolation period should not take another COVID-19 test for 90 days because of the possibility of a false-positive result.

- **What is a “close contact” to a case and what does it mean to be a close contact?**

A close contact is a person who was within 6 feet of the infected person for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. Persons with an outdoor exposure at school are not considered close contacts.

- **What should I do if a member of my household tests positive?**

Individuals who are continuously exposed at home to a household member who has tested positive can remain at school or work as long as they: monitor for symptoms and remain asymptomatic, wear a highly protective mask at all times indoors at school/work (except when eating or drinking) for 10 days, and test negative within 3-5 days after the last date of exposure to the positive household member while they were infectious.

- **What should I do if my child is in close contact with someone outside of school who is positive for COVID-19?**

If your child is identified as a close contact of a positive individual outside of school, they can continue to attend school as long as they monitor for symptoms, wear a highly protective mask for 10 days after the last date of exposure, and test negative with an at-home rapid antigen test within 3-5 days after last exposure.

If your child recovered from COVID-19 in the last 90 days, they are exempt from testing, but are required to monitor for symptoms and wear a mask for 10 days following exposure.

If your child develops any COVID-19 symptoms, you should call your healthcare provider immediately and make arrangements for your child to be tested for COVID-19.

- **What determines if a class will close, or a school will close because of an outbreak?**

The LA County Department of Public Health will conduct an investigation and make a determination if a school or class should close due to an outbreak.

- **Will I know about an outbreak in my student's school?**

School Administration will communicate all necessary information to the school community, in accordance with LA County Department of Public Health guidelines.

An outbreak is a specific event of multiple, linked cases that is determined in partnership with the LA County Department of Public Health. If an outbreak is identified, the school's Compliance Task Force will follow specific protocols to inform the school community.

COVID Vaccination

At this time, the vaccine is not required, but is highly encouraged, for age-eligible students. This rule may change for the 2023-24 school year. If your child is fully vaccinated, please upload your proof of vaccination to TADS.

Although the government is not mandating the vaccine yet, there is a possibility that this will be our school policy for the 2022-2023 school year. We are an independent school. We are not mandating it. We are saying that there is a possibility that if you choose to send your child to our school, then you choose to vaccinate your child.

California currently allows certain exemptions. A qualified medical condition will be accepted, according to the current laws and regulations. This written exemption must be on the physician's official letterhead and have the doctor's signature attached. This note should be sent to info@starsacademyschool.com. Other "sincerely held religious beliefs" exemptions are, at this time, also allowed under California law. This written exemption must be provided from the family directly. This note should be sent to info@starsacademyschool.com.

For any student with one of these exemptions, there will be additional COVID mitigation strategies that may include wearing an N95 mask, additional distancing, additional PCR COVID testing, and ineligibility to participate in certain indoor or high contact activities that require exertion.

*COVID policies will be updated as the CDC and LA County update their policies.

POLICIES MANDATED BY LAW

Child Abuse Reporting Policy

In accordance with California state law, all school staff are mandated reporters and are obligated under penalty of fine and jail term to report the

reasonable suspicion of physical abuse, emotional abuse, emotional deprivation, physical neglect, inadequate supervision, or sexual abuse and exploitation. The report will be made to a law enforcement or county child protective agency. The school is not required to contact parents in advance of making a report to legal authorities. The clear intent of the law, based on the seriousness of the crimes listed above, is to mandate that a report of any reasonable suspicion of abuse be made. School staff members are legally required to make such reports in the best interests of the affected child and do not, once reasonable suspicion is established, have any legal alternative except to make the report to the proper authorities for their investigation and review.

Non-Discrimination Policy

We welcome students from all backgrounds and experiences to create an inclusive learning community where all students, parents, and professionals appreciate and value diversity in all of its forms. This includes, but is not limited to race, color, national and ethnic origin

This nondiscrimination policy covers admission or access to, and treatment or employment in the administration of any of its employment, rights, privileges, educational programs, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletics, recreational, and other school-administered programs generally accorded or made available to students at the school.. The lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission to or participation in programs or activities.

Student/Parent/Teacher Contract

STARS Academy students will work cooperatively to become self-directing, think critically, develop social competence, respect their diversity, and actively seek learning opportunities. The teachers of the STARS Academy will establish the highest standards and expectations for student achievement, promote a foundation for life-long learning, and model appropriate behaviors and attitudes expected of students. The school community will work cooperatively and collaboratively to create an enriching learning environment in which all partners are empowered by their own sense of ownership and responsibility to the school.

Staff Pledge: I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

- Teach classes through interesting and challenging lessons that promote student achievement.
- Vow to motivate students to learn.
- Have high expectations and help every child to develop a love of learning.
- Provide a nurturing, safe, and caring learning environment.
- Actively participate in collaborative decision-making and consistently work with families and school colleagues to make school an accessible and welcoming place for families that help each student achieve the school's high academic and behavioral standards.
- Respect the school, students, staff, and families.
- Modify curricular experiences to meet the individual educational and social needs of students.

Student Pledge: I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

- Come to school ready to learn and work hard.
- Know and follow the school and class rules.
- Communicate regularly with my family and teachers about school experiences so that they can help me to be successful in school.

- Respect the school, classmates, staff, and families.

Family Pledge: I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

- Ensure that my child is on time and attends school every day; gets adequate sleep, regular medical attention, and proper nutrition; and follows the school dress code.
- Communicate the importance of education and learning to my child.
- Respect the school, staff, students and families.
- Support the school's commitment to inclusive and accessible education.