

Union Street Charter Parent & Student Handbook

2025-26

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Introduction

Mission Statement

The initial school years are crucial to a child's educational attitudes & future success in learning. Our teachers are committed to providing a nurturing environment and fostering high self-esteem and confidence. Students are encouraged to see themselves as part of a learning community that emphasizes collaboration, critical thinking and performance. Student success at Union Street is based on academic growth, a well-developed sense of self-worth, and a willingness to accept challenges.

At Union Street Charter we believe in the unique value of each student, family, and teacher - both as individuals and as members of the school community. We work together to create an environment that minimizes the pressures of popular culture and the use of academic competition as motivation. Our ultimate aim is to turn a child's natural curiosity and desire to explore into a lifelong love of learning. We value the trust that families place in us as we guide students toward a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them.

This handbook provides information in three sections:

Section 1 describes policies for day-to-day school operations. Section one contains most of the school rules & policies. We ask parents to read the rules and to discuss them with your children when you think they need help in understanding or following a rule.

Section 2 is intended for teachers, administrators, and parents. There is information on parking, the breakfast, lunch & afterschool programs, school trips, student health, complaint procedures, student evaluation/testing, and the Board of Directors.

Section 3 explains the relationship between Union Street Charter (USC) and The Equinox Center for Education (ECE).

The school calendar is on the last page of the handbook.

Section 1: Policies for Daily Operation

Regular Hours of Attendance

- Kindergarten: 8:30 to 1:45
- Grades 1 – 3: 8:30 – 3:00
- Grades 4 – 5: 8:20 – 3:00
- Minimum Mondays: School ends at 1:45
- Half days: School ends at 12:15
- Extended childcare is available for a fee or free for qualifying families (see page 20 for more information). Children who are not picked up after school will be checked into the after school program.

Before school care: 7:45 a.m. to 8:10 a.m.

After school care: 3:15 - 5:30 p.m. (Tues. – Fri.); on minimum Mondays, 2:00 - 5:30 p.m.; on half days 1:00 - 5:30 p.m. If you have child care options on half days, please pick up your children at lunch.

PLEASE BE ON TIME. PARENTS AND STUDENTS SHARE THIS RESPONSIBILITY.
BEING ON TIME IS REQUIRED. TARDIES MAY RESULT IN TRUANCY.

Attendance Reporting Requirements

- If your child is absent, please call or email the office. We need to record the reason for the absence (excused or unexcused). Illness and medical appointments are excused absences.
- If your child is tardy, they must check in at the office. Please let us know if the tardy is due to a medical / dental appt. (excused tardy). Late lunch orders can be taken until 8:45, but not after. If you bring your child after 8:45, you need to provide a home lunch.
- If your child is absent due to a contagious disease (COVID, pink eye, whooping cough, scarlet fever), you must call the office (822-4845 ext. *#) to let us know so that other parents can be notified to look for symptoms.
- Please don't send students to school who are contagious or feverish! During the school day, parents will be called when a student feels ill. If the student is running a fever of more than 1 degree, the parent will make arrangements to pick up the child as soon as possible.
- If a student needs to be absent due to special circumstances, please tell the teacher why the student will be absent and when the student is likely to return. Independent Study Contracts for individual assignments and class work can be arranged with the teacher in most circumstances. Please notify the teacher a week or more in advance to arrange an independent study contract for planned absences.
Short-term Independent Study Contracts are crucial to school funding. The school continues to collect ADA (Average Daily Attendance) monies for your child when an independent study contract is completed. Independent studies are approved on a “case by case” basis by the principal if the best interests of the student and the school are served by an independent study.
- Taking vacations outside of designated vacation times is discouraged. It has a negative impact on the classroom, teacher, and individual students. If it is in the best interest of a child, independent studies are available for up to fifteen school days per year. Longer independent studies are not available. After fifteen days, students will be marked absent, the school loses funding, and truancy may become an issue. Truancy is defined as 3 or more unexcused absences or tardies, in excess of 30 minutes, in a school year.

Habitual Tardies and Chronic Absences

Tardies for medical appointments are excused. Habitual tardiness is a problem for the student, the class, and the teacher. They compromise the quality of the start of the day and the effectiveness of learning. Bringing students on time is both a parent expectation and a formal obligation. Each year parents sign an agreement to bring students on time and daily.

The school will respond to chronic absences and habitual tardiness as follows:

1. When a student is habitually tardy or absent, the principal will send a letter home stressing the importance of timely arrival and asking the parent to bring the student on time every day.
2. If excessive absences or tardiness continues, the teacher will call to discuss or schedule a meeting with the parent to help the parent problem-solve timely arrival. The principal may attend this meeting.
3. Other consequences that may be implemented:
 - a. A student may lose privileges.
 - b. The parent may be required to submit an action plan to the principal.
 - c. The student may be referred to the county SARB Board.

Union Street Charter Contact Numbers

Phones: 707-822-4845, 707-822-1580 Fax: 707-825-9025

Staff Extension Numbers:

Principal, Rea Erickson: 8#

Office/Administrative Assistant, Pam Killoran: *#

After School: 7#

Suggested Guidelines for Calling School

Please check with your child's teacher about the best way to get in touch.

The best times to talk to a teacher:

- 8:00 to 8:15 a.m. (before school starts)
- 12:30 to 12:50 p.m. (during lunch recess time)
- 3:15 to 4:00 p.m. (during after school)

The best way to leave a message for a child:

If you need to leave a message for your child between 8:30 and 3:15, please call the office at 707-822-4845, ext. *#. Plan ahead and communicate with your children before they come to school. Arrangements for visiting friends after school or for spending the night should be made at home a day or more in advance and not through the school phone and not during after school.

Communication

An important strength of the school is open communication. Your child's academic, social, and emotional growth is important to the staff. The staff encourages open communication about positive experiences and about problems. Please be aware that 8:15 to 8:30 a.m. and 3:00 to 3:15 p.m. are not good times for teachers to have thoughtful conversations. Please avoid trying to have a conversation with the teacher if you bring in your student after the start of class.

The school has regular methods of written communication including the school news, the weekly classroom news and a summer newsletter. These bulletins contain current and vital information for your participation in the school community and for your child's needs at school. News communications are sent by email (paper copies are available on request). Please watch for, and read, these notes.

Special Events

We encourage families to attend the many enjoyable family events each year. The special events include the Family Fun Night, the Family Potluck / Spring Sing, Open House night, and the end of year picnic / graduation.

Birthdays and other Parties

Your child's birthday is celebrated at school in an appropriate way for the age group. Any other birthday recognition must be done outside of school. Please do not send cakes or treats to school on your child's birthday. Please do not bring invitations or presents to school; this policy minimizes hurt feelings. Any personal gear necessary for after-school parties or sleepovers should be handled outside of school.

Eating Time

Basic rules minimize conflict and food problems during eating times. During snack and lunch times, students will sit at the picnic tables or on the porch benches and remain seated until snack or lunch is over. No food sharing between students. No playing during eating time.

Food, Candy, and Snacks from Home

Parents have deeply felt and diverse views about what children should eat. Teachers are not expected to monitor food from home and we have a few basic rules to minimize conflict and food problems at school. Students should bring only what they are going to eat for lunch or snack. ***Food, of any kind, may not be shared with others.*** Please do not send excessive amounts of candy, snack treats, or sweets. We ask students with home lunch and snack to take uneaten food home, rather than throw it away. Consequently, parents, who want to know what their children eat from their lunch boxes, can monitor what comes home.

