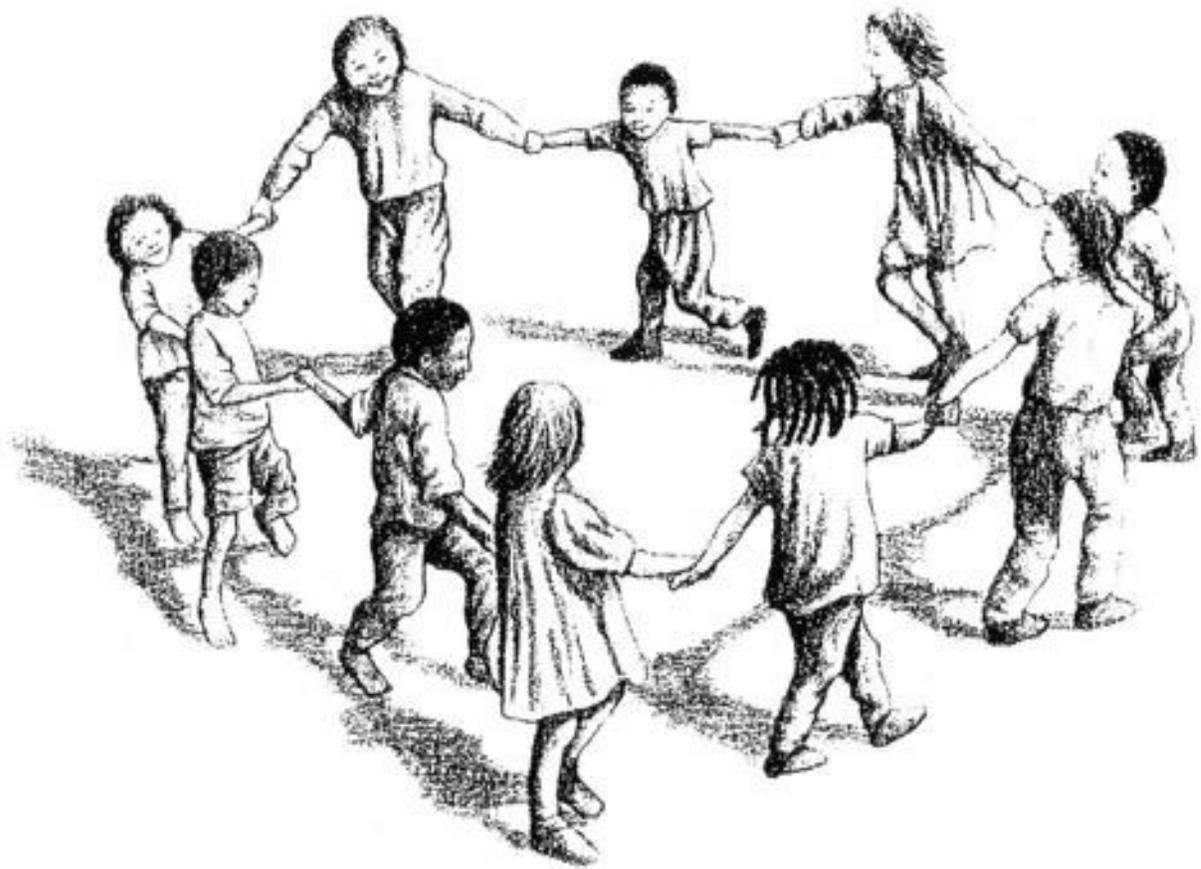
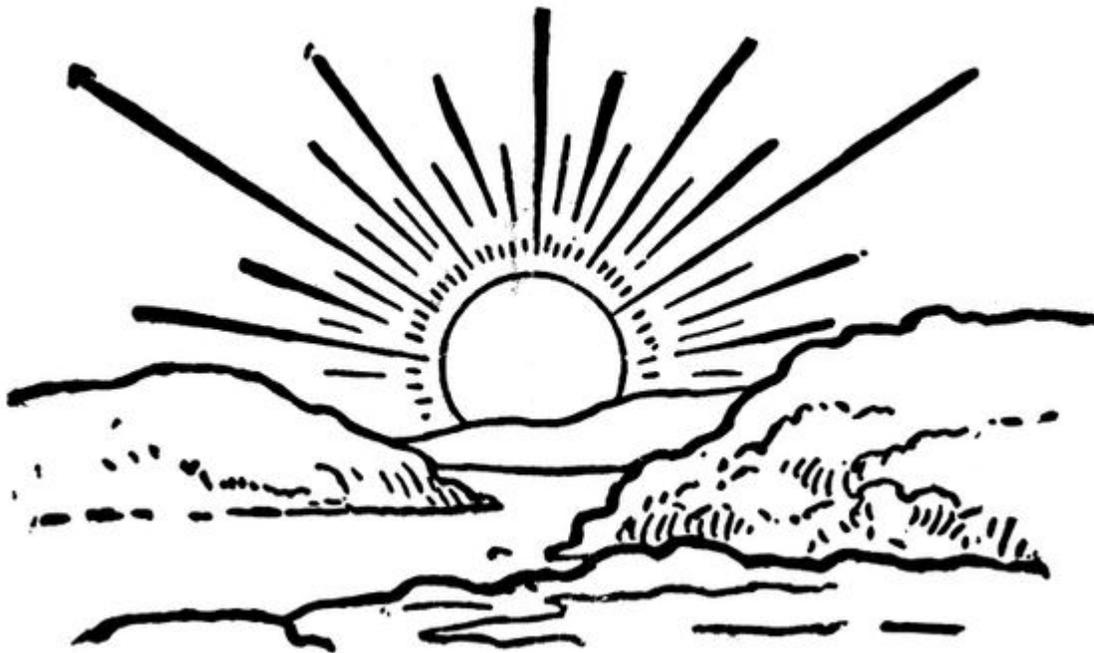


