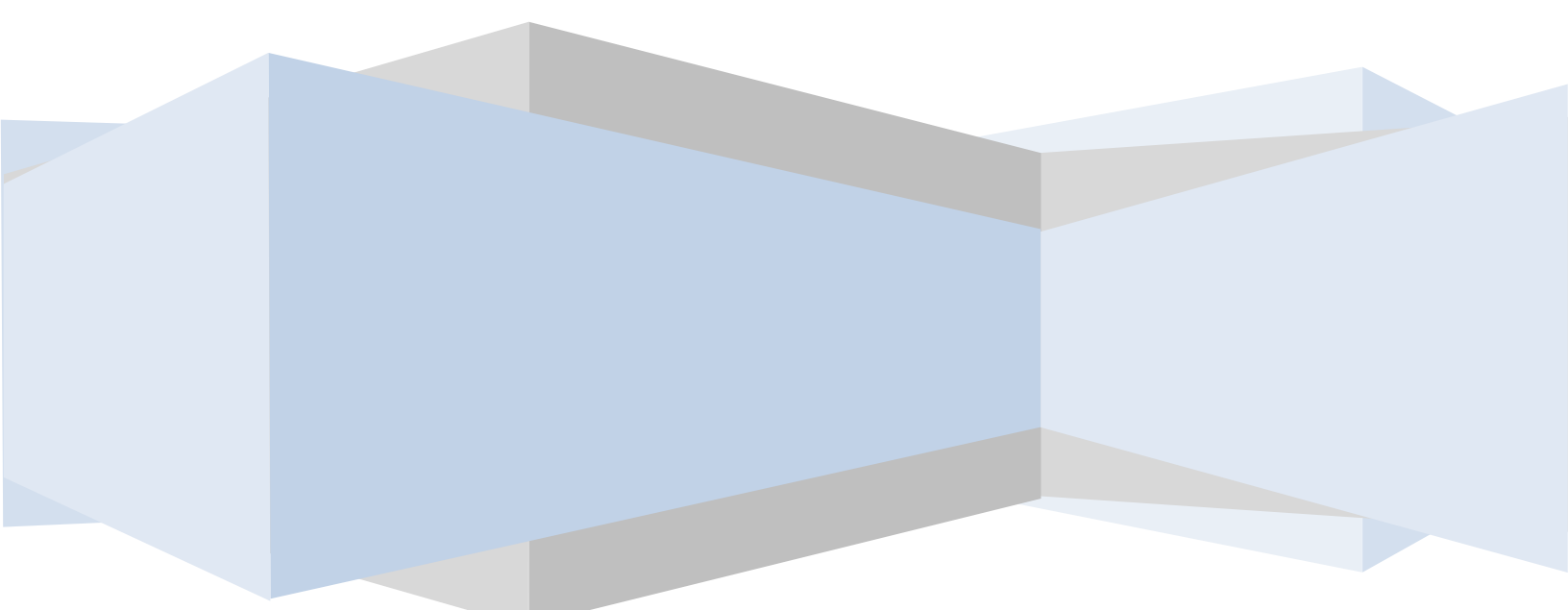


Río Gallinas Charter School

Program and Policy Handbook

2013-2014 school year

We do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, color, sex, age, veteran status, or disability.



As a working document, this handbook will be revised at any time as needed. Substantive changes will be proposed with public notice, and made subject to approval by the Governing Council of Río Gallinas School

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RÍO GALLINAS GENERAL SCHOOL DAY

- The school year will be 171 days for students and 185 days for teachers.
- Instructional hours per day are 6 hours and 35 minutes.
- The school day begins at 7:55 A.M. and ends at 3:10 P.M.
- Staff members on morning duty will need to arrive by at 7:30 AM, otherwise staff members must arrive by 7:45 A.M.
- Students have a 15 minute morning break at the school site and 25 minute lunch break at the park before they come in to eat lunch. During bad weather students take their breaks in their classrooms under teacher supervision.
- Morning and Lunch Break duties are assigned among staff. Staff on lunch duty go out to park and come back to eat with students. All classroom teachers must walk their students quietly out to the park during lunch break even if they don't have duty.
- The total lunch period is 45 minutes.
- Staff will stay until 3:30 PM daily with the exception of the teacher meeting one day per week from 3:30-5:00 PM.
- Wednesdays are usually scheduled for hands-on field day experiences for students. On Friday, staff may leave after all students have left the school grounds.
- Each school day will include some form of arts experience such as a creative movement class or a guided drama activity, some real-world study of ecological principles and problems, and time for students to read, research, reflect on, and assess their ongoing projects.
- By embedding the reading, writing and computational skills inside the larger relevant projects, we intend to develop student's literacy skills at the same time as we assist their learning about the arts and science foundation's beneath local history, culture, ecology, and artistic expression.
- Students will read each day individually or in small groups.
- Students will write each day (projects, journals, creative writing, documentation, etc.).
- Students will work on math programs daily.
- Students will communicate through and about the arts daily.
- Students will edit their work in small groups.
- Students will be moving closer to reading and math literacy every day.
- Each day's activities will be aligned to the NM standards and benchmarks

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

As an expeditionary learning school for the Arts and Ecology,
our crew at Río Gallinas school is committed to
growing a culture of academic excellence, service, and caring
through self-discovery and responsible participation
in the local and global community

OUR SCHOOL MOTTO

RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, *Above all ...* BE KIND

OUR TENDING SKILLS

PROMPT

PREPARED

POSITIVE MENTAL ATTITUDE

PARTICIPATE

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS



WE ARE CREW; NOT PASSENGERS!

OUR APPROACH TO LEARNING

OUR BACKGROUND: Río Gallinas School is an expeditionary learning school for ecology and the arts modeled after a constructivist approach to learning which recognizes that students come to the school experience, not as “blank slates,” but as individuals who already have years of meaningful, diverse learning experiences in place, ready to be built upon. Students will learn to critically think, see relationships, analyze content, and apply knowledge, use technology appropriately, and to create their own artistic visions.

VISION: The vision of Río Gallinas School is to encompass children of all abilities and learning styles and offer to these students in grade one through grade eighth hands-on learning experiences where they can engage in an arts and science-rich, family-centered environment of the highest quality.

CURRICULUM STATEMENT: Curriculum will revolve around discovery learning that is rooted in the arts (including dance, drama, music and visual arts) and development of the human community (local culture and history and its connection to regional, state, national, and global issues), integrated with the sciences (including investigation of ecological systems and resources with emphasis on of Las Vegas and surrounding area). Every part of the curriculum will be aligned to the New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks for each grade level.

TEACHING ENVIRONMENT:

- A lower school / upper school structure that corresponds to grades 1-4 and grades 5, 6, 7, & 8 whereby students of mixed ages successfully make the transition from elementary & middle school studies into high school.
- Learning exchanges with other schools in the area, including the West Las Vegas and Las Vegas City School districts, Luna Community College, United World College, and New Mexico Highlands University.
- Place-based education that employs the rich local environment to engage learners in an investigation of the ecology, history, and culture of Las Vegas and surrounding areas and extend learning to the world at large in a family-centered setting.
- Integrated, theme-based curriculum that encourages and empowers teachers and students to make connections between areas of study and uses technology in powerful ways to enhance learning and add to the means of expression of the fine and traditional arts.
- Emphasis in learning in the use of the many human, technical and natural resources available in the school and larger community, including leaders in the arts and sciences.

- Study of the constructive engagement of conflict, creating an adult-student collaborative learning community in which all participants develop and share their personal knowledge and skills.
- Artistic creation and creative invention, with a solid foundation in artistic standards and skills and in the imagination needed to fully participate in scientific investigations, while providing appropriate and fully realized tools and spaces for that learning.

RÍO GALLINAS SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL MODEL

The educational model at Río Gallinas School focuses on academic content instruction based upon best practices and research. It is our belief that students' ability to read, and to comprehend what they read, is critical. Our staff will focus upon developing reading and math literacy skills in every student through a variety of methods and strategies. Arts experiences and site-based ecological investigations will serve as the anchor points for student literacy, as students learn to outline, revise, execute, and defend their projects, both singly and in their learning groups.

Río Gallinas School is committed to teaching New Mexico State Standards for Education in arts, career readiness, health, language arts, mathematics, modern and classical languages, physical education, science, social studies, and technology through the development of effective and critical thought. Students will meet or surpass the New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks for each grade level for arts, sciences, language arts, mathematics, social studies, physical education, modern, classical, and native languages (English, Spanish), health education, and career readiness.

We recognize that students who enter our school may be one or more grade levels behind their age-peers nationwide, and may come from low-income, single-parent, or other challenging environments. Our school plans to assess students upon entry and continuously during the year so we can better meet their academic and social needs.

As demonstrated in current research, the creative arts stimulate and develop the following kinds of cross-discipline thinking and learning skills that we hope to develop and strengthen

OBSERVING	SYNTHESIZING	IMAGING	EVALUATING
MODELING	RECOGNIZING PATTERNS	TRANSFORMING	FORMING PATTERNS
ABSTRACTING	MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES	ANALOGIZING	RESOLVING CONFLICTS
COMPLEX THINKING	PREDICTING	SELF-REGULATION	INTERPRETATION

CONSTRUCTIVISM: THEORY ON LEARNING

This is a theory about how we learn. The corresponding method of teaching is theme-oriented, project-based learning. This theory states that it is human nature to construct our own understandings of the world. Duckworth (1993) describes her version of teaching: “I propose situations for people to think about and I watch what they do. They tell me what they think rather than me telling them what to make of it.” This approach values the student’s points of view and encourages children to bring their experiences to the learning situation. This is important when working with students who feel they cannot learn or have nothing to offer to the school setting. Through our many years of teaching in Las Vegas, New Mexico, we found that a constructivist approach to teaching in this area is very successful. We encourage students to seek deep understanding of concepts applying knowledge learned to everyday situations out in their world.

J.G. Brooks and M. Brooks (1999) state, “Constructivist methodologies include wanting students to take responsibility for learning, to be autonomous thinkers, to develop integrated understandings of concepts, and to seek to answer important questions.”

SCIENCES/LOCAL ECOLOGY:

The sciences, especially the environmental sciences, bring learning to life for students. The study of local ecology allows students to discover universal concepts and issues within the context of something familiar. It gives meaning to abstract issues and allows students to grow beyond their initial limits into understanding about the world around them. The environmental intelligence (Howard Gardner, “Frames of Mind” and subsequent work) serves as an entry point into learning for students who encounter challenges in the traditional verbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical intelligences.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Through a strong emphasis on achievement in ecological sciences, fine and traditional arts, a family-centered environment, and the Spanish language, the Río Gallinas School Charter School will strive to achieve the following goals and objectives.

Goal

Students will meet or surpass the New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks for Grade 8 in all content areas by the time they are graduated from the school at approximately age 13.

Objectives

At least 90% of students who have attended the lower school for **two** years will meet or surpass the following New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks for Grade 4:

- Arts (as expressed in the fine and traditional local arts)
- Science (especially relating to place-based ecological studies)
- Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Social Studies
- Physical Education
- Modern, Classical, and Native Languages (English, Spanish)
- Health Education
- Career Readiness

For students who have been enrolled for **three or more** years at Río Gallinas School by the time they complete their studies at the school, 90% will meet or surpass all New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks for Grade 8 in all content areas, as listed under Objective 1 above, with these additional expectations:

- Students will demonstrate advanced proficiency in at least one of the four fine and traditional art forms: dance, drama, visual arts, and music. Advanced proficiency will be determined by using the New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks in the Arts for Grades 5-8.
- Students will demonstrate advanced proficiency in the ecological sciences. Advanced proficiency will be determined by using the New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks in Science for Grades 5-8.

- Students will demonstrate basic fluency in reading, speaking, and understanding the Spanish language, as described by the New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks for Modern, Classical, and Native Languages.

Goal

Students will demonstrate an understanding of local ecology, culture, and history, and be able to make connections to regional, state, national, and global issues.

Objectives

All students will attend three local or regional events during each school year and will be required to contribute to, participate in, or report in depth on at least one of these events in each year.

Each year, 100% of students will create standards-based works of art (either fine or traditional arts), and other projects, which incorporate elements of local ecology, culture, and history, and focus on issues of regional, state, national, and global importance.

Goal

The school will be a safe environment in which students will demonstrate growth and progress intellectually, emotionally, physically, developing mastery of the self.

