

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HANDBOOK

### GROUP OF EXPERIMENTAL LEARNING SCHOOLS OF THESSALONIKI AMERICAN FARM SCHOOL

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Academic year 2022-2023

#### **Highlights**

1. The "Primary School of the Group of Experiential Learning Schools of Thessaloniki" shall henceforth be referred to as "Elementary School" or "School". Accordingly, the "American Farm School" shall be referred to as "AFS". By "parents/guardians" we refer to the biological parents of the students or those who have legal guardianship. The title "Ministry of Education and Religions" is shortened to "Ministry of Education".
2. Abiding by and observing this Handbook is necessary for the proper operation of the School and the fulfillment of its mission. It constitutes the basis for the smooth cooperation between the members of the school community.
3. The School Handbook is in accordance with the current legislation, laws, and directions of the educational authorities.
4. The Handbook is posted on the website of the School. A copy of the Handbook is submitted to the Directorate of Primary Education of Eastern Thessaloniki in accordance with the applicable provisions.

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## PHILOSOPHY - VISION - GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The Primary School started operating in the school year 2013-2014, combining the characteristics of the Greek and American educational tradition under the auspices and guidance of the American Farm School, while maintaining its non-profit character. The Elementary School complies with all the standards of the Ministry of Education of the Greek State. Its operation is supervised by the Principal of the Elementary School, the Directorate of Primary Education of Eastern Thessaloniki and reports to the President of the American Farm School.

From the beginning of its operation, the goal of the School was to provide *modern experiential, holistic, and pioneering education* to its students:

‘Modern’ because in a world characterized by rapid change and challenges that include opportunities such as the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution, but also threats, such as the global risk of climate change, education systems must adjust their goals and evolve their methods to anticipate and prepare in time for future developments.

‘Experiential’ not only because experience are at the core of the liberal educational tradition of American pragmatism, but mainly because only through experience can the child assimilate knowledge by discovering and giving it personal meaning.

‘Holistic’ involving the body and the senses, the mind, and the soul and aiming at the acquisition of that body of knowledge and skills that will make children literate, socially competent, and responsible citizens of the 21st century

‘Pioneering’ in the sense that the School is not limited to the introduction of innovative ideas from the international arena. Instead it acts as a laboratory generating new knowledge, contributing to the improvement and reform of the educational system as a whole.

The Elementary School in our approach is a living and dynamic ecosystem, with children and their needs being center stage. According to our philosophy, childhood is both a developmental stage of preparation for adult life and an autonomous life experience of the individual with its own distinct value. In this context, all the programs, functions, procedures and interactions that take place in the school have a dual purpose which is composed of two—seemingly confrontational—challenges:

On the one hand, to allow students to experience their childhood as a pleasant experience, during which the interests, experiences, rights, and individual developmental trajectory of each child will be respected by the entire school community.

On the other hand, to inspire and guide students so that they go beyond the normal egocentrism of their age and perceive themselves as active and responsible members of the local and global community. Our vision is for today's students to become the environmentally aware, democratic, and critical citizens of tomorrow, who will work, collaborate, and create an environmentally sustainable and peaceful future.

Guided by these principles, the School, through its constantly evolving programs encourages, guides its students to engage in experiential activities of environmental interest, taking advantage of the opportunities offered at the AFS with the following objectives:

- to expand and reconsider their relationships with their surroundings, situations, and phenomena they study
- to acquire knowledge but also build mechanisms that optimize its understanding,
- to acquire the ability to use oral and written language correctly in Greek and English,
- gradually become acquainted with ethical and humanitarian values,
- to cultivate their aesthetic criteria, so that they can appreciate the works of art and express themselves accordingly, through their own artistic creations,
- to ultimately acquire critical thinking skills, and the ability to communicate efficiently
- to collaborate effectively, so that they are productive and creative in any environment they work in.

The thematic units in the Elementary School are designed considering: the targets set in the Curriculum of the Ministry of Education, the interests and needs of the students, as well as main current social and

scientific topics. The main feature of the thematic units is the flexibility and adaptability to current data—locally and globally.

