

# **Chinook Spirit Children's Academy**

## **Family Handbook**

**Welcome to Chinook Spirit Children's Academy!**

**5621 Paradise Blvd NW (inside High Desert Center for Spiritual Living)**

**Albuquerque, NM 87114**

**505-850-7916 school cell for calls or texts**

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**Co-Founders:**

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**CSCA does not discriminate on the basis of  
race, color, national origin, disability, or religion in any program or activity.**

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**THE MISSION:**

To integrate the gentle, nurturing spirit of change and growth into academics, creativity and consciousness. Please see our philosophy at [www.chinookspirit.org](http://www.chinookspirit.org).

**HOURS OF OPERATION:**

CSCA is open from 8:45 am to 4:15 pm Monday through Thursday.

**HOLIDAYS:**

CSCA will be closed in observance of the following holidays:

Labor Day- first Monday in September

Fall break: two weeks in October

Thanksgiving break: Wednesday through Friday

Winter break: 2 weeks at Christmas and New Year

Martin Luther King Day- third Monday in January

President's Day- third Monday in February

Spring break: 2 weeks in spring

Memorial Day- last Monday in May

Please see the Academic Calendar at [www.chinookspirit.org](http://www.chinookspirit.org) for specific dates for the current year.

**SCHOOL CANCELLATION:**

In the event of harsh weather, we will follow the APS school delay or closing schedule. On a 2 hour delay, school will begin at 11:00 AM.

**ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE:**

School begins at 9:00 am and ends at 4:00 pm. Students may arrive as early as 8:50 and must be picked up at 4:00 pm.

CSCA staff will not be available to escort students through the parking lot, so please do not drop your child off in the parking lot where (s)he must cross in front of cars without a parent escort.

Staff members soon come to know which child belongs with which parent, but children will never be released to anyone that the staff on duty does not recognize as the child's parent or someone authorized to pick up the child from school. Your understanding is appreciated when a staff member asks the individual picking up to furnish valid picture identification. Parent or Guardian, to authorize individuals other than yourself for pick up, please come in person to the school to add the name(s) to the Pick Up Authorization Card kept on file at school.

If your child will be dropped off late or picked up early, your child will need to be signed in or out by a person authorized to pick up per the Pick Up Authorization Card.

#### **BEFORE AND AFTER CARE:**

Before and after school care has been arranged with a CSCA staff member. Should you need before or after care, you will be directed to this staff member who will provide you with the plans, agreements and payment arrangements.

#### **ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES:**

We accept children grades kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade that meet our Acceptance Criteria Checklist. Upon enrollment, a meeting will be scheduled to ensure all forms are completed and discuss your child's needs. All forms must be completed, records received, and tuition per chosen payment plan received before your child begins school.

Regarding immunizations, please update our records as further immunizations are received by your child. An annual state philosophical waiver is required if immunization records are not up to date with state guidelines.

Enrollment is based upon availability. If a wait list is required, students will be placed in order of receipt of enrollment form. As openings arise, placement will be considered based upon date on enrollment forms and sibling(s) in the school. Younger siblings are grandfathered in at kindergarten.

CSCA is unable to admit students with disabilities that require modifications beyond what one adult can manage with a class of twelve children. We do consider admittance of siblings that require modifications *that live with currently enrolled students*, a grandfathering-in process; in this case, family would assume full financial responsibility of all modifications and/or staffing required by said student, also approved by CSCA director.

## **DISENROLLMENT PROCEDURES:**

Parents may discharge their child at any point in the school year with a written 30-day notice, along with the understanding that continued payment for a 30-day notice is required. If full, annual tuition has been paid, any tuition beyond the 30-day notice will be refunded less the 5% annual payment discount. If you have chosen a 12-month payment plan, you will be invoiced based upon what you have paid and what remains in order to pay for a 30-day notice for that point in the school year.