Objectives

Students will regularly create written journal entries and other reflection instruments to demonstrate personal goal setting and the ability to assess their own progress fairly and insightfully.

Staff will monitor socialization skills and academic performance through behavior reports, staff and student reflections and self-assessments and other appropriate instruments. We will use these results as formative assessments to adjust the school environment through a team process.

At least three times a year school staff along with the student and the student's parents will meet to evaluate the student's progress in intellectual, emotional, and physical self-mastery, and to adjust teaching and learning to meet student needs.

Goal

Students will develop skills of collaboration, community participation, service, and self-knowledge.

Objectives

Students will regularly engage with parents, siblings, peers and staff in family-centered experiences at Río Gallinas School, its satellite learning centers, and other locations, in order to include family members in the community of learners the school represents.

Students will regularly participate in peer-teaching experiences and will be required to serve as a mentor to younger students during each year after their first year of enrollment in the school.

Students will regularly take part in collaborative and service-learning opportunities both within the school environment as well as in teams with community members and other learning institutions for a minimum of ten hours each quarter.

ECOLOGY AND THE ARTS

ECOLOGY:

The study of the relations between organisms and their natural environment.

A cornerstone of this school is the active exploration and critical understanding of the complex web of life within which we find ourselves. We discover knowledge of place within the stories, the multi-generational experiences, the biological and investigative sciences, the histories and cultural artifacts, and the land and the people.

As examples of methodology for the linking of ecological studies with literacy and art, students of this school will participate in such opportunities as the following:

- Directly explore, observe, and document the diversity and biological interplay of the region, and create standards-based artistic responses integrating this learning.
- Identify, interview and document traditional knowledge, histories, and stories of community members as they relate to themes that reflect agricultural practices, natural resource development, weather patterns, water availability, species studies, etc.
- Participate and document regular visits and research at an environmental education satellite site and at one or more arts-focused satellite sites (theater, art studio, etc.).
- Be introduced to the professionals in the fields of ecological studies and the arts through direct contact and exposure to their work.
- Directly observe and research the region's ecology by means of species studies, water quality testing, photography, mapping, plant identification, etc.
- Develop skills and knowledge of traditional folk arts based on indigenous local materials.
- Be introduced to local medicinal plants and their traditional uses by interviewing, and / or video and audio recording of practicing *curanderas* (traditional healers).
- Develop tools to provoke attention, interest, and engagement with participants, families, and the community that will include oral histories, video documentaries, and 'museums' to highlight the school's place-based investigations.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the cultural relevance and the ecological significance of acequias and farming to the region.
- Become familiar with restoration ecology through both theory and site based demonstrations and observations.
- Develop systems analysis through the exploration of food source and distribution in northern New Mexico.
- Examine, research, and experiment with alternative sources of energy.

- Develop critical knowledge of and seek solutions to the water issues facing this community.

THE ARTS IN EDUCATION

An arts education engages students and invigorates the process of learning. It restores to our children their birthright of artistic expression and the perception and discussion of beauty. Educational researchers have shown that people use many routes to learning, including kinesthetic, visual, auditory learning styles, analysis (taking ideas apart), and synthesis (putting ideas together). An educational approach that integrates arts increases learning potential for all students. At the Guggenheim Elementary School in inner city Chicago, after the curriculum integrated with the arts with other subjects, daily attendance increased to 94%. At the same time, 83% of students achieved at or above norms in reading and math. An art education builds values that connect children to themselves and to their culture.

Fourth, fifth, and sixth graders enrolled in a program of improvisational drama showed significant improvements in reading achievement (Gourgey). The researcher found students' attitudes, self-esteem, and expression improved, and they exhibited a greater sense of trust and acceptance of others.

The creative arts ("Critical Links," review of research, 2002) prepare and stimulate the brain for learning and communication like no other area of study. Research has shown that participating in music lays down fundamental thinking skills students will need for higher mathematics, and that creative movement prepares the brain like nothing else does for higher level thinking skills that cross domains and subject areas. The arts also engage multiple intelligences unlike "academic" teaching, which tends to focus on those children who already do well in school.

Literacy skills like pattern and shape recognition, sequence, order, shape, and rhythm are at the heart of the study of the arts and sciences. Eric Jensen's work ("teaching with the Brain in Mind" and "Arts with the Brain in Mind," ASCD Publications) shows that movement is essential for learning and that creative movement helps organize the brain's ability to learn and to communicate that learning.

OTHER AREAS OF EMPHASIS

TECHNOLOGY LITERACY

Integrated with classroom instruction will be a continual development of technological literacy. All activities will center on encouraging students to appropriately develop an understanding of the importance and applicability of critical thinking in current and future learning using technological and non-technological source of information. Río Gallinas School students will be prepared to discern and to evaluate appropriate sources of information and choose which is most applicable to solve problems or address issues/questions. When students use technology as a tool, they are in an active role of recipient of information. Students actively make choices about how to generate, obtain, manipulate, and /or display information. Technology also plays an increasingly important role in the creative process and all the fine arts.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

In Río Gallinas School collaborative classrooms there will be on-going communication and collaboration among students, teachers, and community members with recognition that learning requires diverse perspectives. Everyone will be learning from everyone else, and all students will enjoy the opportunity to contribute and to appreciate the contributions of others. The school will not segregate students according to ability, achievement tests, interests, or any other characteristic. In Río Gallinas School, knowledge will flow equally from student to student, student to teacher, teacher to student, community members to student and so forth. Students will learn to share their knowledge, to treat each other with respect, and will focus on higher levels of understanding. Students will learn to listen to diverse opinions, support knowledge claims with evidence, engage in critical and creative thinking, and participate in dialogue. Students will be responsible with the guidance of the teachers to set goals, design learning tasks, and assess what they are learning.

TEACHER AS FACILITATOR

Teachers at Río Gallinas School will act as facilitators creating rich environments and activities for linking new information to prior knowledge, providing opportunities for collaborative work and problem solving, offering students a multiplicity of authentic learning tasks. The teacher will provide a diversity of genres and perspectives, using and building upon stories and artifacts from the students' homes and communities.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Río Gallinas School is committed to demonstrating a connection between the mission of the school and community. Both have at their heart a desire to establish new patterns of educational and employability living, that enable people to meet their educational and economic needs, yet develop, nurture, and sustain strong community values and harmony. All students will be involved in community service each semester. Community members will come to the school to share their personal expertise with the children.

Río Gallinas School is committed to communicate with and involve the community in the school. We are committed to partnerships with local schools, local businesses, and community members, Federal and State agencies, foundations, and other national organizations.

EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING

WHAT IS EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING?

Expeditionary Learning is an educational system that differs from traditional systems in three main ways.

1. In Expeditionary Learning schools, students learn by conducting "learning expeditions" rather than by sitting in a classroom being taught one subject at a time.
2. Expeditionary Learning works on developing the character — as well as the intellect — of students.
3. Expeditionary Learning changes not only how students learn but also a school's culture. The Expeditionary Learning system holds, as Massachusetts educator Ron Berger says in *A Culture of Quality: A Reflection on Practice* (from the Annenberg Institute for School Reform's Occasional Paper Series, Number 1, September 1996, Brown University), that "the quality of a school lies in its culture." Expeditionary Learning affects standards, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and school organization. At a successful Expeditionary Learning school, teachers, parents, staff, and students work together to create a school culture of collaboration, respect, and high expectations.

THE HISTORY OF EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING

Expeditionary Learning was a program developed by Outward Bound, a non-profit organization for comprehensive school reform. Founded in Great Britain in 1941, it was brought to the United States in 1961. Outward Bound uses outdoor activities where students "learn teamwork, courage, craftsmanship, perseverance, and compassion". These instructional practices are incorporated into Expeditionary Learning classrooms to create powerful learning experiences and foster academics and personal growth.

WHAT IS A TYPICAL EL SCHOOL DAY LIKE?

Gone are the ringing bells, rows of desks, and fill-in-the-blank worksheets. For all or most of the day, students and teachers are engaged in challenging learning expeditions. They explore a topic or theme in depth by working on projects that call for intellectual inquiry, physical exploration, and community service.

On a given day, their explorations may take them outside the school building to do scientific research in natural areas, conduct interviews in local businesses, or carry out a range of other fieldwork assignments.

Each day provides opportunities for quiet reflection — time for students to write in their journals, gather their thoughts, and reflect on what they have learned. Students work individually and in small groups. Together they learn to draw on the strengths of a whole class and are not separated into "ability groups."

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING

THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-DISCOVERY: Learning happens best with emotion, challenge and the requisite support. People discover their abilities, values, passions, and responsibilities in situations that offer adventure and the unexpected. In Expeditionary Learning schools, students undertake tasks that require perseverance, fitness, craftsmanship, imagination, self-discipline, and significant achievement. A teacher's primary task is to help students discover they can do more than they think they can.

THE CREATION OF WONDERFUL IDEAS: Teaching in Expeditionary Learning schools fosters curiosity about the world by creating learning situations that provide something important to think about, time to experiment, and time to make sense of what is observed.

THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEARNING: Learning is both a personal process of discovery and a social activity. Everyone learns both individually and as part of a group. Every aspect of an Expeditionary Learning school encourages both children and adults to become increasingly responsible for directing their own personal and collective learning.

EMPATHY AND CARING: Learning is fostered best in communities where students' and teachers' ideas are respected and where there is mutual trust. Learning groups are small in Expeditionary Learning schools, with a caring adult looking after the progress and acting as an advocate for each child. Older students mentor younger ones, and students feel physically and emotionally safe.

SUCCESS AND FAILURE: All students need to be successful if they are to build the confidence and capacity to take risks and meet increasingly difficult challenges. But it is also important for students to learn from their failures, to persevere when things are hard, and to learn to turn disabilities into opportunities.

COLLABORATION AND COMPETITION: Individual development and group development are integrated so that the value of friendship, trust, and group action is clear. Students are encouraged to compete not against each other but with their own personal best and with rigorous standards of excellence.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION: Both diversity and inclusion increase the richness of ideas, creative power, problem-solving ability, and respect for others. In Expeditionary Learning schools, students investigate and value their different histories and talents as well as those of other communities and cultures. Schools and learning groups are heterogeneous.

THE NATURAL WORLD: A direct and respectful relationship with the natural world refreshes the human spirit and teaches the important ideas of recurring cycles and cause and effect. Students learn to become stewards of the earth and of future generations.

SOLITUDE AND REFLECTION: Students and teachers need time alone to explore their own thoughts, make their own connections, and create their own ideas. They also need time to exchange their reflections with others.

SERVICE AND COMPASSION: We are crew, not passengers. Students and teachers are strengthened by acts of consequential service to others, and one of an Expeditionary Learning school's primary functions is to prepare students with the attitudes and skills to learn from and be of service to others.

CORE PRACTICES OF EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING

LEARNING EXPEDITIONS: These challenging, interdisciplinary, real-world projects and in-depth studies act as the primary curriculum units in Expeditionary Learning schools. Learning Expeditions support critical literacy and address central academic standards of content, while promoting character development and fostering a service ethic.

ACTIVE PEDAGOGY: In Expeditionary Learning schools, teachers use active pedagogy (teaching and learning) to help students become active and collaborative learners; to make connections, to find patterns, to see events from different perspectives, to experiment, to go beyond the information given, and to develop empathy and compassion for events, people, and subjects.

SCHOOL CULTURE AND CHARACTER: Expeditionary Learning builds shared beliefs, traditions, and rituals in order to create a school culture that is characterized by a climate of physical and emotional safety, a sense of adventure, an ethic of service and responsibility, and a commitment to high quality work.

LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT: Leaders in Expeditionary Learning schools create a professional community that focuses on curriculum and instruction as the primary vehicles for improving student achievement and school culture.

SCHOOL STRUCTURES: Expeditionary Learning schools use longer and more flexible schedule blocks, common planning time, heterogeneous groupings, and/or looping to ensure student success.

SERVICE LEARNING

Service Learning is a method of teaching and learning that integrates practical life experience with service to the community. Rather than presenting information to students in the isolated environment of a classroom, students see and experience the practical application of knowledge they have gained. While service learning strives to reinforce classroom academics, it also provides opportunities for character building and personal growth. Working within the community can teach students more about the diverse world in which we live, help them develop compassion and understanding, and provide a sense of civic responsibility.

