

# THE SOULARD★SCHOOL



**Soulard  
Education  
Center**

## Parent Handbook 2023-24

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## 1. School Structure and Definitions

Welcome to The Soulard School. In this handbook, we often use the term “The Soulard School” as a blanket term for two organizations, The Soulard School charter elementary school, and the Soulard Education Center, a separate organization covering early childhood education, before/aftercare and summer camp. While the two have very similar policies in most areas, this handbook focuses on the elementary program. A separate handbook will be distributed to early childhood families that focuses on the unique aspects of their program.

This handbook is intended to share key policies and procedures with families. Some are excerpted or adapted from our Board Policy Manual. The full manual can be found on our website, [www.soulardschool.org](http://www.soulardschool.org).

## 2. Purpose

It is the purpose of The Soulard School to foster an environment of belonging that inspires learners to make a difference for themselves and their communities.

## 3. Mission

The Soulard School is a community dedicated to educating its children so they can be empowered academically, grow emotionally and build authentic connections

## 4. Vision

The Soulard School will be a school that reflects the rich diversity of the neighborhood and surrounding communities; a school that actively involves families in their children’s educational life; a school committed to developing physical, social-emotional, and intellectual competencies. The Soulard School will serve as an example of the profound and real possibilities of a community dedicated to educating its children.

## 5. Philosophy

At the Soulard School we are committed to understanding the dynamic process of learning across the school community and within each student. Our evolving approach permeates every aspect of our school experience.

We take a progressive approach to learning and believe that children learn best by doing. We believe that their voices and interests should be incorporated throughout their learning experience. We see valuable aspects in many educational theories and programs, and believe that teachers teach best, and students learn best when we are able to incorporate the most meaningful approach to each situation.

Respect is at the core of our philosophy – respect for the self, for others and for the environment. Respect for each student’s individuality, learning style and intentions lay the foundation for our approach.

We believe that this approach supports the attitudes and behaviors needed today as well as those that will be needed in the future. These include: personal empowerment and cultural pluralism; global thinking and ecological awareness; flexibility and adaptability; creativity and innovation; respect, caring, and responsibility; and competencies of all kinds.

## 6. Four Pillars of the Soulard School

Our education is based on a model created when The Soulard School opened in 2004 and updated when the elementary program converted to a charter in 2019. This model is built on four core pillars: *diversity of all kinds, child well-being, integrated studies curriculum and community engagement*. It is this unique model that allows us to create original programming that empowers teachers, engages families and includes students. Through innovative leadership programs, relevant community partnerships, and authentic experiences that elevate every type of learner, our model results in children who know they can have an impact.

### A. Diversity and Inclusion

It is The Soulard School's mission to establish a strong sense of community and belonging within our students, parents and staff.

At The Soulard School, belonging means:

- Everyone feels safe and comfortable
- We are able to express our experiences and engage and interact with our community
- We are able to actively engage and be a part of activities/experiences without restriction
- We feel at home, welcome

We see the power of self discovery, and believe that as you learn about others, you learn about yourself. The Soulard School welcomes students from across the city. We work to actively recruit many kinds of staff, students and families, believing that everyone learns best in a diverse setting. We seek to build a community with racial, socio-economic, geographic and cognitive diversity, where parents, teachers and students can come together to learn and grow. As such, diversity of all kinds will be represented not only in our community, but in our curriculum, our libraries, our provocations, and in our experiences.

As an urban school, we know it is important for our students to learn beyond our school walls. As we work within our school community to find shared language, and methods for processing big ideas and events related to individual and community identity, we are also taking our students out into our city to volunteer, learn about others and build a strong understanding of themselves as a citizen and active community member.

### B. Child Well-Being

Through our programming and social emotional curriculum, The Soulard School proactively creates a school culture that incorporates health and wellness. We provide a framework for building social and emotional intelligences through the explicit teaching of executive

functions. This is combined with a class and school structure aimed at empowering students and building a sense of purposeful responsibility and belonging. Aspects of our school that address child well-being include:

- *Yoga, Movement and Mindfulness* - Every class day includes forms of yoga, movement and mindfulness exercises.
- *Self-Regulation Tools* - The school uses the Alert Program, comparing the body to an engine, to teach self-regulation strategies.
- *Buddy Circles* - This program, developed by the school in conjunction with Webster University, brings together small groups of students for peer mentoring and support around specific issues.
- *Student Responsibilities* - As students move through the grades, they are expected to play an increasingly active role in the school. Beginning at the kindergarten level, this includes having input on subject studies, as well as leading yoga or group discussions. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for tasks in their classrooms and around the school.
- *Nutrition & Culinary Arts Program* - Healthy eating is key to children's development and ability to regulate emotions and focus. Our Nutrition & Culinary Arts program ensures that all students receive fresh and balanced meals daily, along with Nutrition education and a kitchen class program that helps them build knowledge about where food comes from and how to prepare and enjoy a wide variety of foods. This includes hands-on experience growing vegetables and herbs in the school's garden and tending our chickens.

### *C. Integrated Studies Program*

Everything is connected - in life and in learning. At its basic level, our integrated studies program combines curriculum for two or more subjects, allowing students to see how ideas are connected to arrive at more meaningful and authentic understanding. Students are motivated to learn, engaged in their learning, retain their knowledge, and are better able to think critically and collaborate.

Our teachers do not rely solely on a set of textbooks to set the curriculum in many areas of study. With the Missouri Learning Standards as our base, teachers and students build the curriculum together each year. Student interests are incorporated into in-depth, cross-curricular studies, and vertically connect the grade levels for continuity and depth. Teachers draw from a variety of sources and influences, including elements of teaching found in Montessori and Reggio Emilia classrooms, and build on educational theories from Project Zero, Howard Gardner, and others.

With our low elementary student-teacher ratio (maximum 12:1), teachers are also able to genuinely know each student as a learner, and help them build on their strengths as they work to form a classroom community. Trimester evaluations provide an in-depth assessment of student progress toward goals and standards, as well as narratives about student growth,

both academic and social-emotional. Students are active participants in their mid-year conference, presenting their progress and goals to their parents and teachers, and forming strategies and supports together.

Teachers in our classrooms may be seen: circulating among groups or individuals asking questions, recording information shared by students for the group to refer to, supplying a resource, using manipulative or tool to assist a student in their discovery, facilitating the sharing of information or ideas between individuals or groups, and conducting formal and informal assessments.

A teacher participates in the learning process by providing opportunities for students to discover and learn. The Soulard School teacher balances time dedicated to direct instruction with opportunities to support students in self-discovery. Students do not rely on teachers for the “right” answer or for information they are capable of obtaining themselves. They are given many opportunities to initiate, plan and direct their own learning. Students are able to learn and demonstrate what they have learned in a variety of ways.

#### *D. Community Engagement*

The Soulard School was built upon a foundation of community-building as parents and founders came together to grow the school, as a physical space and as a learning model. It is our objective to continue to facilitate healthy growth of both the individual *and* the community in both respects. Education is something that we do *with* our students and families, not for them.

The Soulard School has developed a model for how community engagement evolves within our school and strengthens our relationships and sense of belonging.

#### *The Soulard School Model for Community Building and Engagement*



- *I see you-* This first step focuses on the importance of acknowledging others in your everyday life. It starts with a simple statement letting another person know they are known and seen.
- *I learn from you-* Letting others know that you value their input, ideas and expertise. By reaching out to those that have skills and knowledge that will support a program, project, event or hardship confirms that not only are they seen but they are valued.
- *I want to partner with you-* Engaging those that you see and learn from in meaningful ways. In this stage we utilize the strengths that each community member brings and work together towards a shared goal.
- *I make plans/change with you-* Once you are in partnership, the work you do affects not only your relationship but the community where you are working.
- *I belong-* Each of these phases builds to a sense of belonging. This is the level of relationship that binds community and encourages members to trust and continue to engage in the process with others.

This process is happening at multiple levels within our student, staff and parents. We use it as a way to establish a healthy community. It is also a reflective tool, if we see that a situation is not moving forward we look to this model to see if there is a skipped step or a need to revisit.

#### *Our Parents*

The Soulard School's unique model is built on parental involvement in every aspect of the school's operation and development. We actively involve families to create a shared vision between administration, teachers and parents. Families are encouraged to volunteer three hours every month, assisting the school in projects and activities. This not only allows us to save money that would otherwise be spent on outside services, it also builds community among families as parents work together to serve lunches, weed the garden or offer after school clubs.

#### *Our Neighborhood & Urban Partners*

The Soulard School actively values the city and sees it as a place of learning, rich with resources and full of opportunities, and we tap into neighborhood and human capital as a source of energy. Our approach to education and community engagement demands a resourcefulness born of creativity, flexibility and grit. Among other urban activities, classes walk to public parks, take public transportation, and utilize the Soulard Farmers' Market. By incorporating all the elements of the neighborhood, our students see that everything they need is available and possible with and within their community. Our community partnerships with Soulard organizations like Gene Slay's Girls and Boys Club and Mad Art Gallery directly support the school's educational programs.