CSCA staff reserves the right to suspend, expel or disenroll ANY student at their discretion at any time effective immediately. CSCA Director will manage student/parent behavior and respond with reason. Decisions are made from the perspective that we are responsible for providing a safe, academic environment for all students. Generally, students will be given three warnings, but this is not a requirement of CSCA staff. If this happens, a 30-day notice tuition payment will still be required.

## **How to Handle School Adjustments or Challenges**

1. Talk and listen to your child.
2. Ask yourself what you can control and what your role is in this situation, and move forward accordingly.
3. If you feel the need, email your concern directly to the teacher involved. Through email, you may schedule a meeting with that teacher. Sometimes the school has a whole picture or perspective to consider related to what your child is struggling with. We do appreciate the opportunity to share the whole picture, perhaps details you were unaware of based upon your child's account, and we like to hear the student's perspective as well. Be open to hearing the teacher's perspective because a child's norms can be different in a whole class setting. Together, parent and teacher can develop a plan of action for your child that is in line with school mission.
4. CSCA will implement the Spiritual Approach to Intervention process. Sometimes, Spirit Time topics can be integrated discretely as well. If appropriate, other staff will be involved in the SAI process.
5. The teacher will follow up to see if there is improvement.
6. While CSCA staff wants the best for your child as you do, please understand that we are not able to meet repetitively about the same topic. At the point that two meetings have been requested involving the same topic, we generally ask that you use email to keep us informed if needed and trust our response to be handled at school without further parent meetings (until P/T conference), and/or evaluate if CSCA is a fit for your family.
7. Do not talk to school volunteers about your child's personal challenges; allow the teacher to use her discretion to inform volunteers as needed. We ask that all parents, volunteers and staff respect student confidentiality.
8. Do not make assumptions. Know that the adults involved have the best of intentions for the students.

9. Allow time for adjustment or mending of a situation.
  - At the base of it all, CSCA believes that these adjustments and challenges are life lessons, and we address them from that root belief with the hope that, layer by layer, individuals involved will develop coping strategies for the next time this situation develops later in life. Examples may be a disagreement, feeling left out, anxiety, fear, insecurity, feeling something was unfair, and more.
  - While these situations are most likely to happen in most school environments, please know that your child is in a SAFE and supportive place to maneuver through these life lessons with adult guidance.
  - CSCA recognizes that we are one path for academics. Our mission, philosophy and curriculum will yield results for students and families who feel that our program meets their needs. We honor all paths to academics and honor families' right to choose the best path for their child.
  - CSCA reserves the right to disenroll students at any time for any reason, though we would do so with extreme reserve and in loving respect to maintaining our vision for our community as a whole.
  - Should matters not be resolved after several attempts and disenrollment is the route by either party, there is a 30-day notice for tuition payment.

#### **TUITION AND PAYMENT:**

- Tuition is \$6,500 annually. There are no additional required fees.
- CSCA's tuition rate is competitive and has mindfully been kept as low as possible. Field trip fees, materials, books and other ongoing expenses have been included into the tuition and will not be added as extras.
- Multi-Child Family Discount: 10% discount per additional sibling
- Referral Discount: You get a 5% discount for every student that you refer which enrolls in CSCA for one school year

#### **Payment Terms:**

- \$200 enrollment commitment with enrollment forms, nonrefundable.
- 10 monthly installments, due on the 1st of each month, Aug 1-May 1: \$650/month
- Pay full year tuition by August 1st and receive a 5% discount; (2.5% discount for bi-annual payments in Aug/Jan)
- Receive \$50 monthly discount in exchange for 6-8 hours of volunteering per month
- *If tuition is not received on the due date per your chosen payment plan, a \$25 late fee will be added to your account, payable immediately. \$25 late fees will accrue for every week of late payment. If tuition is not received within 10 business days of the due date, your child's space could be filled and your child may be placed on a waiting list until the account is*

*current and space is available for re-admittance. If disenrollment action is taken, a 30 day notice of tuition will still apply.*

**Payment Methods:**

- Checks or money orders made payable to Chinook Spirit Children's Academy
- Pay on website or by automatic draft (set up with bookkeeper). These credit or debit card transactions have a \$10 convenience charge per month.
- Cash payments are not accepted
- \$35 charge for any returned check. If your check is returned more than two times, we will no longer accept a check for future tuition payments.