The principles of experiential learning are at the heart of the School's educational programs since its establishment, leveraging the rich and long tradition of the American Farm School. Throughout our educational programs, students observe, think, try, create, imagine, ponder, collaborate, gather experiences, and learn. The way experiential activities are organized in projects—varying across grades—incorporates the basic targets of the Curriculum of the Ministry of Education, enhancing the experiential perspective of all subjects in an interdisciplinary perspective, and takes full advantage of the natural environment and departments of the AFS.

Finally, the School encourages both students and teachers to be involved in the experiential projects and to share their outcomes with other members of the School (families of students, Principal, other AFS departments), the local and the wider community. This way they contribute in:

- building an open and interactive ecosystem among all those involved in the educational process; and
- disseminating the knowledge generated and encouraging innovation

## **CURRICULUM**

The School's curriculum is modelled based on the Curriculum of the Ministry of Education and includes 'Expanded Learning Time' (a deviation from the officially allocated hours per subject) for enhanced teaching of Science, English, IT, and Experiential & Environmental programs.

In particular, educational planning for all classes includes:

- Modern teaching methods and innovative teaching and learning approaches
- Collaborative, interdisciplinary, and exploratory approach of all disciplines that aims at the development of critical thinking, collective effort, the ability to communicate effectively, creativity, and being able to action to solve a problematic situations
- Interactive teaching and the use of smart boards in the classroom and interactive educational software for all subjects
- Implementation of student assignments with the use of computers (internet research on the topics of the assigned tasks, creation of electronic presentations, web pages, conceptual and mental maps, etc.), as well as with the project method (work plans)
- Use of school textbooks edited by the teachers of the School

## **English Language**

The subject of English language is a priority for the School's Curriculum, thus, we have adopted the following:

- The Department of English sets a unified educational design and curriculum with specific learning and cognitive targets for each grade
- Our program of English language prioritizes Literacy across the grades. All classroom activities, projects, programs, or resources ultimately teach students the craft of Writing and engage them in systematic Reading
- 'Expanded Learning Time' for the English subject in each grade accordingly:
  - Grades 1–4: 5 hours/week
  - Grades 5–6: 6 hours/week
- Small-group classes (12–13 students) for Grades 3–6
- Experienced staff engaging in professional development series organized and promoted by the English Department
- Experiential, cultural, and environmental projects that align with the school's philosophy as well as the current educational trends of teaching languages using the communicative approach and culture
- A mentoring program for recent university graduates. Our interns work under the guidance of our English teachers inside and outside the classroom, enriching the school's activities and supporting students individually
- A comprehensive series of textbooks, an annually evaluated and updated Writing Program, and online practicing material that promote literacy skills

- Production of English-language theatrical performances, organization of American celebrations (Halloween, Thanksgiving), and observance of international days (e.g., World Book Day, Democracy Day) that aim at teaching language through culture

### **Second Foreign Language**

There is a second foreign language (either German or French) in the curriculum of Grades 5 and 6.

### **iPad 1:1 program**

The purpose of the 1:1 program is the personalized use of iPads at school by all students in grades 2–6, that is, to acquire knowledge, attitudes, and skills for the 21st century. Through the systematic and personalized use of iPads, students use the devices for educational use and benefit (e.g., research, recording, data presentation, innovation).

For the safe use of iPads as educational tools, the School sends to parents/guardians at the beginning of the academic year the regulatory operation of the 1:1 program requesting permission to install the Mosyle online platform on the students' devices.

### **Digital Citizen Program**

The aim of the "Digital Citizen" program is to endorse students with the necessary skills to become able and conscientious internet users, and, ultimate, 'digital citizens' that respect the ethical use of technology and its tools.

### **Enhanced teaching of Information Technology | Media Literacy and Communication**

- Introduction of the subject of IT in Grade 1
- Playful approaches and implementation of experiential applications for younger students (Grades 1–2), familiarizing them with computers and iPads
- Application of the technological knowledge acquired in educational projects and presentations, in the context of environmental projects or other school subjects.

