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PRESCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK 2016-2017

Rainbow Community School
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WHO WE ARE



Our mission

We develop accomplished, confident, and creative learners who are prepared to be leaders in building a compassionate and environmentally sustainable world.

Our method

- We provide an engaging, nurturing learning environment to educate the whole child using the seven domains.
- We inspire academic excellence with a program in harmony with the stages of child development.
- We model within our community the kind of world in which we aspire to live.

The Heart of Rainbow

Connection to self: We grow through inner discovery.

Connection to community: We learn through relationships.

Connection to the natural world: We serve through stewardship.

Connection to the spiritual: We honor all that is sacred

The 7 Domains of the Whole Child



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The Twelve Guiding Principles of Rainbow Community School's Educational Model

Holistic Learning

Each child is unique and learns differently. The child is a whole human being; therefore, a complete education develops the child in all seven domains: spiritual, mental, social, natural, emotional, creative, and physical.

Harmonious Learning Environment

Children learn best in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe. Love and respect underlay each teacher's approach to skillful classroom management. The more students are engaged and on-task, the more they learn: We provide a secure learning environment by giving students the daily structure they need to feel grounded, with the flexibility to drive inspiration.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

Immersion in the arts expands the soul. Developing imagination also builds critical thinking skills. While there is a place for memorization and rote skill building, critical thinking is the foundation for building the future. Therefore, time for students to build hypothesis, observe, and evaluate fosters curiosity and problem-solving. Furthermore, children learn decision-making and leadership skills by exercising a voice in the classroom.

The Natural World and Sustainability

Through understanding nature, we understand ourselves. Therefore, the learning environment extends into the natural world and into the greater community, and children spend as much time outside as possible. Children who have a relationship with nature will take care of it.

Authentic Learning

The curriculum, based on thematic interdisciplinary learning, creates relevant connections for students. We inspire and empower through discovery, using experiential learning, inquiry learning, and real-world opportunities. In order to build confidence, students take risks and meet increasingly difficult challenges. Learning from failure teaches problem-solving and perseverance.

Research and Innovation

Our pedagogy adapts and evolves according to the current, applicable research and our own rich experience and innovation. We are free to borrow best-practices from great learning models such as Waldorf, Montessori, and others, to create a hybrid model that adapts to contemporary needs, brain research, and practicality.

A Balanced Approach to Learning and Assessment

Fostering a love of learning is the key to creating motivated learners. Our curriculum is designed to introduce skills at key developmental windows (while allowing flexibility for differences among individual children) and inspiring children to challenge themselves. Students are assessed using multi-faceted methods to create a well-rounded understanding of both the level each child is at and what type of learner each is.

Contemplation, Compassion, and Service

Contemplative methods support all aspects of development. We explore the world's religious traditions for spiritual insight, as we develop a higher consciousness. We build character and compassion through service to the larger community. The development of values is the most important lesson.

Meaningful Relationships

The relationship between the teacher and the student is the heart of education. Collaboration between students fosters ideas and social skills. Students become adept communicators. A parent is a child's first teacher, and we will honor you and communicate with you as such while supporting your growth as a parent.

Health and Wholeness

Healthy habits, in and out of the classroom, help children learn and grow into healthy adults. Physical education and kinesthetic learning are integrated into the curriculum. A safe learning environment builds confidence. Balance in all aspects of life brings contentment.

Community and Individuality

A strong community is diverse, supportive, and cooperative. Within our strong community, each child is treated as an individual. Their unique interests, talents, and learning styles are nurtured. Social and emotional learning builds competent world citizens.

Gifted Teachers

The most important component to our program is gifted teachers. Our teachers are trained in the best conventional practices *and* alternative, holistic practices, in order to provide a balanced approach to teaching. Educators must be excellent role models and passionate about life. Education is a sacred calling: Our goal is to make a positive difference in the life of your child, our community, and beyond.



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OUR PRESCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

The preschool child's rightful world and work is **play**. They need a safe and loving space to dream, imagine, create and experiment with self-expression. The preschool program nurtures this through storytelling, art, drama, music, yoga, dance and multicultural celebrations.

We believe that each child is a unique gift from the universe and should be cherished and respected. We allow the children to gravitate to the activities and experiences that attract their attention and interests, thereby fostering independence and supporting diverse patterns of growth.

Children are introduced to **community-centered living**. They are encouraged to work together in community, to make choices that benefit both the child and others and to respect themselves, each other and the environment.

We empower children by teaching **conflict resolution skills** that help them identify and express their own feelings and needs as well as listen and respond to the needs and feelings expressed by others.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF RAINBOW COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Founded in 1977 as Rainbow Mountain Children's School, a preschool program serving 15 families, Rainbow Community School now provides preschool, elementary and middle school education to more than 200 students. Our student population spans ages three through 5th grade in the main school, and 6th through 8th grade in our Omega Middle School Program. Though we have grown, we remain a community-centered school that seeks to nourish each child in the seven domains - spiritual, mental, social, natural, emotional, creative, and physical - using the multiple intelligence theory of Dr. Howard Gardner, Harvard Graduate School of Education, as a conceptual framework.

RCS provides a holistic curriculum in an open classroom setting. Creativity, imagination, critical and divergent thinking, problem solving, as well as appreciating a world of various cultural and spiritual values, are central to our curriculum. Community service learning and multi-age classroom experiences are also an integral part of our curriculum.

Our teaching integrates disciplines presenting math, the sciences, social studies, art, movement, reading and writing into one unit of study. Additionally RCS provides specialized instruction in music, both vocal and instrumental, 2d and 3d arts, physical education, and Spanish as a second language. Our low student-to-teacher ratio, about 11 to 1, allows us to nurture the individual growth of each child.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The RCS Board of Directors uses the Carver Policy Governance Model for its policies; Dynamic Governance is used for meeting facilitation and consent generation.

Briefly, policy governance separates issues of an organization's purpose/mission ('Ends') from all other organizational/administrative issues ('Means'). In other words, the Board is responsible for defining the RCS Mission ('Ends'). The Board also develops policies that define healthy boundaries between the functions of the Board and the Executive Director and provide guidance for the Executive Director's duties. Therefore, the Executive Director is exclusively responsible for all matters involved in the *operation and management* of the school ('Means'). Most importantly, policy governance creates alignment between the Board, the Executive Director and the school's 'Owners' who are defined as staff, students, families and other members of the RCS community.

A copy of all the current Board policies is kept in the school office for review. To assure accomplishment of the RCS mission and purpose, the Board continuously evaluates its written policies and rigorously monitors their reasonable implementation by the Executive Director. The Board meets on the third Thursday of the month at 3:30 PM at the school; meetings are open for attendance by RCS community members.

The 2016/2017 Board of Directors are: Alisha Audeh, Alyssa Augustine, Jeff Bachar, Keith Costello, Cheryl Dalton, Claudia Konijn, Darrah Noble, Renee Owen, Susie Robidoux, Stewart Stokes and Jen Tracy.

STUDENT SUPPORT PROGRAM

Students in the Rainbow Community School Student Support Program have a plan that is typically a combination of extra classroom support from an assistant or teacher, specialized one-on-one time with a student support advocate, and individualized classroom accommodations. The Student Support Team crafts a student support plan, communicates regularly with parents, oversees classroom accommodations, and acts as a liaison with any off-campus providers.