Students are expected to volunteer a selected number of hours of independent service learning per school year to community groups or agencies (outside of school projects). This service learning can include any volunteer activity in our community that results in making a positive impact on others. Primarily, these activities will be outside of the classroom, but initially they

may be an extension of a classroom assignment, especially with younger students. Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- Students combined a NM history lesson (history of the midwifery in Las Vegas) with art (pictures drawn of what they learned) to produce a unique picture calendar to support the practice of midwifery. The students also presented the gifts to the family of a famous local midwife..
- Students studies the ecology of key stone species and presented the information they learned in pamphlets and documents to pass out during a performance in a local park for to teach the community the important role these animals play in keeping the ecological balance.
- Students raised money for groups in need. Money has been raised for Save the Chimps project, Horse Shelter, Tsunami Relief, and Hurricane Katrina Relief.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Río Gallinas staff believe that parental involvement is the cornerstone of creating a positive educational experience for our students. Therefore, parents/guardians or adult family members of each student's family are expected to volunteer at least two hours each month per household (20 hours per year) at Río Gallinas or school functions. There will be many opportunities for parents to get involved in their student's school experience throughout the school year. Some examples include, by are not limited to: serving on committees, sharing expertise in specific areas of need, assisting in classrooms, providing transportation for expeditions, and fundraising.

RESEARCH THAT EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING WORKS

Schools and individual educators who have used Expeditionary Learning say student attitudes towards school changes, leading to more interest and engagement in school. Subsequently, student performance and achievement increases, while discipline problems decreases. "Students tend to perform well compared to state and district averages on standardized tests such as the NM Standards Based Assessment. Positive results have been found across subjects (e.g., reading, writing, math, science, and social studies)". Conflict skills, such as conflict resolution and cooperation, were also strengthened.

Two independent research groups, the Academy for Educational Development and a team from the University of Colorado's Department of Education, have studied Expeditionary Learning programs. Both groups found dramatic increases in students' levels of engagement and motivation, as demonstrated by high attendance and low rates of disciplinary problems. All of the original demonstration schools, most of which are located in inner cities and serve high proportions of low-income, at-risk students, showed dramatic improvement in the high stakes test used in their districts.

Following are evidences of Expeditionary Learning's success:

- The Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning in Spring 1997 scored on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills administered by Denver Public Schools generated the following results. Math, reading and language scores were above average in every grade level. Every grade level averaged at least one year above grade equivalency in every subject. In addition, the report of the accreditation visit by the North Central Association Visiting Resource Team in April 1997 concluded that the Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning is well on its way to becoming a powerful example of educational practice for the state of Colorado and the nation.
- King Middle School in Portland achieved dramatic gains on the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA), surpassing the rate of change statewide. King students went from performing below the bottom of the range for demographically similar schools in six curriculum areas in 1995, to performing above the top of the range in all six areas one year later. King students averaged a 59-point increase in their scores, compared to a statewide average gain of only 15 points. In 1997, King's reading, math, and language arts scores increased again, by an average of an additional 25 points.
- In New York City, three-year longitudinal comparisons show significant increases on the Degrees of Reading Power Test in grades seven and eight at the School for the Physical City, placing the school 29th out of the city's 226 junior high schools in reading in 1996. Some 75 percent of the students were reading at or above grade level, compared to only 47 percent across the school system as a whole.
- In 1996, fifth-grade students at Clairemont Elementary School in Decatur scored at the 8.1 grade equivalent in math on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the 7.6 grade equivalent in reading after its third year of implementation. Clairemont fifth graders also outperformed both the school district and the state in all curriculum areas on the Georgia Curriculum Based Assessment Test in 1996, scoring at the 99th percentile in reading, the 95th percentile in math, the 98th percentile in science, and the 95th percentile in social studies.
- In Boston, the Rafael Hernandez School ranked 11th in math and 17th in reading out of the city's 76 elementary schools on the Stanford-9 test in the percentage of fifth graders reading above grade level. The Hernandez School is a two-way bilingual school that serves a student population that is 59 percent Hispanic, 27 percent African American, and 14 percent Caucasian; 73 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.
- McKinley Elementary School's fourth graders improved their scores on Cincinnati's Fourth-Grade Proficiency Test by 26 percentage points in math, 23 in citizenship, and six in reading from 1995 to 1996. In all five areas tested, McKinley's fourth graders achieved a higher rate of proficiency than the district and state average. Sixth graders at

McKinley scored higher than the district and state average in reading (89 percent proficiency) and science (46 percent proficiency).

- At the Lincoln, Bryant, and Table Mound Elementary Schools in Dubuque, Iowa, a longitudinal study showed a significant decrease in the percentage of sixth graders scoring below the 25th percentile and a substantial increase in those scoring above the 75th percentile on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

Expeditionary Learning is also beneficial to teachers, helping them to develop new ways to teach and reevaluate their ideas about education.

HOW DO EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING TEACHERS ASSESS THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR STUDENTS?

Ideally Expeditionary Learning students create high quality work, because Expeditionary Learning schools place students in situations that demand it. For instance, when middle school students presented their plan to renovate a vacant lot to a Boston urban planning commission, their proposals had to meet architectural standards, zoning requirements and community needs. Assessment is also imbedded in an Expeditionary Learning school's curriculum and instruction. Expeditionary Learning nurtures a culture of continuous reflection, revision, and improvement. Expeditionary Learning schools make explicit the criteria they apply to judge student performance, and they expect students to work hard until they have achieved their best work. Expeditionary Learning schools try to avoid setting assessment apart as an isolated, dreaded event. Instead, Expeditionary Learning makes assessment indistinguishable from quality instruction.

Expeditionary Learning recognizes that effective assessment is impossible unless one has clearly defined standards. We require students to meet skill and content requirements identified in the New Mexico State standards. Students, at the end of 3rd, 5th, & 8th grade, present their portfolios for evaluation by a panel of people who represent the local community, and then discuss their work in terms of effective communication, deep knowledge and higher order thinking. This demonstration of understanding is meant to further uncover student skill and knowledge. Students whose work is not judged by the passage panel and crew leaders as meeting passage requirements are not promoted until they demonstrate that they have completed the required work and attained the necessary knowledge and skills.

HOW DO EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING TEACHERS ASSESS THEIR OWN PERFORMANCE?

Creating a culture of reflection, critique, and revision pushes students to better performances. Expeditionary Learning believes the same is true of entire schools. Expeditionary Learning has created *Benchmarks* to help schools use the same cycle of self-evaluation and improvement. These benchmarks are derived from the [Core Practices](#). They consist of specific criteria that a school can use to determine its progress in implementing the Core Practices.

HOW DOES EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING CHANGE THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER?

Teachers are the key to Expeditionary Learning's success. As designers of Expeditionary Learning curricula and guides of learning expeditions, teachers must be engaged in their own learning process as well as that of their students.

Instead of working in isolation behind closed classroom doors, teachers collaborate closely with colleagues, family and community members. This openness and collaboration ensures rich and high quality learning experiences for students, and significant professional growth and renewal for teachers.

HOW TO PLAN AN EXPEDITION

The key components in planning a learning expedition are a **theme or topic, guided questions, a clear set of learning goals,** and a **final project as an assessment task.** It is important to align all learning expeditions with district and state standards.

The theme/topic needs to integrate the concepts the educator feels are most important for student understanding. Background skills and knowledge, big ideas, and modes of inquiry are important in developing a theme/topic. A theme/topic allows for the "learning expedition to encompass more than one discipline and make connections across fields of knowledge." An example of a theme is "Why are keystone species introduced into the wild?," an expedition done by Río Gallinas.. Other examples of themes from other EL schools include reaching for the stars, winter Olympics- a study of both ancient and modern Olympics, we belong- a study of communities, and blast from the past- an expedition on ancient civilizations

Guided questions are those questions that you hope students will explore during the learning expedition. Guided questions start the learning expedition, and although at first may be broad, quickly lead to more focused questions. Questions are open ended, meaningful, controversial, challenge students' thinking, have students investigate an idea or dilemma, or explore ideas.

Learning goals are what you want the students to know (content), do (performance), and be like (dispositions) at the end of the learning expedition. Students are asked to view issues from different perspectives, use prior knowledge, evaluate and examine the information, and make connections to the real world. Opportunities should be provided for students to communicate their ideas.

Not only is there a final assessment, but assessment occurs throughout the expedition. Students are continually asked to reflect, revise, and make improvements. Forms of assessment may include "critique sessions, peer revision, conferences, discussions of the qualities of good work by examining exemplars, and development of standards and criteria for what makes good work". The final assessment may include a performance for parents and community members where students present the information they have learned. Last year the final assessment for

the Río Gallinas students was their theatrical performance Re-wilding medicine show for parents, teachers, and community members as well as individual participation.

For more information on Expeditionary Learning, go to:

<http://www.elob.org>

RÍO GALLINAS CURRICULUM FORMAT

Río Gallinas School curriculum (1st -8th) format establishes standards at each grade level. The format provides a framework for instructional resources and assessment aligned to mastery-level curriculum mapping. **A specific detailed curriculum aligned to the NM State Board of Education's Content Standards, Benchmarks, and Performance Standards is included in the appendices.**

Río Gallinas School will begin the year with a fully mapped curriculum for the areas of mathematics, language arts, social studies, and science, art, and modern, classical, and native languages for grades 1st -8th . During the first year, the collaborative council and staff will align the physical education and health curriculum.

During the first year after meeting the students, their families, teachers, and community members, the curriculum will be re-mapped to better meet the individual needs and diversity of the school's learning community.

Río Gallinas School will use an approach that recognizes education as a process that takes place both inside and outside the school and is therefore affected by:

- social and academic organization of the school
- personal and background characteristics/circumstances of students and their families
- community contexts within which families students and schools exist
- relationship of each of these factors to the others

All students at the school will be valued by:

- ensuring that the images and symbols in the school reflect the membership, participation, and contribution of all the categories of students
- sensitizing all staff, visitors, and students to the importance of language used to describe staff, students, parents, who are part of the school family and community
- planning and teaching with the assumption and expectation that all students can learn whatever the school deems important
- ceremonies, festivals, and traditions reflecting the values and diversity of all the students
- involving all students, parents, and community members in supporting and participating in the instructional program

GRADING PRACTICES AND ASSESSMENT

REPORT CARD/CONFERENCE SCHEDULE DURING EACH EXPEDITION:

1ST EXPEDITION: August - December

2ND EXPEDITION: January- May

October (date to be announced)

Conference and goal setting after MAP assessment

November Student-Led Conference

January Report card mailed out

January (date to be announced)

Conference and goal setting after MAP assessment

Student-Led Conferences

Report card mailed out

The conferences will include these elements:

- a student portfolio (samples of work completed by student), student, parent, and teacher evaluations
- Individual assessments and rubrics.

January & May Students will participate in a final group expedition performance or and/or community service activity. A Comprehensive Expedition Report Card will be mailed out to parent/guardian's home address and parent/guardian can pick a copy at the school. Final report card will include teacher's reflection on his/her participation in final group performance and/or community service learning activity.

October/January Time will be set aside to have conferences with students families who need additional academic or social/emotional support for upcoming expedition or following school year.

STATE-MANDATED TESTS

We will administer all state-mandated tests. If the name of the test or the set of test requirements changes, then the following statement will be obsolete. The school will administer the Criterion Referenced Test (or other Standards Based Assessment required by the state of NM).

SCHOOL WIDE ASSESSMENT PLAN

Río Gallinas School has identified a school-wide assessment plan that is comprised of several components. The plan involves a variety of relevant, authentic, performance and criterion-based assessments that most effectively measure the school's actual classroom instructional effectiveness towards fulfilling our goals and objectives.

Students will be required to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and strategies through performance assessments that correspond to the New Mexico content standards and benchmarks. The assessments used will help the facilitators gain insight into students' different strategies for learning and to determine student progress and achievement.

Students will be a part of the assessment team. When students are collaborators in assessment, they develop the habit of self-reflection. They learn the qualities of good work, how to judge their work against these qualities, how to step back from their work and assess their own feelings of accomplishment, and then how to set personal goals. (Reif, 1990; Wolf, 1989) Educators trained in assessment will conduct on-going assessment workshops for students and teachers.

Students who have attended Río Gallinas School Lower School for two years will meet or surpass the New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks for Grade 4 in arts, science, language arts, mathematics, social studies, physical science, modern, classical, and native languages (English, Spanish), health, and career readiness.

