

JOURNEY SCHOOL

PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK

2020- 2021



JOURNEY SCHOOL
PK-12 EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY



REGGIO CHILDREN



MSA
CESS



Conscious
Discipline

BUCK INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION

PBLworks



JOURNEY SCHOOL

PK-12 EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY

Journey School is a vibrant and inclusive learning community empowering students to think critically, creatively, and independently.

We foster active exploration and quiet reflection, individual endeavor and collaborative engagement.

We teach our children that it is possible to change the world.





JOURNEY SCHOOL
PK-12 EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY

Welcome to Journey School!

As our mission states, Journey School strives to be a community of learners engaged in the pursuit of truth, understanding, and the common good.

This framework animates all that we do in our intellectual, artistic, athletic, and service endeavors. To foster these pursuits, we believe in cultivating relationships and in the value of trust and respect, and we believe that behaviors of staff, students and families alike should reflect the trust and respect that is afforded to everyone.





JOURNEY SCHOOL

PK-12 EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY

At Journey School, conflict is handled through the sharing of perspectives and listening mindfully to one another. Students, staff, and families should keep in mind that we will default to trusting one another as a community and as a learning partnership. In order for an authentic community to function, honesty is crucial. Sometimes it is necessary, however, to set forth simple, written expectations so that all members of a community can know what is expected. This is especially important in matters that affect the safety or integrity of our community. This handbook is a guidebook to help us to establish a common understanding as we begin our time together, to document our growth as a community and to navigate times of conflict when they arise.





The Journey School Handbook reflects the work and needs of the School community, and it will evolve to address concerns brought by students. Students, families and staff may be led to offer changes to the principles, policies, and procedures described here. Anyone wishing to propose changes may bring their suggestions for consideration.

The handbook will be reviewed annually, and changes may be made on an as-needed basis.

Information about Journey School policies and practices follows.

Community Engagement and Expectations

Journey School strives to be a community of learners committed to the belief that in all our interactions, respect is paramount. Because we respect one another, and because we believe in the inherent worth of all people, we seek to listen deeply to one another when we find ourselves in conflict or disagreement.

Community-building time and class time are equally valued. Meeting for conversation and discussion, advisory times and service days are opportunities for us to grow together and to care for our space and our community.

Engagement in community means that we speak and act with integrity, that we follow through with our obligations, and that we honestly express our ideas and boundaries. Just as important we support others in doing likewise and offer them the same respect we wish from them.

Classroom Expectations

Teachers are responsible for setting clear expectations for behavior and work in their classrooms. Students can expect the school Leadership Team to support teachers in maintaining these expectations.



Teachers are encouraged to take time to explain the reasoning behind rules and expectations and to ask students to take part in creating classroom norms and agreements. Whenever there is a question about behavior, our interactions should be governed by courtesy, respect, and safety.



Attendance & Tardiness

As a project-based learning program, we are clear that a student who does not attend class regularly will have a diminished experience compared to a student who attends consistently.

Credit for a class depends on sufficient attendance, completion of work, and participation in activities. Likewise, being on time shows respect to the teacher and fellow students.

Tardiness is disruptive to the flow of class and advisory time, and habitual tardiness shows a lack of respect for the time of others.

Teachers refer students who are having trouble being on time or attending class to the Leadership Team.

Personal Technology

The default rule of Journey School is that mobile devices should be silenced and put away during the entire academic day (from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm).

Students are allowed to use cellphones only in case of an emergency and under the supervision of a staff member.

Teachers and advisors may decide to permit mobile device use for a specific classroom activity, provided that the use of technology is appropriate to the work at hand. Teachers may confiscate devices that are causing undue distraction and refer the problem to the Leadership Team. Students may use laptops and tablets for note-taking and academic work, but students who are off-task on their devices will be asked to use paper and pen instead while a contract for technology is created with the student.

Network Use Policy

The Network Use Policy at Journey School applies to all personal and school devices using the Journey School network. Students on campus who choose to use their personal data plans on campus are still required to follow all rules around mobile devices, community standards, and community trust.