## 7. Non-Discrimination Policy

#### *As to students:*

It is the policy of The Soulard School to maintain a safe and supportive school environment for all students, free from harassment, intimidation and discrimination on account of actual



or perceived race, color, creed, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship/immigration status, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, or weight.

The Soulard School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies and other school-administered programs.

*As to Staff:*

The Soulard School is an equal opportunity employer. It does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, religious affiliation, sexual orientation or gender identity.

*Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Student, Staff and Parent Guidelines*

These guidelines are intended to help the school promote the educational and social integration of transgender and gender nonconforming students, staff members and parents and ensure a safe learning environment free from discrimination and harassment.

The school will change official records and address students, staff and parents by the name/pronoun they request. Students, staff and parents shall have access to bathroom facility of their choice. The school will not ask a student to use a bathroom facility that does not match their gender identity. The school will make accommodations to make students feel safe. On overnight trips, sleeping accommodations are gender-segregated. Students will have access to accommodations that correspond with their gender-identity.

## 8. Supporting Student Behavior

The following shapes our approach to supporting individual student needs:

The goal with each child is to build self-respect and self-monitoring behavior. We want to help children develop strategies for decision-making that they can independently put into practice in their daily interactions with peers and others.

We recognize that students develop at individual rates and have individual needs. We strive to approach each child and situation in a way that meets the needs of each child.

No corporal punishment is ever to be implemented, i.e., hitting, spanking, pushing, ear pulling, etc.

No psychological punishment is ever to be implemented, i.e. denial of snack or lunch, threats of physical punishment, forced isolation, name calling, etc.

Any teacher or staff member who willfully violates this policy will be immediately discharged. Parents of the child will be immediately notified, and the general community informed of the discharge.

## 9. Anti-Bullying and Student Conflict Policy (from Board Policy Manual)

The Soulard School works to ensure that all members of the school community (staff, parents and students) treat one another with respect and advocate for their own needs and the rights, and the needs and rights of others.

Conflict is an inevitable part of the learning process as students navigate social situations through varying developmental lenses. As such, teachers take an empathetic and restorative approach with involved students to ensure each student is heard, and a shared understanding of the situation and the necessary work needed for a more positive outcome is achieved.

At times, an unhealthy pattern of interactions can be seen between two or more students and further action is needed. This behavior may be labeled as bullying under school policy. The Soulard School prohibits all types of bullying behavior including intimidation in any school setting, cyber bullying, and retaliation against any bullying behavior.

The State Law defines bullying as intimidation, unwanted aggressive behavior, or harassment that is repetitive or is substantially likely to be repeated and causes a reasonable student to fear for his or her physical safety or property; substantially interferes with the educational performance, opportunities or benefits of any student without exception; or that substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school. Bullying may include physical actions, gestures, or verbal, written, or electronic communication.

Any employee of The Soulard School who is a witness to or becomes aware of any type of bullying will report the information to the school counselor/social worker and/or the principal as soon as possible, and no later than 2 days following the bullying incident. Staff, students, or parents may report suspected bullying to the classroom teachers, school social worker, or administration by email, phone, or in person. If classroom teachers are notified, they will follow procedures in notifying the social worker and principal as soon as possible. The Soulard School prohibits any retaliation against a person who is reporting bullying to school staff.

When administration is notified of any report of bullying behavior, an investigation will begin within one school day. The principal or school counselor/social worker will independently or collectively work together to determine the bullying situation. The investigative process will take no longer than 10 days. Following the investigation, the school will take a responsive approach as is appropriate for the child's age and stage of development. These responses may include counseling, social skills instruction, behavioral support plan, and/or consequences that are logical and natural to the circumstances.

The anti-bullying policy will be published in The Soulard School Handbook that is distributed to all families each school year. The policy will be discussed with The Soulard School staff on an annual basis. Administration will review the anti-bullying policy as needed to ensure that the policy is equitable and fair.

## 10. Suspensions & Expulsions

Suspension and expulsion will not be considered for students younger than 3rd grade except under extreme circumstances. Instead, an individualized support plan developed by a team of key stakeholders will be implemented within 10 school days, and information gathered to determine if a Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plan are warranted.

Suspension or expulsion may be considered for students in 3rd through 5th grade for the most egregious behavior, in which students, staff, and/or the school are put in serious danger, or are persistently disrupted in their daily activity. In these situations, the Board of Directors will afford the student a hearing if requested by the family.

**Short-Term Suspension:** In the event of one of the following actions occurring, students will be placed on short-term suspension from school. A short-term suspension may be anywhere from one to four days. The Principal or designated school leader has the discretion to determine the number of days for the suspension period, and whether the suspension should be served in school or out of school.

The following are all actions that may require a short-term suspension:

- Attempt to assault any student or staff member
- Abuse to school property or equipment, or vandalism of school property causing damage
- Endanger the physical safety of another by the use of force or threats of force
- Persistent disruption of classroom activities despite multiple (e.g., more than two) documented direct interventions and conversations with parent/guardian
- Documented and repeated use of obscene or abusive language or gestures
- Failure to comply with classroom and school-wide rules and procedures
- Failure to complete assignments, carry out directions, or comply with disciplinary sanctions

**Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion:** Students who commit any of the infractions below are subject to long-term suspension or expulsion at the discretion of the Principal. A long-term suspension is five school days.

The following are all actions that may require a long-term suspension or expulsion:

- Physical abuse of a staff member or another student

- Continuous and persistent school and classroom disruption
- Assault of any student or staff member
- Persistently engage in conduct which disrupts school or classroom activity
- Possession, use, or attempted use, or transfer any weapon or drugs

The Principal will notify parents/guardians in writing and in person or by phone (when possible) that the student has been suspended from school. Any student who is expelled or given a suspension longer than 10 days will have the right to appeal the decision in writing to the Board of Directors within 5 days (in the case of a long-term suspension) or 10 days (in the case of expulsion). Hearings to consider the expulsion of a student will be held in executive session unless the parent requests an open hearing.

Students who receive a short or long term suspension from school will be required to make up all missed work and assignments on an agreed upon timetable, and will be required to make amends that are logical to the offending incident prior to returning to school.

#### Responding to Student Behavior: Discipline for Students with IEPs

Students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) will be held to the same behavioral standards as general education students. When students with IEPs require disciplinary action, the classroom teacher, assistant principal or designated special education coordinator, parent or guardian, and principal will work together on a case-by-case basis to determine the student's appropriate consequence and whether the action was or was not a result of the student's disability.

### 11. Use of Restrictive Behavioral Interventions (excerpted from Board Policy Manual)

**Seclusion** - Seclusion is defined as confining a student alone in an enclosed space with locking hardware. The school will not use seclusion except in an emergency situation when awaiting arrival of law enforcement personnel.

**Isolation** - Isolation is defined as confining a student alone in an enclosed space without locking hardware. Isolation shall never be used as a form of punishment or for the convenience of school personnel.

Isolation may only be used by staff:

- After de-escalating procedures have failed;
- In an emergency situation, in which a student's behavior poses a serious, probable threat of imminent physical harm to self or others or the destruction of property
- As specified in a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Section 504 plan, or other parentally agreed-upon plan to address a student behavior.

Use of isolation requires all of the following:

- The student to be monitored by an adult in close proximity who is able to see and hear the student at all times. Monitoring shall be face-to-face unless personal safety of the child or staff member is significantly compromised, in which case technology-supported monitoring may be utilized.

- The total time in isolation is to be reasonably calculated by school personnel on a case-by-case basis based on the age of the child and circumstances, and is not to exceed 40 minutes without a reassessment of the situation and consultation with parents and/or administrative staff, unless otherwise specified in an IEP or Section 504 Plan or other parentally-agreed-upon plan to address a student's behavior.
- The space in which the student is placed should be a normal-sized meeting or classroom with standard lighting, heating, cooling, etc. for the school.
- The space in which the student is placed must be free of objects that could cause harm.

**Physical Restraint** - Physical restraint is defined as using person-to-person physical contact to restrict free movement of all or a portion of a student's body. Note this goes beyond briefly holding or hugging a student to calm them down, intervening in a fight, or taking a student's hand, putting a hand on the back, etc to transport them for safety purposes. Physical restraint shall never be used as a form of punishment or for the convenience of school personnel.

Physical restraint shall only be used:

- In an emergency situation, in which a student's behavior poses a serious, probable threat of imminent physical harm to self or others or the destruction of property
- When less restrictive measures have not effectively de-escalated the situation or
- As specified in a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Section 504 plan, or other parentally agreed-upon plan to address a student's behavior.

Physical restraint shall:

- Only be used by authorized school personnel trained in the proper use of restraint
- Only be used for as long as necessary to resolve the actual risk of danger or harm that warranted the use of the physical restraint
- Use no more than the degree of force necessary to protect the student or other persons from imminent bodily injury
- Not place pressure or weight on the chest, lungs, sternum, diaphragm, back, neck or throat of the student

**Mechanical restraint** - Mechanical restraint is defined as a device or physical object that restricts a student's freedom of movement or normal access to a portion of his or her body. Mechanical restraint shall only be used as specified in a student's IEP or Section 504 plan with the exception of vehicle safety restraints and mechanical restraints employed by law enforcement personnel in emergency situations.

