

MIDDLE SCHOOL HANDBOOK

2010-2011



LAGUNITAS SCHOOL DISTRICT

LAGUNITAS SCHOOL DISTRICT

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There is a no tobacco use policy on Lagunitas School District property or District activities.

WELCOME

2010-2011 SCHOOL YEAR

Dear Middle School Students and Parents,

This handbook should answer many of the questions you might have about our school community and the Middle School Program. Please read it thoroughly and keep it as a reference during the year.

If you are new to the school community, please do not hesitate to ask any of us regarding the culture and traditions here in Lagunitas. This school year is shaping up to be a great year at the middle school. We will be experimenting with a new electives schedule and new social support opportunities for students, as well. You are welcome and encouraged to join our middle school parent group. Throughout the year there will be opportunities for parents to support our program and participate in the academic and social processes at school. It is with your support our students will grow, learn and thrive.

Sincerely,

Chris Francis, Lagunitas School Principal
and
Members of the Middle School Team

SCHOOL HOURS FOR 2010-2011 SCHOOL YEAR

START TIME: 8:35 a.m. END TIME: 2:55 p.m.

SHORTENED WEDNESDAYS: 2:00 p.m.

LAGUNITAS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION

We are a community, committed to continuous improvement in our educational effectiveness, aimed at fulfilling the needs of each individual student. We strive for quality, balancing academic excellence, social awareness, civic responsibility, and self esteem in a safe and attractive learning environment where all participants benefit. We value parental choice and involvement, collaborating with staff, students, and Board, to ensure that programs continue to be responsive, operations become ever more efficient, and educational opportunity continues to be optimized.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY—Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Grades

Education should arouse new dimensions of interest which provide students with the skills to make positive choices in their lives; to think critically; to respect themselves, their fellow human beings, and their environment.

Students learn best in an atmosphere where individual opinions and learning styles are respected. Students need to feel safe to take risks without fear of failure. Students need a support system of parents, teachers and friends to help set and achieve goals.

Students will be actively involved in their learning when the learning tasks are exciting and relevant to them. Teachers must use a variety of teaching methods and materials and allow students to work in different instructional settings. Students will work independently but also have the opportunity to work with partners and in small group situations. Working successfully with others is a valuable part of a child's education.

It is our goal that students exiting the Middle School Program will be able to:

- take responsibility for their own learning
- be respectful of themselves, others and their environment
- obtain the skills necessary to pursue a path of lifelong learning
- feel confident in their ability to learn
- develop understanding of themselves in relation to the rest of the world
- have a strong sense of community and the need to be an active participant in that community

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM DESCRIPTION (6, 7, and 8th grades)

The Middle School Program is a semi-departmentalized program. Students rotate through several different teachers to receive a comprehensive curriculum in language arts, math, science, social studies, and PE. A variety of enrichment activities are infused into the students' daily schedule including art, drama, music and technology. Emphasis is placed on individuals experiencing success by developing self-confidence and heightened sense of self-esteem.

ABSENCES, TARDIES AND INDEPENDENT STUDY

ABSENCES

Regular school attendance is directly related to successful learning. Learning includes active participation where ideas are exchanged in a real and immediate way. When absent, the student is denied the dynamics that occur within the classroom.

Students with excessive absences may be referred to the School Attendance Review Board (SARB). Students may have to repeat those classes that are not satisfactorily completed. Students who have not satisfactorily completed classes due to such excessive absences will not be recommended for graduation or movement to the next grade.

If a student has been absent prior to a school event (for example a field trip or dance), they will only be allowed to attend based on teacher discretion.

However, students who have been absent 2 or more consecutive days just prior to the event will automatically not be allowed to attend the event.

If my child misses school, what should be done?

It is the student's responsibility to gather make-up and/or homework from teachers for short term absences. Only after a student has been absent for 2 consecutive days or more will an "absent-homework request" be taken. In this case, an "absent-homework request form" will be circulated to the teachers to write down make-up work. It is the parent's responsibility to pick up this form from the office before 3:30pm. Upon special request, it may be posted outside the office for later pick-up.