If classroom accommodations and interventions implemented by the classroom teacher are not effective in solving academic or behavior issues, a classroom observation by and/or in collaboration with a Student Support advocate will be conducted to determine whether a student needs to have a student support plan. This can be requested by the classroom teacher or parent.

THE STAFF

Executive Director: Hired by the Board of Directors, the E.D. is responsible for helping to craft and guide the development of Rainbow Community School's vision, maintaining its mission as an innovative and holistic learning environment while leading the effort towards designing a replicable national educational model.

Director of Operations: The D.O. is responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the school, including both logistical and educational aspects. Parents with questions, concerns, ideas and comments are always welcome to communicate directly with the D.O.

Business Manager: Assists the D.O. in day-to-day financial operations of the school. The Business Manager handles accounts receivable and accounts payable and is responsible for communicating with parents regarding the status of their accounts with the school.

Office Manager: Assists the D.O. with daily operations, classroom needs, special events and volunteer coordination. Handles school wide communications, student records and daily office operations, including assisting parents and staff with office needs.

Administrative Assistant and Media Specialist: Assists with daily administrative needs and offers Educate Database support for parents and staff. Maintains the school website and social media accounts.

Admissions Director: Welcomes new parents and guides them through the admissions process and assists the D.O. with marketing.

Development Coordinator: Manages the Annual Campaign, business sponsorships and helps with fundraising and grant writing.

School Counselor: Works part time with students, teachers, and parents to support the social/emotional needs of our community.

Curriculum Director and Marketing Coordinator: Supports staff and students with curriculum design and implementation and oversees marketing development.

Director of Equity: Supports RCS in its growth as a socially just and equitable community.

Professional Development Coordination: Coordinates professional development opportunities.

Social Media and Marketing Team: Maintains the school website and social media accounts and executes RCS marketing tasks.

Facilities Manager and Custodian: Assists the D.O. with all grounds and facilities issues, including maintenance, repair, and construction.

Faculty: Visit the RCS website (www.rainbowcommunityschool.org) to read faculty biographies for our regular and specialist teachers.

The School Day

HOURS OF OPERATION

Before School Care	7:45 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
Preschool Day	9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
After School Program	2:00 - 6:00 p.m.

- Two, three, and five-day attendance plans are offered.
- The School Office is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. August through June. In the summer the office is open from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ENROLLMENT



Children who have had their third birthday and are fully potty trained are eligible for enrollment. After initial inquiry and receipt of information regarding school fees and philosophy, parent and child must set up an appointment to visit the preschool classroom and meet with the Admissions Director. With the parent present, the child is encouraged to explore the classroom and join in any activities. Upon enrollment and payment of initial fees, the parent receives preschool guidelines, nutrition information, playground rules, permission forms, and health and immunization forms.

On the first day a child attends school, the office must have in each child's file:

- A completed Preschool application
- A completed set of enrollment paperwork
- Authorization for emergency care

Within 30 days of a child's first date of attendance:

- A health assessment by a licensed physician
- A record of immunization *or* a completed exemption form
- A signed statement from each child's parent that they have received our discipline policy in writing and that their child's teacher has discussed it with them

PLEASE NOTE: We are required to have each of these forms in our files in order to maintain our license to operate. State law prohibits students with incomplete files after 30 days to attend class until we have received their missing paperwork. We appreciate your cooperation.

PARKING AND DRIVEWAY USE

To ensure the safety of our children and all members of the RCS community, it is of utmost importance that we practice safety and courtesy while in the parking lot and obey the posted signs year-round. Please watch out for others, drive slowly and hold the hands of very young children.

ONE-WAY traffic only in the parking lots. For the preschool and elementary campus, enter from Haywood Road and exit onto State Street. For the middle school campus, enter from State Street and exit onto Pennsylvania Avenue.

ARRIVAL

Mornings can be busy times, and they set the tone for our day. Help your child have a successful start to their day by doing the following when you and your child arrive at school:

- Greet your child's teacher. Communicate any important information they should know about your child's morning or changes to their schedule.
- Help your child organize their belongings in their cubby.
- Check to be sure that your child has all of their required daily items (see the following page) and that their water bottle and lunch box is labeled with their name and the date.
- Remind your child to wash their hands before beginning work or play.
- Sign your child in on the provided roster.

Please plan to bring your child to their classroom by 9:00 a.m. In order for your child to gain the most from their experience at RCS, we ask that you respect our 9 a.m. start time to the best of your ability. The teachers have carefully planned the flow of the day, and your child will miss key learning opportunities if they are consistently late.

Separation: Separation from a parent or caregiver into the preschool classroom is an important accomplishment for every preschooler. Though you may wish to remain with a child who is having difficulty separating, trust that your child's teachers are well trained to handle such occurrences, that your child is learning important skills, and that tears are often solely for the parent's benefit. You can help your child most by conveying



happiness and confidence in their well-being, stating your expected departure (sneaking out can be terrifying for the child - as it will seem you have vanished), and then leaving. Your child's teacher will be available if you need to hand an emotional child to them for some one-on-one time before they transition to begin their day.

DAILY ITEMS PROVIDED BY PARENTS

Sheets: *All* children need a labeled bottom sheet to cover their sleeping mat for rest time (a crib sheet fits the mat well). If your child naps, send in a top cover; a *small* pillow or a stuffed animal is optional. We'll keep these items in the bottom of your child's cubby and ask that you take them home *weekly* to wash them. If a child does not come to school with clean linen, the school will temporarily provide it. The parent will be expected to wash and return the school's linen, as well as bring a fresh set of their own for their child.

Clothing: Please send in a labeled extra change of clothes that are appropriate for the season. We do play outside every day, so please dress your child for the weather. Make sure your child is wearing shoes for easy movement. Flip-flops, clogs, cowboy boots, and slick-bottomed shoes often cause children to fall when running outside, and limit their play.

Lunch Boxes: According to state law, all lunch boxes must be labeled with your child's name and the current date. We have masking tape and a permanent marker on hand for this. Please pack a morning snack and an extra snack if your child participates in our after-school program. *Please see the food guidelines on the following page.*

Utensils: Please remember to send in any utensils your child will need for their lunch/snack. We aren't set up to sanitize or hand out clean utensils.

Napkins: The children are required by the health department to place their food on napkins while eating. Please send your child to school with a cloth or paper napkin each day.

Containers: Use plastic only for storing food or drinks in lunch boxes. **No glass, please.** We are required to throw away all unlabeled and/or unclaimed containers at the end of each day.

Water: You must send in a water bottle labeled with your child's name and the current date. It will be kept in your child's cubby for your child to drink from throughout the day. This water bottle must be taken home and replaced with a clean water bottle *every day*.

Milk: It is required by law that cow or soy milk be offered to each child with their lunch. (NO other type of milk qualifies.) Please include a container of milk in your child's lunch box daily. It, too, must be labeled with your child's name and the current date. **If you do not plan to send milk with your child daily, please sign a nutrition waver, available from your child's teacher. This does not exempt you from our school nutrition policy, just the FDA guidelines.**

SHARING DAYS

Your child will have a “sharing day” each week. This is an enriching opportunity for them to share interests, special objects, or stories from their life outside of school. Help your child choose an appropriate item to bring (not a toy). Books, items from nature, music, and their own art work make wonderful shares that everyone enjoys. *Violent toys, such as guns and swords, are not permitted.*



CHANGE IN PICKUP PERSON

Please notify your child’s teacher or after school teacher if someone other than you will be picking up your child. Make sure that a list of people who can pick up your child (in addition to legal parents and guardians) is on file in the school office. If someone who is not on the list will be picking up your child, they will only be allowed to do so if you have notified the teacher and/or after school in advance, preferably in writing. There is a Change in Pickup form posted in the classroom for your convenience. Anyone picking up students must provide a photo ID. RCS teachers and staff are not responsible for the care of your child once you have signed them out from school.