**Financial Aid:**

CSCA offers financial aid to qualified applicants. Must submit financial aid application. Deadline June 1. Awards announced by June 30. There is a limited amount of financial aid.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

Please report an absence by calling or texting the teacher or the school (cell) phone at 505-850-7916 **by 9:30** am on the date of absence. If leaving a voice mail or text, include the student's name, date, reason for absence, and expected return.

Children must remain home if they displayed any of the following conditions:

Temperature of 100 degrees or above within last 24 hours

Severe cough

Productive, new congestion symptoms

Swollen glands

Questionable skin rash

Diarrhea - 3 loose stools or more in 24 hours

Vomiting

Head Lice

Too sick to participate fully in activities

If a child becomes sick at CSCA, the parent will be notified. The child will be comforted and separated from the other children while waiting for the parent to pick him/her up.

Medication can be administered, *but* only with a signed statement from the parent. Prescription and non-prescription medication must be in the original container with the doctor's or manufacturer's instructions on it. Parents are responsible for signing the medication in on the medication log each day that the child needs medication. Unused medication, or medication past the expiration date will be returned to the parent or disposed of properly. Please be aware that CSCA does not have a nurse; medications will be handled by CSCA teachers and assistants per parental instruction.

New Mexico state statute says:

*Any parent, guardian or person having custody and control of a person subject to the provisions of the Compulsory School Attendance Law is responsible for the school attendance of that person.*

CSCA recommends less than 9 days total absence annually, excused or unexcused. Since much of our curriculum is hands-on and experiential, attendance is critical for academic growth. Make-up work will be provided as much as reasonably possible.

Great consideration has been given to a family-friendly Academic Calendar, one that allows for three 2-week midyear breaks. While we understand there will be special events, we ask that whenever possible, family vacations are planned during break times. When committing your child to attend CSCA, you are committing as much as possible to agree to the attendance policy as it aligns with the Academic Calendar.

Examples of excused absences:

- Illness
- Limited family emergencies
- Family deaths
- Medical, health or legal appointments
- Suspensions
- Religious commitments
- Deployment of a military parent
- Limited extenuating circumstances as approved in advance by a school director

All other absences will be considered unexcused, such as:

- Non-school sponsored activities or trips
- Family vacations outside of the normally scheduled school breaks

In the case of 3 consecutive days of absence, a doctor's note is required, unless advance notice was given.

Partial-day absences will be recorded as follows:

If 50% or less of the day is absent, it will be recorded as ½ day absent.

If 50% or more of the day is absent, it will be recorded as 1 full day absent.

Tardies will be documented from 1-30 minutes late. Anything beyond 30 minutes is considered an absence. 3 tardies equals ½ day absence.

Truancy is considered and reported in the state of New Mexico when a student accumulates more than 10 unexcused absences per school year.

If your child misses 9 consecutive days without notice, CSCA reserves the right to discharge the student and fill the space, placing the discharged student on the waiting list. The 30-day notice of tuition payment still applies.

Tuition is charged regardless of attendance.

#### **CLOTHING:**

School clothes need to be equivalent to play clothes, garments that can get messy at times. Our curriculum is rich with visual arts, physical education, outdoor play, and more.

Comfortable shoes need to be worn to school in case we walk somewhere nearby such as park, community center, or tennis courts.

During fall and spring, please pack sunscreen in your child's backpack for outdoor play, or consider applying it before sending your child to school, if you think it will last the day. Hats can be worn outdoors for sun protection also.

During cooler months, jackets, coats, gloves, scarves, hats, and warm shoes are essential. Unless it is too windy or rainy, we will bundle up and enjoy the outdoor sunshine each day, at least for recess.