No Pets at School

Please leave pets at home or in your car when you are on campus (no pets on the playground, even with a leash!). Do not bring pets to school events, particularly camping trips and the end of the year picnic. The only exception to this rule is when a teacher approves a pet visit during a school project.

Clothing, Lost Clothing and other Stuff

Students should wear informal clothing that is appropriate for classroom projects, P.E. activities, and active play at recess. Please avoid clothing that will be damaged by mud, paint, or other common classroom stains. Wear shoes that are good for running and kicking balls. Sandals, flip flops, and dress shoes make active play difficult. Your child must have appropriate shoes for recess and P.E. every day. To avoid splinters, no bare feet are allowed at school and students must always wear shoes outside the classroom. Many pieces of clothing are lost and misplaced each year. **Please label with your student's name or initials, all jackets, sweaters, sweatshirts, t-shirts, backpacks, lunch boxes, water bottles, car seats, and any other articles brought to school.** Teachers are not responsible for identifying clothing. The school maintains a lost and found area where unlabeled things are temporarily stored. Check to the right of the fifth-grade door if something is missing.

Reducing our Carbon Footprint

Union Street Charter makes an effort to reduce our use of natural resources in the following ways:

- Solar panels installed in 2005 & 2022.
- 100% renewable energy provided by Redwood Coast Energy Authority.
- Energy efficient electric heating system installed in 2016.
- Energy efficient LED lamps, installed in all classrooms (Prop 39 clean energy funds), 2016.
- Food scraps diverted to a local farmer.
- Recycling collected from all classrooms, offices and lunch areas (reusable containers encouraged). Lunch trays are washed daily.
- Families are encouraged to bike or walk to school.
- We teach children not to waste and reduce the amount of plastic in use.
- Families are encouraged to bring their own plates, cups & utensils to potluck events.

Union Street and “Pop Culture”

Union Street Charter discourages pop culture. We want parents and students to know how we define pop culture and what it means to discourage pop culture. As a staff we want to make the school a place of learning that is free of the inundation of commercialism, consumerism, and the marketing of associated items, symbols, and icons. We hope to create a school culture that allows the unique personality and imagination of each individual student to flourish outside the subtle and overt pressures of pop culture.

1. All grades have “talking sharing”. Descriptions of movies, video games, pop stars, and toys or products associated with current “fad” marketing are inappropriate topics for sharing.
2. Some grades have “thing sharing” once a week. Students are encouraged to bring objects that are found or made. Toys are not allowed in school or in thing sharing. Lego creations stay at home. (Many of the Lego sets represent pop culture and movie “type” creations rather than free form self-expression. We want to make sharing rules simple!)
3. If a parent is uncertain about whether something a student wants to share is appropriate, teachers ask that parents check with the teacher in private the week before rather than letting the child bring an item to school and then checking with the teacher. Checking ahead of time avoids the “trauma” of having to take something home that a child wanted to share on sharing day.
4. Teachers will monitor writing assignments and discourage students from relying on pop culture “storylines”.
5. On the playground students are discouraged from excessive pop culture fantasy play and discussion that is exclusively focused on “pop culture” content. We encourage other imaginative play.

6. The school does not have a dress code regarding clothing images or rigid rules regarding images on backpacks and lunch boxes. The staff encourages parents to support minimizing the symbols and icons of pop culture by asking you, whenever possible, to select clothing, lunch boxes, and backpacks that are free of pop culture images. We are not comfortable banning these items, but you can show support for our mission by steering your child away from what is currently trending in the marketing images of movies, TV shows, and toy lines.

Electronics Use Policy

In classrooms where students use electronic resources for educational purposes, students and parents will sign the following electronics use policy agreement.

At Union Street Charter, our students have access to educational technology, including Internet access in our classrooms. We use Securely to prevent & report attempts to access inappropriate websites. Our goal is to teach students to use these electronic resources to enhance our school's instructional goals. Union Street Charter has taken precautions to ensure that students are using the Internet and other electronic resources for appropriate educational means. Student use of the Internet and multimedia resources will be supervised by an adult. However, we cannot guarantee that students will refrain from locating inappropriate sources. Please review the guidelines listed and sign below.

1. Student use of instructional media will support grade appropriate instructional goals.
2. Students will respect and show proper care and handling of all equipment. Any student found to be intentionally damaging any hardware will be subject to consequences.
3. Students will respect security measures. Changing or attempting to change a computer's settings is a violation of acceptable use of our equipment.
4. Students will not share their passwords or log on to other people's accounts.
5. Staff will closely supervise student internet use. Students will be held responsible for information viewed, received, and sent.
6. Students will immediately tell a teacher if they accidentally open an inappropriate website or page, or if students see someone else breaking any of the technology use rules.
7. Students will not use social media sites (Facebook, twitter, Instagram, etc.) at school and are strongly discouraged from using such sites (particularly ones with age restrictions in the use policy) at home. Most of these services require users to be 13 or older.
8. Students will not use photographs of students in projects without approval of teacher and parent.
9. Students will never post or send messages or pictures that hurt, threaten, or embarrass other people. Students will tell a parent or teacher immediately if they receive inappropriate pictures or messages, or if they feel bullied in any way.
10. Students are expected to respect the work and ownership rights of students, staff, and people outside the building. Teachers will instruct students in the meaning of plagiarism.
11. **Students will not use electronic devices from home while at school or school activities. For example: smart watches, cell phones, air pods, etc.**

Internet Posting Policy

Union Street Charter supports the use of video and still photography by families to record their children's experiences at school events. However, in order to protect the privacy of children and families we need to place some restriction on posting images to the Internet.

1. Families may post images to a site that is password protected and managed by a parent. (Please do not post school related photos/video to your personal site)
2. No student names will accompany posted photos.
3. No student faces will be tagged in photos.
4. Anyone who has access to the class photo site may not re-post any photos or videos taken at school events.

We hope that with this policy, all families can feel safe about sharing the joyful photos that come from school and school events.

Equity and Inclusion

Most of our teachers and staff attended the Equity/inclusion workshops. All teachers have ordered books for the class libraries that include authors of less privileged groups. Our restrooms are single user and therefore gender neutral. The teachers have agreed to use more gender-neutral terms like third graders instead of boys and girls.

At the administrative level, we have taken steps to ensure that our admissions lottery is accessible to a diverse audience. We have removed requirements like mandatory meeting attendance and narrow paperwork deadlines. Our forms are now available on our website. We accept many types of proof of birth, including the hospital certificate or a signed affidavit. The USC Educator Effectiveness grant includes funding to offer stipends for staff of color to attend peer alike support groups or pay for mentors. Our board policy on harassment prevention can be read on our website (click on this [link](#)).

Union Street and Cultural Diversity

Union Street Charter believes that the diversity of human experience enriches us all. We foster awareness and respect for cultural diversity and differences. Teachers strive to be aware of the visible and invisible privileges associated with belonging to a dominant culture. To promote a tolerant school community, teachers encourage a positive attitude and understanding of cultural diversity by:

- Recognizing, in age-appropriate ways, different cultures and cultural practices through literature, music, and in other curricular areas.
- Fostering a school culture where students and families of all cultural, social, racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds feel comfortable and respected.