Kindergarten Handbook



SunRidge Charter School

The kindergarten offers a joyful, nurturing setting that inspires the imagination through creative play, storytelling, puppetry, music, movement, and art. Emphasis is placed on the healthy development of the physical body through practical activities that include handwork, crafts, baking, cooking, gardening, digging, sweeping, nature walks and plenty of time outdoors. Responsibility for self and others is encouraged through attention to sharing, caring and taking care of our kindergarten classroom and play yard. The foundations of written language and literacy are laid with emphasis on the oral traditions of storytelling, puppetry, and song. The foundations of mathematics are nurtured through rhythmic movement, music, and the practical activities of cooking, sewing, gardening, and carpentry. Attention and care of the natural world and its beauty lay a healthy foundation for more precise scientific explorations in the later years.



Dear Parents,

We offer a warm welcome to you and your family. What an exciting journey you and your child are embarking on as you prepare for the kindergarten experience. We offer a nurturing environment for your child, one that inspires imagination and creativity while providing plenty of opportunity for physical movement and activity. We invite you to join us in a partnership that will nurture and support your child. This handbook offers a clear picture of our program as well as the ways in which you can support the kindergarten program at home. Please take time to read the handbook all the way through and refer back to it over the course of the year. We will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Life At School

Clothing: Fancy dresses, dress up/costumes or clothes that can't get dirty should be left for special occasions. Dress your child in clothes that allows them to move freely.

Natural fibers: Clothing made from cotton and wool fibers have a warming and breathing quality, which is vital to the young child as their bodies are growing and developing.

Layers: Temperatures often fluctuate from the start of the day to the end. Please dress children in layers that can come off as the day grows warmer (make sure arms and legs are covered at the beginning of the day). Children's midriffs must be covered at all times.

Label Clothing: Please label all outerwear such as coats, hats, sweaters and rain gear with child's name, as well as the items in their change of clothes bag.

Jewelry: We ask that jewelry is left at home. It can cause distraction and easily get lost or broken. If your child has pierced ears, please send them to school with studs only.

Shoes/Boots: Shoes need to be comfortable, secure and able to support the feet in running games. Please, no light-up shoes, flip-flops, or clogs without a back strap. Please provide a pair of rain boots to stay at school. Indoor shoes must provide traction and support for activities such as skipping, hopping, jumping, and dancing. For indoor shoes, avoid clogs or other shoes without a closed heel.



Rain Gear: We go outside every day rain or shine and the children may get wet and sometimes muddy. Please provide rain gear: raincoat, long enough to cover clothing and roomy enough for warm layers underneath, rain boots, and rain pants. Please, no umbrellas or boots that light up.

Hats: We provide a sun hat with a wide brim and ask that you send your child with a warm, snug-fitting hat that can remain at school. Choose simple styles, avoid costume and animal themes.

Change of Clothes: Please include in your child's change of clothes bag the following items: short and long sleeve shirts, pants, shorts, underwear, two pairs of socks, and a plastic bag. Check their change of clothes bag periodically to replenish as needed, and label every item.

Lost and Found: Each class will have a designated area for lost items. Twice a year, unclaimed items will be donated to charity.

Toys and Items from Home: We ask that toys and other personal items from home remain at home and classroom toys remain at school.