SIGNING OUT

It is important to sign your child in and out each day. Because your child remains the responsibility of the RCS staff as long as they are on campus, please do not sign your child out until you are prepared to leave with them (we allow for up to 10 minutes of transition time after you have signed out your child). If you would like for your child to stay and play on our campus between 2:00 and 3:00 while the other children are outside - even if you are present - **they must continue to be signed in**, and after-school fees will be assessed. Adults present on campus should model appropriate preschool classroom behaviors and be mindful of the impact that visiting adults can have on the behavior and emotional security of other children. Please refer any social/emotional or behavior concerns you witness directly to the staff present.

There is a fee grace period (15 minutes before and after the 9:00 - 2:00 program start and end times) if your child is either delivered or picked up then.

The school closes at 6:00 p.m. sharp. There is a fee of \$16 (per child, per occurrence) charged to anyone who picks up his or her child after 6:00 p.m.

The School Year

2015-2016 SCHOOL CALENDAR

Please see the 2015-2016 RCS School Calendar on the RCS website:

www.rainbowcommunityschool.org/calendar

Paper copies of the school calendar are available in the office upon request.

CELEBRATIONS and COMMUNITY EVENTS

Rainbow Community School and Omega Program embrace diversity. We therefore celebrate holidays of many of the world's cultures and study about families in many different countries. We observe the holidays of the world's major religions in various ways during the school year, and seek to affirm the universal values and commonality among these traditions. Your child may come home singing a song in another language, or having eaten a certain holiday food or celebrated a custom unfamiliar to many of us. In this way, our students learn to appreciate and celebrate diversity, perceive the universality of the human spirit and nurture the understanding that various human cultures complement one another.

Class-Led Celebrations: Each month individual classes sign up to lead a school-wide exploration of a world holiday or celebration that takes place in that month. From the Autumn Equinox to Holi to Earth Day, each celebration is unique, but each provides a chance for multi-age experiential learning, community building, and mindfulness.

We also enrich our own Rainbow Community School story with monthly **Community Events** designed to build meaningful connections between families, staff, and children outside of the classroom. Some community events include potlucks, stream clean ups, and roller skating parties. Facilitated through Parent Council, these events are announced when the sponsoring classes have secured the venue and may change from year to year. Please see the following section for Annual Community Events.



RCS ANNUAL EVENTS

Community Work Day: Community Work Day is a means to nurture both community building and the physical plant of our school. It's an opportunity for us to set a positive, community-oriented example for our children. This event is usually set in August before school begins to help get the campus ready for the first day of school.

Halloween: All children, staff and parents are welcome to join and encouraged to dress in costume for our annual costume parade in the morning. The parents in each grade provide the non-sugar treats (small toys, objects from nature, craft materials, etc.) for their class, which are passed out by volunteers after the parade when the kids go trick or treating at selected classroom doors. The Omega class creates a haunted house each year; children enter only if they wish and can go through with the lights on, if they prefer.

El Dia de los Muertos: Around November 1st, there is a school-wide celebration to remember and honor loved ones who have passed away.

Winter Performance: With the guidance of our art and music teachers, each class is involved in creating a song, dance or short play and performing in our Winter Program.

Grandparent's Day: Grandparents and other special "elders" are invited to join us on campus for coffee, tea and light snacks. They enjoy performances from various classes and have the opportunity to visit their grandchild's class for a portion of the day.

May Day: On May 1st we celebrate Spring with a May Festival including a maypole, fairy costumes, and strawberries and whipped cream.



Staff Appreciation: Each year Parent Council organizes a way to thank the staff for their commitment to our children. Each classroom gives a special gift from the children.

Imagine!: As the year draws to a close, Rainbow turns its focus to the arts, working with visiting artists and the talented Rainbow staff to create an original performance featuring singing, instruments, dancing, acting, poetry, and visual arts from kids in preschool through 8th grade.

Graduation: Preschoolers perform a poem or song for their gathered guests and all children are presented with a certificate of achievement. The ceremony is typically followed by a picnic lunch.

Fundraising Events: The school plans fundraisers to help close the gap between tuition and the actual cost of operating the school, fund classroom budgets for special purchases, and to support other non-profit organizations in the community.

Harvest Hoedown: The Hoedown is a carnival-style event, with each class hosting a booth, game or craft. Food and drink, bouncy houses, a bake sale, wine and cake walks, and exciting raffles are all part of this big day. This family-friendly event is fun for all members of the community.

Book Fair: Our autumn Book Fair will be at Firestorm Café & Books.

Various other fundraising events will be scheduled throughout the year to support special causes, such as collecting meals for Manna Food Bank around Thanksgiving, or selling produce from our gardens to fund a special class trip.

Regarding Alcohol at School Events: Although it is infrequent, RCS does occasionally allow alcoholic drinks at some events, particularly adult fundraisers. In RCS's long history we have never experienced any disrespect of this privilege.

FACULTY TRAINING

Rainbow Community School is proud to have a dedicated, well-trained faculty that participates in the administration of the school. Faculty Training days and Early Release days serve two purposes that are critical to achieving the mission of the school:

1. **Training:** Well-planned, relevant training recharges and inspires teachers to be their best. Trainings help teachers learn how to use their time with students efficiently and effectively, while giving teachers an opportunity to rekindle their creative juices and to remember their sacred purpose. Teachers learn strategies and techniques that have direct application in the classroom so they can deliver the highest quality of education.
2. **Collaborative Planning:** Early Release days provide teachers time together with other teachers at RCS and the executive director to collaborate on school policy, events, communication, and general management of the school. Collaboration creates a positive school culture through an empowered faculty.

Early Release Days for *Preschool* occur on the **first Wednesday of each month**, and are listed on the school calendar. On these days, **all children must be picked up by 1:00 p.m., and no After School care is offered**. This allows *all* of the preschool staff to participate in important training/collaboration opportunities, so that we may best utilize the available resources at RCS to enrich the learning experience of your children.



Communication

EDUCATE (CORNERSTONE) DATABASE

The Educate (formerly Cornerstone) Database is an integral communication tool at RCS. The database is a great place to find class roster information, school calendars, and a copy of your child's Narrative Conference Reports. You can use it to sign up for inclement weather alerts, or just find out what birthdays are coming up in your child's class. Please check the database to make sure your own address, phone numbers, and email addresses are correct. If you are new to RCS and do not have your username or login information, or are not able to access the database for any reason, please contact the office.

EMAIL

Much of the communication within your classroom and from the administration will be done by email, including informative newsletters from your child's teacher and weekly Rainbow Reminders with upcoming community events. **It is vitally important that all parents receive, read, and respond to all communication from the school.** Please let your child's teacher, class parent and the Office know if you need to use another form of communication.