Dress

Journey School believes that students should have latitude in expressing themselves through their attire. Clothes should be clean, comfortable, and appropriate for a work and learning environment. Clothing that is distracting, that depicts dangerous or demeaning messages, or that advertises or references the use of substances illegal for minors leads first to a conversation with the student and then, if problems persist, to the Leadership Team and parents.

Campus Visitors

Students may, with the advance permission of the Leadership Team, invite visitors to campus. Permission should be sought several days in advance so that staff can be notified of a visitor. Visitors should attend classes with their hosts unless other arrangements are made with the Leadership Team.

Posted Rules

Different parts of campus may have special rules because of the environment and the age of the students served in that area. Students are responsible for observing posted rules in all environments.

Anywhere students are working with technology will have posted rules for the safety of students and equipment. Likewise, Journey School students are required to know and follow the rules of other parts of the campus when they visit, and to be mindful of how their age-appropriate language and behavior might be perceived by younger children.

Disciplinary Action and Support



At Journey School, our intention is to partner with our students so that we can build our community through a respect for and love of each other and our differences. As a community, it will always be our default to help a student struggling behaviorally first through one on one conversation, next through small group conversation, and finally in large group conversation. In most cases of disruptive or inappropriate behavior, teachers hold conversations with students to help them understand how their behaviors have been inappropriate and in what ways the behavior needs to change. The Leadership Team is informed of these conversations. If problems persist, the Leadership Team works with the student and family both to hold a student accountable and to explore ways to support the student seeking to change. Parents and teachers may also be involved in creating plans through which students gain clarity around behavioral expectations.

If problems continue to persist beyond that point, the Staff Student Disciplinary Committee may be involved and or, the student may be asked to leave the community.



While that is true, Journey School believes in restorative justice, meaning that consequences should be aimed toward healing both the student and the community trust. We believe that restorative justice creates greater accountability than consequences that are simply punitive.

Any student who acts in a way that betrays the trust placed in all students by the community is required to appear before a council of the Staff Student Discipline Committee (SSDC). The committee will be comprised of an even number of staff and students. The student portion of the SSDC is a committee of 3 students who serve two-year terms. Students can be nominated by teachers, the Leadership Team, or other students. SSDC selection takes place each fall as spots open up on the committee. Any Upper School Staff Member may serve on any given council of the SSDC.

The SSDC will assemble to hear cases involving violations of community trust. The council is tasked with creating a process by which a student can repair the trust that has been damaged by the student's actions. Only students who have admitted to violating the community trust have the benefit of an SSDC hearing. When a student has violated the community trust but has not admitted doing so, no hearing takes place. Discipline decisions are, in these cases, left to the Leadership Team. Once a student appears before a council of the SSDC, the student is presented with a statement about what happened and given the opportunity to respond and answer questions. The advisor, as advocate, shares insights and thoughts on the situation. The SSDC then makes a recommendation of consequences to the Leadership Team.

The Leadership Team must "sleep on it" before issuing final consequences. The Leadership Team may take the recommendation of the SSDC in whole or in part, may reject the recommendation and take different action (which will be explained in writing to the SSDC), or may send the case back to the council for reconsideration. When there is a final decision, the Leadership Team informs the student, their advisor, and family through a conversation followed by a letter to the student documenting the whole process. This letter is placed in the student's file.

In some circumstances, a council of the SSDC may conclude that a violation was so severe that trust cannot be restored by the student. In this case, separation of the student from the community is recommended. Upon receiving a recommendation for separation, the Leadership Team calls a meeting with attention to the situation for the Journey School staff. After “sleeping on” the perspectives offered at this meeting, the Leadership Team makes a final decision on separation.

Students facing separation are removed from the community for the remainder of the Journey School year. Separated students may re-apply to return to Journey School the following year. If a student wishes to return, and is readmitted, the Leadership Team works with the student to restore community trust and re-integrate the student into the Journey School community.