Pets: Dogs are not allowed on school property unless they are service dogs. Very occasionally we will allow small pets from home to visit the kindergarten, but prior arrangements must be made.

Attendance/Tardiness: Regular attendance is important for healthy social development. When children are late, they miss out on vital social bonding that takes place first thing in the morning. School funding is dependent upon the daily attendance of each child enrolled, so we ask that you please try to arrange family vacation times to coincide with the school vacations. See SunRidge Parent Handbook for further information on absences and tardies. The Parent Handbook can be found on the SunRidge website www.sunridgeschool.org under "For Our Parents", then choose Parent Handbooks from the drop-down menu. You can also request a printed copy from the office.

Absences: If your child will be absent, please notify the office in the morning by calling 824-2844.

Independent Study

Under some circumstances, a student may be able to miss between 3-40 consecutive days of school when a completed plan of "independent study" is assigned by the class teacher. Independent Study agreements enable the school to collect state funds for the attendance of the student only if the student has completed the required schoolwork specified in the Independent Study agreement.

The first step is to speak to our school manager about the specific process. It is also a good idea to let the teacher know of the intended absence.

Important Independent Study (I.S.) information:

- Parents need to request an I.S. from our school manager at least 10 school days prior to the intended leave.
- The amount of work assigned in the I.S. agreement should be comparable to the amount of work the student would be expected to complete if they were in attendance at the school.

- Parent and student needs to sign and date the agreement prior to the I.S. start date.
- The completed packet is due back to the teacher within two days of the student's return.
- Any absences due to incomplete assignments will result in lost monies to the school for the percentage of incomplete work, and the absence will be recorded as an "unexcused absence" for that percentage of time. Unexcused absences are considered truant after 3 days.
- Students may not be on I.S. and also attend regular core classes on the same day.

Emergency Card: We must be able to reach a parent or responsible party in case of an emergency. Please keep your emergency card current, and include cell phone numbers.

Illness: Students must be fever free (without medication) for 24 hours before returning to school.

Please keep your child home if they have any of the following:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Persistent cough
- Severe headache
- Earache
- Red, puffy, or draining eyes
- Wheezing, difficulty breathing
- Suspicious rash
- Temperature over 100 degrees
- Stomachache

Protocol Regarding Lice

The common head louse turns up on students from time to time, and, while lice are not a health concern, infestations can be extremely time-consuming to eradicate. For this reason, it is essential that parents take quick and thorough action when nits (lice eggs) or lice are discovered on their children.

As an ongoing proactive measure to minimize possible lice infestations, SunRidge School encourages parents to conduct regular lice screenings at home. More frequent checking at home is advised if there are cases of nits or lice in a class. As a general preventative, students should be advised to avoid hair-to-hair contact, and to not share clothing, hats, brushes or combs.

Twin Hills District Schools, including SunRidge, follow the recommendation of the California Department of Public Health that students not be kept out of school if nits or lice are discovered in their hair. Research indicates there is no benefit to sending children with nits or lice home for the day in terms of lice eradication or limiting the spread of lice. All major health organizations now recommend against removing children from school if nits or lice are present on a child.

If nits or live lice are seen on a child, the child's parents will be informed. Parents are expected to provide treatment that night. Parents are to bring their child to the office to be checked by school personnel prior to returning to class. If nits or lice are still present upon re-examination, the parents are informed and the child may return to class. When the school has been made aware of nits or lice being present, the parents of all students in that class will be notified of the occurrence without divulging the

name of any child. Please help us respect each child's confidentiality.

SunRidge School cannot prescribe which lice treatment products parents should use. When nits or lice are identified on a child, we will provide resources for information about lice and their treatment. It is the parent's responsibility to become informed about treatment options and to use their own judgment in choosing a treatment. It is also the parent's responsibility to begin a treatment program if their child has nits or lice, and to continue treatment as needed until the infestation is eliminated. The California Department of Public Health recommends the following brochure, A Parent's Guide to Head Lice, and it can be found at:

http://www.cdph.ca.gov/health_info/discond/documents/2012headliceeng.pdf

Snack: Four days each week we provide a hearty, organic snack for the children which includes a grain. Water and herbal tea are provided. Once a week we have a soup-making day and ask that families bring organic vegetables to contribute. Monday's we ask parents to send a hearty snack and a full water bottle.

Field Trips: We plan field trips each year to visit farms and gardens in the community. Transportation is provided by either volunteer parent drivers or school bus.

Our district requires each driver to be registered with our school office in order to drive on a field trip. This includes driving only your own child. Our office staff can assist you with this process. Parents and siblings are often welcome to join us, however, official chaperones can only have kindergarteners under their supervision, (not other siblings). There may be a small cost for these trips. Please note: as per district requirement, field trips begin and end at school.

