

**Union Street Charter
Parent & Student Handbook**

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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 to understand a rule or help in following a rule.

Section 2 is intended for teachers, administrators, and parents. There is information on parking, the lunch, snack & 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 / Rules 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: 8:30 – 1:45
- Half day ends at 12:15
- Extended childcare is available from 7:45 a.m. to 8:10 a.m. and from 3:10 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. On minimum Mondays, school ends at 1:45 and after school starts at 1:55. On “Half Days,” school ends at 12:15 and extended childcare starts at 12:45. If you have child care options, please pick up your children at lunch. Children who stay on half days will be checked into the afterschool program.

PLEASE BE ON TIME. PARENTS AND STUDENTS SHARE THIS RESPONSIBILITY.
BEING ON TIME IS A REQUIREMENT FOR CONTINUING ENROLLMENT.

Attendance Reporting Requirements

- If your child is absent, please call the office. We need to record the reason for the absence (excused or unexcused).
- If your child is tardy, they must check in at the office to get a tardy slip. 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 (pink eye, whooping cough, scarlet fever, etc.) or head lice, 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. When family travel occurs during scheduled school days, 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. ***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.

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 habitual tardiness as follows:

1. When a student is absent or habitually tardy, 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 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 (recess, etc.)
 - b. The parent may be required to submit an action plan to the principal.
 - c. The principal may inform the parent that re-enrollment for the coming school year depends on a solution to the habitual tardy problem.

Union Street Charter Contact Numbers

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

Staff Extension Numbers:

Principal, Rea Erickson: 8#
Office/Administrative Assistant, Pam Killoran: *#
Kindergarten, Jenny Winsted-Wilson: 6#
First Grade, Violet Ray: 1#
Second Grade, Sharyn Swartz: 2#
Third Grade, Christine Steinbock: 3#
Fourth Grade, Greg Gaiera: 4#
Fifth Grade, Nancy Forrest / Mo Taylor: 5#
Resource, Naomi Winger: 9#
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 822-4845, ext. *#. If you need to leave a message for your child during afterschool (3:15 - 5:30), call 822-4845, ext. 7#. 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. No concern or interest is too small or too large to discuss. Many people are available to address these concerns, including teachers, staff, board members, and other parents. Please be aware that 8:15 to 8:30 and 3:00 to 3:10 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 bi-weekly school news, the weekly classroom news and a summer monthly 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 Halloween party, the family potluck & spring sing, open house night, the upper grades' school play, and the end of year picnic.

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 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 snack and lunch. During snack and lunch times, students will sit at the picnic tables or on the benches and porch and remain seated until snack or lunch is over. No playing during snack. When the weather is inhospitable, the students eat in their classrooms.

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

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 all jackets, sweaters, sweatshirts, t-shirts, backpacks, lunch boxes, 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.
- 100% renewable energy provided by Redwood Coast Energy Authority.
- Energy efficient electric heating system installed in 2018.
- Energy efficient LED lamps, installed in all classrooms (Prop 39 clean energy funds).
- Rain water collection for plant watering.
- 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 to potluck events.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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. 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 software or 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.

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.
6. Parents who have questions about the way the school has handled a particular situation can request a meeting with the bullying incident team to share concerns, understand staff choices, and to be part of problem solving.

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.

Union Street Charter 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 & STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

You will be asked to sign this if your child is given a space in Union Street Charter. 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 – In order for your child to be a Union Street Charter student, for continuing enrollment during the school year, and for re-enrollment in following years, 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 side 2).
- 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.

PROGRAMS TO ENCOURAGE PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- 1) Contribute talents and skills as a volunteer for classroom activities, field trips, camping trips, family social events, building projects, and/or donations to the ECE and school fundraising.
- 2) Participate in monthly Board of Directors meetings as a member, advisor, or visitor.
- 3) Attend school family events and celebrations.
- 4) Volunteer at school "work parties".
- 5) Attend parent education programs presented at the school.

Objective: increase volunteer participation at events & on the annual survey in 2019-20

Progress for 2018-19: 17% of parents volunteer, 91% attend events and 25% complete survey

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

Any adult on yard duty may deem any activity unsafe or inappropriate regardless of prior approval.

The following behavior may result in intervention/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. Student behavior results in suspension for a part day, full day or several days:
 - 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.).
 - b. Families may meet with the teacher/principal to review the incident.
 - c. Student repeats behavior: the consequence is suspension of one to three days. This step may occur one or more times before moving to step three:
 - d. Parent and child will be informed if expulsion is a possible consequence for continuing behavior that is incompatible with basic student responsibilities.
3. Student is recommended for expulsion:
 - a. May result with no warning due to serious violation of ed.code.
 - b. Panel reviews expulsion. Parent may request an appeal to recommended expulsion.
 - c. The board makes a final decision regarding expulsion.