PHONE CALLS

We do not interrupt class activities for phone calls. Messages can be left (day or night) for any staff member on the school's voice mail system. Most teachers check for messages at the beginning and end of their day; they will let you know the specifics. If you need to get a message to your child's teacher during the school day, (to communicate a change in pick up for example) please call the office. A staff member will deliver your message. After regular office hours, After School staff will answer phones when possible.

RCS WEBSITE

www.rainbowcommunityschool.org

The RCS website is a great source of overall information about the school, including an updated school calendar, community news, and links to the RCS Facebook page. As an informed parent, please stay familiar with its contents.

PARENT MAILBOXES

Parents will be assigned a mailbox in their child's classroom. We ask you to check your mailbox regularly. You may also use the parent mailboxes to meet your own communication needs, such as sending birthday invitations for your child's party or thank you notes to other parents.

OFFICE/STAFF MAILBOXES

There is an office mailbox in each classroom and a secure drop box just outside the office door. Messages for the administrative staff and tuition checks may be left in any of these mailboxes. All faculty have a mailbox in their classroom.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A bulletin board outside the office displays information about student achievement and growth; another near the first grade displays information about our Mission.
- Outdoor bulletin boards displaying community flyers and announcements are located next to the green door Preschool classroom and on the wall between Grades 1 and 5.
- Each classroom has its own bulletin board for news specific to its students and parents.

PARENT MEETINGS

Mandatory meetings: Twice a year, parents are required to attend a meeting with their child's teacher and the other parents from their child's class - the first such meeting occurs in late August, just prior to the start of school, the second meeting is TBD but will likely occur in the second half of the school year. It is required that one parent from each family attend each of the two mandatory meetings. If for some extenuating circumstance this is not possible, please let your classroom teacher and the office know.

Parent Meetings: On an as needed basis during the year teachers may organize a parent meeting to communicate important information to the group as a whole. Though these meetings are not mandatory, attendance by at least one parent is strongly encouraged.



APPOINTMENTS WITH TEACHERS

Appointments with teachers may be scheduled throughout the year, as necessary. Many teachers cannot be available for impromptu meetings/discussions at arrival times (other than a *quick* message), as they are preparing for class and greeting their students upon arrival. Others may not be available at departure times, especially when they have faculty meetings and other meetings to attend after classes are dismissed. Please ask your child's teacher about his/her available times so that he/she can be truly present, and not distracted, when speaking with you.

APPOINTMENTS WITH THE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Parents and community members are welcome to drop by the office, with or without an appointment, to talk with Director of Operations, Sandra McCassim, whether it be to share a concern, an idea, a compliment or a FYI.



PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled four times a year; please consult the school calendar for exact dates. RCS tries to schedule two full days off school for each conference cycle, so that parents have ample time to spend with their child's teacher(s).

In each cycle, *one* conference per child is scheduled – even if a child lives in more than one household. Parents who wish to meet with teachers for conferences need to meet on these

scheduled conference days and take responsibility to sign up for a conference time. Teachers are not obligated to reschedule missed conferences for a family who does not attend a conference due to recreational reasons (vacations), neglects to sign up for a conference in advance, or does not show up for their scheduled conference and does not provide a reason for their absence. If parents are unable to attend a conference due to circumstances *beyond their control*, they should notify their child's teacher as soon as possible.

Listening Conference: The first conference of the year is in September. It is a Listening Conference, at which the teachers are present to listen to the parent/guardian discuss their child's strengths, challenges, hopes and interests. These conferences help to establish a relationship of respectful communication between parents and teachers. Teachers gain valuable information about the needs of the students in their care and help parents to build trust that their thoughts and feelings, hopes and fears about their child are valued.

November Conference: About a week prior to the November conference, parents will be able to view their child's student report on the school database. Please read this report before your scheduled conference in order to make best use of your time with your child's teachers. At the conference, parents will receive their child's standardized test results and discuss the child in regards to the seven domains.

February Conference: About a week prior to the February conference, parents will be able to view their child's student report on the school database. Please read this report before your scheduled conference in order to make best use of your time with your child's teachers. Teachers will discuss each child's strengths, challenges, and present possible goals for the remainder of the school year.

End of Year: Teachers will hand out final assessments, and final student reports will be available on the school database. Parent(s) and/or teacher may request a separate conference if a face-to-face conversation would be beneficial, such as to decide on a placement for the next school year, or to discuss any areas the child could benefit from summer remediation.

Community Participation

We invite and encourage parents to participate with their child's class in our numerous school celebrations and special events. In all situations, the teacher is responsible for classroom activity and is authorized to make decisions and direct classroom activities based on her/his professional judgment.

PARENT, GUARDIAN AND GUEST VISITS

Any parent may visit their child at school at any time unless restrained by court order. Please inform the teacher before a visit that is intended to be more than a quick stop in. Guests must check in at the Office and get a visitor badge.

VOLUNTEERING

RCS is a holistic, community-centered educational environment. In keeping with this emphasis, parents and guardians are expected to become an integral part of the classroom and the school community by volunteering for a wide variety of school-related activities. Parents who are highly involved report greater satisfaction in the school and higher levels of success for their children. Your child can only receive the full experience if, as a family, you are participating in the community and volunteering. Some families volunteer 100 hours or more, while some just do what they can. We understand that parents who work long hours and/or have multiple children are more challenged to volunteer.

There are two ways to volunteer: in the classroom and school-wide. Ideally, every family will have an opportunity to volunteer both ways. Your child's teacher or class parent will keep you informed about volunteer needs in the classroom. Opportunities to volunteer in the community will be ongoing throughout the year and will include grounds/landscaping maintenance, fundraising committees, special events planning and participation, and various administrative tasks. Weekly Rainbow Reminders emails will alert you to upcoming volunteer needs.

Below is the **minimum suggested amount** that each adult member of each family should be involved in community activities:

- Attend at least 1 school-wide event
- 3-4 hours of classroom volunteering
- Volunteering a minimum of 2 hours at a minimum of one event
- 3-4 hours volunteering within the greater community

For more information on acquiring volunteer credits, refer to page 22 in the "Tuition and Fees" section.



of

ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

The RCS Annual Campaign Committee consists of volunteers who are dedicated to providing resources that make it possible for our school community to realize its mission. RCS tries to keep tuition low enough to encourage economic diversity at the school. Like most private schools, the RCS tuition does not cover all the operating expenses of the school. The true cost of educating your child is much higher. The Annual Campaign Committee asks parents to contribute generously to close the gap between the total cost of educating your child and operating expenses. Your donations to the Annual Campaign provide the funds necessary to further nurture the discovery, enjoyment and development of the unique gifts of each student.

It is our hope that every RCS family will make an intentional commitment to the campaign for the benefit of all our wonderful children and gifted teachers. When all parents donate to the campaign, Rainbow is then able to successfully leverage funding from outside foundations, doubling the benefits. Your generosity will enrich your child's learning experience and gratify your heart.



PARENT COUNCIL

The mission of Rainbow Community School Parent Council is to play an integral role in the school community by supporting the events and rituals that shape the heart of Rainbow culture: connection to self, the community, the natural world and to the spiritual. As participants in the governance of the school, Parent Council representatives attend monthly meetings, liaise with classroom teachers, act as a resource for parents, support parents with questions or concerns about school policy, procedure and channels of communication, and organize the Harvest Hoedown and other school events.