Birthday Celebrations: We celebrate **five-year-old** birthdays with a story, songs, and birthday books. The **five-year-old** birthday is often celebrated together as a group to soften the level of direct attention the child has to bear; families are typically not present for this celebration.

Parents of the **six-year-old** child are invited to attend our celebration. The teacher will share a story and offer a gift of a birthday book made by the class. We may invite the parents to share a story of the child's birth or younger years. The family is welcome to bring a treat such as fruit bowls or fruit kabobs to share with the class on the day of the celebration. Please clear the treat you plan to bring with your child's teacher at least two days prior to the celebration.

Birthday Party Invitations: For any home birthday celebrations, please send invitations in the mail. If the entire class is being invited the invitation can go in the weekly class letter. Please get the information to the teacher a few days before the letter comes out.



Festivals: We celebrate seasonal festivals together as a kindergarten community, as well as with the larger school community throughout the school year.

Parent Help: Parent volunteer efforts within the kindergarten and school community are essential to the success of our program.

Parent / Teacher Conferences: We hold conferences once a year in the fall. Spring conferences may be scheduled for children born between April and June in preparation for first-grade readiness. We meet with each child's parents to talk specifically about academic and social development. We have portfolios to share and offer an opportunity to ask questions and voice any concerns. Sign up sheets, with dates and times will be posted in advance. Parent-teacher conferences are also scheduled as needed and can be initiated by parents or teachers.

Class Bulletin: Outside the classroom is a bulletin board for class and school communication.

Mail Boxes: Each child has a mailbox slot where parents access handouts from the teacher. Split households will have two copies of each handout in their slots.

Phone: Messages during the day can be left at the office at 824-2844. Teachers have individual voicemail boxes where confidential messages can be left.

Before School: The teacher's focus is on the children as they arrive in the morning, therefore the preferred form of any morning communication is by written note. If your child has had a particularly difficult evening, night or morning, a few written words to that effect will be helpful for us. We are able to offer brief check-ins after school and will be happy to set up conferences as needed.

Phone Tree: Teachers use group emails and the phone tree to distribute time-sensitive information. Please pass along changes in phone numbers to phone tree leaders.

Parent Evenings: We schedule regular parent evenings throughout the year. These meetings are a blend of a "Window into the Classroom", artistic or musical activity, and educational topics. Waldorf methodology is deep and rich and these meetings provide us with the opportunity to share our knowledge about the developing child. Parent meetings are also an essential component in creating a partnership that will nurture and support your child. Our parent evenings help to build the foundation of the adult community at our school, providing a container

to share the joys and challenges of parenting and teaching in these modern times. We ask that each household is represented at these meetings.

First Grade Readiness: The guideline for entry into the first grade is that the child must be six years old by June 1st. We will have individual discussions regarding readiness during parent conferences.

Drop-off: Kindergarten classes are in session Monday-Friday from 8:30 am -12:30 pm. If you arrive before 8:30 am, please supervise your child outside. Kindergarten children are not to be dropped off in the parking lot. All school rules apply to the playground before and after school and it is the parent's responsibility to uphold them.

Pick-up: Please wait outside until your child is released. If running late, please call the office, 824-2844, to let us know. If your child is not picked up within 10 minutes of dismissal time, expect a phone call from the school. If you need to pick your child up early, please let us know in advance and sign them out in the office. Children need to be with an adult until they reach their vehicles. When someone other than a family member will be picking up your child, please write this information into the afterschool log.

Kindergarten Play Yard Boundaries: The kindergarten boundary is the fence line of the kindergarten play yard. Kindergarteners spend the outdoor portion of the day in the play yard under the supervision of teachers. On occasion, the children go on outings outside the play yard with their teachers. Parents can ensure a safe and secure environment by making sure the gates are closed and latched when entering and departing from the play yard.

Safety Considerations and Guidelines for the Kindergarten Play Yard

We want our kindergarten families to feel welcome to use the yard as a place to have lunch and for the children to play after school. We ask for your help in maintaining the established guidelines for the children while they are in our care and expect that these safety considerations will be respected and supported during non-school hours.

Our kindergarten play yard is defined by two separate play spaces, the “Redwood side” on the east side of Morning Star building, and the “Sycamore side” on the west side. We ask that you choose one side for your after-school time in the yard so that your child will be with you in an area that you can easily observe and supervise. We ask that the children do not run freely from one side of the yard to the other and that they are especially mindful of the rope divider on the backside of the Morning Star classroom, as well as any area that may be roped off at any time.