Separation is a very rare occurrence at Journey School. More often, students are asked to perform a number of tasks that are designed as opportunities to reflect on the community and the trust that sustains it. Off-campus privileges or participation in activities or trips may be suspended. Similarly, some students may face suspension from school. Students who are suspended as a result of the SSDC process are not permitted to come to school or attend school functions for the duration of their suspension.

The Leadership Team and the student's advisor collaborate to create tasks that should be completed during the suspension to help prepare the student for re-entry into Journey School community. Students completing such tasks are welcomed back with a clean slate and the assumption of appropriate community participation.

It is always the case that restoration and maturation are the goal in any incident of broken trust in the community. The goal will always be to preserve the relationship with the student and to continue on as community members.



Appropriate Speech

Demeaning, discriminatory, threatening, and blatantly profane language—sometimes even when said in jest—is corrosive to community. We ask that students refrain from this at all times. While humor is an important part of life at Journey School, we are also aware of the ways in which others are affected by what we say. We should be especially mindful about avoiding gossip, about avoiding demeaning remarks about those who are not present, and about using language that objectifies or diminishes others as individuals or as groups. Students who are made uncomfortable or are offended by a conversation or a remark should either let the offending person know directly and immediately, or bring it to the supervising teacher (if it happens during class), to their advisor, or to the Leadership Team for help.



Campus Policy

Students must remain in campus for the entire academic day. Parents must inform Journey School if their student will walk, ride bikes, or be picked up by someone other than a parent or be driven home by Journey School van. Students may not leave campus except with parental permission in advance. Students may not walk onto neighboring property.

Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco

Journey School is a drug, alcohol and tobacco-free campus. The following are strictly prohibited at Journey: using illegal drugs (or synthetic variants of illegal drugs); using a medication in a way other than the way in which (and for whom) it was prescribed; using tobacco/nicotine (including smoking, "vaping," or smokeless tobacco products); drinking or being under the influence of alcohol. Students who use drugs, alcohol or tobacco on campus, or who come to campus under the influence of controlled substances, are in violation of the community trust.

This policy extends to all Journey School functions even when they are held off campus (trips, sporting events, dances, retreats, etc.). All violations of this policy result in disciplinary action. Violations may result in students being separated from Journey.

Bullying and Harassment

Bullying, or the intentional and persistent verbal or physical targeting of individuals or groups with the intent to humiliate, intimidate, or marginalize, is a violation of community trust and are not tolerated. Students who persist in bullying behaviors appear before the SSDC.

- Students who witness bullying behaviors are encouraged to “be bold” and stand up against these behaviors. Students often try to manage conflicts within peer groups on their own, but when encountering bullying, students should approach their advisor or other staff members for help. Staff members should report any instances of bullying to the Leadership Team.
- Physical violence is never acceptable at Journey School. Students who intentionally act in a physically violent manner against another member of the community are suspended from school until an SSDC hearing can be arranged.
- Sexual harassment is the violation of any person’s sexual boundaries. Words or actions that are perceived to be unwelcome sexual advances have no place at Journey School. Students must honor one another’s boundaries and should report instances where boundaries are violated.
- Bullying, harassment, or intimidation (in person or online) involving Journey School students when away from school can come to school with the students. If and when these behaviors begin to affect students at school, Journey School considers bullying, violence, or harassment, even outside of school hours, as a violation of our community trust to be handled as such.

Diversity and Inclusivity

Journey School is a community of staff, students, and families who respect and honor the contributions of people from diverse backgrounds. We seek to create spaces where diverse viewpoints can be safely expressed and valued in the work of seeking truth. Journey School expects its students and staff to act inclusively in all aspects of school life. Students and staff are expected to strive against discrimination of any kind, including discrimination based on age, race, color, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, physical disability, genetic information, family status, socioeconomic background, national/ethnic origin or immigration status.

Anyone who experiences or witnesses discriminatory language or action directed toward a specific person or group of individuals should bring such incidents to the attention of the supervising teacher, advisor or Leadership Team.



Student Safety and Confidentiality

The safety and well-being of the student is the primary consideration in all student-teacher communications.