Note: Students are encouraged to contact a classmate for missed work.

TARDY POLICY

Arriving late to school has an impact on all students' progress and success. Much of what goes on in class is established in the first few minutes of instruction. The student is put at a disadvantage if important announcements are missed, due dates are reviewed, the lesson set is covered, or an activity is started. Additionally, students arriving late to class interrupt the learning of others the teacher will not repeat what has already been covered. It is the student's responsibility to check in with the teacher to see what he/she missed. Being on time is an important life skill to learn and practice beyond the classroom. We also understand that there are many circumstances that may affect being on time.

1. There are NO excused tardies, with the exception of medical appointments, which must be verified with a medical note.
2. If a student arrives late to school, after 8:35 AM, he/she must go directly to the office and check-in. An admit to class pass will be issued. The office will document the tardy.
3. Instruction and/or announcements will not be repeated; it is the responsibility of the student to get missed information (especially important if the student misses more than 10 minutes or an entire period).
4. On the third tardy in a given trimester, a phone call will be made or a letter will be mailed home.
5. On the fourth tardy, a conference will be requested between parent, student, homeroom teacher, and administrator to determine a plan for remedying the tardy issue.
6. If tardies persist, fifth tardy in a given trimester, it will result in "loss of privilege" such as not be allowed to go on the field trips or attend school dances for the remainder of the trimester.

At any time, if the situation does not improve, we may refer the problem to the School Attendance Review Board.

INDEPENDENT STUDY

Advanced notice of at least two weeks should be given to the school secretary and all M.S. teachers if a parent/guardian plans to take their child out of school for more than five consecutive days. If the work is completed, the student will receive an "I" on the attendance sheet. If work is not returned, the Independent Study Contract is null and void and the absence becomes **unexcused** ("U" "**unexcused**" on attendance sheet). This contract and your child's work must be returned to school the day after the student returns. The State no longer allows Independent Study of less than five (5) consecutive school attendance days.

INFORMATION ABOUT ACADEMICS

SCHEDULE

The Middle School program schedule includes four core academic classes, elective/enrichment activities and physical education. The core subjects include math, language arts, social studies and science. Core classes meet for approximately 90 minutes one day a week and for approximately 50 minutes on three other days. In addition to the core subjects, physical education and elective/enrichment classes are scheduled. Students have the opportunity to participate in student government. The Middle School year is divided into three 12- week trimesters. Each trimester, students change elective/enrichment classes.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

The Middle School program employs a variety of assessment methods in order to view students in a holistic manner. The staff wants students to be familiar with different assessment tools as a way of navigating through real-life situations. The purpose of assessment may include one or more of the following:

- as diagnostic tools to more effectively plan for an individual student or class
- to assess progress in a curricular area
- to apply knowledge and demonstrate understanding
- to help students self-assess
- to provide feedback to parents and students
- to meet state, county or high school requirements
- to provide a means of articulation between middle and high school
- to facilitate communication between teachers in different content areas

Assessment methods fall into three general forms, which include direct observation, teacher/student-developed tasks, and standardized instruments. Assessment tools that are utilized are:

- literacy portfolios
- direct writing assessments
- individual student-teacher conferences
- teacher and student created “rubrics” for specific tasks/projects
- teacher created course and unit evaluations
- self/peer evaluation
- oral presentations
- written response
- performance tasks
- norm referenced tests (state mandated eg. STAR test)
- Resource Specialist Program assessments

The use of multiple assessments allows teachers to modify instruction for individual students, to assist in the design of the curriculum based upon student needs, and to make decisions about the selection of appropriate instructional materials.

Report Card / Progress Reports

At the end of each trimester, a Middle School Report Card is mailed home. Halfway through each trimester, progress reports are sent out. These can reflect either a need for

improvement on the part of a student or may report considerable progress. Students are given grades in each class and evaluated on their behavior and effort.