The hillside that runs behind the school has trails that have been put in to allow access to the space without causing erosion. Please make sure your child stays on the trails at all times.

Play tools: Shovels and other play equipment are put away in the sheds on either side of the yard at the end of the day. We ask that this equipment remains in the sheds after school.

Thank you for your support in helping us to keep the play yards clean, tidy, and ready for use the following school day. Please feel free to sweep or rake as needed. (Perhaps the picnic

tables need to be wiped down or the hose needs to be recoiled and the children could help with this.) If we all keep an eye on the play yards and help to maintain and tidy them they will remain a welcoming play space for the children each day.

Gates should remain closed at all times and will be locked after 3:30 and on the weekends.

Continuity of Following Guidelines: We ask for your support in maintaining respect for our equipment and play space. We ask that the children follow the same guidelines for safety while visiting before and after school, as in the regular school day.

Direct Supervision: Please keep a careful eye on your child, as well as other children, while in the play yard.

Attention to the tone and content of adult conversations: Please save adult conversations for a time and space away from the children. Children can easily tune in to the mood and content of conversations in the yard.

Cell phones and Laptops: Please do not use cell phones or computer devices while in the kindergarten yard or classrooms. (Exceptions can be made for occasional use of your phone as a camera.)

Standards for Behavior: We strive to create an environment where each child feels safe and cared for. If you observe hurtful behavior, (e.g., hitting, kicking, pushing, spitting, name-calling, teasing, or threatening language) please directly and kindly intervene and redirect the child. We encourage you to enlist the parents of the children involved to help resolve issues that arise.

Tidy up

- Please help your child return toys and tools to their proper place.
- Empty sand or dirt from buckets, bowls, wheelbarrows etc.
- All buckets, rakes, shovels, etc. must be returned to their hooks.
- Please make sure hoses are rolled in a tidy coil.
- The yard should be left in a tidy fashion each day; please double check that the playhouse is left clean inside.

Play Cottage

- The cottage in the Sycamore Play Yard is to be used with care.
- Please, no water, sand or wet mud-play in the cottage.
- Please make sure table and chairs are put away in a tidy fashion.
- Children are not to climb the walls of the cottage, nor stand on the furniture.

Climbing Structure and Monkey Bars

- The climbing structure and horizontal bars must be used safely at all times.
- Only one child is to use the hand-over-hand horizontal bars at a time.
- No climbing or sitting on top of the hand-over-hand bars.

Water

- No water from sinks, hose, or pump before or after school, unless the teacher gives specific permission.

Water Pump

- Wood chips, stones, sand, and yard debris can easily clog and damage the pump.
- Only water is to go into the pump and the barrel that houses the pump.
- Only one child is to have their hands on the pump at a time.

Trees

- Climbing trees on campus is not allowed at any time.

Kindergarten Fence

- No climbing or sitting on the kindergarten fence.

Shovels

- Shovels are for digging. They must be at the child's side when walking.
- No throwing or running with, the shovels.

Sticks

- Children are to refrain from playing with sticks after school.

Tire Swing

- Adult supervision is required at all times while children are on the tire swing.
- Please designate one adult to monitor and remain close to the tire swing area.
- Only three children at one time are permitted on the swing.
- No hanging on the suspending chains.
- Children are to wait for their turn outside of the support bars, on the hay bales or benches.
- They must sit on their bottoms while swinging, with their feet on the inside of the tire.
- The tire swing must not be in use while other children "shimmy" up the side support bars.
- Children are to hold on with both hands.
- No ropes or other equipment may be brought in the tire swing area.
- We encourage children to push others on the swing and request adults or older children refrain from pushing or riding the swing. We have taught the children to push with two hands directly on the tire. Please do not let them grab the chain and run in circles, it is too easy for them to lose their footing and get dragged by the momentum of the swing.

Communication: As in any aspect of human endeavor, clear communication is an ongoing goal. We hope you feel comfortable coming to us with your questions and concerns. If a difficulty arises, please come to your teacher directly, as soon as possible. We have established various modes through which to maintain open lines of communication.

Home Visits: Optional home visits help bridge the child's experiences at home and school. We will contact you prior to school starting to make arrangements. If you wish to have a home visit and unable to do so prior to school starting, we will try to arrange one as soon as time allows.

Written Communication: SunRidge distributes a weekly school bulletin to all families via email. Please read it each week. Kindergarten letters will update you on what we are doing in the classroom and will provide details for upcoming kindergarten and school functions.