Unacceptable clothing and accessories are prohibited. Examples of these include, but are not limited to:

Gang-related attire, excessively tight or revealing clothes, short-shorts, bare midriff attire, low-cut shirts, spiked jewelry, chains, belts with more than 2 inches excess, sagging or wearing pants below the waist or in a manner that allows underwear or bare skin to show, excessively baggy pants, T-shirts with expletive or derogatory words or statements

As a matter of courtesy and respect, hats/caps are not to be worn while inside buildings except for specific instructional, safety, religious, or medical reasons.

### **MEALS AND SNACKS:**

Students can bring a lunch and snacks of their choice each day in a lunch box. There is not refrigerator access for lunches or snacks to be stored, so please consider sending cooling packs in lunch boxes if perishable foods are packed.

Lunch takes place around 12:00 in the classroom or at the park picnic tables.

Two snacks are scheduled during the school day, one at mid-morning and one mid-afternoon. Snacks must be nutritious, healthy snacks.

Please send reusable water bottles, labeled with your child's name, each day. Students may have their water bottles during the day as they work and must take them home to be washed every day. Non-sugary drinks are also allowed, though they will not be allowed on carpeted areas.

Sodas and sugary drinks are not allowed. No sweets for lunch or snack allowed. Sweets are reserved for special treats provided to the whole class, such as birthday celebrations.

Note about nuts: Nuts are allowed ***unless otherwise advised***. This will be a decision based upon our current students' needs and tolerances.

### **BIRTHDAYS:**

Please provide a special treat (cupcakes or anything your child loves) on or around your child's birthday. Please confirm this date with the teacher in advance.

If your child is having a birthday party, there are some considerations with our small community to know about. 1) If your child is keeping it small and not inviting the whole class, which is perfectly understandable, do not distribute invitations or thank you notes at school. Please do so outside of school entirely, such as through email. 2) If your child is inviting the whole class, invitations or thanks notes may be delivered at school in student mailboxes.

We support any process of celebrating that your family chooses. Our goal is to consider all of our students, thus we ask these courtesies.

### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT:**

- We greatly value parent involvement and input. Parents know their children best, and we all want the best for all children.
- ***We expect communication between parents, teachers and students to be respectful at all times, no matter what. Please refrain from negative assumptions and always clarify with the teacher anything you wonder or need to know; our intentions are always positive, so we***

***encourage open communication to keep things as clear as possible. Disrespectful behavior from adults or children will not be tolerated and will be grounds for disenrollment based upon CSCA discretion. (See Disenrollment Procedures)***

- We invite parents to volunteer to help in the classroom, share a talent/skill, or for field trips, but certainly there is no obligation to do this.
- Parent newsletters will be **emailed** on a regular basis with information about the curriculum and upcoming events.
- For those parents that are interested, parent meetings may be held with opportunities for discussion about topics such as spiritual lessons, instructional approaches, schedule, calendar, fundraising, and more.
- See Parents as Role Models for more information

### **VOLUNTEERS:**

After allowing a few weeks for teachers and students to get into a routine, we are very open to parents who wish to volunteer. We welcome most any talents, whether it's reading one on one with kids, helping teachers with prep, sharing a hobby or career, organizing a holiday celebration, etc. We can arrange a regular schedule, or it can be as designed by the volunteer and school arrangement. We are flexible, as long as it's best for our students.

Volunteers who arrange to structure a lesson for students will be asked to follow a framework which will include the goal of lesson/event, steps to attain, appeal to various learning styles and special needs, character/life lesson connection, closing summary, etc.

All volunteers must sign in upon entering CSCA, sign out upon leaving and complete BIB (background check).

Younger siblings are welcome to join parent volunteers, given parents are mindful of supervising that child and minimizing distraction. We believe younger siblings can fit easily within the mission and philosophy of CSCA. It can be all-around good for everyone, the younger sibling who gets to come to school and look up to older peer models and the older children who learn compassion by interacting with that child. The situation is very real life, and we support it as much as reasonably possible.