All staff members have a legal obligation to report suspicions of child abuse (physical, emotional, sexual) to the Leadership Team, who is responsible for pursuing such matters with the Head of School. Advisors are also required to report cases in which they suspect that a student of engaging in self-harming behaviors.

In cases where a student's safety or well-being at school is in question, the advisors, teachers and Leadership Team collaborate to create clear parameters for the student at school. In cases deemed necessary or appropriate by the Leadership Team, Journey School may request permission from parents to speak confidentially with a child's mental health team (therapist, psychologist, and/or psychiatrist).



Medical Leave

Medical Leave at Journey School happens when a student becomes too ill to attend school for an extended and open-ended period of time, families may request that the student be placed on medical leave. This means that, for the duration of the leave, the student will not be expected at school and that assignments may be modified depending on the student's ability to complete work outside of school.

Academics and Coursework

When we say that academics at Journey School are "different by design," we mean several things. First, we believe in student-centered education that is project-based and exploratory. Given the differences in the way academics are approached, we believe it is critical to also evaluate them differently. Journey School teachers strive to evaluate students individually and "meet students where they are." Teachers work to cultivate, above all else, a growth mindset with their students. Journey School teachers have high expectations, and those high expectations are calibrated for each student. Teachers may push some students toward more advanced work or achievement, while asking other students to focus on foundational skills or information.

Second, we believe that students should have a voice in framing their work. Students have a number of options for electives in any given term, and there are options for framing their work within many courses as well. Curriculum is structured by both grade level and student achievement; students are encouraged to pursue advanced level study as appropriate to their interests and abilities.

Likewise, we want our teachers to have opportunities to teach their passions, sharing with students what it means to explore a subject in depth and move from knowledge toward insight.

Students may choose to sit for AP, SAT Subject exams, or MEP exams in corresponding disciplines after consultation with their teachers and advisor.

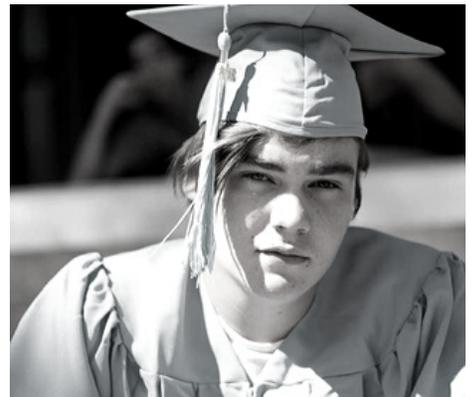
Third, rather than evaluating students through traditional letter or number grades only, we offer in-depth narrative evaluations and then their corresponding numerical grades. These narratives offer insights into a student's learning process and evaluate individual progress in a given course or as a member of the community.

At the end of each year, grades will be assigned and transcripts may be submitted for accreditation if that is the desire of the student and their family.

Graduation Requirements

Journey School operates on a semester system, granting 0.5 credits per semester of each course successfully completed. In each semester, there are eight periods in which a student can take a course. Year-long “core” courses are worth 1 credit; term-long courses are worth 0.5 credits. At the end of a term, students receive narrative reports accompanied by marks of Credit, Incomplete, or No Credit and grades.

Incompletes are granted only when a student’s circumstances have made it impossible to complete the work required before the end of the term. A clear deadline for the work must be set, and teachers must be specific, both in the report and in person, when informing students and advisors what is necessary for credit to be earned. Parents should be notified as well. If the work is not completed by the secondary deadline, the Incomplete becomes a No Credit. Incompletes may not be carried into the following academic year.



Portfolio Defense

Journey also requires students to undergo a Portfolio defense, which is a type of defense of learning, where students curate a portfolio of their work as evidence they have achieved academic and social and emotional maturity. They tell the story of their learning journey in front of the entire school community which includes students, parents, teachers and leadership members.

The portfolio is a reflection of their experience in the institution and must include their academic reports as well as at least 5 of their best learning artifacts ranging from inquiry, reflection, analysis and creative expression pieces.