SunRidge Kindergarten Discipline Procedures

In an effort to keep the kindergartens at SunRidge a safe and productive educational environment, the following discipline procedures are utilized:

Regular Correction Techniques: In the kindergarten, teachers use verbal and nonverbal cues to redirect student behavior. Methods are respectful and sensitive to the individual student. The emphasis is on the positive behavior desired rather than on the student and what he or she has done. The teachers work with strategies based on the work of Kim John Payne, M.Ed

1. **Connect before you direct.** Connect with your child before you direct their behavior in a more positive direction. Touch them gently on the shoulder, make eye contact – then redirect.
2. **Stay Close:** Your calm physical presence will help calm your child. Be calm, stay close, right by their side, and you have a much better chance of redirecting your child's behavior.
3. **D.A.D.D.** = Describe/Disapprove – Affirm – Discover – Do-Over

First...**DESCRIBE** and if necessary, **DISAPPROVE**

Begin by describing what happened very briefly. "You hit your sister." "I see you are very upset." If necessary, express clear disapproval for the action. "It is hurtful to behave like that." "We don't speak/act that way in our family." "It is ok to be upset, but it is not ok to hit." Speak with quiet directness. Say as little as possible. Mean it.

And... **AFFIRM**

We know that we are meant to separate a child's actions from his/her whole being, but it's not always easy. To achieve this, the describe/disapproval step needs to be followed up right away by an affirmation... "You hardly ever speak like that." "So often you do kind/helpful things." "You usually have such gentle hands."

Then... **DISCOVER**

Then the adult discovers what the subtle issues are, wondering to him or herself "What's up?" or checking lovingly with the child "Something must be bothering you, what is it?" The question must come at the right time to get an honest response: this might be AFTER the child has had time to calm down from the heat of the moment.

Finally... **DO-OVER**

When the issue is clarified, the adult can help the child do it over, saying kindly and firmly "Let's find a way to say what you need to say kindly/without hitting." "You may make up for the words you used, and then you can say what is bothering you." "How could you say/do that kindly? What could you say that would work better?"

4. **Insist.** Insist that your child can do the right thing. Insist that they 'do-over' their actions. Your children will consistently test your boundaries – it's their job! It is your job to consistently reinforce the boundaries that you have chosen for your child.

5. **Follow through.** Stay close, and help your child follow through with whatever action you have insisted upon. Be beside them whilst they do it. They are learning how to live up to social expectations and boundaries, and we can help them as they learn.

Modeling Genuine Apologies at Home

Parents can model or demonstrate by making authentic apologies and do-overs to each other in front of the children “Oh honey, I am sorry, that came out unkindly. Let me try again... I guess we are all learning to be kind.”

Parents only need to do this – genuinely – a few times for the children to begin imitating. Far too often parents leave genuine apologies until after the children are in bed – depriving children of an opportunity to learn about real apologies.

Possible Consequences: Verbal reminders, redirection into alternate activity, or separation from group activity are among the natural consequences for those who do not follow established procedures and/or do not respond to regular correction requests. At the discretion of the teacher, the parent will be notified and a child may spend the remainder of the day at home.

- ❖ **Verbal Reminder:** A verbal reminder is a clear and direct verbal communication to the student that provides the child with a clear picture of what behavior is expected.
- ❖ **Redirection into Alternate Activity:** When possible, an effort is made to redirect the child to an activity in which they can be successful.
- ❖ **Separation from the Group or Activity:** If the child’s behavior is disruptive to the group activity and the child is not responding to verbal reminders or redirection, it may be necessary to ask the child to sit out. The child would be invited back into the activity once they have demonstrated responsiveness to the teacher. If the child is unable to contain their behavior in an appropriate manner, it may be necessary for the teacher to engage the help of our administrative team for “calm and return” in the office. If none of these techniques are successful, the parents may be notified to pick up the child.
- ❖ **Sent Home for the Remainder of the Day**
The following behaviors in the kindergarten may result in a child being sent home for the remainder of the day:
 - Especially graphic, threatening language to a teacher or other student.
 - Actual or threatened behavior that caused, or could have caused, physical injury.
 - Severe tantrum (screaming, kicking) that does not respond to teacher intervention.
 - Leaving fenced kindergarten yard or the classroom building without adult permission.
 - Hiding when class gathers or moves to another area.
 - Refusing, in a confrontational or persistent way, to follow the teacher’s requests or instructions.
 - Intentional spitting at another person.

If a child exhibits chronic behavior issues, the teacher will convene a Student Success Team (SST) meeting or a Support Circle Meeting with parents and other support staff to help address the needs of the child and the class.