### **Promotion of the 'Love of Reading'**

A Lending Library schema operates both in Greek and English for all grades of the elementary school. Each class has its own small lending library for the students, while we organize visits to the library of the American Farm School, where students enjoy a variety of activities.

### **Cultivation of sportsmanship**

- The subject of Physical Education from Grade 1 focuses on the development of motor skills, which, in turn, promote students' physical conditioning and health
- School programs to acquaint students with sports and games (basketball, football, volleyball, track and field) and to introduce basic techniques
- Cultivation of sportsmanship and noble competition through activities
- Organization of sports events and sports festivals
- Modern sports facilities (indoors and outdoors)
- Acquaintance of students with sports and traditional games that come from the American sports tradition and culture

### **Cultivation of culture, social contribution, and voluntarism**

- Attendance of various age-appropriate theatrical performances
- Participation of students in school productions in Greek and English
- Participation of students in volunteer programs or events of the School

### **Cultivation of social skills**

- Programs for the development of social skills from Grade 1 through experiential activities
- School&Social Life programs in all grades with activities created by the school's psychologist, in collaboration with the class teacher
- Emphasis on cultivating collaborative skills through collaborative teaching methods as well as through experiential observations of the classroom community and of the extended community of the American Farm School.

### **Proper eating behavior and eating habits**

- All grades participate in the Healthy Eating program organizing experiential activities in collaboration with our nutritionist
- Involvement of students in cooking activities
- Utilization of the vegetable garden and the raw materials of the farm for tasting sessions
- Student visits to food production units and participation in activities/visits outside the School
- Involvement of parents in cooking activities and experiential workshops

### **STEM program**

The term STEM refers to the education model that connects four areas of science: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Instead of being taught as separate subjects, the STEM approach integrates these disciplines into a coherent learning experience that analyzes real-life problems. The aim of the program is for students to systematically study scientific and environmental issues from an early age. The educational philosophy of STEM permeates throughout the entire curriculum of the School, our interdisciplinary activities and environmental programs.

STEM activities are organized by the elementary teachers in collaboration with our secondary school teachers and external collaborators, utilizing elementary school facilities and the natural environment of the American Farm School.

### **Environmental Experiential Learning**

For the implementation of the environmental programs, the School has taken the following provisions:

- Implementation of the program for acquiring basic hands-on experience in the sustainable utilization of life and nature across all grades of the Elementary with weekly activities in the vegetable garden and the greenhouse, with the involvement of the plant and animal production departments of the American Farm School
- Utilization of the farm of the AFS
- Visits with thematic content of special environmental programs, implemented on the farm of the AFS
- Excursions to areas of environmental interest (national parks, lakes, wetlands) and implementation of educational programs for our students to get better acquainted with such issues

## **ADMINISTRATION | TEACHING STAFF**

### **The School Management**

**The Principal** is responsible for the effective and successful operation of the School in educational matters. Specifically, he is responsible for:

- the academic, scientific, pedagogical and administrative coordination of the educational program
- the development and implementation of curricula with emphasis on experiential and environmental education, innovation, STEM as well as students' technological and digital literacy
- the recruitment of teachers, in collaboration with the relevant Departments of the AFS, as well as their coordination, guidance, evaluation and professional development
- the collaboration with the teachers of the School in a climate of mutual understanding and appreciation and motivate them to develop initiatives and encourage them to innovate in their teaching and in the way they approach education
- participating in the development and implementation of the academic strategic planning of the School
- the development of innovative academic initiatives and programs
- the representation of the School in all its relations with third parties and the observance of the educational legislation
- communicating with parents/guardians about academic and educational issues related to the students
- the smooth operation of the School and the coordination of school life with the aim of shaping a positive climate and developing harmonious relationships between members of the School's community
- the cooperation with the Association of Parents and Guardians for academic and educational issues
- observing the classes of all teachers at scheduled intervals (2 hours per month per teacher)

**The Deputy Director/s** are responsible for:

- compiling the schedule and the duties, as well as following up their operation

- acting as hiring committee members for new teacher, supervision, and evaluation team, which is led by the Principal
- managing the electronic file and the digital platform of the school and acting as the link between the teachers and the IT Department,
- replacing the Principal of the school in his absence,
- working with the Principal for the smooth and safe operation of the School and reporting to the President of the American Farm School

The administration of AFS appoints one its executive, as the **Coordinator of Academic Affairs**, who will be responsible for the administrative and financial support of the school's management.