Cultural practices, religious observance, and holidays are often viewed as synonymous. We view them as separate. These are deeply personal topics for many people. At Union Street our focus will be on cultural practices, appreciating where we are different and recognizing our commonalities. Sharing of cultural traditions are at the discretion of the classroom teacher with support of staff.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Staff, students, and parents are dedicated to making our school a safe, caring, friendly school environment. All students will be able to report bullying and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Union Street Charter is a “reporting” school. This means that anyone who has knowledge of a bullying incident is expected to report to staff.

Everyone in our school community has an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance. We will not allow emotional, physical, or verbal bullying. Such behavior includes: direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults, such as teasing or name-calling; and social isolation, manipulation, or aggression that causes distress. Union Street Charter will not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Union Street Charter prohibits discrimination, harassment, intimidation and bullying based on actual or perceived disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, color or any other characteristic listed in California Penal Code 422.55 or Education Code 220, or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.

Steps to prevent bullying and help students feel safe at school, staff will:

1. Teach a grade appropriate "pro-social/anti-bullying" program to students in grades K-5. The current program in use is *Second Step*. The staff will use this, or other programs, in the future.
2. Closely supervise students in all areas of the school and playground.
3. Take families' concerns, and students' concerns, about bullying seriously.
4. Be aware of bullying and stop it when it happens.

Reporting

1. Students and others who experience, or observe, bullying will immediately report to staff.
2. Parents whose children report bullying at home will tell school staff about the reported incident.
3. The school will not tolerate retaliation toward anyone who reports incidents.

Response:

1. Staff will investigate allegations of bullying, suspected bullying, and threats of bullying.
2. Staff will provide immediate consequences for retaliation toward students who report.
3. Staff will attempt to address minor bullying using the usual school behavior guidelines.
4. In serious or recurring cases, staff will:
 - a. Monitor and intervene whenever necessary
 - b. Provide incentives and consequences to foster different ways of behaving
 - c. Work with parents of children who have used bullying behavior to form a home and school partnership for helping the child choose more positive ways to interact with others
 - d. Note the incident in the child's file
5. The school, as needed, will form a bullying incident team that includes the principal and two teachers to review bullying incidents and responses.

Bullying hurts! No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Students who choose to bully must learn different ways of relating to classmates and other people.

Wellness Policy

The staff and board recognize the link between student health and learning and desires to provide a comprehensive program promoting healthy eating and physical activity for school students. The principal or designee shall build a coordinated school health system that supports and reinforces health literacy through health education, physical education and activity, health promotion for staff, a safe and healthy school environment with parent and community involvement.

To encourage consistent health messages between the home and school environment, the principal or designee may disseminate health information and/or the school's student wellness policy to parents/guardians through school newsletters, handouts, parent/guardian meetings, web sites, and other communications. Outreach to parents/guardians shall emphasize the relationship between student health and academic performance. Outreach will include dissemination of the school's Immunization Policy.

School Wellness Council

The board is comprised of staff, parents, and community members. The board will function as the school wellness council and gather input from others. Parents, students, all school employees, board members, school administrators, and members of the public may participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the school's student wellness policy through surveys and public meetings.

Nutrition and Physical Activity Goals

The Wellness council shall adopt the following goals for nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness. In developing goals, the council will consider evidence-based strategies and techniques.

The school's nutrition education and physical education programs shall be based on research, consistent with the expectations established in the state's curriculum frameworks and content standards, and designed to build the skills and knowledge that all students need to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

The nutrition education program shall include, but is not limited to, information about the benefits of healthy eating for learning, disease prevention, weight management, and oral health. Nutrition education shall be provided as part of the health education program and, as appropriate, shall be integrated into other academic subjects in the regular educational program, before- and after school programs, summer learning programs, and school garden programs.

The school should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally- relevant, participatory activities, food promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat- free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health- enhancing nutrition practices;
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- Links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition- related community services;
- Includes professional development training to the staff, to enhance their knowledge and skills related to student health and wellness.

All students shall be provided opportunities to be physically active on a regular basis. Opportunities for moderate to vigorous physical activity shall be provided through physical education and recess and may also be provided through before- and after-school programs, programs encouraging students to walk or bicycle to and from school, in-class physical activity breaks, and other structured and unstructured activities. Grades 1-5 provide 200 minutes of PE every 10 days.

For all foods available on campus during the school day, the school shall adopt nutritional guidelines, which are consistent with federal, state and local requirements and support the objectives of promoting student health.

Potable water will be available at all times during the hours of operation.

Foods and Beverages Marketing Policy

Items marketed or advertised on campus must meet Smart Snack standards. It is the goal for foods and beverages available to students during school hours to support the health curriculum and promote optimal health, taking into consideration the needs of students with special dietary needs. Nutritional standards adopted by the school for all foods and beverages sold to students, including foods and beverages provided through the school's food service program, shall meet or exceed state and federal nutritional standards.

The food service program will attempt to offer fresh, seasonal locally grown produce. All foods and beverages made available on campus during the school day will be consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Staff shall ensure meals are served in a pleasant environment with sufficient time for eating, while fostering good manners and respect for students and staff.

Foods made available by the school meal program comply with state and local food safety and sanitation regulations. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans and guidelines are implemented to prevent food-borne illness in schools.

The principal or designee shall encourage school organizations to use healthy food items or non-food items for fundraising purposes. He/she also shall encourage school staff to avoid the use of non-nutritious foods as a reward for students' academic performance, accomplishments, or classroom behavior.

School staff shall encourage parents/guardians or other volunteers to support the school's nutrition education program by considering nutritional quality when selecting any snacks, which they may donate for occasional class parties. Class parties or celebrations shall be held after the lunch period when possible.

Program Implementation and Evaluation

The director shall designate one or more school employees to ensure that the school complies with this policy. The director shall assess the implementation and effectiveness of this policy at least once every three years. The assessment shall include the extent to which the school is in compliance with this policy, the extent to which this policy compares to model wellness policies available from other schools, and a description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the wellness policy. The Director will use the CDE "Does your local school wellness policy measure up?" tool.

The director shall inform and update the public, including parents/guardians, students, and others in the community, about the contents and implementation of this policy on an annual basis in the parent handbook. Outreach to parents/guardians shall emphasize the relationship between student health and wellness and academic performance.

Parent/Guardian Contract

The vision of Union Street Charter is to offer an effective and supportive learning experience created by high quality curriculum, access to staff, regular reports and collaboration of students, parents, and teachers. Families of Union Street Charter students agree to contribute to the vision by becoming involved in the following ways.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES – We expect parents to agree to do the following:

- 1) Bring your student to school regularly and on time.
- 2) Participate in scheduled parent/teacher conferences and any special student intervention meetings requested by child's teacher.
- 3) Follow through with all plans made during conferences and special meetings.
- 4) Support the homework policies of the school.
- 5) Support your child in following the school's student conduct policies (see next page).
- 6) Read the weekly classroom and school news.
- 7) Follow the rules and procedures described in the Parent Handbook.
- 8) Allow your student to take state tests.
- 9) Interact with staff in a calm and courteous manner.