**Chemical Restraint** - Chemical restraints shall never be used by school personnel.

#### Follow Up

Following an incident in which restraints of any kind were used on a student, the student's parents will be notified through verbal or electronic communication as soon as possible, no later than the end of the day of the incident. Parents shall receive a written report of the emergency situation within 5 school days of the incident, documenting:

- Day, time of day, location, duration and description of the incident and de-escalation interventions
- Event(s) that led up to the incident

- Nature and extent of any injury to the student
- Name and contact information for a school employee the parent can contact regarding the incident.

The school will also include this documentation in its files and include all incidents in applicable state and federal reporting.

## 12. The School as Mandated Reporter of Child Abuse/Neglect

All school staff members are considered “mandated reporters” under Missouri state law, and are required by law and school policy to report any suspected case of child abuse or neglect, whether it relates to a parent, staff member or peer. In general, it is the job of state/local authorities, not to the school, to investigate and determine the credibility of concerns. When applicable, the school may notify a family when a call to the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline has been made, but is not required to do so.

## 13. General Daily Schedule - Elementary

7:00 - 8:15am	Early Arrival: Drop-off at McGurk’s Room (kitchen) Door, signed in and put in the care of the beforecare teacher
8:15 - 8:30	Arrival: Students proceed directly to classrooms
8:30 - 8:45	School Day Begins with Yoga and SEL activities
8:45 - 11:00	Morning Core Curriculum (Math and Literacy)
11:00 – 11:30	Recess (Recess/Lunch schedule will vary by grade)
11:30 – 12:00	Lunch (Recess/Lunch schedule will vary by grade)
12:00 – 3:15	Afternoon Core/Extended Core Curriculum
3:15 - 3:30	Closing Meetings/Cleaning in Classrooms
3:30	School Day Ends
3:30 - 6:00	Aftercare Activities

\*Pre-K schedules and specific elementary class schedules will be shared with parents during Curriculum Night

## 14. Comings & Goings - Sr. Pre-K and Elementary

- 7:00 – 8:15 Before School Care: Park on street. Students enter through McGurk’s Room (kitchen) door. Parent must accompany child to sign in and put in the care of the beforecare teacher.
- 8:15 – 8:30 Gates open for drive-up and drop-off of elementary students.
  - A driveway monitor will be on duty to assist elementary students at the driveway door.
  - No walking or parking in the driveway please!
  - If elementary parents wish to walk your child to the classroom, use the Victor St. door.
  - Pre-K families should enter through Victor St. door and walk child to classroom.

- 8:30 – 3:20 Driveway gates locked. Please park and walk your child to the front door and ring the bell. Students will need a tardy slip from the office to enter class after 8:45.
- 3:20 – 3:45 Gates open for pick-up of elementary students,
  - Students wait in the classroom until the parent pulls up in the driveway.
  - A staff member or parent volunteer will assist students into their cars.
  - No Walking Or Parking In The Driveway Please!
  - If elementary parents wish to walk up to the building, ring the bell at the Victor St. door and wait until your child is called to the door, or enter the building and wait by the classroom door until they exit.
  - Pre-K families enter through Victor door and pick up from classroom.
- 3:45 – Close Gates Locked. Visitors ring the bell at Victor St. door. Aftercare parents enter through McGurk's Room door.
- During drop-off and pick-up, please respect class time and teacher/administrator responsibilities. This is an appropriate time for reminders and information exchange, but not a good time for conversations. Please schedule an appointment for conversations.
- Please be sure that your child arrives at school before 8:30 so they are ready to join class on time.
- Please be prompt in picking your child up at the end of the day. If you will be late, please call to let us know by 3:00. Students not picked up by 3:45 will be sent to the office and parents contacted. Students still in the office at 4:00 will be sent to aftercare and their family charged \$16 per child.
- As soon as your child is released to you, you are responsible for them. Please make sure that your child stays with you at all times.
- Please send a note or email to let us know if your child will be picked up by someone other than those listed as authorized pick ups. Anyone not in the child's file will be asked for identification and students will not be released until parents can be contacted.
- Parents utilizing aftercare will be given a key card for the McGurk's Room door. Additional cards may be purchased for \$5 in the office. Students are not to use the keycards. Please do not share your card with anyone who will not be picking up your child on a regular basis. All visitors should enter through the Victor Street entrance and sign in.

\*Procedures for Jr. Pre-K (Sprouts) pick up and drop off:

- Parents will park and walk students into the building. Drop off will be directly with the classroom teacher.

## 15. Attendance, Absence & Tardy Policies & Procedures

Timely and consistent attendance is pivotal to children's academic and social-emotional development. There is a demonstrated link between attendance, academic achievement, and overall success in school. Missing instructional activities can result in decreased work habits and problem-solving skills, lower achievement and self-esteem, and a lack of self discipline.

School attendance laws in the state of Missouri require that children must attend school regularly. Additionally, state funds are allocated to school districts and charter schools through average daily attendance. Lower average daily attendance directly affects how much funding the school receives. For a copy of our school's complete attendance policy, please contact the office.

The elementary school day begins at 8:30 and all elementary students are expected to be in the classroom by that time. If a student enters the school *after 8:45, they are counted tardy*. Elementary students who are tardy should report to the office for a tardy slip prior to going to class.

If your child must miss all or part of the school day due to illness, emergency, or other unavoidable circumstances, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the office before 8:30am by phone (865-2799) or email ([info@soulardschool.org](mailto:info@soulardschool.org)) the day your child will be out.

If a parent does not notify the school of an absence or tardy, the office will attempt to contact parents to verify the child's absence. If we are unable to reach a parent, the absence will be marked unexcused.

Please plan doctor, dentist, or other appointments during after school hours as much as possible, and take any vacations and other travel during regularly scheduled school breaks.

The following are considered *excused* absences, tardies, or early dismissals:

- Illness, including covid or covid-related quarantine
- Medical appointment which cannot be scheduled outside of school hours
- Days of religious observation
- Death in family
- Extreme emergencies

The following are considered *unexcused* absences, tardies, or early dismissals:

- Family outings or trips
- Time with family or out-of-town visitors
- Lack of sleep or over-sleeping
- Lack of interest/motivation
- Lack of transportation or car troubles
- Other, as discussed with administration

### *Excessive Unexcused Absences*

- 3 unexcused absences in a trimester: administration contact parents/guardians to check in and determine barriers to regular attendance



- 5 unexcused absences in a trimester: administrator to re-contact parents/guardians, initiate documentation in student's file
- 8 unexcused absences in a trimester: administrator to require conference with parents, school social worker and classroom teacher to create a plan to improve attendance.
- Chronic absenteeism from school may result in referral to Missouri Department of Social Services Children's Division for educational neglect.

#### *Excessive Unexcused Tardies or Early Dismissals*

- 5 unexcused tardies or early dismissals in a trimester: administration contact parents/guardians to determine barriers to timely and consistent attendance
- 8 unexcused tardies or early dismissals in a trimester: administrator re-contact parents/guardians to set up conference to discuss strategies for improving arrival time to school
- Chronic tardiness or early dismissals may result in referral to Missouri Department of Social Services Children's Division for educational neglect.

#### *Absences due to illness*

While the school may request a doctor's note for extended illness, we recognize the need for precautions around illness and will work with families to ensure that students absent due to illness are provided opportunities to continue to engage in academic work and stay connected to classmates to the best of their ability. The school will not penalize students and parents for missing school while following medical guidance/school policy to prevent the spread of covid or other contagious illnesses.

#### 16. Changes in Pick-Up Routine

When a different person will be picking up your child (other than those listed on the release form), please notify the school in writing/email that morning. Students will not be released to individuals without parent authorization.

#### 17. School Closings & Inclement Weather Procedures

##### *Weather Closings:*

The Soulard School makes an effort to remain open in all but the worst weather. However, due to concerns about staff and family safety, we do close or operate on a varied schedule (late start, early closing, etc) for snow/inclement weather days when necessary. The school notifies families/staff in several ways, depending on the timing.

**Snow the night before:** Families/staff notified via email, phone and SMS the previous night or by 7:00 a.m.; School listed on school closing list on KMOV Channel 4, on KMOV's website and on the school's Facebook page.

Snow during the school day: Families notified of early closing by email, phone and SMS with several hours' notice.

Other emergency closing: Families/staff notified ASAP via e-mail, phone and SMS. We will use phone numbers provided in the buzz book, so if your contact information changes, please let us know. Families and staff can always call Eleanor's cell phone (314-724-3141) if they have questions about whether school is in session.

During the 2023-24 school year, school may need to be canceled or switch formats (i.e. from in-person to distanced) due to the covid-19 pandemic. This may affect individual students, classes, or the whole school. We will work to provide families with timely notification of any closures or changes in learning mode by email, phone and by our school Facebook page.