### **The teachers**

The teachers of the school, having an understanding of the complex role they are called to perform and guided by a high sense of professionalism and responsibility, must:

- Respect the personality, the needs, and the social, cultural, religious or racial idiosyncrasies of students.
- Enhance the self-esteem of students, providing equal opportunities for all independently of their individual, social, economic, racial, or religious differences and create a psychologically safe and enjoyable environment.
- Cultivate and develop students' skills, which are referred to as the skills of the 21st century, such as Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Creativity, the Ability of Effective Communication.
- Secure the safety of children while they are at school and during extracurricular activities
- Consciously cultivate a sense of self-discipline and social awareness in children.
- Keep the necessary confidentiality regarding the decisions and discussions in the Teachers' Association about the performance or behavior of the students and about any other issue that concerns events at the school.
- Collaborate with each other, regardless of the specialty they have and produce the best possible pedagogical and educational result.
- Collaborate with the scientific and administrative staff of AFS for the continuous enrichment of the educational programs and the improvement of the provided services.

The duties and responsibilities of teachers are also described by the respective educational legislation

### **ENROLLMENT PROCESS**

The Elementary School is solely responsible for determining the admission of its, incumbent on the extant legislation. Those students who have been born in the calendar year as provisioned by the law are eligible to enroll in the first grade of the Elementary School.

The following is required for a complete registration application:

- Informative meeting of the parents of the prospective students with the principal of the school regarding the educational programs and the aims of the school,
- Acquaintance with the child and their visit to our premises,
- Submission of all the necessary documents provided by the current legislation and the Enrollment Department of AFS.
- Completion of the form "Application / Registration Card" (the form is completed at the Enrollment Department)
- Inform the parents of the current Internal Regulations of the School
- Deposit in advance, as stated in the form of annual fees and charges

All the necessary forms and supporting documents are submitted to the Enrollment Department.

### ***Non-re-registration, removal of a student***

Pursuant to the current legislation (Law 4713 Government Gazette 147/29-7-2020), the Primary School reserves the right to refuse re-enrollment or to suggest the removal of a student in the following cases:

- for disciplinary misconduct of the student, following a decision of the Association of Teachers
- for violation of the internal regulations of the school, which is confirmed by the Association of teachers
- non-re-enrollment of a student is also possible in case of non-full payment of tuition fees two (2) school years

Non-re-registration or removal of a student due to low attainment is not allowed.

### ***Enrollment in the middle classes of the School/re-enrollments***

In case there are vacancies in middle classes, the School accepts transfer applications of students from other schools. Parents/guardians are responsible for the timely registration of their children.

For new enrollments, the Psychopedagogical Services of the School in collaboration with the principal evaluate the learning readiness of the student in pedagogically appropriate ways.

### **Distribution of students in sections**

Students enrolled in Grade 1 (or in intermediate classes, in case of transfer from other schools) are assigned a class by the Principal with criteria which are the exclusive right of the School, subject to the current legislation, the principles of the School, and the idiosyncrasies of the student and their personal information.

Twin siblings have the option of being placed in the same or different class sections after consultation of their parents/guardians with the Principal.

The number of students per class is determined according to the school's license and the current legislation.

### **Financial obligations**

The payment of annual tuition fees and other charges is made in accordance with the Tuition & Other Services Charging Regulations, which is sent to parents/guardians before the beginning of the school year.

## **ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL LIFE**

### **Start - End of courses**

Classes start on September 11th of each year and end on June 15th of the following year. Any change in these dates by the Ministry of Education is announced to the parents/guardians by the school's administration.