Students who have attended Río Gallinas School for three or more years will meet or surpass the New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks for their grade.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT UPON ENROLLMENT: STAFF REVIEW

- Previous SBA/other standardized test scores
- Portfolio (if any) from previous school (s)
- Parent statement of strengths, weaknesses, and goals
- Student statement of strengths, weaknesses, and goals

SHORT-CYCLE ASSESSMENTS

- Pre-test series** assessing level of achievement in fine and traditional arts, sciences with emphasis on ecological investigations, Spanish language, English language (including

- New Mexico Writing Assessment), mathematics, social studies, physical education, health education, and career readiness.
- NWEA MAPS- Measurement of Academic Performance Survey (fall, winter, spring)
 - DIBELS – Developmental Indicator of Basic English Literacy Skills first-second

ONGOING ASSESSMENT METHODS:

- Teacher observation and documentation: Teachers will record observations of student’s academic and social progress through watching students interact with other students, working with ideas and diverse materials.
- Growth Portfolio (Teacher): This portfolio will include works collected by the teacher and student demonstrating a student’s development and growth over time. It will include evidence of academic and/or thinking skills, content knowledge, self-knowledge, and cooperative learning. Parents, student, and teacher will meet each nine weeks to discuss portfolio content.
- Reading Logs: Students will be required to read at least twenty books per year and document in their reading log.
- Rubrics: Students and teachers will use clearly stated rubrics for each activity or project so students can assess their own work. Students will examine examples of quality work so they can make an educated self-evaluation. Students will have to justify their scoring.
- Oral Presentations to peers and/or community members: upon completion of a project, students will make presentations through varied mediums (dance, art, power point, poetry, story, song, theatrical piece, video, photos, etc.)
- Journals and Place-Based Experience Documentation: students will keep several journals including personal reflection, art experiences, documentation of field studies and projects. Students will bring self-selected journal entries to peer learning groups for reflection and evaluation.
- Interviews with parents, teachers, peers, self, community members, and specialists
- Quizzes and Tests
- Checklists of skills
- Report Cards: The purpose of our report cards is to enable parents, students, and educators to better understand the student’s performance and to know what is required for future progress and mastery of state content standards and benchmarks. Staff will not assign letter grades. The school will issue report cards quarterly.

END OF SCHOOL YEAR ASSESSMENTS:

- Post-test series mirroring assessments will be given at beginning of the year.

A meeting with student and parents will be scheduled to review portfolio and assessments from the year and to revise assessment of strengths, weaknesses, and goals for coming year and/or transition to high school. Staff may make recommendations for the student to participate in summer school or tutoring.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICIES

Río Gallinas School is committed to providing a safe, challenging, and creative learning environment for the students, teachers, and parents. We want students to enjoy school and feel safe. The school has set forth policies and rules to ensure a positive learning environment for all involved in the school. Students are encouraged to make responsible decisions and to be active in solving conflicts in a positive way. The Río Gallinas School policies reflect the school mission by shifting many responsibilities to students.

Using the model of Restorative Justice in the Classroom, students monitor and determine appropriate behavior and resolve conflicts. The restorative approach is based on the belief that the people who can best resolve conflict or a problem are the people directly involved, Imposed solutions are less effective and less educative.

Río Gallinas School is committed to taking the time and using the necessary resources to find solutions for behavioral issues in the school community. At times when the school must take disciplinary action, staff makes sincere and professional attempts to locate the underlying cause of behavioral difficulties, and to make reasonable adjustments in the daily environment of the student to address his/her needs.

The main components of our restorative justice model are class meetings, campus-wide meetings, and/or conferences. Consequences for behavior may include counseling and/or community service. Under extreme circumstances and/or repeated Offenses, consequences may be suspension, police contact, and/or expulsion. Before expulsion, students have the right of due process, except when the student's conduct presents an immediate threat to the health and safety of others. Río Gallinas School will notify the District of expulsions immediately and will include suspension and expulsion data in its annual report.

Staff members are held responsible for following the discipline policy. Students, parents/guardians and/or staff are encouraged to contact the director if he/she has concerns about behavior in the school.

Restorative Justice Approach: When a conflict arises, the students and staff involved meet and share their perspectives and feelings, and then find solutions with the teacher(s) and/or peer mediators. After discussing solutions, each student fills out a reform stating possible resolutions and what can be given back to the community.

Class Meetings: When a conflict involves the majority of the class, a staff member oversees a class meeting. The students share their perspectives, feelings, and find resolutions. Staff may call follow-up meetings, until the situation is resolved.

Campus-wide Meeting: When a conflict has impacted multiple classes, a campus-wide meeting will be held to discuss all of the issues, provide opportunities for students and staff to participate in the concern, seek positive outcomes.

Conferences: Conferences result in a wide variety of outcomes and follow up. Parent(s)/guardian, teachers, director, and the student are all involved in the communication, in goal-setting, and in the evaluation of the student's progress.

Community Service: In the event that a student or students behaviors have negatively impacted the school culture, students will be required to give back to the school community through specific service projects. Projects will be undertaken by students under the supervision of parent / guardians after school.

CATEGORY I OFFENSES (IN CLASSROOM)

Making noises that interrupted the class,

Talking out of turn,

Bothering a student in the class,

Arguing with the teacher,

Not taking responsibility for my actions,

Having negative attitude toward work,

Using Inappropriate language,

Not doing work,

Teasing,

In someone's body space:

Consequences: Follow Refocus Agreements (to be entered in the computer data base by administrative assistant)/ community service possible)

Tardy: **Consequence:** Contact parent/guardians, reinforce importance of attending school on time. Email director if problem persists

Excessive Absences: Send email to director/administrative assistant He/she will call parents.

Homework not complete: Contact parent/guardian. Email director if problem persists

Misusing materials and/or equipment: Call parent/guardians/ email director

Gum: If Seen, Heard, Found

Consequences: If seen or heard, Staff asks student to throw gum away and can restrict its use for that student for the rest of the day.

If found, that classroom will have no gum chewing in classroom for three days

If found in a common space, students who chew gum will volunteer to clean it up

If it is found again in common space, no gum chewing for three days.

Hats Worn inside

Consequences: Staff member will take it away until the end of day

Cell Phone if seen, heard or used during class time

Consequence: Staff member will take it away

(Parent/Guardian will need to pick up)

Electronic Devices In school

Consequence: Staff member will take it away (Parent/Guardian will need to pick it up)

Soda/ Candy is not allowed in school

Consequence: Staff member will take it away and it will not be returned

Unacceptable Dress

Consequence: Student will call home for change of clothes and wear a school issued T-shirt to cover up until clothing is changed.

Computer Agreements not followed (See computer agreement)

Consequence: Computer is taken away. Parent/Guardian will be called.

Pornography on computer: Computer will be taken away. Student will be placed on desktop with supervision. Conference with Parent/Guardian. Two counseling sessions required.

Not using honorific titles: Students will address staff and visitors by the honorific title of Mr. or Ms. Choice of names could be first name or last name

Consequence: Remind student of proper title

CATEGORY I OFFENSES (OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM)

Disrespect/Defiance: Meet with staff member

Inappropriate Language (Remind him/her of appropriate school language)

Inappropriate displays of affection (Interrupt the behavior.)

If any of the above behavior continues, there will be a conference with parent/guardian (email director)

Play Kicking/Hitting

Consequence: Loss of choice time, Teacher decides consequence

Example: Pick-up trash, beautify an area, restricted in an area

If this behavior persists, referred to peer mediator and parent called.

CATEGORY II OFFENSES (OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOMS)

Bullying and Harassment:

Inappropriate language directed at another student

Teasing

Destruction of property or materials

Consequence: Follow conflict resolution protocol

If behavior persists, parents are contacted and student attends two counseling sessions.

CATEGORY III OFFENSES

Physical and/or verbal fighting with one or more students

Bullying and Harassment

Inappropriate sexual language directed at another student

Intimidation/threats to another student

Endangering the health or safety of others

Consequences: 1-4 will occur for every offense in category III.

1st removal from class,

2nd meeting with the student(s), following conflict resolution protocol. Fill out

Discipline Form with teacher and student. (to be entered in the computer data base by administrative assistant)

3rd conference with parents/guardians. Student will be required to attend two counseling sessions during art/P.E./hip-hop or after school.

community service possible

4th 1-3 day suspension depending on severity of offense. (Decision made by a staff team) Fill out Discipline Form with teacher and student. (to be entered in the computer data base by administrative assistant)

Computer Agreements not followed (Pornography on computer)

Verbal abuse to staff member, volunteer, or visitor

Intimidation/threats to a teacher

Petty theft

Consequences: 1-4 will occur for every offense in category III.

- 1st removal from class,
- 2nd meeting with the student(s) **Fill out Discipline Form with teacher and student. (to be entered in the computer data base by administrative assistant)**
- 3rd conference with parents/guardians Student will be required to attend one- two counseling sessions during art/P.E./hip-hop or after school.
- 4th 1-3 day suspension depending on severity of offense. (Decision made by a staff team) **Fill out Discipline Form with teacher and student. (to be entered in the computer data base by administrative assistant)**

CATEGORY IV OFFENSES

Extortion	Police contact
Grand theft	Police Contact
Possession of tobacco/ alcohol	Parent/guardian Contact
Possession of drugs	Police contact
Possession of Firecrackers	Parent/guardian Contact
Possession of Dangerous Weapons	Police contact
Arson	Police contact
Bomb threat	Police contact
Fire Alarm Misuse	Police contact

Consequences: **Police will be contacted depending on offense, 1-4 will occur for every offense in category IV. Fill out Discipline Form with teacher and student. (to be entered in the computer data base)**

- 1st Removal from class,
- 2nd conference with parent/guardian, two counseling sessions, community service
- 3rd behavioral agreement,
- 4th 1-3 day suspension depending on severity of offense. (Decision made by a staff team) **Fill out Discipline Form with teacher and student. (to be entered in the computer data base by administrative assistant)**

MAINTAINING A POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

BEHAVIORAL AGREEMENTS USING OUR MOTTO

Show RESPECT by

- ⤴ **Listening by showing eye contact, reflecting back through on-topic questioning or conversation, and staying seated when others are talking**
- ⤴ **Keeping hands and feet to self**
- ⤴ **Sitting up in the circle**
- ⤴ **Promptly doing what the teacher asks you to do**

Show RESPONSIBILITY by

- ⤴ **Completing your class tasks**
- ⤴ **Being prepared with paper, pencil, book, etc.**
- ⤴ **Putting things away when finished**
- ⤴ **Participating in class projects and discussions**

Above All BE KIND by

- ⤴ **Using manners (please, thank you, excuse me, etc.)**
- ⤴ **Participating and showing kindness in group activities**
- ⤴ **Helping and sharing with others**

CLASSROOM BEHAVIORAL AGREEMENTS USING OUR TENDING SKILLS

Be PROMPT by

- showing up to school on time,
- quickly sitting in your seat what class starts,
- starting assignment right away and turning it in on time
- quickly doing what the teacher asks you to do

Be PREPARED with

- completed homework assignments,
- required writing materials: paper, pencil, laptop etc.
- required reading materials: text book, reading book etc.
- any other required materials: appropriate clothing, sleeping bag, etc.

Have a POSITIVE MENTAL ATTITUDE by

- believing in your ability to overcome any challenge,
- choosing right from wrong,
- asking others for help or clarification
- admitting to your mistakes..

PARTICIPATE by

- expressing yourself in crew,
- completing class work during class time
- doing your part during group assignments,
- showing up to field activities and performances

Strive for POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS with everyone you know by

- using good manners around peers & adults
- kindly acknowledging and greeting each other appropriately
- accepting differences in each other
- making an effort to understand the other person, before expressing your need to be understood

TEACHER & STUDENT SCHOOL-WIDE BEHAVIOR AGREEMENTS

RESPECT , RESPONSIBILITY AND ABOVE ALL BE KIND

Respect for others and for things.

Responsibility for ourselves.

Kindness to others, plants, animals and ourselves..