Our school calendar has 6 inclement weather days built in. If these days are not needed during the year, they will be canceled and the school year will end early.

## 18. Health Policies

### *Medical Forms, Immunizations and Screenings*

The Missouri Department of Health requires each child to have a yearly medical examination and a prescribed series of tests, screening, and immunizations. This must be received before your child begins school. This form should be updated as needed each year. All students should have a vision and hearing screening upon entering school. Families who choose not to immunize their children are required to have a religious exemption form on file, and may be excluded from school in the event of a local outbreak of certain diseases.

### *Medication*

We dispense medication to children under necessary circumstances. All medications (prescribed or over-the-counter) must be handed to an administrator in the office by the parent, and the parent must complete a Medication Authorization Form. Medications are kept in the McGurk's Room medicine cabinet or office during the day, with administered doses tracked on the Medication Authorization Form.

For safety reasons, we ask that families not store medication, including inhalers or cough drops, in student backpacks, etc. An exception would be students who wish to self-administer medications such as inhalers or epipens. Self-administration can only happen with written consent from parents and a physician and for students who can demonstrate an ability to self-administer properly. See the office for more details.

The state department of childcare licensure considers sunscreen, diaper cream, etc. to be medications and families in the early childhood program may be asked to sign a blanket consent form allowing these routine over-the-counter items to be applied to their children as needed.

### *Allergy Policy*

Parents are asked to identify student allergies on enrollment forms annually so the school is able to identify all students with allergies. Students with allergies that rise to the level of disability as defined by law will be accommodated in accordance with school policies and procedures pertaining to the identification and accommodation of students with disabilities. An Individualized Health Plan (IHP), including an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) may be developed for students with allergies that do not rise to the level of a disability.

All staff members are required to follow any 504 Plan or IHP/EAP developed for a student by the School. Staff members shall be mindful in use of any air fresheners, oils, incense or other such items intended to add fragrance to any school facilities, as these can trigger allergies. Staff members are prohibited from using cleaning materials or other chemicals except those provided by the school. Staff members will receive annual training about allergies. Information about individual students' allergies will be shared with staff and others only to the extent authorized by the parent or as otherwise permitted by law. Staff members will take all allergy medications and information with them when the class leaves the building for field trips and other activities.

The school prepares lunch daily for students. Parents of students with allergies should consult with the Culinary Arts Teacher about ingredients served for lunch and determine if/how that student should participate in the lunch program.

### *Illness*

Please notify the administration if your child is diagnosed with a contagious disease. We can then use this information to inform parents of the potential illness and symptoms to look for in their children.

Children who are ill should be kept at home. We will not accept sick children and will request that a child who looks or acts sick be picked up promptly.

The school will not allow students or staff to enter/remain in the building when ill. Policies around covid, flu and other contagious illnesses will be updated regularly to comply with city health department and CDC recommendations.

Students or staff with the following symptoms (not explained by other causes) will be sent home:

- Fever of 100.4 or higher
- Sudden loss of sense of taste or smell
- Cough
- Runny nose, congestion
- Shortness of breath
- Achiness
- Headache
- Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea

People sent home with these symptoms will consult with the school and, if necessary, their physician and/or the Health Department to determine when to return to school. If a student or staff member tests positive for coronavirus, that individual will be excluded from the

building per school policy. In addition, the school will work with the Health Department to determine others who may need to quarantine based on proximity to that individual and vaccination status.

Since studies indicate that children are most likely to contract covid from a family member, if a parent, sibling or other household member tests positive, the student should stay home for 5 days and test negative before returning.

Students developing any symptoms of covid or other communicable illnesses at school will be isolated and parents notified immediately for pick up. Parents are asked to have a reliable plan for prompt pick up so that sick students are not spending excessive time in the school building.

Parents are asked to call and inform the school when their child will be out due to illness.

While families will not be notified of every minor illness in their child's classroom, the school will inform parents if a student or staff member in their child's class tests positive for covid-19 or another significant communicable condition such as strep throat, flu or hand-foot-and-mouth disease.

#### *Head Lice*

Students found to have live head lice will need to be picked up from school and thoroughly treated. Students who have been treated and are found to have nits (eggs) will need to be retreated after 10 days, but can be at school during this time, provided they do not have live lice. While many alternative treatments exist for head lice, we ask that students be treated with medically recognized products such as Rid. Any family having lice should notify the school so that all families can be on the alert.

#### *Accidents and Injuries*

Parents are informed through a written Accident Report of any notable injury incurred during the day, and copies of those reports are kept in the students' files. Parents will be called immediately for more serious injuries including any head injury.

## 19. Contacting the School

Contact Eleanor White or another administrator with information about illness, absence or early pick-up or any questions. Contact can be made through written notes, email, or phone call/message. Eleanor's email is [eleanor.white@soulardschool.org](mailto:eleanor.white@soulardschool.org), and the school phone number is 865-2799. While you may wish to include teachers in email correspondence about absences, etc, they may not have the chance to check email throughout the day – please direct such correspondence primarily to the office.

## 20. Communication with the School Community

The majority of the school's communication with families is done via email, using the "everyone" and classroom email lists, as well as individual parent emails. Please make sure that the email address you provide the school is one you check daily. If you need paper copies of notifications and newsletters, please contact the office and your child's teachers. In the event of an urgent situation, families will be contacted by phone.

The "everyone" email list is designed to be a one-way street, allowing administrators to send messages to everyone. While you can reply directly to that administrator, you cannot "reply all."

Our class email lists are set up to facilitate communication between parents and teachers, and parents can both receive and send messages to all in their class. You are welcome to use class email lists to communicate with the whole class for social purposes as well as class projects. You must be on the class email list to send emails to it. Some classes as noted have "teachers.classroom@" emails that go to all the teachers in that room, while "classroom@" lists go to all parents and teachers in that room.

Please be respectful when using class email lists and avoid frivolous emails. If you have concerns or questions about curriculum or teaching, please contact the teacher or administration directly.

2023-24 Class email lists:

- Jr. Pre-K/Sprouts - sprouts@soulardschool.org, teachers.sprouts@soulardschool.org
- Sr. Pre-K/Quietude - quietude@soulardschool.org, teachers.quietude@soulardschool.org
- Mums/KG - mums@soulardschool.org
- Enigma/1st grade - enigma@soulardschool.org
- Alchemy/2nd - alchemy@soulardschool.org
- Thrive/3rd - thrive@soulardschool.org
- Mosaic/4th - mosaic.@soulardschool.org
- Explorer/5th - explorer@soulardschool.org

## 21. Communicating with Two-Household Families

Many families at TSS have two (or more) households, due to divorce, separation, etc. It is our expectation that all custodial parents, step-parents, etc. participate fully in their child's school experience. It is our school policy to communicate openly with both parents simultaneously whenever possible.

It is also our general policy to encourage all parents and step-parents to attend conferences together, even in cases of divorce or separation. It is important for parents to hear consistent information regarding their child's progress, development, and needs.

However, we recognize that there are times when it is not productive to have parents together for conferences. If you feel that your family requires separate conferences or other special communication considerations, please contact the Principal prior to conferences. To support consistency and proactively prevent miscommunication, an administrator will be present at each conference and in the case of parent-teacher-student conferences (second trimester), the student will be asked to attend both conferences.

## 22. Emergency & Safety Policies

Our school building is a secure place. Video cameras and a door release system ensure limited access to the building for student safety, while a fenced yard keeps them safe while at recess. Classrooms are equipped with a telephone system allowing for external calls as well as internal calls to the office or school-wide paging in case emergency assistance is needed. All classrooms and offices have doors that can be quickly secured from the inside.

Teachers and staff members are informed at the start of each year about updated Fire, Tornado and Alert ("intruder") procedures, and procedures are practiced with students regularly. Each classroom has a list of emergency procedures, student emergency contacts, and a map of exit routes on hand, and teachers will be provided with training on emergency drills annually.

The school's administration stays connected to news media and Soulard social media sites to learn of any news event that could affect our school/neighborhood/region's safety. If we feel the school is at risk in any way we will contact families by phone and email and ask that parents pick up their children immediately.

If we feel there is a threat to any of our buildings or nearby we will ensure all entrances to the buildings and classrooms are locked, window shades are closed and students are secure within the school.

The Administration is always able to contact classes at all campuses (1110, 1111, 1113 Victor and Girls/Boys Club) by phone, and if circumstances require, will travel to their building to support staff.

If you feel that it will be a challenge for you to get to the school quickly in an emergency, please have a plan in place for another family member/friend to pick your child up should there be an unexpected school closing. In the event of an early closure, Administrators will remain in the building until all children are picked up.

It is the responsibility of school administrators and the Board of Directors to ensure the safety of students and staff while at school, and to ensure a learning environment free of disruptions that interfere with daily routines and learning. If any employee, parent or visitor is disruptive, physically or verbally aggressive, or suspected to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, he or she will be asked to leave school property. Depending upon the severity of the incident, access to school property may be limited or denied over an extended period of time.