### **SAFETY PROCEDURES:**

As a General Habit:

All doors will remain locked at all times during school hours outside of drop off and pick up windows. To enter the school, simply buzz and a staff member will let you in. While doors are locked from the outside, students will still be able to open them without a key, for fire safety.

*New Mexico statute NM22-13-14 requires that all students and staff evacuate the building during a fire drill, fire alarm, or mandatory evacuation. Shelter-in-place and lock-down procedures also require full cooperation. In the event of a critical incident, APD will establish a response command center and will make the decisions from that point on. Parents may not come on campus or leave campus during a lock*

*down or lock down drill. Please be aware that CSCA staff will contact you as soon as safely possible. In the case of a full evacuation, CSCA students and staff will go to Paradise Hills Community Center.*

#### Fire Drill Safety:

In order to equip students with our safety plans, CSCA follows state guidelines. The State of New Mexico requires two fire drills the first two weeks of school and eight thereafter. In case of a fire drill, students will walk to nearest exit and walk to our designated safety areas. In the case that you are visiting or picking up during that time period, the doors will be locked, and you can meet us there if you need us; otherwise, the fire drill will end in a few minutes, and we will return to the classroom momentarily.

#### All Weather Safety:

This includes severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, sand storms, etc.

Students will practice all weather drills, which involves staying indoors in the classroom near the interior wall and brick wall.

#### Lock-down and Shelter-in-Place Procedures:

A lock-down is when a dangerous person is in or near the school campus.

Here's what happens during a lockdown:

- Bathrooms are locked.
- Students are moved out of the hallway and into the nearest rooms immediately. They must stay in those rooms until they are cleared to leave by public safety personnel.
- Students and staff are kept away from doors and windows.
- All doors are closed and locked to protect students and staff from the threat.
- All blinds are closed. Lights are kept on.
- Attendance is taken.
- Everyone remains quiet.

Additionally, shelter-in-place means that something dangerous is happening in the general neighborhood. It is handled similarly to a lockdown, except that the students and staff are allowed to move around inside their classroom. They are allowed to have organized and supervised restroom breaks, medical attention, food, and water if necessary. No one is allowed in or out of the building.

Periodic Lock-Down or Shelter-in-Place Drills will take place within CSCA to practice safety and peace/calmness in the case of such an emergency (per NM guidelines).

#### Medical Safety:

-The enrollment packet includes medical information and release, and this must be on file prior to your child's first day of school. This tells CSCA staff instructions for removing your child from school in the case of the need for emergency medical transportation or treatment, and it names a physician and

preferred medical facility for treatment in the case your child becomes ill or injured while at school. In case of accident, injury, or emergency that cannot be treated with on-site first aid, every effort will be made to contact the parent or emergency contact person(s). If no one can be reached in a reasonable amount of time, depending on the nature of the emergency, the child will be taken to the nearest appropriate medical facility.

If your child receives a minor injury while at school that does not warrant immediate emergency contact, you will receive a written report of the injury and all pertinent information.

#### **Background Check Policy:**

All individuals who wish to be involved with the classroom must clear our BIB background check prior to being considered for volunteer (at your own expense of roughly \$24). This is a required safety procedure for everyone working with students.

#### **ANTI-BULLYING, NONVIOLENT POLICY:**

No form of bullying or violence from students, families or staff will be tolerated at CSCA. Bullying will be addressed from a disciplinary approach as well as a spiritual and healing approach.

#### **NO WEAPONS POLICY:**

CSCA does not allow weapons of any kind within 1000 feet of the school. (New Mexico prohibits the carrying of firearms with or without a permit in all K-12 schools.)

#### **NO DRUGS AND ALCOHOL POLICY:**

CSCA is a drug and alcohol free zone; all substances, including cigarettes, are strictly prohibited. This includes the parking lot and personal vehicles parked in the school parking lot. No smoking, no tobacco products, no alcohol, no illegal substances. This will be strictly enforced.

#### **CHILD ABUSE REPORTING**

CSCA staff are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or endangerment to CYFD.