### **Holidays - interruption of classes**

The official school holidays are those set by the Ministry of Education. Classes may also be regulated by the Ministry of Education or other competent government agencies.

### **Arrival and departure of students**

#### *Arrival of students*

The arrival of the students at the school can be done by school buses during reception hours, announced at the beginning of the school year. Parents/guardians who transport their children to school on their own must be consistent in their arrival and departure times. Those who drive with their own vehicle in the premises of AFS must drive with special care, observe the speed limit (30 km/h), follow the pre-set route making a left at the AFS gate and driving around the campus to the side entrance of the Elementary, where they will follow the instructions of the staff regarding dropping off their child. If parking is required, parents/guardians are obliged to use only the parking lot of the Elementary school for security reasons.

In case of late arrival, the parents/guardians hand over their child to the Administrative Assistant. The child remains under the supervision of a teacher of the school until the beginning of the next period from the moment of his arrival at the school.

#### *Departure of students*

Parents/guardians who pick up their children during the set time of departure must use the parking lot of the Elementary school or any other area designated by the school's Security Officers for security reasons. The students are picked up at the entrance of the Elementary school. The children are handed over by the staff of the Elementary only to those who are registered in the authorized list kept in the Administration Office.



The authorized list is completed by the 15th of September each year with responsible statements of the parents/guardians which are sent for completion by the parents to the School.

Parents/guardians who wish to pick up their child outside the regular school hours can do so by contacting the Administration Office by 12:30. In any case, students are delivered only to those who are registered in the authorized list.

Otherwise, a written notification is required from the parents/guardians by email to the school, sent from the account the family regularly communicates with the school, indicating the authorized person to pick up the child from the school. In the same message they must indicate the ID card or passport number of the appointed pick-up person on an emergency basis. In such cases, the child is handed to the authorized person by the staff of the school upon presentation of their ID.

The School reserves the right to request additional identification documents from the family-appointed person before handing over the student.

### **Health-hygiene issues of students**

The School educated children about the rules of personal hygiene. Parents/guardians must report serious health problems to the School that may require special care or medical supervision. In case of communicable disease, the parents/guardians are obliged to inform the School and to confirm their child's recovery with a medical certificate.

### **Student Health Card and Participation in the Physical Education classes**

The Student Health Card (A.Δ.Y.M.) is submitted by the parents/guardians to the School until the end of September each year. One copy is kept in the health history file of the student by the Medical facility or the doctor that fills it out, and a second copy is kept in the child's Health Booklet by the parent/guardian.

In order for students to participate in the Physical Education class, parents/guardians must submit the Student Health Card to the School. The Student Health Card is valid for three years and is submitted for Grades 1 and 4, at the beginning of each school year.

### **Medical service**

The School has a nurse and a doctor for the students in case of an accident or a medical emergency. For more serious injuries (not minor cuts and abrasions), the doctor informs the parent/guardian. Students are covered by a group liability insurance against accidents or injuries sustained while students were at school.

### **Exemption from Religious Studies**

Parents/guardians of students who wish to be exempted from the Religious Studies course must submit to the School a statement at the beginning of each school year, in accordance with the applicable provisions.

### **Student performance**

During the school year, students' performance is evaluated by oral and written tests as well as other pedagogically appropriate ways. At the end of each trimester, the parents/guardians receive a progress report and descriptive evaluation for their child recording their progress.

### **School visits and Excursions**

Educational visits, participation in activities, events and excursions are part of school life. For such visits and excursions, students must submit a relevant participation form signed by their parent/guardian. During these visits/excursions, school regulations are in force.

### **Student dress and appearance - School uniform**

The Elementary School has a specific uniform, which bears its colors and logo and which students should wear every day. The uniform better serves the nature of our experiential program in terms of practicality and comfort for the students.

It is necessary for students to write their name on all their personal belongings. Items that do not have a name tag and have not been claimed until the end of the school year are used for charitable purposes at the discretion of the School.