SHOW RESPECT AND CARE FOR THINGS AND MATERIALS

Teachers agree to:

- Provide specific places for things
- Provide enough time for clean up
- Provide places for trash
- Provide clear boundaries for what is and is not available for student use
- Provide a space, if needed, to store items from home which are not allowed during school

Students agree to:

- Always return things to their proper place
- Always tidy up and throw away trash at the end of a project
- Respect and care for material things belonging to the school (no eating or drinking at the computers)
- Respect for boundaries
- Not bring the following from home: Game Boys, phones, pagers or other miscellaneous that distract from classroom work. Bicycles and skateboards can't be used during school hours

RESPECT FOR OTHERS, RESPONSIBILITY FOR OURSELVES.

Inside Behavior:

Teachers agree to:

- Provide an organized and engaging learning environments for students
- Be clear about when it is group time, individual time, and time to listen to the teacher
- Always call students on cussing and inappropriate language
- Be clear and consistent about boundaries.

Students agree to:

- Not talk when the teacher is talking
- Calm, quiet voices and bodies
- No interruptions - must wait or join in
- Not leave the classroom without permission
- Not leave the building without an adult
- Not curse or use inappropriate language

Outside Behavior

Teachers agree to:

- Monitor outside behavior to keep all students safe
- Accompany students to and from the park at all times
- Be available for any student who needs to talk to an adult

Students agree to:

- Not disturb other students who are in class
- Not disturb neighbors when traveling to and from park
- Stay with the group when traveling to and from the park
- Follow game rules
- Use problem-solving skills of listening sharing feelings appropriately

FOOD AGREEMENTS

Staff agrees to:

- Provide nutritious breakfasts for those who arrive before 7:55
- Provide water
- Provide nutritious snacks
- Provide specific times and places for snacks

Students agree to:

- Not eat candy during school hours
- Not bring any drinks except water
- Not eat unless it is a designated time and place

DRESS CODE POLICY

We have created an environment where each student can develop their innate qualities, at the same time being aware of others, focus on learning, and develop character and citizenship skills. Students are free to express themselves through attire appropriate to school learning.

Many days students will be participating in physical activities. They need to wear or bring proper footwear everyday. Students will need to have at school, clothing appropriate for dance and physical ed. classes. Clothing may not:

- Promote or suggest racism, bigotry, or sexism
- Promote or advocate addiction (drugs, cigarettes, etc.)
- Promote or advocate violence
- Suggest sexual labels and stereotypes

Guidelines For Clothing:

- No undergarments showing
- No stomachs or chests showing
- No oversized garments
- No hairnets
- No hats inside
- No sunglasses inside

Consequence: Student will be given a T-shirt to cover their inappropriate shirt. If this does not work, parent/guardian will be called to bring appropriate clothing.

TECHNOLOGY / COMPUTER USE POLICY AND AGREEMENTS

Río Gallinas School is a community that uses the computer systems in a responsible, appropriate, and legal manner. We agree to use the following as a guide when working within the school's computer system:

1. The school's Internet connection should be used only for research or information gathering that is directly related to academic assignments or extracurricular projects supervised by the Río Gallinas staff. Social networking sites including, but not limited to: Facebook, MySpace, Tagged, Twitter, YouTube, etc. shall not be used under any circumstances.
2. Game playing on computers is not allowed unless the game is directly related to a school assignment or activity and specifically authorized by the classroom teacher. For example, chess would be appropriate if related to the activities of the Chess Club.
3. Laptop computers should be plugged in each night to assure a full charge the following day.
4. E-mail (or any other computer communication) should be used only for legitimate and responsible communication between students, faculty, and the outside world. Rude, abusive, threatening, or otherwise inappropriate language is not permitted.
5. Students may access only those files that belong to them or which they are certain they have permission to use.
6. Files stored within the school computer systems should be limited to those relating to formal school courses or activities. Students and staff have no privacy rights with respect to any data stored on school property. Staff will routinely monitor all computer systems to determine compliance with this policy.
7. Computers, wireless cards, and cameras belong to and are distributed by the school. Access to the Río Gallinas School computer systems is a privilege, not a right. Violating the letter or spirit of the above regulations may cause to deny a student access to the Río Gallinas School computer systems, and/or may result in more serious disciplinary action(s). Río Gallinas School is required by law to report any illegal or unauthorized use of school computers to the proper authorities.
8. Río Gallinas School is entitled to reimbursement for any lost, stolen, or damaged school property assigned to a student. No school property will be assigned to a student without parental approval and consent.

I hereby promise to follow these guidelines and to respect and care for the computers and other technology that I may use at Río Gallinas. I understand that I may lose the privilege of using the technology if I fail to keep this agreement.

Signed this ____ day of _____, 20__:

Student signature

Student printed name

Parent signature

Parent printed nam

MANAGING SCHOOL-ISSUED TEXTBOOKS, TEACHER MATERIALS & SUPPLIES

STUDENT AND PARENT OR GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITY

1. The **Student and Parent or Guardian** is responsible for each textbook or book club book issued to the student. A student who fails to return all textbooks forfeits the right to free textbooks until each textbook previously issued but not returned is paid for by the student, parent, or guardian. The school shall allow the student to use textbooks at school during each school day. If a textbook is not returned or paid for the school may withhold the student's records.
2. Return textbooks to the teacher or textbook coordinator at the close of the session or when the student withdraws from school.
3. Write the student's name inside the front cover of the textbook in ink.
4. Keep the textbook in good condition. Any misuse of textbooks due to carelessness or neglect may be considered cause to charge the student a fine for that textbook.

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY

1. Teachers should number all textbooks and keep a record of the book number of all books issued to each student, unless textbooks are checked out directly to the student by the Director or assigned book coordinator.
2. Ensure book covers are available and textbooks are kept covered at all times.
3. Conduct periodic textbook checks (1 per 6 weeks suggested)
4. Notify the parent/guardian when a textbook is lost, destroyed, or damaged by a student.
5. Inventory surplus books. Store in a proper place.
6. Verify the textbook number and condition of the textbooks when the student returns them.
7. All teacher materials issued should be kept secure and in good condition
8. Teacher is responsible for paying for any lost or severely damaged teacher materials.
9. Return all books to the Director or assigned textbook coordinator at the end of the year or end of the course (including student books checked out to the teacher)

DIRECTOR OR ASSIGNED TEXTBOOK COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITY

1. Conduct an annual physical inventory in May of all textbooks and teacher editions.

2. Verify annual shipment within two weeks of delivery.
3. Maintain all textbook records and a statement of current charges.
4. Keep *all* extra textbooks in a controlled access book room.
5. Deposit all money collected from students for sales (lost and destroyed textbooks) into the instructional material fund.
6. Order needed textbooks and teacher materials.
7. Require that a separate receipt register be kept for money collected for lost, destroyed, or damaged textbooks.
8. Require that all textbooks be covered.
9. Schedule textbook checks periodically (every 6 weeks recommended) during the school year.
10. Within 2 weeks after the last day of school or on a date agreed upon by the school Director complete the "Inventory Taking Worksheet" for records.
11. Order replacement textbooks for those lost by students.
12. Insure that a check is made out to Río Gallinas Charter School in the amount owed for lost textbooks or in the amount accumulated in the textbook activity account. The check should be remitted by June 15 or on a date agreed upon by the School Director.

ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY POLICY

RIO GALLINAS SCHOOL

COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE POLICY

In accordance with the state compulsory attendance law, parents or guardians are responsible for insuring that their child is in school. Attendance will be taken in every class and each day. Absence for more than 50% of the instructional day will be considered a full day.

Class Attendance: Regular attendance is essential to a student's success in school. Persistent absenteeism creates a genuine hardship for a student academically and socially and is regarded as a very serious problem.

Appropriate legal procedures will be followed for ten or more unexcused absences during the school year, considered habitual truancy, as specified and required by the Public School Code. A student who has accumulated five unexcused absences within a school year is considered truant. However, the school staff are aware of repeated unexcused absences before the point of truancy and will intervene both informally by conferring with the student and more formally through parent/guardian contact and conferences to determine the cause of the student's absenteeism.

In no case will Río Gallinas students be punished for truancy by suspension and/or expulsion.

Notification of Absences: In the event of an unexcused absence, the school will contact the parent/guardian as soon as possible to notify them of their child's absence.

Each trimester parents/guardians will be informed of their child's total absences. Río Gallinas administration will notify parents/guardians of absences through written correspondence or through phone calls.

Excused Absences: In order for an absence to be valid the student must bring a written excuse signed by the parent the day he/she returns to school. A valid excuse is considered illness, death in family, prearranged family event, or religious holiday. Prior notification is requested for students missing school due to family trips or pre-planned extended absences. It is the responsibility of the student and his/her parent/guardian to communicate with teachers regarding homework and classwork assignments for that period.

CONSEQUENCES FOR ABSENCES:

The school will document attempts to notify the parent about her/his child's unexcused absences, attempts of the school to meet with the parent/guardian to discuss intervention strategies and intervention strategies implemented to support keeping the child in school.

STEP 1: Initial Meeting For Students In Need Of Early Intervention

After two incidents of unexcused absences, the student is contacted and counseled by the director. In the meeting the student and director decide what kind of support is needed for the student. Parent/Guardian(s) is notified by a phone call and/or letter and a phone conference is held discussing what was decided in initial meeting between student and director. After school tutoring may be required as support for student to make-up missed assignments. The notification to the student and parent/guardian will be respectful and in a language and manner that is understandable to the student and parent/guardian.

Step 2: Parent/Guardian Conference For Students In Need Of Early Intervention

If student has five unexcused absences within a school year, a parent/guardian(s) will be notified of continued truancy by a phone call and letter and/or email. The letter/email shall include a date, time, and place for parent/guardian to meet to develop intervention strategies that focus on keeping the student in an educational setting. The notification to the student and parent/guardian will be respectful and in a language and manner that is understandable to the student and parent/guardian. After school tutoring may be required as support for student to make-up missed assignments.

Step 3: Notification Of Absences To San Miguel County Probation

If the student has **ten unexcused** absences in a school year, the student's parent/guardian will be notified by mail/email and a phone call. The letter/email shall include a date, time, and place for parent/guardian to meet to develop **new** intervention strategies that focus on keeping the student in an educational setting. The notification to the student and parent/guardian will be respectful and in a language and manner that is understandable to the student and parent/guardian. A letter will be sent to the San Miguel Probation office. After school tutoring may be required as support for student to make-up missed assignments.

Step 4: Contact With San Miguel County Probation

If there is another unexcused absence, within seven days, San Miguel probation offices will be contacted, again.

REFOCUS FORM

Student Problem-Solving Contract

Name of Student: _____ Date: _____

Name of Teacher: _____

Subject: _____

Time of Day: _____

Problem Behavior: Which tending skills did you not follow?

Tending Skills:

- PROMPT**
- PREPARED**
- PARTICIPATING**
- POSITIVE MENTAL ATTITUDE**
- POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP**

Check the problems you were having in the classroom

- I was talking out of turn
- I was tardy
- I was making noises that interrupted the class
- I was bothering a student in the class
- I argued with the teacher
- I did not take responsibility for my actions
- I had a negative attitude toward my work
- I used inappropriate language
- I was not doing work
- I was teasing
- I was in someone's body space
- I misused materials and/or equipment

How did your actions affect your learning?

- I was not listening, so I did not get the information
- I did not finish my work

- I was embarrassed and felt bad about my actions
- I missed the assignment
- I did not do my school work.
- Other _____

How did your actions affect the learning of the crew?

- The teacher became angry
- The teacher became frustrated
- Another student got mad because of my actions
- The teacher had to stop what he/she was teaching
- Students couldn't concentrate
- Another didn't finish their work because of my action
- Other _____

Restitution:

How will you give back to your classroom and school?

Student input needed here!

Your teacher will call your parents/ guardians about this refocus. If you get three in a week, your parents/guardians will need to conference with you and your teacher.

Student's Signature _____ Date: _____

Teacher's Signature _____ Date: _____

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The New Mexico State Board of Education has outlined the rights and responsibilities of students and schools in Title 6, Section 11.2 NMAC, which provides “a comprehensive framework within which local school boards and local school districts can carry out their educational mission and exercise their authority and responsibility to provide a safe environment for student learning, and further to provide students and parents with an understanding of the basic rights and requirements necessary to effectively function in the educational community.” Río Gallinas School adheres to this framework and aligns its policies and procedures with this regulation in its entirety. The following are excerpts (with omissions) from the “Rights and Responsibilities of the Public Schools and Public School Students,” 6.11.2 NMAC.