Grades & Sports

Any student-athlete receiving lower than a C- in ANY subject area will not be able to continue their participation on an after-school Lagunitas team. Accommodations for lower than a C- can be mediated during a conference between teacher, student, and parent/guardian; (for example, an “academic improvement contract” could be devised to aid the student-athlete). Participation may, or may not, be granted following the mediated conference.

Honor Roll & Merit Roll

The Middle School staff is committed to recognizing the outstanding efforts of the students in the program. Each trimester, recognition is given to students who:

- achieve academic excellence and
- demonstrate exemplary conduct/ behavior

Honor Roll consists of all A's

Merit Roll consists of A's and B's

If a student receives any of the following they will not be recognized for the Honor or Merit Roll:

- Receives a S- or U on report card
- Suspension

HOMEWORK

It is important that Middle School students spend time outside of class reflecting on and continuing the learning that takes place in the classroom. Homework may be assigned to:

- finish work not completed during class
- practice or reinforce skills learned in class
- complete reading or writing assignments
- complete large projects which are worked on both in and out of class
- preview upcoming work

Sixth grade students should spend about 1 hour on homework per night. Seventh and eighth grade students should spend about 1½ hours per night. Students who do not make good use of their class time should expect to have homework beyond this average time. Students who are consistently spending more time than this should meet with their homeroom teacher early in the trimester to consider restructuring their homework time.

PROJECTS

It is an integral part of the Middle School learning experience for students to complete projects of increasing complexity and time-span, individually, with a partner and with a group. This allows students to individualize learning, to share findings with

classmates, and to learn time-management and organizational skills. Learning group skills is an important part of the students' educational experience. Skills that are needed to work within a group will be taught and practiced:

- When large projects are assigned, either group or individual;
- An assignment sheet with due dates and requirements will be given to students;
- Teachers will help the class make a schedule and set benchmarks for the completion of projects;
- Students will be informed ahead of time how the project will be evaluated;
- Teachers will keep a master schedule of due dates for lengthy projects and tests, taking into consideration due dates for other classes.
- Groups will be provided with information as to how their assignment will be assessed, what part of the grade will be a group grade and what part will be individual;
- Teachers will provide ongoing feedback and guidance to groups as they work; and, offer mediation, if needed, to solve problems within a group.

QUALITY OF WORK

Students are not required to complete written assignments with the use of a computer. If available, they should be encouraged to use the computer for some of their assignments, this tool will be increasingly utilized as they move through their education. Generally, work should be handed in that is neat, legible, and reflective of the effort the student has exerted in completing the assignment. Work that does not meet this standard will be returned to be "revised".

ACADEMIC HONESTY – Cheating & Plagiarism

Lagunitas Middle School is committed to encouraging students to assume responsibility for their own ethical behavior and experience the joy of accomplishing their personal best.

Plagiarism includes:

- *Cut and paste* text from websites (for example, the plagiarism use of wikipedia)
- Submission of someone else's work as your own, including that of tutors, friends, family members, or paraphrasing without giving credit to the source.
- Turning in purchased essays from the internet written by someone else.
- **NOTE:** You **can** use others' ideas and words, but you **must** give them credit. Use phrases such as "according to..." and "in the book..." and cite all sources you received information from in a bibliography.

Cheating includes:

- Copying assignments or receiving answers from a classmate and turning them in as original work.
- Trading assignments with other students, including graduates.

- Talking about anything to a classmate or exchanging information during a quiz or exam once it has begun.
- Providing test answers of questions before, during, or after tests.
- Using unauthorized notes or technology such as bringing notes into a test or using a computer program to translate the assignment and turning it in as your own.
- Stealing school or student material, “teacher editions”, for the purpose of cheating.
- Changing answers while correcting yours or classmates work.