PARENT OPPORTUNITIES

- 1) Contribute talents and skills as a volunteer for classroom activities.
- 2) Drive/chaperone on field trips/camping trips (parents must be fingerprinted, have auto insurance and are expected to drive other people's children).
- 3) Attend school events and celebrations.
- 4) Support Union Street students and programs by donating to the Equinox Center for Education.
- 5) Attend monthly Board of Directors meetings.

Student Conduct and Suspension Policy

The following behavior guidelines are intended to create an environment that is emotionally safe and academically supportive. Behavior guidelines are for the classroom, playground, field trips, and school events. Behavior guidelines apply to all programs on the campus including extended daycare. Teachers and other staff will give instruction, guidance, direction and counsel students regarding appropriate and safe behavior.

Students attending Union Street Charter have several basic responsibilities:

1. To accept staff guidance, direction, and authority.
2. To demonstrate cooperative, appropriate, respectful behavior toward other people.
3. To be willing to attempt and finish assigned work.
4. To demonstrate the growing ability to work independently and take responsibility for one's own actions.

Union Street Charter Playground Rules:

1. Use swings, slides and other playground equipment the way its meant to be used
2. Play chase games on the lower playground
3. No pushing, pulling or hanging on others while they climb
4. Welcome others into your game; be inclusive
5. Put away playground equipment when done
6. No pretend weapons or fighting at anytime
7. Any adult on yard duty may deem any activity unsafe or inappropriate regardless of prior approval.

The following behavior may result in suspension/expulsion:

1. Destruction/theft of school property or the belongings of other people.
2. Emotional, physical or verbal abuse of other people: students, staff, or parent. *Bullying or verbal abuse includes: put-downs, teasing, name calling, language or behaviors that excludes, hurts or belittles other people. This includes cyber-bullying in, or out, of school.*
3. See Ed code section 48900 for additional reasons for suspension or expulsion.

Intervention/Suspension/Expulsion Process:

1. Students will receive a consequence. Teacher, parent and principal meet to seek positive solutions and an action plan to address the problem and clearly delineate needed changes, including a time frame.
2. Suspension will result from violations of ed code section 48900.
 - a. Teacher/principal meet with the student and inform them of the reason for suspension and prior means of correction (such as 2nd step lessons, meeting with parents, counseling, etc.). If the pupil denies the charges, an explanation of the evidence that supports the charges and an opportunity for the pupil to present the pupil's side of the story.
 - b. Families may meet with the teacher/principal to review the incident.
3. Student repeats behavior: the consequence is suspension of one to three days. Parent and child will be informed if expulsion is a possible consequence for behavior.
Student is recommended for expulsion as a result due of a serious violation of ed.code. section 48900.
Expulsion means involuntary disenrollment from the charter school.

For suspensions of 10 days or more and all other expulsions for disciplinary reasons, USC will:

- Provide timely, written notice of the charges against the pupil and an explanation of the pupil's basic rights.
- Provide a hearing adjudicated by a neutral officer within a reasonable number of days at which the pupil has a fair opportunity to present testimony, evidence, and witnesses and confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, and at which the pupil has the right to bring legal counsel or an advocate.
- Ensure that no pupil shall be involuntarily removed by the charter school for any reason unless the parent or guardian of the pupil has been provided written notice of intent to remove the pupil no less than five schooldays before the effective date of the action. The written notice shall be in the native

language of the pupil or the pupil's parent or guardian or, if the pupil is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the pupil's educational rights holder, and shall inform the pupil, the pupil's parent or guardian, or the pupil's educational rights holder of the right to initiate the procedures before the effective date of the action. If the pupil's parent, guardian, or educational rights holder initiates the procedures specified in clause (ii), the pupil shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until the charter school issues a final decision. For purposes of this clause, "involuntarily removed" includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated, but does not include suspensions.

- For students with disabilities, hold an IEP team meeting within 10 days of the decision of disciplinary action to determine whether the child's misconduct is caused by the disability. Continue to provide FAPE in any alternative educational setting resulting from the suspension.

Student and Staff Code of Conduct

The school expects all staff members, volunteers, independent contractors, board members, and all others participating in school activities (collectively, "staff"), to maintain the highest professional, moral, and ethical standards in their conduct with students. Furthering those goals, the school is committed to ensuring that all individuals who work with or have contact with students conduct themselves in a way that is supportive, positive, professional, and non-exploitative. Staff are role models for students, whether on or off school property and both during and outside of school hours.

All school staff are expected to abide by a professional standard of conduct and model good citizenship for students, parents, and the community. As such, interactions between staff and students should be based upon mutual respect and trust, an understanding of the appropriate boundaries between adults and students in an educational setting, and consistent with the educational mission of the school. Any type of sexual relationship, sexual contact or behavior considered sexual in nature between School Staff and an enrolled student is strictly prohibited. The prohibition applies to individuals of the same or opposite sex. It also applies whether or not the student initiates, welcomes or reciprocates the behavior.

Staff are expected to understand that even the appearance of an inappropriate relationship will adversely impact their effectiveness in the school environment. As such, staff are strictly prohibited from forcing social and/or personal relationships with students outside the classroom.

Prohibited Conduct

Staff members are prohibited from engaging in any of the following behaviors with students, whether on or off School property and whether on or outside of school hours. This list is not exhaustive:

- Engaging in any romantic or sexual relationship with students, including dating, flirting, sexual contact, inappropriate physical displays of affection, kissing, or sexually suggestive comments between students and staff
- Fostering, encouraging, or participating in emotionally or socially intimate relationships with students through communication or gift-giving
- Initiating or continuing private communications with students for reasons unrelated to any direct educational purpose, including oral or written communication, telephone calls, electronic communication such as texting, instant messaging, email, chat rooms, Facebook, or other social networking sites, webcams or photographs
- Providing alcohol or drugs (regardless of age) to students – either prescription or illegal (unless provided pursuant to the Policy on Administration of Medications)
- Engaging in any conduct that endangers students, staff, or others, including, but not limited to, physical violence, threats of violence, or possession of a firearm or other weapon

- Engaging in harassing or discriminatory behavior towards students, parents/guardians, staff, or community members, or failing or refusing to intervene with an act of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying against a student is observed
- Possessing or viewing any pornography on school grounds, or possessing or viewing child pornography or other imagery portraying children in a sexualized manner at any time

Reporting Procedures

Any person with knowledge or suspicion of an improper relationship between student and staff must immediately report the conduct to school administration. Anonymous complaints of inappropriate fraternization by staff with students will be investigated. Allegations of inappropriate staff-student behavior shall be promptly investigated and will be treated as confidential and private to the extent possible within legal constraints. Staff, students, and witnesses who make a good-faith report of a suspected inappropriate staff-student relations violations, or who cooperate in inquiries or investigations related to the investigation of such a report, shall be protected from retaliation.

Section 2: Parent / Guardian Information

Classroom Parent Volunteers

Each grade needs parent volunteers, both regular weekly volunteers and occasional special event volunteers. Volunteering must be arranged with the classroom teacher or Director in advance. The classroom teacher will let you know what is needed and when to sign up for a regular time and day each week, or when to sign up for a special event.

Prior to volunteering in the classroom, the volunteer should communicate with the teacher to discuss the expectations for volunteering needs. Classroom volunteers are there to benefit the entire class and are not in class solely for the benefit of their own child. Classroom volunteers must follow the instructions provided by the classroom teacher or aide. Classroom rules also apply to volunteers to ensure minimal distraction to the teacher.