Community Service Portfolio Addition

The student must also serve the community in a meaningful way before they leave Journey. Their social service project can include leadership positions inside the school, internships in Non-Profits, environmental and social justice initiatives, and other projects that inspire positive change. The students must document at least 30 hours of service work in their portfolio.



After the portfolio defense, the leadership team will approve or postpone the student's graduation. If the defense does not meet the graduation standards, the student must present it again. There is no limit of times a student can present their defense.

Teachers' Role in Academics

Advisors work closely with students to ensure that they are making sufficient progress toward each of these distribution requirements. The advisor may occasionally modify these requirements for individual students (for example, those transferring from another school where opportunities and requirements were different than at Journey School).

Students will take two electives each semester as part of their credit hours.

Independent Study

Students are eligible to earn credit for independent studies. Independent studies may be designed and undertaken with a mentor by permission of the Leadership Team and the student's advisor. Students may not take a course for Journey School credit that is offered in the regular curriculum as an independent study unless the student is unable to attend regular classes and with the permission of the student's advisor and the Leadership Team. The only exception to this rule is when a student has a scheduling conflict that cannot otherwise be resolved.

Independent studies include online courses, but such courses must be offered by an accredited, school-approved institution in order for credit to be granted. For the 2019-2020 school year, Journey School requires official documentation that the expectations of the course have been fulfilled.

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is central to the integrity of any school. Students must do their work according to the directions given. While collaboration and outside help are often appropriate and necessary to complete an assignment, the integrity of the endeavor is compromised when a student relies too heavily on the work of others. Copying another student's work, asking someone else to do the work (or doing work for someone else), or simply presenting another's work without citation or attribution is called plagiarism.

Journey School teachers take seriously their responsibility to help students recognize and avoid plagiarism. There are times when plagiarism occurs because a student does not understand the need to cite sources. When this happens, teachers help the student understand what needs to be changed about the work in question, and what changes need to take place in the student's work process.

When a teacher determines that a student has knowingly plagiarized, the teacher contacts the student's advisor and parents. Plagiarism and other academic dishonesty are grounds for failing a course and appearing before the Staff Student Discipline Committee (SSDC).

Academic Resources, Progress and Difficulty

Journey School is committed to the academic progress of every student. Several resources exist for students facing academic difficulty. Broadly speaking, all teachers are available by appointment to provide extra help when necessary. Midway through each semester, teachers issue mid-term progress checks that identify any academic difficulties. Advisors are charged with keeping a close eye on the overall academic picture for each student and are expected to bring their concerns to the attention of the student and parents when appropriate. Journey School may request that a Learning Specialist be consulted. Depending on the situation, some combination of these people will collaborate on a plan to help address the individual student's difficulties. Journey School students must remain in good academic standing in order to continue at Journey School from year to year. Journey School defines good academic standing as making clear progress toward graduation.



Advising

The advisor-advisee relationship is at the core of a Journey School education. Advisors are primarily responsible both for knowing each advisee well and for cultivating an advisory group that can be a source of support for its members. The advisor is the first person a student should seek out when encountering a problem with another member of the community, and the advisor is responsible for helping students to employ their best voices in such situations. Advisors keep close watch on the “big picture” for each student. They are responsible for reaching out to teachers, the Leadership Team, and the parents as appropriate. Advisors are intimately involved in any disciplinary action involving the student, and they will be informed as soon as the possibility of disciplinary action arises. In some cases, in disciplinary situations, advisors act as advocates for their advisees.

The advisory group provides one venue for students to participate in and care for the community. In addition to holding meaningful weekly advisee meetings, the advisor plans various activities, including advisee days and advisee outings, over the course of the year.

Parents should consider the education director and the homeroom teacher as the first points of contact for questions and concerns regarding their student’s experience at Journey School.

Daily Schedule

Journey School's day runs from 8:00-3:00. Students are expected to arrive on time and stay for the duration of the day. We begin our days with a Morning Circle and Mindful Breathing where we settle in and prepare for the day ahead.