Consequences for plagiarism and cheating:

- 1st offense: no credit on assignment or test; parent/guardian contact.
- 2nd offense: all the above; parent/guardian conference with administrator and/or counselor; creation and signing of “academic honesty contract”.
- 3rd offense: all the above, and 1 day suspension.

GETTING HELP

The goal of the Middle School program is for all students to experience success. **The best advice for students who need help is to ASK for it.** Parents should encourage their children to seek help or to help seek it on their behalf. If a student is having trouble completing an assignment, does not understand exactly what is expected, or needs help with specific skills necessary to complete the work, he/she should contact the teacher for the particular class. Teachers are willing to work with their students during times other than class time as long as these times are pre-arranged.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Note: Requirements may change. Please watch for notices regarding changes in requirements.

In order to provide students with a course of instruction that will insure the skills necessary to transition into the required high school curriculum, we have adopted a set of requirements for graduation from the Middle School Program.

COURSE OF STUDY

Students in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades will be required to complete courses in the following subjects each year:

1. Language arts-including reading, listening, writing and speaking
2. Mathematics-including concepts and applications
3. Science
4. Social Studies
5. Physical Education

In order to graduate from eighth grade, students must have completed **each** middle school class with a minimum 1.7 GPA (D+), not failed any core class, and submit an 8th grade exit portfolio. A student who does not complete a class with a GPA of 1.7 (D+) and submit an 8th grade exit portfolio must attend summer school in order to receive a diploma.

MIDDLE SCHOOL BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

The Middle School Program is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment. Students are encouraged to reach their highest potential by contributing to a sense of community, developing into caring individuals making informed choices. In order to insure that all students have the opportunity to reach this potential, the following behavior guidelines are in place.

1. Students are expected to treat each other with respect, to be tolerant and to appreciate differences. Differences will be resolved in positive and non-violent ways. Students can expect staff to treat them respectfully and to intervene on their behalf in conflict situations and where issues of health and safety are involved.
2. Students are expected to arrive to all of their classes on time, prepared to work, and ready to participate positively.
3. Individual expression is encouraged. Inappropriate language will not be tolerated. Profanity, racial slurs, sexist remarks, harassing and/or threatening words are all examples of inappropriate language.
4. Students can expect to be treated with fairness and respect by the district staff and are expected, in return, to treat all district staff with courtesy and respect. Students should be allowed to express their opinions, but must respect the guidelines established by the community and educators.
5. Students have a right to function in an environment conducive to learning. Distractions should be minimal. Distractions by other students, which interfere with the learning process, will not be tolerated.
6. Students are expected to dress appropriately (see *Dress Code Policy*)
7. Students can expect to be given extra assistance, if necessary, in their academic endeavors. In return, they are expected to take responsibility for their own learning by paying attention, having appropriate materials with them, participating positively in class discussions and activities, completing assigned work, and putting forth their best effort.

CAMPUS GROUND RULES

As an initial stage in the development of a Peer Conflict Resolution program in the Middle School, past students adopted a short list of *Campus Ground Rules*.

1. Respect other peoples' property. No stealing or messing with other people's backpacks, clothing, food, etc.
2. No verbal harassment. This includes teasing, taunting, spreading rumors, bribery, blackmail, or unwanted attention.
3. No physical harassment or violence.
4. No inappropriate romantic touching.
5. No put-downs. This includes name calling, insults, etc.
6. No threats.

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Should it become necessary to discipline students for inappropriate behavior, the following steps of progressive discipline will be initiated. **It is recognized that the severity of individual situations may result in the skipping of any of these steps.** Generally, the following steps may be initiated:

1. Teacher/Staff speaks with the student directly.
It is our philosophy that approaching the young adult is the most effective way to communicate responsibility and accountability within our community
2. Asking the student to leave the class.
This measure is to simply take the student out of the situation. A follow-up discussion with the student will occur in a timely manner.
3. Office visit.
 - a. The office visit will be recorded by the school secretary. If available, the principal will meet with the student, to address the specific incident.
 - b. If a student is sent to the office more than once in a day, (s)he is suspended for the remainder of the day and/or additional days upon the Principal's discretion.
 - c. If multiple office visits occur, the teacher and/or administrator will contact the parent/guardian via phone/email/ or progress report.
4. Citation.