Parents with talents and interests in particular areas can often find a place to add their expertise to the school program. Let your classroom teacher or the principal know if you have expertise in a particular area that you think might be useful to the program.

Classroom Parent Visits

Visits are for observation or presentations; they are short and infrequent. Visits should be during school hours, and be arranged with the teacher and/or Director at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance. Except for unusual circumstances, approved by the Director, USC visits for observation should not exceed approximately sixty minutes in length and may not occur more than twice per semester.

Volunteering/Visiting Guidelines

Parents or guardians who are interested in volunteering/visiting in the classroom must adhere to the following guidelines:

All visitors/volunteers shall sign in on the Visitors Log at the main office immediately upon entering any school building or grounds when during regular school hours. Before leaving campus, the visitors/volunteers shall sign out on the Visitors Log in the main office.

While on campus, visitors/volunteers are to enter and leave classrooms as quietly as possible. No electronic listening or recording device may be used in a classroom without the teacher and Director's written permission. Information gained by volunteers regarding students (e.g. academic performance or behavior) is to be maintained in strict confidentiality.

The Director may refuse to sign-in or register a visitor/volunteer if it is believed that the presence of the visitor or volunteer would cause a threat of disruption or physical injury to teachers, other employees, or students.

Additional Educational Resources

Staff may work with children in the classroom or in the staff room where individual and small group practice is subject to fewer distractions. Teachers will inform parents if their child is working with the staff on a regular basis for reading or math intervention. USC also provides speech and special education services. If you have concerns about your child's speech or progress in learning, talk with the classroom teacher or the principal.

Available Mental Health Services by Teacher Referral

Union Street Charter offers confidential student support counseling for social-emotional issues that are interfering with academics or causing conflict on the playground. Typical topics covered include identifying emotions, understanding how emotions feel in the body, mindfulness, social skills, conflict management, boosting confidence and offering a comfortable space for students to talk freely about what is going on for them. Many of the activities are play-based, including drawing, using sensory activities and playing games. These activities often help the student express themselves in a comfortable setting. Space is limited and the sessions are once a week for 15-20 minutes. Parent consent is required. Please fill out the Health Information Exchange and Consent Form. In some instances, students may need more intensive counseling than the school can provide.

If a student has Medi-Cal, The Department of health and Human Services can provide counseling. Students who are experiencing some anxiety, depression or more than typical difficulty with social interactions may be referred by parents or the school. Parents can call Children's Behavioral Health Services (707-268-2800).

The Arcata Family Resource Center may also be able to assist with Mental Health Services. You can contact them at 707-826-1002. They are located on the Arcata Elementary School campus at 2400 Baldwin, but services are open for all Arcata residents. Families with insurance can call their insurance company and ask for a list of counselors covered by their plan. For more resources, please talk to our Counselor. Crisis hotline 24 hr. (707-445-7715).

Foster and Homeless Assistance

Union Street Charter offers student support for homeless youth. The liaison for homeless students can refer homeless families and youth to health care services, including dental, mental health, and substance abuse services, and housing services. Please contact:

Foster/McKinney-Vento Liaison (Union Street Charter)

Phone: 707-822-4845 ext. 8

Email: principal@unionstreetcharter.org

Children and youth who are experiencing homelessness are provided the rights and services to which they are entitled to under the McKinney-Vento Act. These rights may include:

- Immediate enrollment in the school they last attended (school of origin) or the local school where they are currently staying, even if you do not have all the documents normally required at the time of enrollment.
- Continue to attend their school of origin, if requested by you and it is in the best interest.
- Receive transportation to and from their school or origin, the same special programs and services, if needed, as provided to all other children, including free meals and Title I.
- Receive the full protections and services provided under all federal and state laws, as it relates to homeless children, youth, and their families.

Incidental Expenses

A few special events each year require funding. Parents can support these special events through donation requests that appear on their monthly statement from the Equinox Center for Education (ECE). Specific donation amounts may result from the costs of camping trips, field trips out of the area, and yearbooks. No child will be excluded from school camping trips or field trips if the cost of the trip imposes a financial hardship. If the request for donation is a burden for your family, simply send an email to the office to request a scholarship. The ECE has a fund to help cover student scholarships.

Student Health Policies

Union Street Charter Policy Regarding Immunizations:

To protect the health of students and staff against preventable diseases, Union Street Charter adheres to California State Law regarding immunization regulations for school entry. The California School Immunization Law requires that children be up to date on their immunizations (shots) to attend school. California schools are required to check immunization records for all new student admissions at Kindergarten (or Transitional Kindergarten) through 12th grade and all students advancing to 7th grade.

Starting January 1, 2021, all new medical exemptions for school and child care entry must be issued through [CAIR-ME](#). Parents can create an account in CAIR-ME and apply for an exemption. They will receive an exemption application number to give to their child's physician. For more information on immunization requirements, visit [ShotsforSchool.org](#).

Head Lice Policy:

Head lice problems are endemic for school children. Teachers, and staff will follow the guidelines below:

1. Parents will be notified when nits/lice are found so that the child can receive treatment before returning to school.
2. Staff will make detailed information about head lice available to those who request it.

Student Health Insurance and Injuries:

Every student in the school is enrolled in an umbrella school injury accident program that covers excess medical costs above health insurance. If your child is injured at school and your costs exceed your insurance, talk to the office for claim forms.

When a significant injury occurs at school, personal contact (either in person or by telephone) is the best way for a parent to learn of the circumstances of the injury. Teachers will make a reasonable effort to contact parents, but if a parent cannot be contacted, an injury/accident form will be sent home with the child. In the case of a serious injury that requires medical attention, teachers will contact a parent, or if the parent cannot be reached, an emergency contact provided by the parent.

Parking, Drop-off & Pick-up

Union Street Charter's parking system is designed for safety and efficiency. **Please do not block Union Street.** If you are unable to turn in to the driveway, loop through the roundabout or community center parking lot and try again. Crowding usually clears very quickly. No parking at the Village Apartments or lining up in their driveway. Note: the "depot" is the covered area in the driveway where staff monitor drop off & pick up.

DROP OFF: 8:10 TO 8:30

- Spots on the playground side of the school driveway & the yellow curb in front of the school are for **drop off only**. These "stop and drop" spots are for parents who can drop off children without leaving the car.
- A staff person will facilitate and monitor curbside (yellow zone on Union Street) drop off from 8:10 to 8:30. Children are monitored as they travel from the car to the schoolyard.
- Parents who need extra time to get children out of their car seats:
 - Park in the four spots on the apartment side of the driveway for **up to 5-minutes**. These spots fill up quickly.
 - Park on Union Street past the stop sign & red curb up the hill and walk students to the driveway.
 - Park at the Community Center parking lot and walk students to the driveway.

PICK UP: 3:00-3:15 - Tuesday through Friday

- Spots on the playground side of the school driveway & the yellow curb in front of the school are for **pick up only (stay in your car)**. Staff members will safely direct children to their cars waiting in the driveway and at the yellow curb in front of the school.
- Parents who need extra time to get children into their car seats:
 - Park in the four spots on the apartment side of the driveway for **up to 5-minutes**. These spots fill up quickly.
 - Park on Union Street past the stop sign & red curb up the hill and walk to the driveway.
 - Park at the Community Center parking lot and walk over to the driveway.
- At 3:15 all children not picked up are checked into after school.