#### **PARENTS AS ROLE MODELS:**

All adults, friends, family and staff must conduct themselves in a respectful manner at all times while on CSCA campus or with CSCA outings. This includes abiding by the expectations outlined in this handbook, including the Acceptance Criteria Checklist. Parents, friends, family, staff and all adults must remember they are role models for children and conduct themselves with that in mind at all times. See Parental Involvement section for more information.

## **INTERNET USAGE**

1. CSCA is open to BOYG (bring your own gadget), but there are goals that fit our philosophy for consideration. We use them for instructional purposes, as a resource. Also, our goals for recess time are movement and socialization. Some kids like to bring a gadget to play music and dance together at recess, which fit our goals. Some kids choose to use it for a timer for relays, etc. Also, we focus on posture and body alignment. Their spine needs to be in alignment, feet flat on floor, sitting up straight, thighs parallel to ground, shoulders back and down, etc. So if your child is asking to bring a gadget, here are some questions you can ask her/him to help evaluate if the answer is yes/no:

--“How can you incorporate movement and socialization with this?”

--“Do you have habits of using good posture, and will you practice good posture while using your gadget?”

--“Can I be fully responsible for keeping track of and caring for this gadget?”

--Ask yourself, “Is this how I want my child spending recess (play, socialization, exercise and movement) time?”

Please also know that fairness, such as gadget allowance, in our diverse, multiage classroom is an individual matter as each child develops toward various privileges and is motivated and/or triggered in various ways.

If the answer is yes to the questions, parental controls must be already installed, and CSCA cannot assume responsibility for caring for and keeping track of gadgets; students and families assume full responsibility.

## **PESTICIDE USE:**

Indoors: Natural remedies will be used as much as possible, but if pests are present and persist, a pesticide company will be called to treat the situation in a non-toxic (to humans and animals) manner to ensure safety for all students, staff and families.

## **DAILY SCHEDULE/CURRICULUM:**

- We believe there is flexibility within a framework, so we present a framework for learning. Within it, there will be a great deal of wiggle room to accommodate for every single learner’s needs.
- The curriculum is written or designed by CSCA educators, Holly Wu (NBCT, early childhood generalist) and/or Val Sayhoun (NBCT, Intermediate level generalist).
- Technology is naturally integrated into the curriculum on a regular basis.
- CSCA follows Common Core State Standards and New Mexico Standards as a minimum.

- Differentiated instruction is generally small group and tailored to student’s individual needs at all times. Every moment is designed with each individual learner in mind. CSCA is a school that maximizes students’ learning time and opportunities!
- Consultants as teachers, experts in their field, will be brought in for areas of need (ex: students want to learn to play guitar, so we may contract a guitar teacher; we want to teach yoga during PE, so we may contract a child yoga instructor; etc). Note—background checks will be performed on all consultants and volunteers, anyone working with children.

	<b>Mon-Wed</b>
9:00	Balanced Math
10:30 (snack)	Literacy
12:00	Lunch/recess
12:45	Spirit Time
1:30	Science and Social Studies
2:30 (snack)	Music, Art, and PE
3:00	Writer’s Workshop
4:00	Dismiss

Thursdays: Life is our Classroom Day!

Students come to school and are escorted with parent-drivers-chaperones (someday by bus) on curriculum-related field trips. Field trips also include service projects for community outreach. In order to attend Life is our Classroom Day each Thursday, permission slips must be signed and returned in advance. Parents are invited, but not required, to chaperone with advance arrangements made with the teacher.

Fridays:

No school for students. There will be discussion about this free day in their life, what students learn from this day, since life is our classroom. Teachers will be planning on this day as needed from a location of their choice.

Balanced Math:

A hands-on approach to math with a balance of problem solving/application, conceptualization, and computation/practice--

1. Small group instruction and centers for math, including math journals (conceptualization)
2. Independent work (computation/practice)
3. Number Literacy (problem solving/application)

4. Practice fluency with facts, once developmentally appropriate
5. Remaining assessments are performance based which includes progress monitoring.