Student Success Team (SST): SunRidge offers additional support in the form of a Student Success Team meeting. A teacher or parent may request an SST to form a supportive network and to create an action plan to assist the student to attain maximum success. The team is typically composed of the Director, the Educational Support Teacher, the class teacher, and the parents.

Student Support Circle: A moderate touch intervention

This is a meeting of the adults in the child's life. It is attended by the child's parents or guardian, the child's teacher or teachers, a member of the supporting "stream," and trained parent helpers. The aim of the meeting is to find ways to build upon the child's successes. A support circle may be requested by a teacher or a parent, and it is coordinated by the student support coordinator. There is follow-up after the meeting to see what progress has been made.

SunRidge Parent Handbook: Please see the Parent Handbook for additional information regarding the SunRidge Community (all grades). The Parent Handbook can be found on the SunRidge website www.sunridgeschool.org under "For Our Parents", then choose Parent Handbooks from the drop-down menu. You can also request a printed copy from the office.

Life At Home

There are five components essential to a child's healthy development: sleep, movement, nutrition, rhythm, and care. Providing these will give your child a firm foundation for life.



Regenerative Sleep: In our sleep, we charge up for the next day's experiences and process the day that has just passed. It is easy to observe that well-rested children are far more capable of developing healthily and engaging socially with other children in school. Children who wake up by themselves after a good night's sleep are often able to eat right away. As a guideline, if a parent needs to wake up their child in the morning, they will probably need to tuck them into bed earlier in the evening. It is important for your child's experience of being tucked-in that you do not feel guilty or worried about it. Your approach and attitude towards sleep have a lot to say in how your child will experience sleep. Young children need plenty of sleep, 12 hours, especially during the school year. Consistent early bedtimes (7:00 pm) will provide your child with the restorative sleep they need and a nurturing rhythm to their day.

Healthy Movement: The child learns with its body. We adults sit down a lot. That in itself is worth a thought because research tells us that the human body was not designed for sitting on a chair, but rather for lying down, standing, walking, running, climbing and so on. Children learn from their surroundings and copy everything they see; they therefore also mimic the adults' lack of movement. However, most of the adaptive growth of the physical body goes on during the first 7 years of a person's life, and this requires a lot of natural, physical exercise. The most basic human sense, the tactile-kinesthetic sense, is the touch and muscle-joint sense, which is crucial for the child's brain development. The tactile-kinesthetic sense tells us how our body is located in relation to its surroundings, and what we are doing with our body. Processing the

messages from the tactile-kinesthetic sense is crucial for a child's development, and it is the only sense that puts us in direct contact with reality. It is essential for a human being to be able to sense and detect its own position in relation to its physical surroundings.

There is a growing trend in society, that promotes the understanding that if we academize our children from an early age, they will learn faster. Recent brain research confirms that if children do not exercise their physical body and practice their tactile kinesthetic sense and basic cross-coordination by crawling, walking, climbing, cutting with knives and so forth, they will become far less fit to learn. When children feel at home in their own body and challenge themselves regularly physically, they will know their body's capacity and feel confident with it. They will be better able to judge their own physical capabilities. You will rarely see a child play with a kitchen knife or cut itself seriously if it knows how to handle a knife and has developed its motor skills accordingly.

The Meal: The meal speaks to the senses. The child digests primarily through its senses and nature's foods can inspire many experiences just in themselves. The sense of hearing is also stimulated when cooking: the sound of someone biting in a carrot is unique, as is the sound of someone cutting juicy lettuce with its own particular crunching sound.

The atmosphere around the preparation of food has a lot to say; if it is not about getting the cooking over and done with as quickly as possible, it can have a positive influence on one's own and the child's desire and ability to sit down and enjoy the food peacefully. On days when the atmosphere is tense, it will also have an influence on the meal. It means a lot that the child knows the food in its raw form and gets its own experience with it. For example, it is good for the child to see that a carrot has a top and that you must peel or wash it before you can eat it. When we prepare the food together, it is natural to take a little bite and taste it, and this increases the child's familiarity with the raw materials. It can be very pleasurable to cook together. Involving the child in cooking is a wise long-term strategy. They can become very good assistants when they grow older, perhaps later becoming co-chefs.

Rhythm: Repetitive actions speak to the body. It allows small children to comprehend what is going to happen. The idea of rhythm bases itself upon the understanding that small children do not perceive the world intellectually, and therefore they will not benefit much from getting everything explained. Children live much more through their body. Therefore, it is essential that children have the opportunity to try something repeatedly and that they keep practicing until they finally manage to do it. Children need to practice a lot, particularly when it comes to their motoric development, both at fine and gross motor levels. If a child is to grow to master a particular skill, the child needs enough time to practice. Creating daily, weekly and monthly rhythms your child can rely on will help them to be at ease with the world around them and allow them to engage more fully with new experiences.