"Legal limits" include the requirements of the federal and state constitutions and governing statutes, standards and regulations, and also include the fundamental common law requirement that rules of student conduct be reasonable exercises of the school's authority in pursuance of legitimate educational and related functions. There are special limitations arising from constitutional guarantees of protected free speech and expression, which must be balanced against the school's need to foster an educational atmosphere free from undue disruptions to appropriate discipline.

6.11.2.8 JURISDICTION OVER STUDENTS.

All officials, employees and authorized agents of the public schools whose responsibilities include supervision of students shall have comprehensive authority within constitutional bounds to maintain order and discipline in school. In exercising this authority, . . . public school authorities shall have the right to supervise and control the conduct of students, and students shall have the duty to submit to the schools' authority.

Statement of Policy: The school is a community and the rules and regulations of a school are the laws of that community. All persons enjoying the rights of citizenship are subject to the laws of their community. Each carries with it a corresponding obligation.

The right to attend public school is not absolute. It is conditioned on each student's acceptance of the obligation to abide by the lawful rules of the school community until and unless the rules are changed through lawful processes.

Teachers, administrators and other school employees also have rights and duties. Teachers are required by law to maintain a suitable environment for teaming in their classes and to assist in maintaining school order and discipline. Administrators are responsible for maintaining and facilitating the educational program by ensuring an orderly, safe environment in the public schools. In discharging their duties, all school employees have the right to be free from intimidation or abuse and to have their lawful requests and instructions followed.

6.11.2.9 RULES OF CONDUCT FOR NEW MEXICO PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

The acts specified in Subsection A. of 6.11.2.9 NMAC below are prohibited in all the public schools of New Mexico. Within legal limits as defined in 6.11.2.7 NMAC, local school boards have discretion to develop rules of conduct governing all other areas of student and school activity.

Prohibited Activities: The commission of or participation in the activities designated below is prohibited in all New Mexico public schools and is prohibited for students whenever they are subject to school control.

- Criminal or delinquent acts*;
- Gang related activity;
- Sexual harassment: unwelcome or unwanted conduct of a sexual nature (verbal, non-verbal or physical) when . . .such conduct substantially interferes with a student's learning or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive learning environment;
- Disruptive conduct: willful conduct which materially and in fact disrupts or interferes with the operation of the public schools or the orderly conduct of any public school activity; or leads an administrative authority reasonably to forecast that such disruption or interference is likely to occur unless preventive action is taken;
- Refusal to cooperate with school personnel: a student's willful refusal to obey the lawful instructions or orders of school personnel whose responsibilities include supervision of students.

Regulated Activities: Beyond those activities designated above as prohibited, all other areas of student conduct may be regulated within legal limits by local school boards as they deem appropriate to local conditions.

6.11.2.10 ENFORCING RULES OF CONDUCT.

Enforcing Attendance Requirements. Formal enforcement action under the Compulsory Attendance Law, supra, and the Family in Need of Services Act, Section 32A-3-1 et seq. NMSA 1978 shall be initiated whenever a student's absences indicate that the law is being violated.

* By statute, Section 22-5-4.7 NMSA 1978, each school district is required to adopt a policy providing for the expulsion from school, for a period of not less than one year, of any student who is determined to have knowingly brought a weapon to a school under the jurisdiction of the local board.

Search and Seizure: School property assigned to a student and a student's person or property while under the authority of the public schools are subject to search, and items found are subject to seizure, in accordance with the requirements below.

Notice of Search Policy. Students shall be given reasonable notice, through distribution of written policies or otherwise, of each school's policy on searches at the beginning of each school year or upon admission for students entering during the school year.

Who May Search. Certified school personnel are "authorized persons" to conduct searches when a search is permissible as set forth below.

When Search [is] Permissible. An authorized person may conduct a search when (s)he has a reasonable suspicion that a crime or other breach of disciplinary rules is occurring or has occurred . . . and also when (s)he has reasonable cause to believe that a search is necessary to help maintain school discipline. *[Note:]* Student vehicles when on campus or otherwise under school control and students' personal effects which are not within their immediate physical possession may be searched in accordance with the requirements for locker searches. *[Also note:]* Seizure of Items: Illegal items, legal items that threaten the safety or security of others, and items which are used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process may be seized by authorized persons. Seized items shall be released to appropriate authorities or a student's parent or returned to the student when and if the administrative authority deems appropriate.

Notification of Law Enforcement Authorities: An administrative authority shall have discretion to notify the local law enforcement officers when a search discloses illegally possessed contraband material or evidence of some other crime or delinquent act.

Basis for Disciplinary Action: administrative authorities in the following circumstances may appropriately discipline a student:

- For committing any act, which endangers the health or safety of students, school personnel or others for whose safety the public school is responsible, or for conduct which reasonably appears to threaten such dangers if not restrained, regardless of whether an established rule of conduct has been violated.
- For violating valid rules of student conduct established by the local school board or by an administrative authority to whom the board has delegated rulemaking authority, when the student knew or should have known of the rule in question or that the conduct was prohibited.

Selection of Disciplinary Sanctions: Within legal limits as defined in Subsection L. of 6.11.2.7 NMAC, local school boards have discretion to determine the appropriate sanction(s) to be imposed for violations of rules of student conduct, or to authorize appropriate administrative authorities to make such determinations.

Detention, Suspension and Expulsion: Where detention, suspension and/or expulsion is determined to be the appropriate penalty, it may be imposed only in accordance with

procedures that provide at least the minimum safeguards prescribed in Section 6.11.2.12 NMAC. Suspensions or expulsions of students with disabilities shall be subject to the further requirements of Subsection G of Section 6.11.2.10 NMAC and Section 6.11.2.11 NMAC.

Discipline of Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities are not immune from school disciplinary processes. However, the public schools are required by state law and regulations to meet the individual educational needs of students with disabilities to the extent that current educational expertise permits.

6.11.2.12 PROCEDURE FOR DETENTIONS, SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS.

The authority of the state and of local school boards to prescribe and enforce standards of conduct for public school students must be exercised consistently with constitutional safeguards of individual student rights. The right to a public education is not absolute; it may be taken away, temporarily or permanently, for violations of school rules. But it is a property right which may only be denied where school authorities have adhered to the minimum procedural safeguards required to afford the student due process of law. This Section prescribes minimum requirements for detention, in-school suspension and temporary, long-term or permanent removal of students from the public schools. Local school boards may adopt procedures, which afford students more protection than this regulation requires.

Post-Suspension Placement Of Students.

Any student suspended from school shall be delivered directly by a school official to the student's parent(s), legal guardian or an adult designated by the parent(s) or the legal guardian, or kept on school grounds until the usual end of the school day.

Immediate Removal:

Students whose presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of interfering with the educational process may be immediately removed from school, subject to the following rules:

A rudimentary hearing, as required for temporary suspensions, shall follow as soon as possible.

Students shall be reinstated after no more than one school day unless within that time a temporary suspension is also imposed after the required rudimentary hearing. In such circumstances, a single hearing will support both the immediate removal and a temporary suspension imposed in connection with the same incident(s).

The school shall exert reasonable efforts to inform the student's parent of the charges against the student and the action taken as soon as practicable. If the school has not communicated with the parent by telephone or in person by the end of the school day following the immediate removal, the school shall on that day mail a written notice with the required information to the parent's address of record.

Temporary Suspension.

A student facing temporary suspension shall first be informed of the charges against him or her and, if (s)he denies them, shall be told what evidence supports the charge(s) and be given an opportunity to present his or her version of the facts. The following rules apply:

The hearing may be an informal discussion and may follow immediately after the notice of the charges is given.

Unless the administrative authority decides a delay is essential to permit a fuller exploration of the facts, this discussion may take place and a temporary suspension may be imposed within minutes after the alleged misconduct has occurred.

A student who denies a charge of misconduct shall be told what act(s) (s)he is accused of committing, shall be given an explanation of the evidence supporting the accusation(s) and shall then be given the opportunity to explain his or her version of the facts.

The school shall exert reasonable efforts to inform the student's parent of the charges against the student and their possible or actual consequence as soon as practicable. If the school has not communicated with the parent by telephone or in person by the end of the first full day of suspension, the school shall on that day mail a written notice with the required information to the parent's address of record.

In-school suspensions of any length shall be accomplished according to the procedures for a temporary suspension as set forth above. No in-school suspension student shall be denied an opportunity to eat lunch or reasonable opportunities to go to the restroom.

Detention.

Detention may be imposed in connection with in-school suspension, but is distinct from in-school suspension in that it does not entail removing the student from any of his or her regular classes.

Long-Term Suspension And Expulsion.

Each local school board shall authorize appropriate administrative authorities to initiate procedures leading to long-term suspension or expulsion. Where prompt action to suspend a student long-term is deemed appropriate, a temporary suspension may be imposed while the procedures for long-term suspension or expulsion are activated.

Freedom Of Expression.

Students are entitled to express their personal opinions verbally, in writing, or by symbolic speech. The expression of such opinions, however, shall not interfere with the freedom of others to express themselves, and written expression of opinion must be signed by the author. Any form of expression that involves libel, slander, the use of obscenity, or personal attacks, or that otherwise disrupts the educational process, is prohibited.

Student participation in the publication of school sponsored student newsletters, yearbooks, literary magazines and similar publications is encouraged as a learning and educational experience. These publications shall be supervised by qualified faculty advisors and shall strive to meet high standards of journalism. In order to maintain consistency with the school's basic educational mission, school authorities control the content of such publications.

PARENT GRIEVANCE POLICY

In order to encourage better school-community relationships and establish a procedure for handling parent concerns and/or complaints, Río Gallinas establishes the following procedures to be followed: **(ALL STEPS MUST BE FOLLOWED IN SEQUENCE.)**

Step One: The complaint or concern will be discussed between the teacher, parent, and the student, if appropriate, in a conference; or the complaint or concern will be discussed between the teacher, parent, principal, and student if appropriate, If no solution can be agreed upon Step Two may be pursued.

Step Two: The parent may bring in a parent advocate to discuss the complaint or concern between the teacher, parent, and the student, if appropriate, in a conference; or the complaint or concern will be discussed between the teacher, parent, principal, and student if appropriate, If no solution can be agreed upon Step Three may be pursued.

Step Three: The matter may be taken to Río Gallinas Governing Council. The parent must submit a written request to the governing council chairperson.

STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY

A grievance is defined as a complaint lodged by a student with a member of the staff or administration alleging one or more of the following unfair practices:

- That a school rule is unfair.
- That a school rule on regulation discriminates between students.
- That an unfair procedure has been used in arriving at a disciplinary action.

The burden of proof is upon the student to show that a rule is unfair is discriminatory, or that an unfair procedure has been perpetrated. The final resolution of the grievance is to be in writing from the principal and designed to provide the student with a basis for resolution of his problem as originally stated in his/her complaint.

If a student has a grievance he/she should present in writing, as follows:

Step One: A letter to the principal if the problem is with a teacher. A letter to the teacher if the problem is with the principal. A conference will be held with the parent, principal, teacher and student. If it is not resolved at Step One, then Step Two may be pursued.

Step Two: A letter is given to the governing council chairperson.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT, OR EDUCATIONAL NEGLECT

Each year there are a significant number of reports of child abuse in New Mexico. Regardless of whether or not school personnel make the report of abuse, case workers and/or law enforcement officers may conduct investigations at the school which provides a convenient site where the child can be comfortable and protected.

THE LAW ON REPORTING CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Any school principal, teacher, nurse, counselor, social worker, or any person **knowing or reasonably suspecting** that a child has suffered injury or injuries (physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological) as a result of abuse or neglect **must immediately report** the matter as follows:

Phone Numbers for Reporting:

**New Mexico's Number for Reporting Child Abuse
(800) 797-3260**

**New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD),
841-6100, or cyfd.org**

If you get no answer you can also call:

**Childhelp® USA National Child Abuse Hotline
1-800-4-A-CHILD®
(1-800-422-4453)
TDD: 1-800-2-A-CHILD**

Childhelp® USA is a non-profit agency which can provide reporting numbers, and has Hotline counselors who can provide referrals

Remember....

- Suspicion of abuse is all that is necessary to file a report
- Your information can be given anonymously
- You will be asked to describe your concerns about the child and it will be helpful if you can provide:
 - (the child's name, age, address, gender, school attended (if possible), and
 - (names of parents.