College and Career Counseling

Journey School employs a College Counsellor who helps students explore and plan for their transition from Journey School after graduation. The post-secondary counselling process is designed to help students understand who they are, and who they aspire to become. Emphasizing fit over prestige and keeping in mind that the college search is one facet of a much larger process, we consider post-secondary planning to be a years-long process of self-discovery. In a typical year, most Journey School graduates will attend a four-year institution. Some will attend two-year schools or directly enter the workforce. A number of students will also consider and take gap years before continuing their education. At Journey School, we honor the path of each student and the College Counsellor works closely with families and students to facilitate exploration and execution around this process.

College and career planning at Journey School is facilitated by the use of the Naviance Family Connection software (Naviance). During the winter of the junior year, students and their parents/guardians meet with the College Counsellor as a family to discuss post-secondary plans. In the fall of the senior year, the College Counsellor meets again with each senior to formalize a plan for the final year at Journey School. Throughout their time in Journey, students and their families are welcome to reach out to the College Counsellor as questions and needs arise about the post-secondary planning process.

When seniors apply to institutions, the College Counsellor coordinates the submission of school documents that typically include a Journey School transcript, the Journey School profile, and a counsellor recommendation & academic narrative. Due to the nature of Journey School's evaluation practices, the College Counsellor writes an academic narrative summarizing each student's term reports from each area of study across all enrolled terms. Students and families do not read recommendations or the academic narrative; the College Counsellor submits these materials directly to institutions. In cases where merit scholarships and/or other institutional honors and awards are typically based on quantitative factors such as class rank and grade-point averages, the College Counsellor works with institutions to facilitate this process in the context of Journey Tamarindo's evaluation practices.

School Security and Safety

The safety and security of all members of our community is of paramount importance at Journey.

The Campus Safety and Security Team (CSST), comprised of the Leadership Team and Teachers, meets regularly and guides Journey School in the evaluation and implementation of policies and procedures related to school safety.

The following are among the policies and procedures currently in place:

- Background checks for every staff member, substitute, and coach are mandatory and continuously monitored and updated. Volunteers who help drive and chaperone student outings are also subject to background and/or driving record checks.
- Each staff member receives the Growing Healthy Relationships training on human sexual development and preventing child sexual abuse. All new staff are required to receive this training in their first year at CFS and repeat the training every two years.
- All units have revisited practices around adventures and outings, campus and off-campus overnights and End-of-Year Program travels to ensure that students and staff are protected.

- Each year, Journey School provides students with annual age-appropriate training and counselling in healthy relationships and responsible decision making.
- Staff members are provided with first aid and CPR training on a regular basis. Staff are expected to maintain certification in both first aid and CPR.
- Journey School has expanded emergency kits, filled with over 30 items, everything from disposable nitrile gloves and Steri-strips to instant cold packs and Neosporin.
- Journey School has site-specific emergency plans.
- Students and staff practice fire and other drills on a regular basis.
- Annual parent meetings invite parents to share questions and ideas with one another and with outside experts — for example, around safety, alcohol and other drug issues.
- For inclement weather and emergency situations, our communications options include the Journey App that allows Journey School to send phone, text, and/or email messages to parents and guardians. We also share information on our website and in our social media channels.
- We ask that all drivers refrain from texting, calling, or otherwise using mobile devices while on campus roads.
- Unknown adults will not be allowed on campus at any time.
- Visitors must be approved in advance by the Leadership Team.

Resources for Students, Parents and Teachers

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is an effective teaching method, arguably more so than traditional practices.

An analysis conducted by Purdue University found that PBL can increase long-term retention of learning material and improve teachers' and students' attitudes toward learning. One explanation that researchers suggest is that both educators and learners are more actively engaged with the subject material.

The experience of questioning, making mistakes, and pursuing inquiries in an organized, guided process makes PBL different from traditional teaching methods.

Being an innovative and systematic method, PBL promotes student engagement through deep investigations of complex questions. It's learning by doing.

PBL focuses on imparting specific knowledge and skills while inspiring students to question actively, think critically, and draw connections between their studies and the real world. Aside of the academic benefits of PBL, students develop self-regulation skills necessary to work effectively with their fellow students and build strong and positive relationships that will shape their future.