As mandated reporters under Missouri Law, it is our policy to not release children to parent/guardian care if child safety is an immediate concern. Staff are within their rights to seek administrative support when they suspect, for any reason, that child safety is in question. Administrators will immediately respond, and may notify the Department of Family Services or the necessary authorities if warranted.

### 23. Parent, Grandparent and Community Members in the Building

We strive to create a warm, welcoming environment for our students and our families, and parental involvement is key. All families are encouraged to volunteer in a variety of ways throughout the school year. Our Volunteer Rally in September helps connect parents, grandparents and others with volunteer opportunities both during and outside the school day.

Volunteers who will be working in the school during the school day generally need to be background checked. This includes:

- Classroom volunteers
- Kitchen volunteers
- Field trip chaperones
- Volunteers running/assisting with afterschool clubs (sports coaches will follow YMCA policies)

Background checks include both Missouri State Highway Patrol fingerprinting and registration with the Missouri Childcare Safety Registry. Volunteers only need to go through the volunteer process once, and will remain in our background check system as long as their (grand)child is enrolled at the school or until they request to be removed.

Parents, guardians, or others involved in a child's education who are registered sex offenders must notify the school upon enrollment. Per board policy, guidelines for their participation in school life will be laid out in advance by administration and will not include volunteering or participating in school-sponsored activities such as clubs, field trips or sports team coaching. People on the sex offender list may still participate in parent conferences, pick up their children from the driveway or front door, and attend concerts.

### 24. Classroom Visits & Visitors

As a school policy, parents are always welcome to visit their child's classroom, whether as an observer, presenter or participant in a lesson. Please check with the office and your child's teachers prior to scheduling any visit.

Visitors are required to sign in at the office upon arrival. Visitors should enter through the Victor Street door and wear a visitor badge during their visit.

### 25. Field Trips

Off-campus experiences enhance student learning at all grade levels. The field trip release

form completed by parents at the start of each school year provides permission for all field trips. Teachers will notify parents prior to any field trip that takes students more than a few blocks from school.

Transportation for field trips may be by school bus or parent/staff drivers. All parent/staff drivers must have up-to-date auto insurance and complete a Volunteer/Employee Driver Agreement. They must also have a fingerprint background check on file. All students under age 8 must have a car/booster seat appropriate for their age, and all older students must wear seat belts.

Volunteer drivers are asked to adhere to the teacher itinerary for the trip. Drivers should not make any additional stops with students in the car unless essential (gas). In addition, chaperones are asked not to purchase items for their own children or others, such as snacks or gifts, unless approved by the teacher.

## 26. Parent Conferences

Parent conferences are scheduled at the end of the first two trimesters. The second trimester conferences include the student (elementary only). At this time parents will receive their child's trimester report. Parents are welcome to schedule additional meetings with teachers or administrators at any time throughout the year. Divorced/separated parents, see policy above regarding "Communications with Two-Household Families" for guidance on requesting separate conferences.

## 27. Student Assemblies

Elementary student assemblies provide an opportunity for our students to come together as a school for celebrations, presentations, and discussions. Assemblies are held monthly (schedule TBA) and will be a time for classes to present on their learning, as well as for school discussions, announcements and celebrations, including Birthday Books (see below).

## 28. Celebrations

The Soulard School celebrates the individuality of each child, and for birthdays we choose to recognize each child in a unique way. In lieu of birthday treats, elementary students are invited to choose a "Birthday Book" to donate to the school. Please help your child choose a book that reflects her/his personality or interests - it can be new or used. Due to our limited library space and a desire to focus on high quality children's literature, we ask that books related to pop culture not be shared at school. Our definition of this is: If a book was a book first and later became a movie or toy, it is likely to be appropriate for The Soulard School. If a book was a movie, toy or video game first and later became a book, it is not likely to be appropriate.

A bookplate will be provided by the school for your child to fill out and decorate, and books will be shared within the classroom on your child's birthday. Then, once a month, all of the birthdays in the school will be recognized in an assembly where each student may



present their book to the school and share why they chose it. August birthdays will be celebrated in September, and June and July birthdays will be celebrated in May.

*We ask that students not bring treats to share for their birthdays.*

*Pre-K teachers will communicate with families about special birthday traditions in their classrooms.*

The school typically does not celebrate commercial or religious holidays during the school day, and teachers work with parent room coordinators to create celebrations that reflect the school's values including friendships, gratitude and healthy eating. In addition, the Parent Association hosts several social gatherings for families including the Harvest Party and School Birthday Party.

Each family will receive a "Buzz Book" in the fall, listing all the students in The Soulard School, along with their addresses and parent emails and phone numbers. We have found that mailing/emailing invitations to birthday parties is the most reliable way to ensure that none are lost. Please do not bring/send invitations to school for distribution. You can also use the class email lists for parties and other social events. See "Communication with the School Community" section above for more information.

## 29. Toys and Items from Home

Children may not bring toys, trading cards, electronics (including phones), etc. to school. Some classes may choose to have sharing days, and your child's teacher will notify you of the policy for their classroom. If a student needs an item after school (a cell phone, sports equipment, etc.), please give it to their teacher or the office at the start of the day for safekeeping.

Pre-K teachers will share policies regarding stuffed animals, etc for nap time.

## 30. Weapons - Real and Pretend

Respect is at the core of our philosophy; respect for each person, for life and for themselves. In light of this, weapons of any kind (toy, real or imaginary) have no place at school or in a child's play. Additionally, and in particular for the pre-operational learner (2-6 years), violent media images are just as confusing and destructive.

Employees, parents and visitors, with the exception of law enforcement officials, are not permitted to carry open or concealed weapons within the school grounds or at school events or field trips.

## 31. Attire & Recess Weather Policy

Soulard School does not have a dress code, but asks that all students dress daily in clothes that are comfortable and able to get dirty through activities and play. Clothing should not

contain inappropriate imagery or language and should not be a distraction to learning.

We encourage children to play outdoors on a daily basis. Please be sure that your child is dressed appropriately for outdoor play, especially in cold or wet weather. During the winter, students will go out for recess if the wind chill is above 10 degrees. Hats, gloves and a heavy coat are required on a daily basis. They will also go out if it is raining lightly. Many classes remove their shoes as they enter the building daily and students are welcome to bring slippers to wear during the day, which may be kept at school. Please be sure that all of your child's belongings are labeled.

*P.E. Attire*

P.E. is scheduled for each elementary class once a week. Parents will be provided a schedule of P.E. days at the start of the year. *Tennis shoes are required for P.E.* If dresses are worn on P.E. days, please make sure your child also wears shorts or pants underneath. P.E. may take place indoors or out, so weather-appropriate clothing is a must.

### 32. Homework Policy

In considering both content and quantity, and with respect to our philosophy and recognized research in the field of homework, The Soulard School maintains the following guidelines about homework:

- Homework should never be a hindrance to the crucial learning that comes naturally and daily with home and family. The Soulard School respects the family as the student's primary, and most important relationship.
- Homework is not "graded," though students are evaluated on the rate they turn in homework assignments. While meaningful experiences should include family, parents are not expected to correct a student's work. In fact, this hinders the teacher's ability to accurately assess the value of the homework for the student. Parents are encouraged to establish routines and an environment that support the student in his/her homework efforts without overshadowing the student's growth in self-management.
- As a student gets older, homework also teaches organization, discipline, and time-management in preparation for middle and high school.
- Homework is generally not assigned on weekends – teachers strive to assign projects ahead of time so parents are able to find a balance between their family's schedule and their child's academic needs.

Homework by grade level:

Grade	Time	Tasks	Purpose
K-1	Less than 1 hour/week plus reading & violin	30 min. violin practice/week Nightly reading independently or with a parent	Independent violin and reading practice reinforce these skills at home. Other optional tasks tie directly to school

		Optional homework such as playing math games with family	curriculum and are not "worksheets." They are not graded.
2-3	Up to 30 minutes/school night, plus independent reading & violin	30 min. violin practice/week Independent reading Other work including spelling words, math practice and long-term projects	Reinforce class work, extend classroom studies through at home projects
4-5	Up to 45 minutes/school night, plus independent reading & violin	30 min. violin practice/week Independent reading with possible book reports and other reading extensions Other work including math practice and long-term projects/reports	Reinforce class work, extend classroom studies through at home projects

### 33. Human Sexuality Curriculum

The Soulard School provides ongoing education for students on human development and healthy relationships. This includes the language of private body, body safety, consent, and advocacy throughout the elementary grades, as well as the anatomically-correct terms for the male and female body. This also includes developmentally-appropriate conversations as it relates to diversity and inclusion, and concepts of social justice, including gender, biological sex, gender identity, gender expression, cisgender, transgender, binary and non-binary, and allyship.

At the upper grades (4th and 5th) instruction will be provided on human reproduction and topics around puberty, specifically the structure and function of the reproductive system, and the physical, emotional, and social changes that occur in puberty.

Families with students in the upper grades will be informed ahead of time about the content of any lessons about human sexuality and puberty and be given the chance to observe the lesson or have their children opt out of participation.