#### Literacy:

A balanced, multi-sensory approach to a meaningful literacy experience, emphasizing speaking, reading, writing--

1. Interactive or shared writing
2. Small group instruction: small, dynamic reading groups
3. Centers include speaking, reading, writing, word wall sight words, making words (phonics) when developmentally appropriate, and handwriting when needed (using Handwriting Without Tears program).
4. No spelling tests, as a general rule (may integrate as homework, if desired)

#### Lunch/Recess:

Weather permitting, we will walk to the park for picnics and play on a regular basis. When we choose to remain indoors, we will have lunch at our tables and integrate a great deal of playful movement afterwards, as well as free creative play. Children need motion and play.

Note: Parents must sign a walking field trip permission slip which allows staff and students to walk within .5 miles of the school any day of the school week, weather permitting. We will access our community resources for critical parts of the school day such as play and PE.

#### Spirit Time:

- Prayer and meditation, including guided imagery
- Spiritual and healing lessons: basic goodness principles shared in all beliefs and practices, Eastern and Western traditions. We celebrate diversity in thinking.
- There are multiples paths, and students will be given choice as to what principles they embrace and participate in.
- Students are encouraged to evaluate how they feel about the spiritual lessons, and they are not expected to embrace every spiritual method being taught to them. "What resonates with your heart?"
- At times, guest teachers will present a variety of spiritual topics such as energy and healing work, meditation, yoga, and more.
- Some lessons will include the teachings of Jesus (the lessons of love, healing and goodness) with the understanding that we all have that "Jesus-potential," that Christ Consciousness
- The structure of this portion of the day will vary between whole group, small group, and one on one. Independent study will be offered as an option.
- Parents will be notified of the topics in advance so they can facilitate conversations with their child within the context of their own family values.

- Students will be given the opportunity to rest. Bring small pillow and blanket from home that fit in the backpack, if desired.

#### Science, Social Studies, Music, Art and PE

- Generally taught in units
- Taught as both stand-alone topics and integrated into literacy and math
- Deep and rich concepts, hands-on learning
- Inquiry and research projects with philosophy that we are a community of thinkers
- Curriculum designed with open-ended study to accommodate multi-age learning
- Life is our Classroom Day/Thursdays will be opportunities to enhance and offer enrichment
- We value giving children the opportunity to explore their talents and interests to become well rounded- musically, artistically, and physically
- At times, guest teachers will be invited to share their talents with the students.
- Students can naturally move and express themselves during this part of the day

#### Writer's Workshop

- Emphasis on process and creativity
- At times, teachers will model by being writers themselves during this time
- Teachers will conduct student-tailored conference sessions for various teaching points
- Small group mini-lessons as needed to teach specific skills
- Students are invited to sharing circles to share their process or product
- When appropriate, the whole writing cycle will be demonstrated and completed in order to publish a writing piece
- A peaceful, magical way to end each day

#### Assessment:

- The academic year is divided into trimesters
- Conferences are student facilitated, twice a year
- Students select an area they are working on each reporting period and progress monitor toward that goal; self-assessment and reflection are embedded in the curriculum and assessment
- The goals are habit-of-learning-type-goals, which extend to all content areas, so all content areas can be measured.
- No letter grades, as a general rule. Rubrics are used as measurement tool
- Remaining assessments are artfully embedded into instruction, mostly performance-based and progress monitored along the way, in order to guide instruction
- Reporting methods may vary from checklists, portfolios, narratives, presentations, and more.

#### A Note About Multiage Instruction:

The school will take place in a multiage setting, which means that all ages of students will often learn together via whole group, small group, or individually. This is our preference as teachers and as parents. We strongly value this approach because it is the utmost example of “community of learners.”

Learners collaborate about the topic at hand and will naturally extend that topic to the level that suits that learner. The nature of the curriculum is open, so students will always be able to “catch” and apply information at the level which is applicable to him/her. The next time that information cycles around, it can be understood even deeper. The information will be learned at a level which is developmentally appropriate.