QUESTIONING CHILD ABUSE VICTIMS

According to guidelines provided by the District Attorney's office, as an educator/nurse, **it is not your role or duty to determine the validity of an allegation.** New Mexico state law places responsibility for the investigation of child abuse on the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department and the local law enforcement agency. Representatives of these agencies are experienced and trained in child abuse interview techniques. To avoid legal problems and also to minimize further trauma to the child, especially in sex abuse cases, it is requested that school staff not question the child in depth regarding the abuse. Using the guidelines below, elicit just enough information to satisfy a reasonable suspicion that abuse did occur and in so doing, please **avoid asking leading questions.**

Questioning guidelines are as follows:

Sexual Abuse

- Where was the child touched?
- Who touched the child?
- When did this happen?
- Where did this happen?

Physical Abuse

- Who did this?
- How did it happen?
- When did it happen?
- Where did it happen?

NOTE: It is essential that you **do not** probe the child for details or information. That is the job of law enforcement and Children, Youth and Families social workers. A well-intentioned interrogation could severely damage any legal case. If the child is very open, detailed, and talkative about the incident, please absorb as much as possible. More information is always welcome - questioning and probing is not.

DRUG FREE WORK PLACE

DRUG POLICY

The School Committee recognizes that alcoholism and drug dependency are treatable diseases. Left untreated, they may result in serious personal and family problems. At the same time, the School Committee is also seriously concerned about the effects of alcohol and drug dependency upon an employee's job performance and ability to serve as a role model for our students.

The School Committee believes strongly that all employees and students should be able to work and learn in an environment free from alcohol and drug abuse. Accordingly, the district expects all employees to report for work and to perform their duties in a manner which does not jeopardize the health, safety and well-being of co-workers and students.

No employee shall distribute, dispense, possess, use or be under the influence of any alcoholic beverage, malt beverage or fortified wine or other intoxicating liquor. Nor shall an employee unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, use or be under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, anabolic steroid or any other controlled substance (as defined in schedules I through V of section 202 of the federal Controlled Substance Act [21 U.S.C., sec. 812]; by regulation at 21 C.F.R., 1300.11 through 1300.15; and in Title 17-A MRSA, section 1101). This applies before, during and after school hours, at school or in any other school system location, defined as follows: School system location" means in any school building or on any school premises; in any school owned vehicle or in any other school-approved vehicle used to transports students to and from school or school activities; off school property at any school-sponsored or school-approved activity, event or function, such as a field trip or athletic event, where students are under the jurisdiction of the school unit; or during any period of time such employee is supervising students on behalf of the school system or otherwise engaged in school unit business.

Any employee who suspects that he/she may have an alcohol or drug dependency problem is strongly encouraged to seek help to correct the problem. The employee will be provided confidential referral services to an outside agency (upon request to his/her supervisor or Director of Personnel) and assisted in determining the extent to which insurance coverage may help pay for such services.

All referrals shall be kept confidential. Any violation of this policy shall constitute sufficient grounds for employee discipline, up to and including dismissal. Any illegal use, possession, furnishing, selling or provision of assistance in obtaining alcoholic beverages or scheduled drugs not covered by the preceding paragraph may, depending upon the circumstances, constitute sufficient grounds for discipline, up to and including dismissal. Referrals under foregoing paragraphs of this policy will not preclude disciplinary action under this paragraph, depending on the circumstances.

As provided in the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, any employee is required to notify the school unit of a criminal or civil conviction for a drug violation occurring in the workplace no later than five calendar days after such conviction. In turn, the superintendent, within 10 calendar days of learning of such a conviction, is to give written notification to the U.S. Department of Education and to any other federal agency from which the unit receives grant funds.

Appropriate personnel sanctions shall be taken against any employee who violates the terms of this school unit's drug and alcohol policy, up to and including termination.

Implementation. The superintendent shall be responsible for the development and promulgation of appropriate regulations to implement this policy.

SMOKING POLICY

New Mexico State Law (30-49-3) states: "A. No person shall knowingly sell, offer to sell, barter or give any tobacco product to any minor. B. No minor shall procure or attempt to procure any tobacco products for his own use or for use by any other minor." In addition, SBE regulation 6.12.4 prohibits "the use of tobacco products in school buildings, on school property, and for students at school functions away from school property." Río Gallinas School does not permit smoking on campus. The tobacco-free zone, according to NM state law, includes the "public school building or property that is used for public school purposes and the area within one thousand feet of the school property line."

STUDENT ASSISTANCE TEAM PROCESS

Río Gallinas School follows the SAT process and the Three-Tiered Model of Student Intervention provided by the New Mexico Education Department.

TIER I GENERAL SCREENING AND QUALITY INSTRUCTION

- General Screening
- Initial assessment upon enrollment: Staff review
- Previous Terra Nova / other standardized test scores
- Portfolio (if any) from previous school(s)
- Parent statement of strengths, weaknesses, and goals
- Student statement of strengths, weaknesses, and goals

SHORT-CYCLE ASSESSMENTS

Pre-test series assessing level of achievement in fine and traditional arts, sciences with emphasis on ecological investigations, Spanish language, English language (including New Mexico Writing Assessment), mathematics, social studies, physical education, health education, and career readiness.

- MAPS- Measurement of Academic Performance Survey (fall, winter, spring)
- Writing sample
- Meeting with student and parents to confirm or revise initial assessment of strengths, weaknesses and goals

A teacher may recognize a student is struggling to learn the standard curriculum, working beyond the standard curriculum, or having difficulty maintaining appropriate behavior in the regular education program. At that point, the teacher tries classroom-based interventions. If the informal interventions do not work for the student, he/she will be referred to Tier II.

TIER II CHILD PROCESS STUDY

Tier II is designed to provide secondary intervention through early identification. Students in Tier II will be referred to the SAT team for an intervention plan to be developed following the format in the manual provided by the PED. The interventions designed in this Tier will be in addition to the quality instruction provided in Tier I. The interventions are designed to prevent or alleviate challenges a student may be facing. These interventions may be short-term or may continue for the school year. Río Gallinas' goal is to assist the student in succeeding within the regular education setting with the standard curriculum. It may be the case that even with interventions in Tier I and II, a few students may not demonstrate a significant and positive response to intervention. In those cases, those students may move to Tier III.

TIER III MULTIDISCIPLINARY EVALUATION

Students referred to Tier III require a multisensory evaluation to determine their need for services at this level. If student qualifies for special education, special education teachers, related service providers, and regular education teachers provide Tier III interventions that consist or specially designed instruction and supplementary aids and services. These services are provided to a student through an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Río Gallinas School has an inclusion model for special education students. The special education teacher meets with the regular teachers regularly as well as works in the classroom with the students to assure educational needs are being met for the student. Some IEPs may require a student to be removed for part of the day.

FIRST-FOURTH GRADES SAT TEAM MEMBERS

SAT chairpersons:

Teachers:

Administrator: Catherine Sanchez-Praiswwater

Student and parent will be included in the meetings

FIFTH-EIGHTH GRADES SAT TEAM MEMBERS

SAT chairpersons: J

Teachers:

Administrator: Catherine Sanchez-Praiswwater

Student and parent will be included in the meetings

CONFIDENTIALITY

Parents have the right to examine their child's education records. IDEA contains confidentiality requirements that are modeled after those in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). While FERPA does not protect the confidentiality of information in general, it prohibits the improper disclosure of information from education records and generally protects parents' and students' privacy interests in "education records." Information from education records may not be disclosed to third parties without obtaining the prior written consent of the parent or eligible student over eighteen years of age, unless one of the exceptions to the prior written consent requirement is applicable.

PROCEDURES FOR MONITORING STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Teachers monitor student progress by observing students as they work. Teachers meet daily to discuss individual students, deciding on ways to help those having difficulties. During the

review, student records are available from a school database for checking. Daily and weekly records of student progress, academic subject coverage, areas of deficiency, and remediation, along with previous standardized test scores and other relevant information, will be in this database, which is at hand during the review. Students who need enrichment are noted, and teachers work out ways for the student to find appropriate challenges through an expansion of project work or opportunities for mentoring.

THE SAT STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

(A Student Assistance Team referral and/or process is a General Education process and is not necessarily the first step to a special education referral aimed at having the student removed from the general education setting.)

The Student Assistance Team Process:

1. Student is experiencing difficulty in the classroom.
 - a. Not “making it” within the general curriculum as presented.
 - b. Having difficulty experiencing success.
 - c. Behavior issues are interfering with student’s ability to succeed.
2. Referral is made to the SAT team coordinator (customarily is the counselor, or principal). The meeting is scheduled with all necessary personnel who are or will be educationally interacting with the student. A special education staff member should be invited to give valuable input in terms of classroom interventions and/or modifications. **This meeting should take place ASAP or at least within two weeks. *The Principal will attend and participate in the SAT process in order to be familiarized with it and to lend support and guidance wherever needed.***
3. Any informal screenings, additional information (academic records i.e. CTBS/Terra Nova results, work samples, attendance records, medical information, etc.) about the student, and/or classroom observations should be conducted and gathered at this time. All information gathered will then be taken to the SAT meeting and effectively used in making determinations regarding how to enable the student to experience success in the classroom.
4. **THE SAT MEETING TAKES PLACE.** At this time the areas of concern are expressed focusing on the strengths of the student. While this is a forum for problem solving, care should be taken so that the focus remains positive and solution oriented. The following things will be determined at this meeting:
 - a. Recommended alternative teaching strategies/interventions
 - b. Timeframes for implementation (this will vary depending upon the time needed to observe a change in performance)
 - c. Schedule for the follow-up meeting

5. Interventions are implemented in the classroom setting **with documentation** as to their effectiveness. (Time frames for trial periods of suggested interventions and strategies will vary depending on the intervention and on the student.)
6. Follow-up meeting takes place to assess the effectiveness of the suggested interventions and strategies through **teacher documentation/data**. Other options are recommended and taken back into the classroom for trial.
7. If “good faith efforts” have proven to be ineffective at enabling the student to experience success and documentation indicates that with appropriate accommodations and modifications the student is still unable to experience success, a referral for a formal diagnostic evaluation may be necessary.

Remember!** The SAT process is designed to help ALL students succeed in the general education classroom. While some students may need more specifically designed instructional programming, it is worth noting that **it all comes down to good teaching!

INTERVENTION AND REMEDIATION

INTERVENTION

We have designed the Río Gallinas School curriculum to meet the individual learning styles and academic, social, and physical needs of all students. A high percentage of students who enroll in non-traditional public school programs are at risk. These students may be bilingual with limited English proficiency, **identified as special education performing below or above grade level**, and/or exhibiting social and behavioral needs. Through ongoing assessments procedures, teachers and students will know academic areas on which they need to focus for maximum achievement. Teaching staff, parents, and students will devise an individualized plan of instruction for students in need of academic and social support.

LANGUAGE AND READING REMEDIATION

Río Gallinas School will address remediation of students with a specific language disability in reading, spelling, and writing. We will provide individual and/or small group instruction through a multisensory approach based in the theories and practices of Dr. Samuel T. Orton and Anna Gillingham. This approach teaches the structure of the English language for reading, and spelling through carefully organized sequence of instruction, taught explicitly in very small steps, using a highly multisensory approach. Comprehension of the meaning as well as the structure of the language is taught from the very beginning. The specific curriculum is called, Sounds and Syllables, Multisensory Structured Language Therapy. Identified students will be worked with three-four times per week in 50-60 minute sessions individually and/or in small groups.

Río Gallinas School understands the value of the parent in the role of educating the child. The staff at the charter will work with parents so they will be better able to support their children in the learning process. The school will provide several parent workshops during the year to support parent learning. Examples of workshop topics include: traditional arts, Spanish, computer and reading literacy, gaining math skills, parenting techniques, etc.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

SIX CRITICAL COMPONENTS OF AN RTI MODEL

A six-stage academic intervention program that addresses the needs of low performing students is recommended before the student is referred to special education. John E.

McCook from Knox County Schools (TN) presented the six components in a recent audio-conference:

1. Initiate Universal Screening

The first critical component of RTI is universal screening administered to all students three times a year beginning in mid-kindergarten. Universal screening is used to pinpoint early academic difficulties.

- Develop “benchmark” data norms for the classroom, grade level, school/district.
- Collect benchmark data during the fall, winter and spring.
- Supply the data to teachers, principals and district staff and parents.