Citations are given for:

- Multiple warnings and/or office visits are not effective in curbing behavior
 - Severity of offense is deemed greater than above steps
 - Defiant behavior
 - Two violations of Dress Code Policy
 - Disruptive classroom behavior
 - Inappropriate playground behavior
 - Gum chewing
 - Profanity
 - Infraction of classroom or school rules
 - Off limits without permission during the school day
- a. A citation will be on the student's permanent record and the trimester's report card. The "Behavior Citation" will be filled out in triplicate. One copy will be given to the student, one copy will be given to the school office and one will be mailed home. Upon completion of the school service task, the student will bring their signed copy of the "Behavior Citation" to the school office.
 - b. A citation will be given with a specific school community service task to be performed by student. This task is determined by Principal and/or teacher giving the citation. **School Service is not an optional activity.** If a student fails to complete the assigned school service task, their name will appear on the list twice on the following day and they must perform the task for two

consecutive lunch periods. If a student fails to complete the task, he/she will complete another task under the supervision of the principal and the student's parents will be notified.

- c. A **second** citation will result in a "loss of privilege" for that student during 12 weeks beyond date of citation issue. The specific "loss of privilege" will be decided by Teacher/Staff or Administrator on an individual basis. An example of loss of privilege would be loss of dance attendance, attendance in after-school sports teams, field trip attendance, "school spirit" days, etc.
- d. If **three** citations are given during a school year, a conference with the administration, student, teacher and counselor, if needed will be arranged.
- e. If **four** or more citations are given during a school year, the student and parents will be required to appear before the School Attendance Review Board for the Drake High School area. This Board reviews attendance and behavior issues among students in grades K-12 in the Drake attendance area.
- f. {for Appeal Process for citations see below }

5. Suspension.

Suspensions are given if:

- Above disciplinary procedures prove to be ineffective.
 - Severity of infraction is deemed necessary to bypass above procedures.
 - According to Education Code: EC48900 administrators may suspend and/or expel students based on a variety reasons (please see Office for Ed Code details).
- a. In-House Suspension. A student is suspended from the school day but will remain on-campus.
 - b. Suspension. A student is asked to leave campus premises after a call to the parent/guardian. A suspension can be up to 5 days.
 - c. After a suspension a parent/guardian, administrator, and teacher "re-entry" conference is required.

6. Expulsion.

7. Referral to Marin County Community School.

It is recognized that the severity of individual situations may result in the skipping of any of these steps.

Citation Appeal Process:

The purpose of the Citations Appeals process is to give the student a chance to explain their perspective on the citation that was given. Appealing a citation does not automatically guarantee that the citation will be dropped, though it might be.

If a student is given a citation, which he/she feels is unfair or underserved, or was given in an inappropriate manner, there will be a 3-step process by which the student can appeal the citation.

***THE STUDENT HAS 3 SCHOOL DAYS FROM THE DATE THE CITATION WAS ISSUED TO APPEAL IT. A CITATION MORE THAN 3 SCHOOL DAYS OLD CAN NOT BE APPEALED**

- 1) The first step in appealing a citation will be to talk to the teacher who gave the citation. Teachers will all be aware that it is their responsibility to give time to the student for discussion about the citation. The student must be aware that it is up to the teacher as to WHEN would be appropriate, such as after class instead of during class. If this discussion does not resolve the concern, the student can move to the next step in the Appeals Process. **At any time during this or the previous step, the student can suggest some kind of service they can provide to the school community that would match and possibly “neutralize” the citation they were given.** This proposed service should satisfy three requirements: the student accepts responsibility for the act which caused the citation, the service would benefit the school somehow, and the service takes between 15 and 30 minutes to perform.
- 2) The second step is for the student to again meet with the teacher, but this time with a neutral 3rd party present. This person could be anyone who can be present to the situation without prejudice to the teacher or the student.
- 3) If the student has gone through the first and the second steps, but still does not feel that the unfairness or undeserved citation has been addressed to satisfy them, they can enter the third step. The third step is to schedule a conference with the principal, the teacher, and the student.