## **Pedagogical meetings | Information for parents/guardians | School–Parent/Guardian Communication**

The communication of the teachers with the parents/guardians of their students takes place as follows:

### *Parent information meetings*

At the beginning of each school year, there is a parents/guardians meeting for each grade, where they are informed about teaching practices, class organization, and issues related to the school's operation.

### *Weekly meetings of Parents–Teachers*

Parents/Guardians and teachers can meet on specific days and times during the week, according to a schedule drawn up at the beginning of each school year. The parents/guardians are notified about the office hours of each teacher, so they can book a meeting. Appointments are scheduled through the Administration Assistant of the elementary..

### *Progress Reports*

At the end of each trimester, an informative meeting is held with the parents/guardians. Teachers discuss the progress reports of their students and offer detailed information about the students' progress and behavior.

### *Special information meetings for parents*

In special cases, on the initiative of the Principal or the Teachers' Association of the School, cooperation meetings are held with the parents/guardians in order for them to be informed on specific pedagogical issues.

### *Electronic and printed information*

The School communicates with parents/guardians via letters, over the telephone, and electronically regarding educational, administrative, and operational matters.

## **Meals | School Cafeteria**

During the first two breaks, students have their snacks at school. For lunch, students have the option to either have it at the school's cafeteria inside the school or at the dining hall of the School. At the dining hall students are served the School's food prepared daily with products of the American Farm School and other carefully selected produce.

## **Psycho-pedagogical service**

The Psychopedagogical Services of the School consist of a psychologist and a special education specialist. In collaboration with the School's administration, they evaluate the school readiness of the children who are going to enroll to all grades of the Elementary School.

If an assessment/diagnosis of some learning difficulty has been made before the enrollment of the student in the School or during the school year, parents must inform the school's Administration and submit the relevant documents for the certification of the diagnosed issue. This will help us provide the most effective intervention for the student. The certification should come from a public institution and: (i) identify the type of learning disability (ii) include a proposed individualized intervention plan for the teaching and assessment of the student.

In cases where students during their course of studies present learning difficulties, they can be referred by the teachers (with the consent of the parent/guardian) or by their parents/guardians to the Psychopedagogical Services of the School. If the Psychopedagogical Services find that there is a special learning difficulty, the student is referred (with parental consent) to a public institution for evaluation and diagnosis of this difficulty.

The School's Psychopedagogical Services collaborates with the teachers to support the students who have learning and emotional difficulties to the extent that this is possible within the school's context.

## **Transportation of students by school buses**

The purpose of the School Bus Transportation Regulation is to provide basic and useful information regarding the overall operation of the transportation system of students to and from the School but also during school visits and excursions.

**Transportation staff**

The transportation staff receives appropriate training and complies with the set regulation that ensures the quality of its services and the safe transportation of students.

**School buses**

Students are transferred by school owned or rented buses which meet the rules and safety standards set by the relevant legislation for the transportation of students. All buses have a minimum insurance coverage provided for bodily injury liability coverage to passengers and third parties, and damage to third parties' physical assets.

**Bus routes - stops**

1. The areas, the bus routes and bus stops that serve the school buses are finalized by the first week of October and are valid only for that school year. During registration period, the Administration can inform applicants only regarding the current service areas and the bus routes. These routes usually constitute the framework for the next year.

2. The relevant charging policies (i.e., canceling of transportation, use of one route per day) are described in detail in the Fees and Tuition section.

3. Students outside the service areas are transferred by their parents/guardians to the nearest bus stop of our bus route.

4. Any applications for transportation after the deadline will be evaluated based on availability and proximity to the pre-set bus route.

5. A temporary or permanent detour from the pre-set bus route may occur either due to exceptional circumstances (i.e., to avoid delays) or for security reasons.

6. The bus routes are designed so that under normal weather and traffic conditions, students arrive at the school before the beginning of the lessons and are dropped off to their respective bus stops at the predetermined time.

7. In case a parent/guardian wishes for their children to return home alone after being dropped off at the bus stop, they should send their request in writing to the school's Administration. For such cases, the School's responsibility for the student's safety is limited to delivering the student at the drop off point.