### 34. Virtual Instruction Program

As students at a public charter school, elementary students may be eligible to participate in free virtual (online) instruction as part of, in place of, or in addition to daily instruction under MOCAP. Please contact the office for more information on this program.

Note that any temporary switch from in-person to distance learning due to covid is not a virtual program under Missouri statute, as students remain connected to their school peers and teachers and engage in a variety of learning activities both on and off screens.

### 35. Internet Safety and Student Technology Use Agreement

All students may use technology as part of classroom instruction, with the goal of enhancing instruction and aiding students in documenting, sharing and presenting their learning. An Internet firewall is in place to protect students from inappropriate content, and students are monitored by staff while using technology. Programs and apps are evaluated for quality and only installed on student technology by the school's Technology Coordinator.

Additionally, all elementary students will receive internet safety training annually. Parents and students will be asked to review and sign a technology use agreement. Under the terms of the tech contract, students acknowledge their role:

I acknowledge that I understand and will follow the expectations listed below. I recognize that use of my school's technology is a privilege, not a right. If I fail to meet the expectations, it will result in consequences and could ultimately result in losing my technology privileges.

#### EXPECTATIONS

I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR MY EMAIL ACCOUNT.

- I will not give my email password to anyone.
- I will only use my email account for school related communication and assignments.
- I understand that my use of my email account is not private and that all of my activity, emails, and documents, are subject to review and monitoring by The Soulard School staff.

I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR MY LANGUAGE AND BEHAVIOR WHEN USING SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY.

- I will only use language on the Internet and in my school email that I would use with my teachers.
- I will only look for web pages with pictures, words, videos, and sounds that are appropriate for school.
- I will not download any apps or files including music, videos, and games unless my teacher gives me permission.

I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR MY PERSONAL SAFETY ONLINE.

- I will practice safety by not sharing personal information, including my name, phone number, address, birthday, or pictures over the Internet without adult permission.

I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR PROTECTING OTHER PEOPLE'S WORK AND PROPERTY ONLINE.

- I will not plagiarize (use information as my own, without citing the original creator) content, including words or images, that I found on the Internet.
- I understand the research I conduct via the Internet should be appropriately cited, giving credit to the original author.

I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR PROTECTING MY SCHOOL'S TECHNOLOGY AND DEVICES.

- I will protect my school's property by using and handling all technology and devices safely and carefully.

Teachers reserve the right to enforce consequences as needed, including a referral to administration.

### 36. Meeting the Needs of Special Student Populations

#### *Services for Students with Disabilities*

The school will develop an individualized educational plan (IEP) for each elementary student with a qualifying disability who needs special educational services pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and/or an accommodation plan, if necessary, for students who are qualified pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

The School will provide special education and/or related services to elementary students with disabilities in accordance with applicable law, including the IDEA and its amendments, Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Missouri's State Plan for Part B. For more information on the school's policies and procedures in assessing and serving students with special needs, including the appeals process, please contact the office.

Student in the Pre-K program with identified special needs or suspected developmental delays may receive evaluation and services through Soulard School. Staff will assist and support this process.

#### *At-Risk Students*

As provided by state and federal guidelines and funds, the elementary school will utilize funds from ESEA, Title 1 and state programs to infuse alternative education strategies into all areas of regular education to meet the needs of students at risk of academic failure due to disadvantaged backgrounds.

#### *Homeless or Migrant Students*

The school guarantees a safe, welcoming environment, regardless of consistent housing. If a student is determined to be migrant or homeless, and there is availability within the grade(s), the student will be enrolled without the typically required enrollment paperwork. Other resources such as transportation will be provided for the student as needed, and the school will assist the student in locating the necessary resources for positive academic and developmental outcomes.

#### *English Language Learners*

The school welcomes students from all language backgrounds. Upon enrollment, parents are asked to identify if their child speaks another language other than English at home. A follow-up parent survey for elementary students helps determine if the student may need additional support in developing English-language skills in an academic setting under federal guidelines.

#### *Gifted Students*

The school will take steps to ensure that students who are academically gifted are provided with an appropriate and challenging education across subject matters. Ongoing

professional development will ensure that staff are prepared to work with all student populations, including gifted students.

### 37. Food Programs

#### *Philosophy*

Family style lunches are an extension of our emphasis on the social-emotional components of education and development. The dining room is a wonderful venue for learning opportunities in a natural context. This setting encourages interpersonal development focused on respect for others and conversation. We encourage respectful social behavior within a community including: quiet appropriate conversation; waiting until everyone is seated and served to begin eating; gratitude for the meal and those who prepared it, including sampling each dish; cleaning up your area when finished; and waiting until most others at the table are finished to be excused.

Healthful meals are provided daily free of cost to all pre-k and elementary students. Keeping in mind student allergies and dietary restrictions, we do not serve food containing peanuts or tree nuts, and a vegetarian option is always available. *We ask that all students participate in the lunch program and not bring lunches from home.* If you have a concern about your child's dietary needs (especially allergies), please contact the school prior to the start of the school year.

#### *Dining Procedures for 2023-24*

All classes (except Sprouts Jr. Pre-K) will eat in the lunchroom, spread out across 3 lunch periods. Quietude Sr. Pre-K will eat at their own tables, but other classes may mix (2-3 grades). There will be a maximum of 70 students in the lunchroom at a time, with tables cleaned and sanitized between lunches.

Students are assigned to a lunch table. They are given the option of water or milk to drink, and food is served family-style, with students passing bowls around and serving themselves an appropriate amount. Each person is expected to sample and taste each dish. A teacher facilitator will sit at most tables to help encourage appropriate table manners, portion servings, and conversation. Seconds will be provided if available. A variety of dishes are prepared for each meal to take into account student food preferences. It is our desire that no child leaves hungry.

At the end of the lunch period, each person clears their dishes, and Culinary Arts staff and volunteers clean the lunchroom and wash dishes. Student "lunch helpers" in upper grades may be asked to help with clean up tasks.

#### *Morning and Afternoon Snacks*

The school does not provide breakfast. The school provides all Pre-K and Elementary students in school with a healthy morning snack. Pre-K and aftercare students will also be offered an afternoon snack. Elementary students have the option of bringing an afternoon snack from home - no drinks or candy please.

Snacks provided by school will typically consist of a fruit or vegetable and a grain/carbohydrate or protein. If you have concerns about snack for your child due to allergies or other dietary restrictions, please contact Sarah Kate ([sarahkate.buckles@soulardschool.org](mailto:sarahkate.buckles@soulardschool.org)).

### 38. Beforecare and Aftercare

Beforecare is available for pre-k and elementary students from 7:00-8:15, and aftercare is from 3:30-6:00. Please register for this program prior to the start of the school year. Requests for drop-in care should be made to the office by phone or to the SEC Program Director (Amy Cross). The daily rate for pre-k and elementary is \$12. Payment should be made in advance. Arrangements made less than 24 hours prior to the date needed will be charged \$16/day. This rate also applies to students who are sent to aftercare after 3:45 because their parents are running late. Aftercare is often fully enrolled, and requests for drop-in care may not be granted depending on enrollment for that day.

Students in aftercare will be provided with a healthy snack as part of their aftercare tuition.

Students in aftercare must be picked up by 6:00. If you will be late, please call the school and leave a message if there is no answer. Families picking up late will be subject to late fees.

Late pick-up fees: \$15 for pick-up after 6:05, plus \$1/minute after that, based on the school's clocks.

All aftercare students must be signed out by an adult before leaving the building.

Aftercare is also available at Gene Slay's Girls & Boys Club across the street. Contact them at (314) 772-5661 for more information. TSS students attending GSGBC will be walked across the street by a staff member daily.

### 39. Family Expectations

The Soulard School thrives because of the dedicated members of the school community. We depend on the active support of the staff, teachers, school partners and you - the families of our students. Your active participation in school life allows us to focus the school's resources on fulfilling its mission of being able to offer an exceptional education that is accessible to all.

*In order for the Soulard School to be a success we ask the following of our families:*

- Ensure that your child is at school on time daily and ready to learn.
- Attend/view the three required annual school meetings: Parent Partnership Night and Curriculum Night in September and the State of Learning in January.

- Participate in 1st and 2nd trimester parent-teacher conferences.
- Contribute 3 hours a month or 27-30 hours per year of volunteer time towards Soulard School projects. The September Parent Partnership Night provides many ways to get involved.

*We also encourage you to:*

- Make a contribution to the Annual Fund Campaign each year. All gifts, of any size, make a difference.
- Support fundraising events for both the school and the Parent Association.
- Attend school-related functions, including school concerts and Parent Association-sponsored social events.
- Stay informed by reading all school-related communications including our weekly e-newsletters, notes from the classroom teachers and other bulletins.

### 39. Enrollment, Enrollment Changes and Re-enrollment

#### *Pre-K Admissions*

See website for details on pre-k admissions processes:

<https://www.soulardschool.org/early-childhood-admissions>

New students entering Sr. Pre-K must be toilet trained and using the bathroom independently prior to beginning the school year.