In the spring, parents who have a strong interest and a desire to play an active role in strengthening our school community are selected to become representatives for the following school year. If a parent is interested in joining Parent Council, they may speak with their current class representative, their class teacher or the head of Parent Council.



Tuition and Fees

TUITION

Rainbow Community School works with TADS Tuition Management System for tuition billing and payments. This allows parents the ability to see account information online and make automatic payments through a bank account or by credit card. Credit card payments will be assessed a 3% processing fee. Parents complete an annual Billing Management Agreement and receive and pay monthly invoices through TADS. Annual tuition for preschool is paid over 10 installments from August 2016 through May 2017. There is a two percent discount for full payment of tuition by July 1.

If a monthly payment is not received by the due date, a late fee of \$29 per payment is assessed. After 60 days of no payments or payment arrangements, the student will not be permitted to attend class until the total amount due, including late fees, is paid in full. If a student withdraws or is dismissed from RCS during the school year and all tuition payments have not yet been made, all transcripts will be held until full payment is received. In the event that full tuition is not paid when due and RCS takes formal collection actions, parents/guardians are liable for reasonable attorney fees and reasonable collection costs incurred by RCS, to the extent permitted by law.

To propose an exception to the fee schedule, a parent must make arrangements with the RCS Finance Committee Chairperson by writing a letter of explanation to the Finance Committee, requesting an alternative payment plan.

After 60 days of no payments or payment arrangements, the student(s) will not be permitted to attend class until the total amount due, including interest, is paid in full.

BEFORE SCHOOL AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM FEES

Preschool Before School and After School care (7:45-9:00 a.m. and 2:00-6:00 p.m.) is billed at \$5.50 per hour with a monthly maximum of \$250.

It is important to sign your child out of After School each day. If you fail to sign out your child, you will be charged After School fees until 6:00 p.m.

There is a fee grace period during transition times (15 minutes before 9:00 and 15 minutes after 2:00) if your child is either delivered or picked up then. **The school closes at 6:00 p.m. sharp.** There is a fee of \$16.00 (per child, per occurrence) charged to anyone picking his or her child up after 6:00 p.m.

CLASSROOM SPECIFIC COSTS

During the year, additional fees may be incurred to purchase particular materials, a special service, or pay for a visiting instructor. The teacher will notify parents of the cost, and parents will be billed the following month.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM CREDITS/PAYMENTS

Our community thrives when every family makes the effort to contribute their time and skills to the needs of their child's classroom and the school as a whole. The Volunteer Credit program is designed to help ensure equitable participation.

About the program:

- Each K-8 family will be billed \$150 per ½ year (June 16-Dec. 15, Dec. 16- June 15) minus \$10 per logged volunteer hour, with a max of 15 hours per ½ year.
- Each Preschool family will be billed \$100 per ½ year, minus \$10 per logged volunteer hour, with a max of 10 hours per ½ year.
- These hours represent the total family contribution, and applies to grandparents or other family members who volunteer their time at RCS.
- Families are responsible for logging their own hours using the Track It Forward website or app. www.trackitforward.com
- Some hours will be standardized, such as:
 - 1hr credit for attending a committee or class meeting
- Credit hours will be given for work that is posted by teachers/staff

Please note that not every event qualifies for volunteer credit. For example, attendance at a class potluck would not count for credit, but volunteering to set up before or clean up after would qualify. If you are unsure, please check with your child's teacher or a member of the admin team.

TIMELY PAYMENT OF TUITION AND FEES

One of the crucial components of operating Rainbow Community School is that we receive tuition and fee payments in a timely manner. With this in mind:

RCS requires all parents to pay their outstanding balances **before we will send student records and transcripts to other schools** (for transferring students and graduating students).

RCS requires **all outstanding balances be paid before a child is guaranteed a spot in a class for the upcoming school year.**

Please help RCS stay financially strong by paying tuition on time so that we can continue to improve our programs and meet the daily needs of our students.



School Policies

NUTRITION GUIDELINES

We feel strongly that good food both benefit your child's health and also positively influence their energy while at school. Please only send in food that has nutritive value and does not contain sugar as a primary ingredient (when in doubt, check the labels; you might be surprised). Inappropriate foods include candy, soda, cupcakes, cookies, puddings etc.

It is important to us that every child eats nutritious meals while in our care. We are committed to serving whole, unrefined, natural foods as much as possible. Please honor our Nutrition Policy when packing your child's lunchbox. We understand that finding foods that your child will eat can be a challenge; therefore we are providing some healthful suggestions:

- **Vegetables** - Please provide at least one vegetable with your child's meal. Suggestions include: carrot sticks, celery with cream cheese, peas in the pod, sweet pepper slices, cucumbers, tomatoes, broccoli or cauliflower trees, and salad greens. These items may be eaten cold. They are also tasty when dipped in your child's favorite salad dressing.
- **Fruits** - Please provide at least one type of fresh or dried fruit. *Fruit rollups and chewy fruit snacks are not considered fruits.* Apple, orange, mango, peach, avocado, kiwi, watermelon, and cantaloupe slices are favorites with the kids. They also enjoy strawberries, raspberries, grapes, cherries, and blueberries.
- **Main Course** - These should include grains (bread, rice, pasta, etc.) and protein (beans, tofu, tempeh, meat, fish, eggs). Children in our program have enjoyed many foods from simple sandwiches to sushi. Some children prefer small amounts of many foods to a larger portion of one food. Please ask for suggestions if you are having trouble finding something your child will eat.
- **Other snacks** - Crackers, yogurt, pretzels, sesame sticks, edamame, dried cereal (non-sugared), additional fruits and vegetables, cheese cubes or sticks, pickles, popcorn, granola bars, etc.

Please limit your child's consumption of the following foods: Pop tarts, Jell-O, *sugary* granola and cereal bars, chips etc. Most children make these items the focus of their meals and refuse to eat their more nutritious foods.

Due to children with allergies or certain dietary needs, no sharing of food is allowed and our classrooms are **NUT FREE**. Allergies and dietary restrictions will be posted on the refrigerator.

Heat-Ups: We are not set up (time wise or help wise) to handle heat-ups on a daily basis.

HEALTH POLICIES

Medical Reports: A record of immunizations and a physical examination within the past 12 months must be completed and on file at school within the first 30 days of each child's first day of attendance. Records should also include results of any screenings, prescribed medications, descriptions of any impairments and current or chronic health conditions. NC State law requires that the child not attend school until the forms are complete. All children are required to either be immunized or to have a medical or religious exemption on file in the school office.

Administration of Medicine: Parents must fill out and sign a medical permission form in order for a staff member to give medicine to a child. This form must give date, dosage as stated on the original bottle, and time of administration. If it is a prescribed drug, the doctor's prescription must be affixed to the medicine and staff will, at all times, follow the doctor's prescription—even if the parent is requesting something different. Your child's name must be indelibly written on the medicine. The medications must be locked up while in school and taken home at the end of the day.

Health Rules for Attendance: Children should be kept home from school if they are feverish, have diarrhea, are vomiting, have dark mucous nasal discharge, or if they show signs of becoming sick (listlessness/drowsiness, productive cough, extreme sore throat, ear pain, eyes that are pink, burning, itching, or producing discharge). See *exclusion criteria on following page*. We realize that it is difficult for working parents to keep their children home, but exclusion will help prevent contagion and promote the health and safety of your own child.