PICK UP: 1:45-2:00 - Minimum Mondays

- On Mondays at 1:45-2:00. Spots on the south side of the school driveway (next to the playground) & the yellow curb in front of the school are for **pick up only (stay in your car)**. Staff members will direct children to their cars waiting in the driveway and at the yellow curb in front of the school.
- On Tuesday thru Friday at 1:45-2:00: Kindergarten parents may park in the driveway and at the yellow curb in front of the school. These spots are restricted "drop off" or "pick up" only at other times noted above.
- At 2:00 all children not picked up are checked into after school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARKING SITUATION

- Drive slowly, 5 mph or less!
- Please use patience, caution, and courtesy while using the crowded driveway. Always have your child walk with you; do not let them run ahead.
- If you park across the street, you must use the cross-walk at the intersection of MLK Pkwy and Union Street – It's the law!

Arcata School District Meal Program

The Arcata School District is eligible for the State Universal Meals Program and the Federal Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) while participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. All students enrolled at Union Street Charter are eligible to receive a healthy breakfast and lunch at school for no charge without having to pay a fee or submit a meal application. However, we need you to complete an important Household Universal Benefits Application. Additionally, this application may be used to may give you access to free after school care and Summer EBT benefits.

State funding for California public schools is based on information collected on the Universal Benefits Application. It is very important that all our households complete this application so that Union Street Charter can receive the maximum level of funding for our students' education.

Completing and returning the form will ensure the continuance of District funding & increased services for our students - including intervention teachers, classroom aides, special programs, technology, extracurricular activities and more!

Lunch Orders

Teachers will take student lunch orders each morning by 8:45. The lunches will be picked up from the district cafeteria and served to students at Union Street Charter. The Arcata School District prepares a breakfast and lunch menu for Union Street Charter according to National School Lunch and Breakfast Program standards. Arcata School District also provides the services of a trained and qualified nutritionist in planning the menu and meeting the law as related to the National School Lunch Program.

Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the agency (state or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (AD-3027), found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
 2. Fax: (202) 690-7442
 3. Email: program.intake@usda.gov
- This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

After School Program

On regular school days after school care goes from 3:15 to 5:30 p.m. A special kindergarten afterschool program runs from 2:00 to 3:00. On Mondays, after school care starts at 2:00 for all grades. On half days after school care goes from 1:00 to 5:30 p.m. for all grades.

We ask that after school be limited to those families who rely on after school so that they can work. Do not use after school for playdates or for babysitting while running errands.

Rates are \$4.00 per hour or free for families that meet income requirements (Universal Benefits Applications are available in the office and in your online enrollment packet). After school snack is available for \$1.00 or \$.65 for families that qualify for a reduced rate. The Equinox Center for Education (ECE) bills parents for extended day care fees and any associated fees. Accounts must be current for students to use the program. Some people need the ECE's tax ID number for childcare costs. The tax ID number is 23-7116546.

Late Fees: After school daycare ends at 5:30 p.m. Children who are left past that time create serious problems for the program. The after school program is not intended for those who need care after 5:30 p.m., and we urge parents to arrange a back-up person to pick your child up if you are likely to be delayed on a regular basis. If you are unable to meet the 5:30 p.m. deadline, please find other after school care. Late charges are \$1 per minute from 5:30 to 5:45 p.m. and \$2.00 per minute after 5:45, regardless of income status. The after school program will be closed to students of parents who are unable to pick up children by 5:30 p.m. on a regular basis or those with delinquent account balances.

After School Behavior Expectations: After school requires acceptable behavior for participation in the program. After school students will treat each other, and the after school staff, with respect and courtesy. Students must be able to demonstrate reasonable self-control in a setting that gives them more freedom, and consequently, more responsibility than what is expected during the regular school day. Parent support is required to keep a positive after school atmosphere. After school staff will inform parents and teachers when children are having trouble in after school. Unacceptable behavior on a regular basis may disqualify a student from after school care.

Behavior expectations during after school, check in, and snack time:

1. Children will sit quietly in their own space and keep their hands to themselves during check in.
2. Children will take care of each other in snack line by waiting for snack without pushing, poking, punching, shouting, or teasing.
3. During snack time, children will sit at the picnic tables or on the benches and porch. Children will remain seated until snack is over. No playing during snack.
4. Children will follow normal indoor guidelines in the classrooms using appropriate voice and indoor behavior.
5. Children will respond, without argument, to requests to change their behavior.
6. Children will use designated materials with care and put things away when they are finished.
7. Children will be considerate of each other and avoid excessively aggressive or antagonistic play, both physical and verbal.
8. Children will cooperate with staff requests to change, or stop, a game when after school staff or teachers feel that an activity is getting out of hand or needs to change.

School Trips and Fingerprint Clearance

All children must have a signed and completed liability waiver and consent to treat form on file in order to participate in field trips and camping trips. School trips outside the immediate campus area require parent volunteers or transportation. All drivers and chaperones are required to be live-scanned for the Arcata School District. Live scan forms are available in the school office. Drivers must also complete the field trip by private vehicle form and provide a copy of their driver's license and insurance card. Students and parents will be notified in advance of any field trip outside the Arcata area. Occasionally, unannounced walking trips within the Arcata city limits (park, library, etc.) do occur.

Car / Booster Seats

Due to state law and the requirements of the school's liability insurance, students less than 8 years old or shorter than 4'9" must ride in a child car seat or booster seat provided by the parent on all field trips and camping trips. The school will not provide or store car seats. For school trips, students must ride in the back seat of the car (unless it is the child of the driver being placed in the front seat). Drivers will take all personal car seats, except for the one for their child, out of the car before coming to drive on field or camping trips. ***Students whose parents do not provide a car seat for the child will stay at school, in another classroom, or in the office.***

California Car Seat Law <https://www.chp.ca.gov/programs-services/programs/child-safety-seats>

Children under the age of 8 must be secured in a car seat or booster seat in the back seat.

Children under the age of 8 who are 4' 9" or taller may be secured by a booster seat, but at a minimum must be secured by a safety belt. Parents should make sure that the lap belt is low on the hips, touching the upper thighs, and that the shoulder belt crosses the chest, but not the face or neck. The law does not have exact requirements for when a child moves from a five-point restraint chair to a booster seat with a lap and shoulder belt. It recommends that the child stay in the five-point restraint seat until the child outgrows that seat according to the specifications of the manufacturer, which is typically between 40 and 65 pounds.

Camping Trips

Union Street Charter camping trips provide important, positive experiences for children. Trips allow children to bond with classmates and develop group cohesiveness and a class identity.

1. Children develop trust for teachers and adults outside their own family. School camping without a child's own parent sends powerful messages to the child: 1) My parents trust that I will be nurtured and cared for by other adults. 2) I can ask for, and get, what I need from other adults and teachers.
2. Children see and experience teachers and adults in a unique context on camping trips.
3. Camping provides novel situations and everyone learns from adapting and developing responses.
4. Camping provides nature experiences. Students gain confidence and build self-reliance.