Pre-K families are required to pay a 10% tuition deposit upon enrollment/re-enrollment to secure their spot for the following year. This deposit is applied to the next year's tuition and is non-refundable.

#### *Elementary Admissions*

See website for details on elementary admissions processes:

<https://www.soulardschool.org/elementary-admissions>

Enrollment closes each year at end of first trimester (early November). The school typically cannot add new students after that date.

All families wishing to enter kindergarten must apply and, if there are more applicants than spots, participate in a lottery each spring to determine selection. Siblings of currently enrolled elementary students, as well as eligible children of staff are given priority in enrollment.

#### *Re-Enrollment:*



Current elementary and pre-k families are asked each January whether they intend to re-enroll their children for the following school year. As we base our new enrollment and teacher hiring/assignments/contracts on this information, it is crucial that this be as accurate as possible. If you are uncertain about your re-enrollment plans, please speak with an administrator.

*Withdrawal:*

At times, a family's circumstances are such that they need to withdraw a student from the school mid-year. Please notify the office if your child is withdrawing so that we can ensure that records are transferred to their new school. Elementary families who move out of the City mid-year may remain enrolled through the end of the semester of their move.

It is the school's policy that Pre-K families must give 30 days' notice of their intent to withdraw. If a family has not provided that notice, their tuition contract will end 30 days after their child's last day. This applies to both pre-paid tuition and tuition paid through a monthly Brightwheel agreement. Any refund would not include the deposit.

#### 40. The Soulard School Parent Association

The purpose of The Soulard School Parent Association ("PA") is to enhance the educational experience of our children by supporting the overall mission of The Soulard School. Each year, the PA does this by facilitating communication among students, faculty and parents, and by carrying out specific projects to benefit the school.

An important aspect of the PA's work is building a strong school community through volunteer work, fundraising and special events. The PA hosts parties like the "Welcome Back Picnic" and the School's Birthday Party. It organizes or supports participation in fundraisers like Oktoberfest. It provides babysitting & pizza at schoolwide meetings so parents don't miss important information. It provides general support to teachers and hosts lunch for them on Records Days. These are just a few of the ways the PA supports our kids by supporting their school.

The 2023-24 PA Officers:

Co-Presidents – Virgil Hall & Denise Heinz  
Vice President – Brandee Zahner  
Treasurer- Dionna Hall  
Co-Secretaries – Amber Nelson  
Social Events - Dionna Hall & OPEN  
DEIB - Liz Frymire  
Oktoberfest Lead - Erin Turner  
Lead Parent Coordinator - Zinnia Ron-Ferguson & Carly Main

In addition, 1-2 parents from each classroom serve as Room Coordinators for the school year. Room Coordinators work with the teacher and other parents to organize class field trips and activities. They also work to recruit parent volunteers for class projects and school

events.

Parental involvement is a major factor in the success of children's school experience. All parents and guardians of students at The Soulard School are automatically members of the PA, and there are countless ways to be involved. Become a Room Coordinator; pitch in on a fundraiser; help the PA carry on school traditions or reimagine them. Or all of the above! Watch the calendar and make it a priority to be involved.

#### 41. The Soulard School & Soulard Education Center Boards of Directors

The purpose of The Soulard School (TSS) Board of Directors is to oversee and work in tandem with the school administration in matters including fiscal management, long-range planning, fundraising and capital improvements. The Board holds the charter for the school, and ensures that all facets of the charter are being adhered to.

The TSS Board meets monthly and includes representatives of the parent body and the community. TSS board meetings are open to the public. For more information about the Board, see an administrator.

The 2023-24 Soulard School Board of Directors:

President – Jay DeLong  
Secretary - Steve Groves  
Members:  
    Jamie Boyer  
    Pam Retzlaff

The purpose of The Soulard Education Center Board of Directors is to oversee and work in tandem with the SEC school administration in matters including fiscal management, long-range planning, fundraising and capital improvements. The SEC's fundraising efforts also support The Soulard School.

The Board meets monthly and includes representatives of the parent body and the community. For more information about the Board, see an administrator.

The 2023-24 Soulard Education Center Board of Directors:

President – Jim Holloran  
Members:  
    Beth Hyser  
    Marybeth Wallace  
    John Wilber

#### 42. Notifications Regarding Federal Programs

*A. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)/Parents Right to Know*

Our school is required to inform you of information that you, according to the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (Public Law 114-95), have the right to know. Upon your request, we are required to provide to you in a timely manner the following information:

- Whether your student's teacher has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
- Whether your student's teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
- Whether your student's teacher is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.
- Whether your child is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.

In addition to the information that parents may request, a building receiving Title 1.A funds must provide to each Individual parent:

- Information on the level of achievement and academic growth of your student, if applicable and available, on each of the State academic assessments required under Title 1.A.
- Timely notice that your student has been assigned, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who has not met applicable State certification or licensure requirements at the grade level and subject area in which the teacher has been assigned.

### *Complaint Procedures*

The following guide explains how to file a complaint about any of the programs that are administered by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) under the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA)

- **General Information**
  - What is a complaint under ESSA?
    - For these purposes, a complaint is a written allegation that a local education agency (LEA, the charter school) or DESE has violated a federal statute or regulation that applies to a program under ESSA.
  - Who may file a complaint?
    - Any individual or organization may file a complaint.
  - How can a complaint be filed?
    - Complaints can be filed with the school, directed to the Principal and/or Executive Director, or with DESE.
- **Complaints Filed with the LEA (the charter school)**
  - How will a complaint filed with the LEA be investigated?

- Complaints filed with the LEA are to be investigated and attempted to be resolved according to the locally developed and adopted procedures.
      - What happens if the complaint is not resolved at the local level?
        - A complaint not resolved at the local level may be appealed to DESE.
  - Complaints Filed with DESE
    - How can a complaint be filed with DESE?
      - A complaint filed with DESE must be a written, signed statement that includes:
        - A statement that a requirement that applies to the ESSA program has been violated by the LEA or DESE, and
        - The facts on which the statement is based and the specific requirement allegedly violated.
    - How will a complaint filed with DESE be investigated?
      - The investigation and complaint resolution proceedings will be completed within a time limit of 45 calendar days. That time limit can be extended by the agreement of all parties.
        - The following activities will occur in the investigation:
          - Record. A written record of the investigation will be kept.
          - Notification of LEA. The LEA will be notified of the complaint within 5 days of the complaint being filed.
          - Resolution at LEA. The LEA will then initiate its local complaint procedures in an effort to first resolve the complaint at the local level.
          - Report by the LEA. Within 35 days of the complaint being filed, the LEA will submit a written summary of the LEA investigation and complaint resolution. This report is considered public record and may be made available to parents, teachers, and other members of the general public.
          - Verification. Within 5 days of receiving the written summary of complaint resolution, DESE will verify the resolution of the complaint through an on-site visit, letter, or phone call(s).
          - Appeal. The complainant or the LEA may appeal the decision of DESE to the U.S. Department of Education.
  - Appeals
    - How will appeals to DESE be investigated?
      - DESE will initiate an investigation within 10 days, which will be concluded within 30 days from the day of the appeal. This investigation may be continued beyond the 30 days limit at the

discretion of DESE. At the conclusion of the investigation, DESE will communicate the decision and reasons for the decision to the complainant and the LEA. Recommendations and details of the decision are to be implemented within 15 days of the decision being delivered to the LEA.

- What happens if the complaint is not resolved at the state level (DESE)?
  - The complainant or the LEA may appeal the decision of DESE to the U.S. Department of Education.

### *B. School, Parent, and Family Engagement Policy*

The school strives to establish open lines of communication at all levels within the school, and to maximize parent engagement. In support of strengthening student academic achievement, each school that receives Title I, Part A funds must develop jointly with, agree on with, and distribute to, parents of participating children a written parental involvement policy that contains information required by section 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (parental involvement policy).

#### GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

The Soulard School agrees to implement the following requirements:

- Consistent with section 1118, the school will work to ensure that parental involvement policies meet the requirements of section 1118 of the ESEA, and each include, as a component, a school-parent compact consistent with section 1118(d) of the ESEA. (See *School-Parent Compact* below)
- Schools will notify parents of the policy in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand. The policy will be made available to the local community and updated periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school.
- In carrying out the Title I, Part A, parental involvement requirements, to the extent practicable, the school will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports required under section 1111 of the ESEA in an understandable and uniform format and including alternative formats upon request and, to the extent practicable, in language parents understand.
- If the school-wide program plan for Title I, Part A, developed under section 1114(b) of the ESEA, is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the school will submit

any parent comments with the plan when the school submits the plan to the local educational agency (school district).