2. Measure Problem Areas

Assessment results (specific and objective data as opposed to anecdotal or opinion-based information) assist in developing hypotheses regarding the following:

- Whether a problem represents a student’s skill or performance issue
- Whether the problem is occurring in measurable and observable terms
- The factors that are associated with the occurrence of the problem

3. Establish Baseline Data

The use of curriculum-based measurements helps to identify the performance of each student on a specific skill measure. During the data analysis, previous benchmark data for the class, school and district should be reviewed to identify where the majority of the students appear. If no student “sticks out” the problem may be instructional or core curriculum related. The students who are not performing to the class norm are the students to identify for intervention.

4. Write an Accountability Plan

Once the problem is identified an intervention plan must be written that includes:

- Description of the specific intervention.
- Duration, schedule and setting of the intervention.
- Persons responsible for the implementation of the intervention.
- Measurable outcomes to use for adjustments as needed.
- Description of the skill measurement and recording techniques.
- A progress monitoring schedule.

5. Monitor Progress

Various data collection methods should be used to examine student performance frequently over time, such as academic, social and behavioral data.

6. Compare Data

Comparing pre-intervention data to post-intervention data will inform whether the instruction has been effective and the decision-making rubric is applied

SPECIAL EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

The Charter school is committed to maintain compliance with the law, specifically the New Mexico State Board of Education's Special Education Regulations, 6 NMAC 5.2 and Standards for Excellence, 6 NMAC 3.2, and the federal IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Act) regulations. This handbook insures the implementation of New Mexico statutes, the New Mexico IDEA State Plan, federal IDEA regulations, the State Compliance Manual and all other required state and federal laws and regulations.

New Mexico Charter School law establishes a structure where the charter school is semi-autonomous under the overall supervision of its local school board. Under IDEA classification, the charter school is a part of the local educational agency (LEA). This handbook reflects 34 CFR Section 300.241 (Treatment of charter schools and their students) and Section 300.312 (Students with disabilities in public charter schools) under the authority of 20 U.S.C. 1413(a) (5).

In accordance with 34 CFR Section 300.312, all students with disabilities attending the charter school and their parents retain all rights under the IDEA and these rules. No student with disabilities who otherwise qualifies for admission will be denied admission, services, or benefits because of their disabilities or needs for special education and related services.

In accordance with 34 CFR Section 300.241, the charter school understands that its LEA shall provide IDEA-B funds, insure that the school's students with disabilities are properly served, and file sufficient information with the State Department of Education to demonstrate that the requirements of the IDEA and all rules regarding the charter school are being met.

The charter school is primarily responsible for determining and delivering needed services to its students with disabilities and for compliance; the local school district is secondarily responsible if the charter school should fail to perform one or more of its IDEA obligations.

IDENTIFICATION

Pre-placement Evaluation

Teaching and special education staff will conduct a pre-placement evaluation when a student displays evidence of having a disability. It will be a full and individual evaluation of the student's unique educational needs. Staff will obtain parental written consent before an evaluation takes place. Written notice will include the staff proposal, the reasons for the proposal, planned evaluation procedures, and an explanation of parent rights and procedural safeguards. Parents, students, or school personnel may request an evaluation.

Evaluation Process

A multidisciplinary team will conduct evaluations. The team includes at least one teacher or other specialist familiar with the suspected disability. Staff will base the evaluation on multiple procedures or assessments, and will strive to eliminate racial and cultural bias from all assessments. Staff will assess the student in all areas related or possibly related to the suspected disability. These related areas will include if appropriate: health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities.

Evaluation Results

The team to determine eligibility for special education and related services reviews results from assessments. After eligibility is determined, parents will meet with school personnel to discuss the results and the IEP.

Evaluation And Determination Of Eligibility

A Committee on Special Education (CSE) will conduct a full and individual evaluation for each child suspected of having a disability to determine if the child has a disability and to determine his or her educational needs. If a child is determined to be a child with a disability, the CSE will develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Thereafter, the CSE reviews each child's IEP at least annually and make any necessary revisions.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- Tests and other assessment tools are not culturally or racially biased and are administered in the child's native language or other mode of communication, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so;
- A variety of assessment tools and strategies are used to gather relevant functional and developmental information about the child;
- Any standardized tests given to the child are validated for the specific purpose for which they are used and administered by trained personnel;
- Tests and other evaluation materials include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely those that are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient;
- Tests are selected and administered so as to best ensure that if a test is administered to a child with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills, the test results accurately reflect the child's aptitude or achievement level or whatever other factors the test purports to measure;
- No single procedure is used as the sole criterion for determining if the child has a disability or for determining an appropriate educational program for the child;

- The child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status and motor abilities;
- Technically sound instruments are used that may assess the relative contribution of cognitive and behavioral factors;
- Assessment tools and strategies are used that provide relevant information that directly assists persons in determining the educational needs of the child, and;
- As part of an initial evaluation (if appropriate) and as part of any reevaluation, the CSE and other qualified professionals, as appropriate, review existing evaluation data on the child, including information from the parents and observations by teachers and related service providers, and identify what additional data, if any, are needed to evaluate the child. Supplementary tests and other evaluation materials will produce additional assessment data.
- In the case of a reevaluation, if it is determined that no additional data is needed to determine whether the child continues to have a disability, the school will notify the child's parents of that determination and the reasons for it. The school will also notify parents of their right to request an independent assessment to determine whether the child continues to have a disability.

DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY

Upon completing the administration of tests and other evaluation materials, the CSE and the child's parent determine whether the child is a child with a disability. A child may not be determined to be disabled if the determinant factor for that determination is lack of instruction in reading or math, or limited English proficiency. Also, if there is a dispute between the CSE and the child's parent about the child's eligibility, such dispute may be resolved through mediation procedures or an impartial due process hearing.

A copy of the evaluation report and the documentation of determination of eligibility will be provided to the parent.

ONLINE SPECIAL EDUCATION RESOURCES

<http://www.rec4.com/SE.htm>

<http://www.rec4.com/Resource.htm>

ONLINE TEACHING RESOURCES FOR DIFFERENTIATING INSTRUCTION

<http://www.gpschools.org/ci/diff/resources.htm>

GOVERNING BODY

The Río Gallinas School Governing Council is the governing body of Río Gallinas School. It consists of at least five members who support the philosophy of the school, including at least one parent or guardian of a student currently enrolled in the School and at least four at-large members from the community. No members of the Río Gallinas School staff, nor members of their immediate family, may serve on the Governing Council. In addition, there shall be at least one student currently enrolled in the School as a non-voting member. The Governing Council shall determine, from time to time, the number, designations and qualifications for the Members and will include such membership information in the Council by-laws.

The Council meets monthly and all meetings and minutes are subject to the Freedom of Information act and Open Meetings statutes of the State of New Mexico. Committees meet and study sessions are scheduled in the interim.

The Governing Council determines the strategic direction for the school to fulfill its mission, promotes the mission of the school, sets and enforces policies, and ensures the academic, fiscal, and legal health of Río Gallinas School. The council will have primary responsibility for the development and review of all major policies, approval of budget and contracts.

The Governing Council is ideally composed of members who are enthusiastic and interested in education, have strong roots in the community, and are willing to learn how to be effective members of the Governing Council.

Policies and procedures by which the governing body will operate are fully prescribed in the Río Gallinas School Governing Council By-Laws, as modified from time to time.

PURPOSE

The Governing Collaborative Council:

- Promotes the mission of the Río Gallinas School
- Provides strategic direction for the Río Gallinas School
- Sets and enforces policies
- Takes action on recommendations from the director
- Hires faculty and staff
- Helps raise funds and encourages volunteer and parental participation.

Advisory School Council

Part of monthly parent/guardian meetings.

The Advisory School Council (Amigos de Río Gallinas) will consist of parents, teachers, director, and community members, as specified in HB 212, and as enacted into law July 1, 2003. The advisory council will use a traditional governance model following Robert's Rules of Order. The advisory council will advise the director and the Governing Council on issues concerning curriculum, school climate, student achievement, community involvement, marketing, fundraising, student activities, school events, etc. The advisory council will appoint a president, secretary, and treasurer.

Río Gallinas School is committed to follow organizational strategies as established in the work of Steven Covey. We have decided to use *Principle-Centered Leadership* concepts to create successful leadership in school environments and governance. Río Gallinas School will involve the local community, parents, schools in the area, and students and parents in the educational process in order to support the child in on-going learning.

Covey presents a holistic, integrated principle-centered approach for developing successful organizations and identifying and addressing issues. These principles revolve around honesty, integrity, fairness, and human dignity. These principles allow for better adaptation to change and the ability to utilize the advantages that changes can offer.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

JURISDICTION OVER STUDENTS

All officials, employees, and authorized agents of the Academy whose responsibilities include supervision of students shall stand *in loco parentis* with regard to any student whom they are required to supervise at any time that the responsibility of supervision exists. This authority applies whenever students are lawfully subject to Río Gallinas' control, regardless of place. During such periods, public school authorities shall have the right to supervise and control the conduct of students, and students shall have the duty to submit to the Academy's authority.

LOTTERY AND ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Each year the director, working with the staff, will determine the number of students to be accepted for each grade level combination. In accordance with statute (22-8B-4.1 NMSA 1978), applicants will be offered enrollment by lottery, except that preferential enrollment will be given to pupils returning to the charter school from the immediate previous year and to siblings of pupils already enrolled in the school, if such students have applied prior to the holding of the lottery. (To apply, a returning student's parent need only affirm the intent to attend.)

A lottery will be held during the month of March. During the preceding three weeks, the school will advertise widely, giving full information about the lottery and how to apply, in such places as the local newspaper, the radio, the school website, the library, local grocery stores. In addition, the school will hold one publicly advertised enrollment information meeting at the school site during the week before the lottery. Records of advertisement, fliers, and articles will be kept on file at the school.

Families interested in their child or children attending Río Gallinas School will fill out a lottery application for each child. The application will indicate the name, grade level of the applicant, and mailing address, and optionally email and phone.

Upon the announced date of the lottery, all applications that have been received will be placed onto an entry list in an order determined by lot. This lottery process will be witnessed by the Director and one member of the Governing Council and shall be carried out in a manner to avoid the possibility of favoritism.

Vacancies in each grade level combination will be filled by offering enrollment to students in the order of their placement on the list. Within two days after the lottery, applicants will be offered enrollment, with a deadline for acceptance, or notified of their location (within grade combination) on the list. As offerees reject enrollment, or fail to reply by the deadline, additional offers of enrollment will be made from the list in order of placement.

Applications arriving after a lottery will be saved for the next lottery to be held during the year.

If at any time after the lottery there are no students on the entry list to fill the vacancies in certain grade combinations, then a lottery may be held for those grade combinations. If there are too few saved applications, the school will advertise for applications. The resulting applicants will be placed at the end of the entry list in an order determined by lot, and the vacancies filled from the list.

In order that Río Gallinas School treat the winners and losers of the lottery with equal consideration and respect, the director will develop appropriate deadlines for response to offers of enrollment and rules for initial attendance, which, if not met, will result in the offer of enrollment being withdrawn and given to the next waiting applicant. The communication offering enrollment shall clearly state this deadline and attendance requirement.

From time to time during the year, the director will review the enrollment numbers with the staff to determine if the enrollment needs of the grade combinations have changed. This review may determine vacancies to be handled as above.

The entry list shall be discarded prior to the March lottery. If still interested, applicants on that list must reapply for the following school year, and shall be given no preference.

Students entering grades 1-8th grade are eligible for Río Gallinas School.

Río Gallinas School will not discriminate based on ethnicity, religion, gender, economic status, disabilities, and limiting conditions. Río Gallinas School will not charge tuition or have admission requirements, except as otherwise provided in the Public School Code.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

As required by law, Río Gallinas School will negotiate with the WLVS district for transportation services. The Río Gallinas School will arrange for special education student if transportation is in the IEP.

Río Gallinas School has budgeted funds for Field Trips and extracurricular activities.

Students will be strictly prohibited in riding in personal vehicles owned by staff or Río Gallinas School Faculty.

FOOD SERVICES POLICY

Río Gallinas School is dedicated to teaching students healthy nutritional practices. There is an existing kitchen in the school building. Lunch will be provided to all grades 1-8 on general Río Gallinas School has negotiated with the West Las Vegas School district to provide free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch. Breakfast is served 7:45-8:00AM. All food services will meet or exceed state and national standards for health, nutrition, safety, and food service.