If your child becomes ill during the school day, every effort will be made to make them comfortable, away from the other children. A parent will be called to come and pick them up.

Please notify the school if your child has a highly communicable disease or condition, so that all other parents can be alerted.

Hand Washing: Hand washing greatly cuts down on the transfer of germs. We ask that all children and adults wash their hands with soap immediately upon entering school in the a.m. and from outside play. We also wash our hands before and after eating, before and after water play, after working with Play Dough and other sensorial materials, and after toileting, nose blowing, finger sucking, or touching any contaminated objects and surfaces.

Toilet Training: Teacher's will observe new children to ensure they are developmentally ready to care for their toileting needs independently. If frequent accidents occur, teachers will work with parents to develop a plan to best meet the needs of individual children and their community.

Recording and Reporting Accidents: All injuries involving bumps to the head, bleeding, broken bones, and/or requiring medical treatment are recorded in an incident log. An incident report is also filled out, and parents are informed of the injury/accident. The report is signed by the RCS staff member completing it and by the parent and kept in the child's student file. Copies are given to the parent and director, and one is sent to the state division.

Emergencies: All RCS teachers have First Aid and CPR training, which is routinely updated. In the event of an emergency concerning your child, the school will first contact you, the parent, and then, if necessary, the back up emergency contacts. If the emergency requires immediate medical care, we will call for an ambulance while we are contacting you. Throughout the year, please notify the school office of any phone number changes for you or your emergency contacts (including work and cell phone numbers).

EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Condition:	If your child has been diagnosed with this disease, our program will:	When to allow child to return:
Chicken Pox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude the sick child from child care Notify all parents regarding possible outbreak Contact the Child Care Health Consultant if needed to find out the other preventative measures to take Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures 	Approximately 6-7 days after the rash begins or when ALL blisters have scabbed over
Diarrheal Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude the child from child care Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures 	When child is diarrhea-free for 24 hours
Hand-Foot-and-Mouth Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclude if child has open, draining lesion on hand or has lesions in the mouth and is drooling. Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures 	When lesions heal or drooling ceases
Head Lice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude from child care 	24 hours after treatment and no signs of nits or lice
Ringworm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude the child if lesions cannot be covered Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures 	If unable to cover the lesion, after treatment begins and the lesion starts to shrink
Strep Throat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude the child with eye drainage and itching Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures 	24 hours after antibiotics are begun
Pink Eye	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude the child with eye drainage and itching Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures 	24 hours after first dose of medication and symptoms are mild
Fifth Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude the child from child care if the child is unable to participate in center activities or has a fever Program will notify all parents Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures 	After child is able to participate in center activities
Impetigo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude from child care Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures 	After treatment has been started
Fever	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude child from child care if child has a fever above 100 degrees Fahrenheit orally, or above 100 axillary 	After child has been fever-free for 24 hours without medication
Vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude child that has had 2 or more vomiting episodes in a 12 hour period 	After child has not vomited for a 12 hour period

INCLEMENT WEATHER DAYS AND POOR WEATHER CONDITIONS

Generally we try to remain open on snow days, but if conditions are truly hazardous then we will close. We will announce any school closing/delay on WLOS Channel 13 TV and WCQS 88.1 This information is on our website. We also send alerts through our online school database (<http://www.cornerstonesms.com>). Please read the following so you know what to expect when school is closed or delayed due to inclement weather.

The first place we post a closing or delayed opening is through our school database alert messages (<http://www.cornerstonesms.com>). All families are automatically enrolled into our alert notification system. Please notify the office if you do not wish to receive alert notifications.

We also post closings and delays on WLOS-TV. We suggest that you go to their website (http://www.wlos.com/sections/mobile/sign_up.shtml) and sign up to have instant message alerts delivered to your phone. You will receive a notice *immediately* from them when we post a closing or a delayed opening.

Every year you will need to re-register for these alerts.

The RCS phone message (Extension 7) will announce if school is closed (but this happens AFTER the WLOS announcement).

If the weather is poor, but nothing is posted on WLOS and the weather and school closing message (Extension 7) hasn't changed by 7:30 a.m., it means that school is open and will operate at the regular hours for all grades. If we decide to close or have a delayed start, we usually make our decision by 7:00 a.m. However, if conditions are changing or hard to decipher, we could post as late as 7:30.

When school is delayed, we will start at 10:00 a.m. in all grades. There are no Before School services on delayed start days. Your child can arrive at their classroom any time after 9:45 am on delayed start days.

We understand that when the roads are bad some of you simply won't be able to make it in. **Please do not put your lives at risk in order to come to school.** Although it would seem courteous to call and let us know you can't make it, we ask that you don't call the office, as the phones are very busy when the weather is bad. If you don't come on a day when other schools are closed, we will assume you couldn't make it.

If you are able to come later in the day, after the roads have improved, please do so. Typically, when the weather is bad, teachers are not able to proceed with their regular lesson plans, because of the high level of absenteeism. If your child can attend later in the day, this is helpful to the teacher and the rest of the class.

If it becomes necessary to close school early, we will change our outgoing phone message first, putting this at the very beginning. This will be followed by a broadcast email and database alert to all parents.

Making the decision whether to close, delay, or open in the morning is very difficult – especially in the dark. Until going out on the roads and actually seeing how bad they are, it is very difficult to tell if it is hazardous enough to call off school, especially when conditions vary so widely throughout the county. Even meteorologists are not 100% accurate about what weather that day will bring. Sometimes we call it off and wish we hadn't, and vice versa. We always try to make the best decision for the safety of our community members, our teachers and our families. Thank you for your understanding and patience.

POLICY FOR EXITING PRESCHOOL PARENTS

If you are a current preschool parent and **you need to withdraw your child from Rainbow Community School, you must give RCS one month of advance notice in writing.** This will give us time to fill the spot you open up when your child leaves, thereby limiting the loss of income to the school. The one-month notice begins the day it is received in the school office. You will be charged tuition during this one-month period, so it is to your advantage to be proactive so you aren't charged tuition when your child is no longer enrolled.

LOST AND FOUND

We will make every effort to return your child's misplaced things to you. You can help us in this endeavor by labeling each of their personal items with their name in permanent marker. There is a Lost and Found box located in the blue door preschool classroom, and another in the Butterfly House.

CELL PHONE USE

To ensure a wholesome educational environment for all RCS students and a productive work environment for all RCS staff, please follow these community guidelines for cell phone use while on campus:

- **Our playground is a "cell phone free zone."**
- Remind your children that RCS students are not allowed to use cell phones while on campus
- Take and make cell phone calls outside school buildings
- Use cell phones away from open campus building doors and windows; ringtones and voices travel
- Ensure that your phone will not ring or vibrate loudly during meetings, events, gatherings, etc.
- When possible, please offer to return incoming cell phone calls after you leave the RCS campus

PRESS / PHOTO RELEASES

Occasionally a newspaper or television station wishes to do a story and take a few pictures of RCS children involving one of our field trips or an activity at school. We also use photos and articles about student activities and accomplishments on the school website, Facebook, and RCS publications. You will be asked to sign a press release / photo release form, which will be one of the initial forms you will be given upon your child's admission to RCS.