- The school will involve the parents of children served in Title I, Part A schools in decisions about how the 1 percent of Title I, Part A funds reserved for parental involvement is spent, and will ensure that not less than 95 percent of the 1 percent reserved goes directly to the schools. (Not applicable to Soulard School for 2023-24).
- The school will build its own and the parent's capacity for strong parental involvement, in order to ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement.
- The school will provide other reasonable support for parental involvement activities under section 1118 of the ESEA as the parents may request.
- The school will be governed by the following statutory definition of parental involvement, and will carry out programs, activities, and procedures in accordance with this definition:

*Parental involvement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring—*

*(A) that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning;*

*(B) that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school*

*(C) that parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child;*

*(D) the carrying out of other activities, such as those described in section 1118 of the ESEA*

## REQUIRED SCHOOL PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT POLICY COMPONENTS

1. The Soulard School will take the following actions to involve parents in the joint development of its school parental involvement plan under section 1118 of the ESEA:  
*At least two parent participants will assist in the development of the school parental*

*involvement plan. Additionally, two community presentations in conjunction with Curriculum Night and Second Trimester Conferences will be held in which the policy is shared, and feedback is invited.*

2. The Soulard School will take the following actions to involve parents in the process of school review and improvement under section 1116 of the ESEA: *Two community presentations in conjunction with Curriculum Night and Second Trimester Conferences will be held in which the policy is shared, and feedback is invited. Suggestions will be documented, and decisions made as to adapt for the following school year.*

3. The Soulard School will hold an annual meeting to inform parents of the school's participation in Title I, Part A programs, and to explain the Title I, Part A requirements and the right of parents to be involved in Title I, Part A programs. The school will convene the meeting at a time convenient for parents and will offer a flexible number of additional parental involvement meetings, such as in the morning or evening, so that as many parents as possible are able to attend. The school will invite all parents of children participating in Title I, Part A programs to this meeting, and will encourage them to attend, by: *Parents will receive advanced notice of these meetings via school lines of communication, including classroom e-newsletters and school e-newsletters, posted fliers, and school messaging systems.*

4. The Soulard School will provide parents of participating children information in a timely manner about Title I, Part A programs that includes a description and explanation of the school's curriculum, the forms of academic assessment used to measure children's progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet by: *Hosting an annual Curriculum Night, including information in the parent handbook and on the school website, and being accessible to parents per meeting requests.*

5. The Soulard School will at the request of parents, provide opportunities for regular meetings for parents to formulate suggestions and to collaboratively participate, as appropriate, in decisions about the education of their children. The school will respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible by: *maintaining open lines of communication, sharing information in a timely manner, being accessible to parents per meeting requests, and hosting annual parent/teacher conferences, and parent/teacher/student conferences.*

6. The Soulard School will provide each parent an individual student report about the

performance of their child on the State assessment in at least math, language arts and reading.

7. The Soulard School will take the following actions to provide each parent timely notice when their child has been assigned or has been taught for four (4) or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified within the meaning of the term in section 200.56 of the Title I Final Regulations (67 Fed. Reg. 71710, December 2, 2002) by: *parent contact via face-to-face meeting, a phone call, or another form of direct communication.*

8. The Soulard School will provide assistance to parents of children served by the school, as appropriate, in understanding these topics: the state's academic content standards, the state's student academic achievement standards, the state and local academic assessments including alternate assessments, the requirements of Part A, how to monitor their child's progress, and how to work with educators.

9. The Soulard School will provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement, such as literacy training and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parental involvement, by: *hosting Curriculum Night and evening/weekend parent workshops, and/or connecting parents to resources.*

10. The Soulard School will, with the assistance of its parents, educate its teachers, pupil services personnel, principals and other staff in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to implement and coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents and schools, by: *Utilizing local resources and agencies for capacity building.*

11. The Soulard School will take the following actions to ensure that information related to the school and parent-programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to parents of participating children in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand: *providing school literature and information in an accessible way.*

#### DISCRETIONARY SCHOOL PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT POLICY COMPONENTS

The Soulard School will implement the following on a case-by-case basis to maximize parental involvement and participation in their children's



education:

- Arrange school meetings at a variety of times
- Conduct in-home conferences between teachers or other educators who work directly with participating children
- Arrange meetings with parents who are unable to attend conferences at school

## ADOPTION

This School Parental Involvement Policy has been developed jointly with, and agreed on with, parents of children participating in Title I, Part A programs, as evidenced by parent participation in initial development.

This policy will be in effect for the period from the first day to the last day of the 2022-2023 school year. The school will distribute this policy to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children on or before date Curriculum Night, Sept. 21, 2022.

### *C. School-Parent Compact*

Parents are our partners in The Soulard School education. The School-Parent Compact outlines shared responsibility in this partnership for improved academic achievement. This compact emphasizes the importance of open and meaningful dialogue, the sharing of information in timely and accessible ways, and the critical need for students to attend school consistently and on time.

The Soulard School and its staff will:

Provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the participating children to meet the Missouri Learning Standards.

Hold annual parent/teacher, and student/parent/teacher conferences

Provide parents with frequent reports on their child's progress

Be accessible to parents; communicate with parents in a timely manner in support of the student's academic achievement and wellbeing

Provide parents with opportunities to volunteer and participate and/or observe in their child's class

The Parents will:

Ensure their student is arriving to school on time, and attending school consistently

Communicate with staff in a timely manner in support of their child's academic achievement and wellbeing

Attend school events such as Curriculum Night, Volunteer Rally, and parent educational workshops

Permit their learners to participate in necessary activities and support plans as determined by achievement data, attendance, and teacher reports.

*D. Public Notice of Special Education under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*

All responsible public agencies are required to locate, evaluate, and identify children with disabilities who are under the jurisdiction of the agency, regardless of the severity of the disability, including children attending private schools, children who live outside the district but are attending a private school within the district, highly mobile children, such as migrant and homeless children, children who are wards of the state, and children who are suspected of having a disability and in need of special education even though they are advancing from grade to grade.

The Soulard School assures that it will provide a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) to all eligible children with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21 under its jurisdiction. Disabilities include autism, deaf/blindness, emotional disorders, hearing impairment and deafness, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairments, specific learning disabilities, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment/blindness and young child with a developmental delay.

The Soulard School assures that it will provide information and referral services necessary to assist the State in the implementation of early intervention services for infants and toddlers eligible for the Missouri First Steps program.

The Soulard School assures that personally identifiable information collected, used, or maintained by the agency for the purposes of identification, evaluation, placement or provision of FAPE of children with disabilities may be inspected and/or reviewed by their parents/guardians. Parents/guardians may request amendment to the educational record if the parent/guardian believes the record is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the privacy or other rights of their child. Parents have the right to file complaints with the U.S. Department of Education or the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education concerning alleged failures by the district to meet the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

The Soulard School has developed a Local Compliance Plan for the implementation of State Regulations for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This plan contains the agency's policies and procedures regarding storage, disclosure to third parties, retention and destruction of personally identifiable information and the agency's assurances that services are provided in compliance with the General Education Provision Act (GEPA). This plan may be reviewed upon written request.

This notice will be provided in native languages as appropriate.

*E. Parents' Bill of Rights re: parents with students with a disability*

As a parent of a child with a disability, you have the right to:

- Attend individualized education program (IEP) meetings and represent your child's interests.
- Have an advocate or expert present at the IEP meeting.
- Receive a copy of your child's evaluation, disagree with it, and request one independent educational evaluation (IEE) at public expense.
- Provide a written report from outside sources as part of the evaluation process.
- Examine all education records pertaining to your child and be provided with a copy of the IEP.
- Disagree with the decision of the IEP team and pursue complaint procedures, including: filing a child complaint with DESE, state paid mediation, have an impartial due process hearing, and appeal the due process decision to the court.
- Participate in review of the IEP and in any decision to change any aspects of the IEP, as well as receive a written notice of action before a change in your child's educational placement or the provision of a free and appropriate public education.
- Have your child placed in the least restrictive environment and in a general education classroom to the greatest extent appropriate.
- Request an accommodation to provide effective communications if you have limited English language proficiency.
- A free appropriate public education for your child with an IEP designed to meet your child's unique needs, which may include, but not be limited to, special education and related services, such as assistive technology devices and services; transportation; speech pathology services; audiology services; interpreting services; psychological services, including behavioral interventions; physical therapy; occupational therapy; recreation, including therapeutic recreation; counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling; orientation and mobility services; school health services; school nurse services; social work services; parent counseling and training; and, medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes.

#### 42. Missouri Read, Lead, Succeed Program

Starting in the 2023-24 school year, all public district and charter schools are required by state law (SB 681) to provide additional yearly testing in fall and spring for K-3rd graders to assess reading competency.

Students who are tested in fall and found to be at least one grade level behind in a reading skill will be termed to have a Substantial Reading Deficiency (SRD) and provided with a Reading Success Plan (RSD) by the school. The RSD will outline strategies that will be used by the school to help the student close their learning gap. Students will be re-assessed in spring to determine whether they have closed the gap or if additional support is needed.

Families will be informed if their child qualifies as having a SRD and will be provided with a copy of the RSD.

Reading skill areas:

- Phonemic awareness
- Phonics
- Vocabulary development
- Fluency
- Comprehension
- Overall lexile (reading) level

Please direct any questions about reading assessment to Principal Shenika Bishop.