School camping trips are different than family camping trips. Directing a group of 17 or more children and adults is a challenging task. Teachers have deeply considered the needs of children and parents while developing the camping guidelines below. Experience has shown us that these guidelines are necessary to creating the best possible school camping trips. We want you to understand the need for having parents stay for the entire trip. Parents who come and go during the trip most often increase anxiety for their own child and also disrupt the flow of the group experience. It is difficult for children to say good-bye early. It is difficult for other students in the class to see parents coming and going during the trip. We want to keep the rules simple and the trip cohesive. Please help achieve our camping goals by supporting these guidelines.

Camping / Field Trip Adult Guidelines

- 1) Adults will communicate a request to attend trips 5 or more days before the start of the trip & make a commitment not to withdraw more than 5 days before the trip. No changes in the last 5 days!
- 2) Adults will attend the entire trip from start to finish (Please do not arrive late or leave early).
- 3) One parent per family can attend one camping trip per year, either the fall or the spring trip.
 - a. One fifth grade parent from each family is invited to attend the last camping trip with their child.
 - b. One parent from each K and 1st grade family is allowed on the spring camping trip, the only K and 1st grade camp trip.
- 4) The teachers will define the necessary number of adults needed for the trip and decline to take parents beyond that number for any but extreme and compelling reasons.
- 5) Siblings of students & pets may not join the trip.
- 6) Adults will facilitate group activities under the direction of the teacher rather than creating separate activities with their own child.
- 7) No tents on camping trips. If you bring a tent for rain emergency, it may only be set up at the request of the teacher.
- 8) No alcohol or marijuana on school trips.
- 9) Emotional Needs Waiver for grades 2 - 3: If the emotional needs of the child or parent make it necessary for one parent to attend a camping trip (regardless of the number of other parents going), that parent, with the permission of the teacher, may do so in accordance with guidelines #1 through #8 above. Teachers take this request seriously; in fairness to other parents, please don't use it lightly.

Camping / Field Trip Costs

- 1) Student Cost: A suggested donation amount to cover the student cost associated with camping/fieldtrips will be added to parent's monthly ECE bill. The donation amount may include food, camp fees & activity costs per student. If you would like to opt out of the donation or change the amount of the donation, please email the office at office.unionstreet@gmail.com. The Equinox Center for Education provides scholarships for camping and fieldtrips.
- 2) Adult Cost: Driver's and chaperones will be billed for their food costs associated with camping trips on their ECE bill. Scholarships are not available for parents.

Emergency Plans

Emergency Preparedness

Union Street Charter Will:

1. Practice emergency drills for earthquake, fire, and lockdown 2 times per year.
2. Review staff emergency procedures yearly and maintain a list of the staff designated to each emergency task.
3. Maintain & inventory school emergency supplies.
4. Maintain a list of the emergency phone numbers and maintain student emergency/health forms.
5. Provide copies of drill & emergency procedures on request.

In the event of an Emergency

Union Street Charter Will:

1. Notify parents by text message and email.
2. Monitor emergency instructions for our area on the radio. We encourage parents to have radios and batteries available at home and at work.
3. If the building is deemed unsafe, temporary shelter will be set up and Emergency Services will be contacted. Alternate locations include The Arcata Community Center, Sunny Brae Middle School and the Masonic Lodge parking lot.
4. In cases of severe injury, the proper emergency personnel will be contacted and the child transferred to the nearest hospital.
5. Maintain a sign-out list to track children when they leave school that includes the name of the person who picked them up, their destination, and appropriate phone numbers. If needed, a copy of this list will be posted on the depot bulletin if all students have been picked up.
6. During field trips, teachers will carry copies of student emergency forms. If possible, all drivers and teachers will return to campus as soon as possible. If not possible, teachers will keep their students together and assist in system of emergency procedures as needed. The teacher's primary role in this case is to contact children's parents and keep the children with him/her until they are picked up.

Student Evaluations: Conferences, Testing and Special Education

USC's mission is to create an optimum learning environment. Grade reporting and frequent testing (such as grade oriented report cards, daily quizzes, chapter tests, etc.) are counter-productive to our vision of a learning environment based on positive motivation and intrinsic rewards. Consequently, our methods of evaluation and reporting emphasize the growth and development of your child. General indications of whether a child's performance is at grade level are included in the evaluation.

Small class sizes provide teachers with an understanding of each student's academic and social development. Teachers continuously evaluate your child's progress with daily observations. These observations and evaluations are reported to parents during two mandatory parent conferences, in the fall and spring of each year (A midyear conference is scheduled by the teacher as needed). Written conference reports provide anecdotal information about your child and indicate general measures of performance and effort. Conference reports are given to parents and kept on file at school.

A child of any age who is having difficulty accessing the educational program may benefit from the results of special education testing services. The staff will recommend appropriate testing services when they feel that professional testing may be useful for diagnosing a problem and planning remediation.

Screening for reading/language and math progress may occur in all grades.

Special Education and Child Find

By [Andrew M.I. Lee, JD](#)

At a glance

- Under federal law, public schools must look for, find, and evaluate kids who need special education.
- This is called Child Find, and it covers kids from birth through age 21.
- It applies to all kids, including those who are homeschooled or in private schools, plus kids who are migrants or without homes.
- Public schools have a big responsibility—they must *identify, locate, and evaluate* any kids who need special education. This is called “Child Find.” Looking for and finding these kids is an important first step toward getting them the help they need to thrive in school.
- When a school knows, or thinks a child could have a disability, it must evaluate the child. Child Find applies to kids from birth to age 21. It can cover kids with learning and thinking differences, developmental delays, and other conditions.

Child Find is part of the federal [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#). The purpose of the law is to serve the education needs of kids with disabilities. Each state and its public schools must have policies and procedures for finding these kids. They must also develop practical methods to identify which kids qualify for special education and related services.

At Union Street:

A student may have a medical or psychological diagnosis of a learning disability or other health condition that may impede their ability to access their education. This may qualify them for either a 504 plan with classroom accommodations or an IEP with modification of the curriculum.

To start the evaluation process, parents may write a letter asking for evaluation. Another method of child find involves a team meeting. A student study team will meet to identify what has been tried or next steps, like reading or math intervention. Team members include parents or guardians, special education teacher, and others that have information or insight to contribute. Several of these meetings may be held. At the meeting the team may decide it is time to start the evaluation process. The evaluation is conducted by the school psychologist. Another meeting will be held to review the results.

Mandated State Testing

The state requires our school to offer standardized testing in math and English language arts in Grades 3-5 and science in Grade 5. **USC requests parents to agree to testing.** The staff strives to prepare the students for testing without "teaching to the test". We strive to make mandated state testing low stress for the students and we prepare them accordingly.

Union Street requests participation in mandated testing for these reasons:

1. Schools with less than 95% participation rate are subject to severe sanctions.
2. High testing rates and strong school scores foster a positive relationship with our sponsoring district, the Arcata School District.
3. Union Street Charter affirms that we are "meeting" the state standards, as required by state law, by having reasonably high test scores and high test participation rates.
4. The charter has to be renewed every five years and test results and participation in testing is a condition of charter renewal.
5. According to law – parents have the right to opt their child out of testing if they provide written notice.

Complaint Procedures

Communication problems occur naturally in human discourse. Please communicate problems quickly and directly to those involved. If you are not satisfied with a prompt resolution to your problem, please contact your child's teacher. We hope that problems can be resolved at this level.