If you choose to not sign the form, or if after signing it you change your mind, your desire will be honored. In that case, your child's picture may still appear on materials that have already been designed and printed, but his/her image will no longer be used on new materials.



MEDIA USE POLICY

We strive to create a learning environment that nurtures children's social development and fosters a rich imagination. In doing so, it is important to recognize the impact that technology and media plays in children's development. Children's social behavior is influenced by examples viewed on television programs, movies, and video games. Children who view content containing violence and negative social behaviors are more likely to resolve conflict in a similar manner. Children who view media content that models positive social behavior are more likely to engage in peaceful and effective conflict resolution.

Media viewing also greatly impacts children's imaginative play. As media use increases and marketing towards young children becomes more aggressive, we are seeing a concerning decrease in the number of children engaging in rich imaginative play. Imaginative play has become restricted to narrow scripts that children adopt from television and movies. They adhere too closely to these scripts and find it difficult to accommodate new characters, events, and behaviors that deviate from the movie or television program they are imitating. Princesses must eat while fluttering their eyelids and almost always need rescuing. Heroes are incapable of solving problems without resorting to violence. Social conflicts erupt over assigned roles as the children find it difficult to imagine that the latest Disney princess might have a sister or friend that isn't portrayed in the movie... or that more than one hero or side-kick can exist. Children who have not had any direct exposure or experience with the characters and story being reenacted quickly learn these scripts from their peers and diligently adhere to them.

As educators, we recognize that media does have value and can also impact children positively when programs are chosen carefully and used with guidance and intention. We place no judgment on families who choose to expose their children to media. We also recognize that children's experiences in the home are carried over into their school experiences. For this reason, we ask that you follow these guidelines regarding media use:

1. Select television programs and movies carefully. Do the characters actions and words reflect the positive values you wish to instill in your child?
2. Limit your child's exposure to media in the mornings. Consider the energy your child brings to our program. Is your child arriving grounded and ready to learn or is your child revved up and inspired to reenact a program they watched in the morning
3. Marketing and branding also make it challenging for children to break away from television and movie scripts. Please select clothing, lunch boxes, backpacks, etc. that DO NOT have images of television movie characters.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Positive Discipline Philosophy

The discipline policy at Rainbow Community School is consistent with the educational philosophy of the institution and is primarily based on Positive Discipline by Jane Nelsen, ED.D. It safeguards each member of the school community and furthers the mental, emotional, physical, moral and spiritual domains of our curriculum.

To this end, each student shall conduct him/herself in a manner that supports the general learning environment, respects the right of all to live and learn in a physically and emotionally safe atmosphere, develops independent and collaborative learning skills, supports the development of problem solving skills, and generally upholds the noblest aspects of the human spirit.

Preschool: The North Carolina Day Care Licensing Rules require that we keep in your child's file a signed statement by you attesting that our discipline practices have been shared with you and that you understand that they exclude all forms of corporal punishment: disciplines related to food, rest or toileting; and discipline delegated to another child. We teach and help children to use a calming space as a way to help them change their energy or behavior pattern. We view this as a positive way of helping our children better understand and manage emotions and energy. These spaces are non-punitive, near the group, and usually selected by the child. A child may choose to find a calming space at any point during the day in which he/she needs to find balance. Children may stay in a calming space for as long as they wish, provided they can demonstrate positive behavior when they choose to resume their usual activities. Our goal is to teach children to make positive behavior decisions and manage their feelings appropriately. Our method of discipline, which we consider energy or behavior management, generally follows these steps:

1. Guidelines/rules are discussed as a class. Children are taught to use calming spaces and techniques.
2. Energy is redirected. We redirect a child's activity to another center where the energy is more appropriate, i.e. sand, water, clay, hammering, play dough.
3. Reminders are given and use of a calming space is encouraged.
4. Problems are discussed. We discuss a problem with the child or group rationally and try to think of solutions together and examine their possible effects. Calming techniques are discussed and practiced.
5. Warnings with natural consequences are given if behavior persists. For example, a child may be asked to put work away if playing disrespectfully. Calming techniques are practiced to help change the child's energy.
6. There are times when a child's energy is such that he/she is not able to cope with his/her feelings alone, or is simply not able to sit alone by him/herself for a minute. In such instances, where one-to-one intervention is necessary, another staff member may be asked to intervene and give the child extra attention until he/she is able to re-enter group activity.

Generally, our environment and activities are designed in such a way as to avoid the need for disciplinary measures. Our faculty is trained to use early intervention, to help shape the classroom atmosphere toward a happy, harmonious, playful one. Teachers

give the children lots of positive feedback and affection, and vary the rhythm of activity during the day to provide for successful experiences. The staff offers a variety of materials to work with in order that extra energy can be vented naturally. In cases of discord, children learn to say to each other how they feel and to listen carefully to each other's feelings. This facilitates their solving their own problems instead of a teacher solving it for them. Children are taught to consider each other's feelings and are given lots of positive strokes for caring behavior.

Removal from Class or Dismissal from School

The physical and emotional safety of students on campus is of utmost importance to Rainbow. Almost all behavioral issues either never happen, because they have been prevented, or they are resolved with little class disruption. However, every community, and every classroom has its issues. Therefore, how do we know when a student needs to be removed from the classroom for a period of time? Each child and every situation is unique, but the general guidelines that a child needs to be separated and parents need to be called are:

1. The child has targeted violent or emotionally aggressive or damaging behavior toward another child or children. In this case, often the "victim(s)" need some separation from the aggressor, so they have time to regain a sense of safety in the classroom. Plus, separating the child can sometimes help the child understand how serious or potentially damaging their behavior is for others.
2. The behavior is repetitive, even if no single event is serious enough to warrant removal, a teacher will use his/her discretion to determine when it is pervasive enough that the class needs a break and the student needs more direct consequences to understand the situation and work on changing behavior.
3. If the behavior is impeding instructional time and community space to a degree the teacher warrants is beyond what the class can expect to deal with.

Generally, when a student is removed, it is for the rest of the day, and sometimes for a day or two following. Always, the staff will try to help the student by considering what his/her needs are. What seems to be the reason behind the behavior? If removal occurs more than two or three times, the child will be considered for an individualized modified behavior plan. If the student isn't already in the student support program, he/she may be referred for student support services and/or counseling.

Protocol for Aggressive Acts and Sexual Experimentation

Whenever a child performs an aggressive act toward another, toward him/herself, or toward school property, that child's parents will be informed of the act, the conditions preceding it, and the consequences of it. This is not to suggest that the child should be in any manner punished by the parent. It is simply a way to develop a tracking procedure with the parent's understanding and participation. If such acts persist, by tracking them we may be able to develop a care plan with the parent that successfully resolves the situation. RCS is dedicated to maintaining a safe and healthy learning environment. Our goal is to teach each child social skills that foster such an

environment. If we are unable, after a period of careful intervention, to maintain this type of environment due to the behavior of a certain child, that child's parents will be asked to school her or him elsewhere.

It is natural and normal for children between the ages of 3 to 5 to be interested in sexual differences. There may be a period of "you show me yours and I'll show you mine" activity. Whenever this occurs, the parent will be informed on the day it occurs. We do not feel it is appropriate for a parent to punish a child for this type of behavior. Again, we see it as natural and normal. But we do feel that it is probably the time for a parent to discuss body parts and social customs with the child. If such activity persists, the preschool director will discuss with the parent possible care plans to help the child move on to other, more socially appropriate activities.