**Obligations of parents/guardians and students**

The parents/guardians should always have their children at the bus stop by the specified time ready for pick up.

More specifically:

-In case the parents/guardians or the representative they have appointed with a statement to the School is not at the bus stop by the specified pick-up time, the school bus has to take off. In that case, the transfer of the student to the school is undertaken by the parents/guardians.

-Respectively, in case of absence of an authorized adult to pick up the student, the school bus will not drop off the student. The school bus escort informs the school and returns that student to the school at the end of the route. The student stays at school until picked up by their parent/guardian.

-If the bus arrives at a stop earlier than the scheduled time, it waits for the student to arrive.

- Parents/guardians who wish their child to change route or stop temporarily, they must inform the Administration no later than 12:00pm. Satisfying such requests is contingent upon availability in the school bus of the specific route.

- For complaints or requests, parents/guardians can contact the Transportation Office and the School Services Administrator.

- The school bus is an extension of the School, therefore, the School's Internal Regulations apply to all passengers.

In addition to the provisions regarding discipline, students using school buses (for any reason and for any transportation) should abide by the following safety rules:

a) No standing, moving or changing position

b) Should not open the windows of the bus, stick out their head or hands

- c) Should not carry with them objects of great value
- d) Should not consume food, beverages, or chew gum. These must remain in their school bag
- e) Should not have pens, pencils, sharp objects, or their iPad outside the school bag

While riding the school buses, students must be considerate of the noise level inside the bus, so that drivers and escorts can operate the routes smoothly and safely.

Students must behave appropriately in the school buses, both to each other and to escorts and drivers.

Escorts and drivers must inform the School's Administration of any student disciplinary issues that occur during the bus routes. In the event that an issue persists and can pose a risk to other students, escorts, or drivers, the School reserves the right to discontinue the service offered to that student, after notifying their parents/guardians.

For any damage caused to the school bus by a student, that student, and by extension their parents/guardians, will be held liable.

## **PEDAGOGICAL CLIMATE AND DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES**

### **Enhancing a positive pedagogical climate and managing discipline issues**

There are four basic tenets in the School, which are respected and accepted by all those involved in school life i.e., students, teachers, parents/guardians. The three afore-mentioned parties agree that:

1. Violence, bullying, and harassment of any kind of are not tolerated in our school.
2. One of the main aims of all those involved in the School is to create a climate that is pedagogically appropriate.
3. The cooperation of students, teachers, and parents/guardians is necessary to maintain an environment conducive to work and learning.
4. The confidentiality of students' personal data is inviolable by all members of the School community (teachers, students, parents/guardians).

Based on these four tenets, all School members cooperate to create a motivational and welcoming atmosphere for all students to actively participate in learning and cultivate necessary life skills. With this in mind, the School applies the following programs:

#### *School Life Observatory*

The School Life Observatory consists of a group of teachers, the Principal, and the Deputy Principals. Teachers supervise and observe the students during lessons, breaks, and activities, recording incidents that may lead to conflict, harassment, or intimidation.

They also monitor, observe, and record student behaviors that are indicative of disciplinary issues requiring pedagogical intervention.

The Observatory meets regularly, discusses and proposes: solutions for all issues related to student behavior and safety, training for teachers and parents/guardians, and ways for resolving disciplinary issues among of members of the school community.

#### *Activities to strengthen bonds and a sense of empathy among students*

- Students of higher grades, who are trained in Mediation and under the supervision of teachers, engage in the resolution of disputes between students.
- The "Guardian-Angel" program is implemented at the beginning of the school year, where each sixth grader 'adopts' a first grade, whom they guide during their first year at school under the supervision of their teachers.

#### *Resolving disciplinary issues*

Respect, solidarity, cooperation, accepting other people's differences, encouragement of positive behaviors, sense of justice, courtesy, self-discipline, strengthening dispute resolution with

understanding and empathy among members of the school community, and the pedagogical management are the basic principles by which possible conflicts or inappropriate behaviors among students of the School are resolved.