In the event that your problems are not resolved, bring your grievance to the principal. Your concerns will be responded to and investigated. Grievances involving people outside the school regarding the school's policies or practices may be directed to the Union Street Charter Principal.

The Governing Board recognizes that the school has the primary responsibility to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations governing educational programs. The Board encourages early resolution of complaints whenever possible. To resolve complaints, that require a more formal process, please see the school for complaint procedures.

Governance / Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is the governing body for our campus with oversight by the Arcata School District. The Board makes important decisions that affect the legal and business aspects of USC. The Board of Directors is comprised of up to seven members with one spot retained for the authorizer. No more than 49% of the members may be interested parties (employees or their family members) and the remainder are parents or community members. The Board meets the third Wednesday of each month during the school year. The Board agenda is posted on the bulletin board by 5th grade classroom and on the website. We encourage parents interested in becoming Board Members to regularly attend meetings. All parents are welcome at any board meeting.

Board of Directors Members:

- Are volunteers nominated in May and approved by majority vote at the annual meeting in June
- Attend 3 hours of training in governance per year
- Determine policies for the school
- Approve the school calendar
- Adopt budgets as proposed by USC director in consultation with Arcata School District CFO

- Approve staffing, hiring, and staff review procedures
- Give input on the Local control Accountability Plan, Safety Plan, and others
- Attend monthly Board meetings and any other “special” Board meetings
- Assist with special school events

Board Member Nominees desired qualifications:

- Regularly attend meetings and give input.
- Learn about the financial and legal decisions made by the board in preparation for becoming a board member
- Volunteers may be nominated for board member positions when openings occur
- Have experience, skills or knowledge that will benefit school governance

The following are expectations of board members.

- Attend all meetings (members who miss two consecutive meetings or who miss three meetings during the course of the year may be replaced by the board of directors.)
- Review the board packet. Give input and ask questions during meetings
- Act as a communication link between the board of directors and other parents.

Sensitive topics in the classroom

The staff of USC recognizes a wide range of values among parents regarding sensitive topics for children. While we want our children to develop personal skills to deal with these issues, we also want to be cautious about creating undue fear, anxiety, or confusion. Young children, at home or in school, should be given factual answers to questions about drugs, their bodies, disease, or war and terrorism. The answers to these questions should be given at an age-appropriate level. Teachers will do their best to give thoughtful answers to appropriate questions that come up in the course of a normal school day.

The context of the family is the best way for children to obtain safe, accurate, and understandable information. You know your child and can best develop a communication that allows discussion of difficult topics. School classrooms are available to set up meetings with professional groups that facilitate family communication on health and child development issues.

The best part of many schools' drug education programs is the focus on building self-image and empowering children to make individual choices rather than responding to peer pressure. Our school philosophy emphasizes individual thinking, responsibility, and building a positive self-image. These skills are not taught in an isolated context or as part of an anti-drug program.

Parent input on sensitive topics is welcome. If you have thoughts to share on this policy, talk to the principal, a teacher or a board member.

Nondiscrimination Policy (Title VI and IX of the Civil Rights Acts)

The **Union Street Charter School** does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or any other legally protected category in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person(s) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Name and/or Title: Principal

Address: 470 Union Street, Arcata, CA 95521

Telephone No.: 707 822-4845

School Accountability Report Card

The School Accountability Report Card is available for viewing on our web-page at unionstreetcharter.org. A paper copy is available by request in the office.

Campus Health & Safety

Asbestos: Union Street Charter and The Equinox Center for Education is in compliance with all aspects of the Federal Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) in the following manner:

- 1) The campus at 470 Union Street has been inspected by a certified asbestos building inspector. The inspector found no suspect asbestos containing materials NON-ACM to present at the building at 470 Union Street know as The Equinox Center for Education and occupied by Union Street Charter. The inspection was done in compliance with AHERA regulations.
- 2) A certified management planner filed the inspection report in 1988 in accordance with AHERA regulations. Due to lack of asbestos on the campus, the management plan is to do nothing in response to no asbestos.
- 3) All records regarding AHERA activities are available to the public and are maintained in a central office of the ECE at 470 Union Street.

Pesticides: No pesticides are used on the Union Street Charter campus at 470 Union Street, Arcata, CA

Section 3: The Equinox Center for Education (ECE)

The Equinox Center for Education rents the campus to USC. The mission of the ECE is to enhance and support the quality educational programs on site. The ECE provides:

1. A website for accepting donations: <https://equinox-center.org>
2. An after-school snack program.
3. Improved furniture in the classrooms.
4. Teacher directed discretionary budgets for program enhancement.
5. School building, improved campus esthetics and structural improvements, and classroom improvements.
6. Improvement of playground equipment and exterior spaces used by students.
7. Technology enhancements, from computers to multimedia and publishing equipment.
8. Funds for special classes and programs, teacher training, and increased field trip opportunities.
9. Improved art and music supplies, improved after school equipment.
10. Through fund-raising, the ECE is able to provide scholarship support for camping, afterschool, snacks, & yearbooks.
11. Bookkeeping for snack, and afterschool billing and collection.

The ECE governing structure

The ECE is a California 501(C)3 non-profit corporation. A non-profit board governs the ECE and raises money to support the education program. A fund-raising committee of the Foundation Board is dedicated to raising funds for all of the above projects. The ECE has a Director who organizes and oversees support activities. We urge charter school parents to support the ECE's fundraising activities. These funds go directly to improving the educational experience. Donations to the ECE are tax deductible. **ECE Tax ID number** is 23-7116546.

Fund Raising

The USC policy on fund raising is to support the efforts of the ECE. This year the ECE hopes to raise \$10,000 in direct donations to go towards camping scholarships, and playground equipment. We hope that many parents will support direct appeals for monthly or yearly donations. The USC board does not support fund-raising that may promote or support particular businesses or products.

Thank you!

Your time and effort reading in this handbook is appreciated. Let us know if there is other information that you would like to see.

School Calendar

Union Street Charter Calendar

2025-2026

School Year

Board approved:

37 Weeks of School/ 178 Student Days

Start on Aug. 25, End on June 11

All event dates are tentative

approved 6-16-25

July 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

August 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

September 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

October 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

November 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

December 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

January 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

February 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

March 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		




May 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

June 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

July 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

August 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Highlighted Dates

-  Early Release 12:15
-  Minimum Day release 1:45
-  School Closed

Aug. 20: K Drop In 9:00-11:00

Aug. 22: 2nd Drop in 10:00-12:00

(Aug. 19, 21, 22: Staff Days)

Aug. 25: First Day of School

Sept. 1: Labor Day

Oct. 24: Fall Family Fun Night

Oct. 27: No school Staff PD, afterschool avail.

Nov. 11: Veteran's Day

Nov. 19-21: Half Day Parent Conferences

Nov. 24-28: Thanksgiving Break

Dec. 22-Jan. 2: Winter Break

Jan. 19: Martin Luther King Day

Jan. 26: Parent Conference

Feb. 16-20: Presidents Break, afterschool avail.

March 22: Spring Sing

April 8-10: Half Day Parent Conferences

April 13-17: Spring Break, afterschool avail.

May 1: Half Day Open House

May 22: Conditional day off if no school closures

May 25: Memorial Day

June 11: Last Day of School