From a spiritual and “Life is Our Classroom” perspective, opportunity for application of spiritual lessons will be constantly present as students learn to be helped by another, to be the helping person, to give wait time, and more. At times, students can be employed as “experts,” which will surely give confidence and leadership opportunities. At other times, students accept that they are the learner, that we all have strengths and growth areas, which we embrace and love about each other. The world is comprised of all ages, levels, talents and interests. Our classroom will represent the world.

#### Kinder-Pre-First-Experience:

We have a unique kindergarten opportunity for families who wish their child to begin kindergarten “early.” Generally, schools have an age requirement that children turn 5 years old on or before Sept 1 to begin kindergarten. While we honor that Sept 1 cut-off as a guideline, we also consider individual needs of children, along with parental input. If your child closely misses this cut-off, but you feel (s)he is developmentally ready to begin kindergarten, you have the choice to offer your child a Kinder-Pre-First Experience. Through individual assessments, we can structure your child’s kindergarten experience on a two-year plan, rather than a one-year plan. At the second Parent/Teacher Conference, a decision will be made as a team (parents, educators, and student) to decide if your child will continue onto pre-first for year two, or your child may be developmentally and academically ready to advance to first grade.

#### Holiday Celebrations:

As part of the curriculum, we do observe most holidays with holiday-related instruction and celebration. The tone of instruction and celebration is that of openness and respect for all beliefs.

If your family has a traditional holiday that you would like to share with the CSCA community, please contact the teacher. It is our goal to embrace and learn from multicultural traditions, particularly those near and dear to our students and their families.

Parents will be notified in advance of such holiday instruction and celebration. If you do not wish your child to participate, alternative arrangements can easily be made. Please notify the teacher in advance.

### Acceptance Criteria Checklist

Complete a classroom observation with the student and parent(s) for up to 2 hours. Additional observation time may be asked if more information is needed by CSCA.
The family meets the CSCA classroom schedule.
Parents and student accept that conflict is a normal part of childhood, and it is here to teach important lessons to all involved. Parents agree to approach conflict from this lifelong learning perspective in order to allow everyone involved to learn what there is to learn from the experience without disrespect or resentment.
The family agrees to keep communication open. CSCA's mission and philosophy center around healing and helping students via the home-school connection. Parents must agree to communicate in a timely manner with CSCA staff and always with respect.
The student connects or shows potential to connect with the CSCA student community.
The parents and student accept a multi-age classroom. If a student is older, the student has or shows an ability to learn compassion and patience with younger children.
The student fits the need for a calm- stimulation environment. (CSCA uniquely offers a calm learning environment.)
The student's behavior is manageable by one adult. (We do not provide additional staffing for behavioral intervention.)
The student's academic need is manageable by one adult. (We do not provide additional staffing for IEP-related academic needs.) That said, we can and will manage many academic needs, but we do not issue IEP's, nor are we required to honor them.
The family accepts that CSCA does not emphasize standardized test scores, though school-level assessment to direct instruction and measure growth in appropriate doses will be administered. This includes spelling; we cannot guarantee that spelling tests will be administered regularly. Note: parents of 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade and up may request that standardized testing is administered once a year and agree to pay an additional annual fee to cover the cost of the state test.
The family accepts CSCA Spirit Time principles that we embrace all faiths with respect, and we teach daily meditation.
The family agrees to complete a handful of homework projects throughout the year, understanding that CSCA does not assign daily homework. We will offer daily homework per parent requests, but should that request be made, the homework routine/responsibility will be monitored from home.
Parents and students agree to maintain a nonviolent, substance free campus.

The inability to respectfully act from the perspectives stated in this handbook, any ONE of them, can be reason for a probationary status or disenrollment effective immediately. CSCA is responsible for maintaining a learning environment that is effective for the greater community of students and that aligns with our mission and philosophy. CSCA reserves full discretion to disenroll any student at any point for any reason.

NOTE: Probationary status will revoke financial aid provided effective immediately.