Care: Children grow emotionally and socially when we surround them with love, care, safety and trust. Our care is often a mixture of what our own intuition and parental instinct tell us to do, as well as other influences from society and the people around us. Caring for a small child is a bit like drawing a circle around the child. In the beginning, this circle is close-in and protective. We start with protecting and shielding the child, and then we slowly prepare them for life. One aspect of care is protecting our children from the dangers of the big wide world. Well-intentioned as it may be, it is counter-productive to send children out into the big world too early. People speak to children about things they cannot possibly understand let alone do something about;

war, famine, disasters, global warming, and the world's incomprehensible injustices. Children do not yet have the mental preparation to deal with this and thus should not be carrying adult worries on their shoulders. All this is something that belongs outside what should be a child's very tangible, practical and safe circle.

It is important to expose them to natural and age-appropriate challenges. This way you can boost your child's self-confidence. Children create their own experiences and they will have these experiences to lean on in life's many challenges: "The world is not going to fall apart when things do not work out as I had anticipated." This process is difficult for many parents because we instinctively want to intervene quickly. It comes from a genuine wish to help and of course, we are there to help when needed, but we should not move every stone from our child's path. A child needs to learn to move obstacles on their way or lift their legs and climb over or under them, and this way they will learn to handle life's challenges in a natural way. Learning to fall, balancing, using a kitchen knife, pouring from a jug, climbing, bicycling, saying hello to a dog in the right way...these are all physical competences that need practicing.

Another aspect of care is tending to the warmth of the child. Before the age of 7, children are not as connected to their sense of warmth, so parents have to help them develop this sense by clothing them warmly when the weather is cold.

Media: We provide a media free experience at school and ask that you do the same at home. In order to support the work of the kindergarten teachers to create and maintain an environment that cultivates imagination, wonder, and beauty, it is essential to make the necessary changes in your household(s) to eliminate your child's exposure to electronic media at this age. SunRidge defines electronic media as all electronic screens, music, and/or phone technology, including handheld devices. This may take extra care in a household with older siblings.

Social Development: Cooperative, imaginative group exercises that focus on movement for the joy of movement itself meet the physical, emotional, and social needs of young children. During the school week, we suggest that families provide a quiet afternoon to give ample rest from a busy morning and to digest images from stories.

Organized Sports: We request that you postpone involvement in competitive and or organized team sports or performance-oriented activities since they awaken a self-consciousness in young children that is better delayed to a later stage of development.

Living Arts: Much learning takes place when children are invited to participate in practical and domestic activities such as folding clothes, setting the table, cleaning, meal preparation, laundry, pet care, gardening, sewing, sweeping, machine repair, and woodwork. We encourage you to invite your child to work by your side at this young age to lay the foundation for healthy habits and independent chores.

Community: We like to think of the kindergarten as a single community of families rather than two separate classes. The kindergarten is also a part of the larger school community that is all working together to bring the children an education imbued with goodness, beauty, and truth. You can support this effort by making connections with families outside of your child's class and by working to build community at all levels within the school.

“The healthy social life is found when in the mirror of each human heart the whole community finds its reflection, and when in the community the virtue of each one is living.”

– Adapted from R. Steiner

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Suggested Reading ~

Parenting Books

- *Conscious Parenting* by Steve Spitalny
- *Simplicity Parenting* by Kim John Payne
- *Soul of Discipline* by Kim John Payne
- *Five Golden Keys: Towards embracing developing life with small children under seven years of age* by Helle Heckman
- *Parenting Well in the Media Age* by Gloria DeGaetano

Waldorf Books

- *Lifeways* by Gudrun Davy and Bons Voors
- *In a Nutshell: Dialogues with Parents at Acorn Hill, A Waldorf Kindergarten* by Nancy Foster
- *Free to Learn: Introduction to Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Education* by Lynne Oldfield
- *You are your Child's First Teacher* by Rahima Baldwin

- *The Genius of Play: Celebrating the Spirit of Childhood* by Sally Jenkinson
- *Storytelling with Children* by Nancy Mellon
- *All Year Round* by Ann Druitt et al
- *Festivals, Family and Food* by Diana Carney and Judy Large
- *Seven Times the Sun* by Shea Darian
- *Children at Play* by Heidi Britz – Cornilus

Remedial Books

- *Healing Stories for Challenging Behaviour* by Susan Perrow
- *The Fabric of Autism* by Judith Bluestone
- *The Out of Sync Child* by Carol Stock Kranowitz