Here are some ways the School tackles disciplinary issues that might arise:

1. Design prevention strategies implemented in collaboration with the teachers and the school psychologist, during the operation and activities of the School.
2. Disciplinary issues are not treated as a problem that concerns only the student or the teacher of the class, but touches upon the entire educational team of the school. Collaboration of the School staff is an effective way to tackle such issues according to relevant international literature.
3. For incidents that come up, the School informs and seeks the cooperation of the parents/guardians
4. In case the initial attempts to resolve the issue do not bring satisfactory results, the Principal and the school psychologist, after evaluation of the case, decide on the action plan which may include counseling of parents and teachers and further evaluation.
5. The School, as an educational institution, has a duty to act in a way that make students realize that their actions has consequences. In this way, the students seek to learn to take responsibility for their choices and to become responsible citizens.

In this context, students should:

- Behave with courtesy and respect towards their teachers and their classmates.
- Help new and younger students with problems they may face, showing them that they are welcome in the new environment
- Be friendly to all their classmates and actively protect those who are being teased or experience other forms of violence, bullying, or harassment
- To talk without fear to the teachers of the School or to the Principal about problems they face with their classmates
- Report to their class teacher or to the Principal any incident they perceive and suspect involves violence of any kind, even if they are not involved in any way.
- Use only the toilets of the students, according to their gender, and to observe the basic rules of hygiene
- Take care of the safety of all those who live and work on campus, to the extent of their ability based on their age
- Use objects of their classmates only with their consent and be careful not to damage items that do not belong to them
- Come to school prepared in terms of their workload (tasks, homework)
- Participate in the lesson respecting the teacher and their classmates and the educational climate that should prevail in the classroom

Students are not allowed to:

- Hit or use any kind of violence (verbal, physical, psychological, online) against their classmates. Violence is prohibited under any circumstances.
- Insult their classmates for reasons related to their physique and abilities, gender and identity, race, ethnic and social origin, as well as their religious or other beliefs
- Spread rumors or exclude classmates from group activities, motivating others to do the same or to make fun of and criticize maliciously
- Bring printed or digital material to school that are not age appropriate
- Bring valuable or dangerous items to school
- Remain in classrooms or corridors during the break without the presence of a teacher
- To cause damage to the equipment of the School, the fields or the facilities that are used for their education

Within the afore-mentioned educational framework and with the intention to bolster a positive educational climate, the School has selected the following consequences to manage discipline issues:

- a) Remark
- b) Reprimand
- c) Referral to the Principal

- d) Inform parents/guardians
- e) Inform the Teachers' Association
- f) Inform the Local Coordinator of Education
- g) Change of class section
- h) Change of school

Competent bodies for the implementation of such consequences in cases (a, b and c) are the teachers of the school; in case (d), the Principal with the class teacher; in cases (e, f and g), the Principal and the Teachers' Association; in case (h), the Principal and the Association of Teachers. Corporal punishment is not allowed. A system of consequences related to misbehavior of the students is constantly re-evaluated and adjusted. Parents/guardians are informed by the teachers regarding the consequences that have been applied according to the behavior of their children (by decision of the Administration in collaboration with the teachers and the Psychopedagogical Services).

#### **Collaboration with parents/guardians on discipline issues**

The School invites to inform parents/guardians, seeking their collaboration whenever this is deemed necessary by the Principal or the Teachers' Association. Parents/guardians must respond to these invitations.

The School and parents/guardians work together to resolve potential student discipline issues based on the principles of respect for privacy, confidentiality of personal data, and the willingness to work constructively.

#### **ACCEPTANCE OF THE RULES AND REGULATIONS**

This handbook has been drafted to ensure the smooth educational operation of the School, in accordance to the principles and educational philosophy of the American Farm School.

Enrollment and attendance of students in the School presupposes and implies the full acceptance of the Handbook rules. This is attested in a signed statement by the parents/guardians who confirm that they are aware of it and accept it.

The School reserves the right to supplement or amend part or all of this Handbook. In case of any changes in the contents, the School informs all members of the School's community.