Section 2: Parent / Guardian Information

Classroom Parent Volunteers

Each grade needs parent volunteers, both regular weekly volunteers and occasional special event volunteers. 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.

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.

Additional Educational Resources

Staff aide(s) 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 aide on a regular basis for reading or math intervention. USC also provides social emotional support, 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 for Students:

Union Street Charter offers 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.

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 445-7715.

The Arcata Family Resource Center may also be able to assist with Mental Health Services. You can contact them at 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.

Classroom Parent Visits

Parents and other family members are encouraged to visit the classroom after the first four to six weeks of the beginning of the school year. Teachers appreciate 24-hour notice for visits in order to plan for special circumstances that may affect the visitor or the class.

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 ECE. Specific donation amounts may result from the costs of camping trips, field trips out of the area, and the upper grade play costumes.

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 back the request stating that a scholarship or campership is needed. The ECE has a fund for students who need help covering these costs.

Parents go on trips as volunteers and pay their own fuel expenses. Parents who go on trips are assessed a fee to cover the cost of their food on trips. "Campership scholarships" are not offered for parents.

At times there will be charges for school-related products like shirts, pictures, yearbooks, and DVD's of plays.

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.

To attend school, your child's Immunization Record must show the date for each required shot. If a licensed physician determines a vaccine should not be given to your child because of medical reasons, submit a written statement from the physician for a medical exemption for the missing shot(s), including the duration of the medical exemption. You must also submit an immunization record for all required shots not exempted. A personal beliefs exemption is no longer an option for entry into school; however, a valid personal beliefs exemption filed with a school before January 1, 2016 is valid until entry into the next grade span (Kindergarten or transitional kindergarten and 7th grade). Valid personal beliefs exemptions may be transferred between schools in California. For complete details, visit ShotsforSchool.org.

Head Lice Policy:

Head lice problems are endemic for school children. Union Street Charter has a no nit policy. Parents, teachers, and staff will follow the guidelines below:

1. Parents are required to notify their student's classroom teacher if their child has head lice.
2. Parents will determine the treatment method preferable to their family and will remove all nits before sending their child back to school.
3. Parents will continue to check and recheck for head lice on a daily basis for two or three weeks after treatment and removal.
4. Staff will make detailed information about head lice available to those who request it.
5. Whenever a child has head lice, parents of that child's class will be notified. If two or more classes are affected, the entire school will be notified.
6. Trained teachers and staff may check all students of a class for head lice (nits) if circumstances make that action appropriate, but will not single out specific children.
7. Parents will be called when nits/lice are found so that the child can receive treatment before returning to school.

Student Health Insurance and Injuries:

Every student in the school is enrolled in an umbrella school injury accident program that covers some medical costs if a parent has no other form of health insurance. If your child is injured at school and you have no health 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. If the parent cannot be contacted, teachers and staff will follow the instructions given on the student's emergency information form, which parents file annually before the start of each school year.

Parking, Drop-off & Pick-up

Union Street Charter's parking system is designed for safety and efficiently. **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.

DROP OFF: 8:00 TO 8:30

- Spots on the south side of the school driveway (next to the playground) & 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 drop off from 8:10 to 8:30. Children are monitored as they travel from the car to the schoolyard.
- Parents who need to park and come on campus may:
 - Park in the four spots on the north 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.
 - Park at the Community Center parking lot.
- After 8:30 and before 2:50, parking is available in the driveway and at the yellow curb.

PICK UP: 3:00-3:10 - Tuesday through Friday

- 3:00-3:10. Spots on the south side of the school driveway (next to the playground) & the yellow curb in front of the school are for **drop off and pick up only (no leaving 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.
- At 3:10 all children not picked up are checked into after school.
- After 3:15 (and before 8 a.m.), parking is available in the driveway and at the yellow curb.

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

- On Mondays at 1:45-1:55. Spots on the south side of the school driveway (next to the playground) & the yellow curb in front of the school are for **stop & scoop only**, no leaving your car (this includes kindergarten parents). 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 the yellow curb in front of the school. These spots are restricted “drop off” or “pick up” only at other times noted above.
- At 1:55 all children not picked up are checked into after school.
- After 1:55 on minimum Mondays, parking is available in the driveway and at the yellow curb.

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”.
- To avoid driveway congestion, come before 8:10 or after 3:15; spots are usually open at those times.
- **Classroom volunteers and other parents who need to go to the classroom will need extra time for walking from the Community Center or up the hill on Union Street.**
- Guidelines for parking on camping trip days and on half days will be published in the weekly news.
- 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 Lunch Program

All parents who qualify for free and reduced lunches are urged to fill out the qualifying form regardless of whether they order lunches from the district. Union Street Charter receives supplemental program funding according to the number of students who qualify for free and reduced lunches.

Each morning the teacher will ask how many people are ordering Arcata School District lunches. The lunches will be picked up from the district cafeteria and served to students at Union Street Charter. We will keep track of the number of lunches eaten by each student during each school month (or billing period) and the cost of the lunches, whether reduced (\$.40) or full charge (\$3.00), will be added to the ECE invoice that is sent each month. All lunch program charges must be paid in full each month for children to use these programs.