ADULT CONDUCT

As the adult leaders of our community, RCS faculty, staff members and parents should model cooperative conduct in all situations. If any member of the community shows repeated disrespect towards other members of our community, including the usage of abusive language or gestures towards a child, teacher, or staff member and/or an unwillingness to mediate a solution or to resolve a conflict using the respectful steps outlined below, RCS reserves the right to ask the family in question to leave the school and to terminate that family's enrollment agreement(s) and/or contract(s) with RCS.

PARENT CONCERNS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

As a community-oriented school, it is essential that the adults in the community model the cooperative, compassionate communication we want our children to imitate. In the spirit of Rainbow, we know it isn't healthy for people to push away their concerns and unmet desires and needs but that it is necessary to *move through them*. The conflict resolution process below is designed to help us all recognize our needs and to move through them towards resolution...while treating people respectfully and keeping things in perspective. Although we may not individually always get *exactly* what we want, as a community, we increase our health and happiness (which, ultimately, brings the best kind of individual satisfaction.) The intended result is the gratification of feeling understood, while continuing to grow as humans. It is life-long learning at its fullest.

The Conflict Resolution Process: Please take a minute to read these recommendations regarding the steps to conflict resolution. We want to hear from you as we are committed to making RCS a community where needs are addressed in a clear and respectful way. After all, a problem cannot be fixed if school personnel are not aware of the problem or if they don't understand that a particular situation, policy, or action was/is a problem or concern to you or the community. **Ultimately, the process establishes Trust.**

The Process:

1. Identify and define the conflict.
 - a. Recognize that conflict is a normal part of the human condition and does not make you weak or wrong. To recognize our feelings and to directly confront the person with whom we have a conflict, requires courage.
 - b. What really is the problem? Can you identify the problem without blaming the other person or group? Think in terms of "I want...I need...I feel...," rather than "You did this, or you didn't do that." Be aware of your true feelings and the feelings of others.
2. Find a safe way to vent your feelings without damaging the community. Feelings strongly influence our behavior and they need validation. It is human with our need to validate our feelings or to simply think them through, to spread the problem to others, which often creates stronger feelings and moves things beyond perspective. When possible, we recommend that you work directly with your child's teacher (or applicable person) if you have concerns or needs that involve the teacher or a classroom situation. This way, you work with the person that has the ability to solve the problem.

NOTE: In a school community, many conflicts are resolved after the first two steps. When a conflict or concern is shared directly with the teacher or leader, often a miscommunication, misinformation, missing information or a misunderstanding may come to light. If this is the case, it can be easily resolved (if it hasn't spread among too many people).

3. If you feel a need for further resolution (after going through this process) or the concern involves RCS as a community, you may make an appointment with the Director of Operations.

Written concerns: If you would like the concern documented, please write a letter to the Director of Operations stating the concern and stating your needs and proposed solutions. If you need mediation between you and the teacher, the Director will help you. If you choose to or if you are asked to write down your concern, we encourage you to be as clear and concise as possible Try to be equally clear in writing about what you feel you need from the teacher or the school.

4. Expect the teacher and/or Director to listen to your concern but may not immediately offer a solution. Provide the teacher and/or the executive director time to analyze and/or observe first hand (if applicable) the situation and gather information. Allow him/her time to respond, which may be a day or several weeks.
5. Expect that the teacher and/or the Director may ask you to brainstorm for solutions with him/her.
6. Together agree upon a solution. This may require compromise. Remember the solution is not written in stone but is something both parties are committed to trying.

7. Together, implement a solution.
8. Follow-up evaluation. After allowing plenty of time, make sure the chosen solution has really solved the conflict to your mutual satisfaction.
 - a. If you are satisfied with the results, please let the other party know. If you submitted a written concern, please also indicate your satisfaction in writing for documentation.
 - b. If the conflict has *not* been resolved to your mutual satisfaction:
 - Start the process over again and try a different solution.
 - You are welcome to address the Board at their next regularly scheduled meeting. The Board, while not designed to manage problems, will take the information into consideration and determine whether the Director has violated any policies.

Family-to-Family Conflict Resolution

Every conflict or uncomfortable situation is unique, and needs to be worked out in its own unique way. However, through years of experience, we have found some common situations that are best resolved with the help of the school counselor. One of those situations is when a parent/child/family has concerns or complaints about another child or family in the classroom. This is a delicate situation that requires compassion and courage. In these cases we are likely to ask both families (or multiple families) to meet together with the counselor and any other involved parties.

Suggestions for moving through the conflict resolution process with grace and dignity:

- Remember that RCS educators are dedicated to finding solutions that fit within the school's philosophy. Conflict can be a time to better understand the philosophy of the school.
- Remember that a "perfect educational environment" for children is not truly perfect (without flaw), but one where children and adults can experience problems and learn from them in a supportive environment.
- Recognize many problems represent the proverbial balance between individual and communal needs.
- Have faith that, unless a situation is extremely traumatic, your child is resilient. Believe in the Holistic strength of your child.
- Remember that many problems are best solved by our children - for their sake and for ours.

PRESCHOOL PLAYGROUND RULES

Slide & Tunnel:

1. Always use the stairs to get to the top; stay off the rock siding.
2. Slide sitting up and feet first.
3. One person at a time.
4. Do not block the bottom of the slide.
5. Slides are for people only - not toys, rocks, etc.

Swings:

1. Preschoolers are only allowed on the swings in the preschool playground.
2. Swing front to back with bottom on seat and head up.
3. Swing seats are not twisted or rolled.
4. Exit swings without jumping.
5. Stay behind the swings when pushing. "Underdog" pushes are not permitted.

Sandbox:

1. **All** sand and sand toys are to remain in the sandbox.
2. Do not throw sand or put it on other people's bodies.
3. Cover the sandbox when not in use.

Monkey Bars:

1. Objects may not be used to reach the monkey bars.
2. One person at a time.
3. Do not hang upside down.

Bridge:

1. Keep bridge clear from toys and debris.
2. Children may run, skip, or hop *across* the bridge. Do not jump in one place on bridge.
3. Stand up while on the bridge.

Gardens & Natural Objects:

1. Walk in garden paths. Do not climb in or over garden beds or walls.
2. Treat living plants kindly. Do not pull off leaves, branches or flowers.
3. Always ask permission before harvesting or weeding the garden.
4. Small sticks may be used for digging, building, and pretend play provided that they are used safely and peacefully. Children with sticks must walk at all times. Sticks are not to be used as weapons.
5. Keep all ground cover (pebbles, mulch, pine needles, etc.) in its designated area of the playground.
6. Do not throw rocks, nuts, mulch, or sticks.

Riding Toys:

1. Riding toys may be used on the basketball court or sidewalk with *teacher supervision*.
2. Keep riding toys on pavement and drive slowly.
3. Do not crash into people or other objects.
4. Keep hands and feet on riding toys when they are moving. Sit properly on seats.
5. Stop riding toys to allow others to safely walk past.
6. Riding toys are for preschool and kindergarten only.

All toys and materials must remain in designated learning centers (crayons with art, blocks & ramps with building, gems and shells in the fairy garden). Shoes must be worn at all times. All gates must remain closed and latched. Weapons, imaginary or otherwise, are not allowed at school.