The Arcata School District prepares a lunch menu for Union Street Charter according to National Lunch Program standards. This is required of schools who serve free & reduced meals. 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 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.

Snack Program

The Equinox Center for Education offers a snack program. Any student is welcome to have a snack on any day. Teachers keep track of how many snacks a student eats and parents are billed the following month. Morning snack will be \$1.00 and after school snack will be \$1.00. Students have the option of bringing a snack from home.

We serve snacks that include milk, fruit or vegetable, and a baked good or main course alternative. High participation makes the snack program possible and we serve what “most kids” will eat. Students (and families) with food needs or values that are not met by the snack program should plan on bringing home snack. The kitchen staff cannot accommodate individual requests for special snacks.

After School Program

Extended day care operates before school from 7:45 to 8:10 a.m. On regular school days after school care goes from 3:10 to 5:30 p.m. A special kindergarten care 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 12:45 to 5:30 p.m. for all grades.

Any child who needs to use the program is welcome on any day. You do not have to sign up to use the afterschool program. All children who are on campus at the start of after school are checked into the program.

Rates are \$4.00 per hour, and the minimum time charge for any given day is 15 minutes. After school snack is available for \$1.00. The 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. 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.

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.

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 / Fingerprint Clearance

All drivers and chaperones are required to be live-scanned for the Arcata School District and have driver information on file in order to participate as drivers on any school trips. School trips outside the immediate campus area require parent volunteers for transportation. Live scan forms are available in the school office. 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 parent trusts 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.
5. Camping trips throughout the grades empower children!

School camping trips are different than family camping trips. Directing a group of 20 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 Trip Driver Guidelines

- 1) Drivers 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) Drivers 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) Drivers 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.

**** 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.***

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 Brea 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 porch 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 Testing

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 February 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 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 progress may occur in all grades.

Mandated State Testing

The state requires our school to offer standardized testing and **USC requests parents to agree to state 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 participation in testing is a condition of charter renewal.

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 district 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, which may require a more formal process, the Board adopts the uniform system of complaint processes specified in 5 CCR 4600-4670 and the accompanying administrative regulation." (Board Policy 15) The Uniform Complaint Policy and form for complaints are located on the USC web page or in the office. The Charter Complaint Form is also on the website.

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 nature and character of USC. The Board of Directors is comprised of up to eleven members. The members will include up to five staff members, the remainder are parents or community members. The Board meets the first Wednesday of each month during the school year. The board agenda is posted on the bulletin board by 1st grade and on the website. We encourage parents interested in becoming board members to start as board advisors (see below). All parents are welcome at any board meeting.

Board of Directors Members:

- Returning board members are approved at the annual meeting in June
- Determine policies for the school
- Approve the school calendar
- Adopt budgets as proposed by USC staff
- Approve staffing, hiring, and staff review procedures
- Give input on the Local control Accountability Plan, Safety Plan, and others
- Oversee admissions according to the Charter, the MOU, and state laws
- Attend monthly board meetings and any other “special” board meetings
- Assist with special school events

Board Advisors:

- Regularly attend meetings and give input, but do not vote on motions put before the Board
- Learn about the financial and legal decisions made by the board in preparation for becoming a board member
- May be nominated for board member positions when openings occur

The following are expectations of board members and advisors.

1. Attend all meetings (members and advisors who miss two consecutive meetings or who miss three meetings during the course of the year may be replaced by the board of directors.)
2. Review the board packet.
3. Act as a communication link between the board of directors and other parents

Sensitive topics in the classroom: education programs for drugs, sex, war, terrorism.

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 for parents 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.

Title VI and IX of the Civil Rights Acts, Nondiscrimination Policy:

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.

Section 3: The Equinox Center for Education

The Equinox Center for Education rents the campus to USC. The mission of the ECE is to enhance and support the quality of the charter school program. The ECE works with USC to provide:

1. A website for accepting donations: <https://equinox-center.org>
2. A morning and 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. Providing scholarship support for afterschool, snack, camping & yearbooks.
10. Improved art and music supplies, improved after school equipment, classroom equipment enhancements
11. Through fund-raising, the ECE is able to offer scholarships to students and parents who need help with the fees for camping trips and any other school trips.
12. Bookkeeping for snack, lunch, and afterschool billing and collection.

The ECE governing structure

The Equinox Center for Education is a California 501(C)3 non-profit corporation. A non-profit board governs the ECE and raises money to support the charter school. 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 for the charter school. We urge charter school parents to support the ECE's fundraising activities. These funds go directly to improving the charter school 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, whose funds go directly to program enhancement for USC. This year we hope to raise \$20,000 in direct donations. 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 book is appreciated. Let us know if there is other information that you would like to see in this handbook.