FIELD TRIP PROCEDURE

- It is our goal to have all students participate in all field trips.
- **In order to insure the safety and enjoyment of all students, some students may be excluded due to previous behavior issues.**
- It is very important that students return signed original field trip permission slips to the homeroom teacher by the due date. It is difficult to plan, schedule and complete all the necessary arrangements for any field trip without adhering to a definite time limit. For insurance purposes, original permission slips must be on file.
- **Students who do not return notices and permission slips and money by the due date will be not be able to participate on the trip.**
- As stated in the “Behavior & Attendance Policy” sections, some students may not be eligible to attend field trips based on missing work, multiple absences, and behavior/discipline issues. (See absences’ policy)

1. POLICY

Requests for scholarships or extenuating circumstances need to be made prior to the deadline in writing to the teacher leading the trip.

- **Deadlines for permission forms are not flexible.**

- Once names are on the car "List" there will be **no changes** generated by students or parents. Car lists are created by teachers.
- A list of students ineligible for field trips will be kept on the office computer and circulated prior to permission slips going home.
- **Teachers who are leading field trips will have the ultimate authority to decide who can participate on any given field trip.**

2. STUDENT BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS FOR FIELD TRIPS

- Students are expected to behave in an appropriate manner, be respectful and courteous to adults, classmates and others they encounter on the field trip.
- Certain behaviors that are particular to a specific location will be discussed prior to leaving, e.g. theater, beach, museum, treatment of wildlife etc.

3. EXPECTATIONS OF DRIVERS/CHAPERONES

- If drivers/chaperones are unable to drive at the last minute, **parents are responsible** to arrange for an alternate driver. Many times we find ourselves in a last minute frenzy because of drivers who give short notice.
- Drivers must have a completed insurance form on file at the school office.
- Students riding with parents are considered to be a group.
- The group needs to stay together with the driver as the group leader, if the teacher requests.
- Drivers should let teachers know if any student(s) are behaving inappropriately
- Drivers need to know where their group members are e.g. bathroom, store, cafe, beach.
- Drivers are not allowed to talk on their cell phone while driving.
- Designated times to regroup will be determined before leaving.

GENERAL INFORMATION

DRESS CODE POLICY

(Also see Middle School Behavior Guidelines)

Again, freedom of expression is encouraged, but students must accept responsibility for their dress at school which is held to a higher standard than the community-at-large.

- Clothing must be clean and in good repair.
- Students must wear shoes at all times and may not wear swimsuits unless they are a part of an authorized school activity.
- Halloween costumes should follow these guidelines, as well.

Guidelines: (created by staff and past student representatives)

Students should **not** wear the following:

- Tops too low in the front, i.e. too much skin and cleavage showing.
- Midriff showing, i.e. too much skin showing between the shirt/blouse and the pants, and/or belly button revealed.
- Pants too low for boys or girls, i.e. underwear or crack showing, and/or too low in the front.
- Skirts or shorts too low in front or back, i.e. too brief that there would be a chance for private areas or underwear to be seen. Shorts must be mid-thigh. Skirts should be no shorter than one hand above the knee.
- Tops with spaghetti straps...discreet showing of bra straps may be permissible.
- Shirts, sweatshirts, hats, or other clothing displaying an advertisement or symbol which might be interpreted as an endorsement of the use of tobacco, drugs, or alcohol, or displaying profanity or profane acts, and is distracting to the learning of others.

** Staff discretion of what constitutes a violation of the dress code will be used when student apparel is distracting to learning and/or inappropriate. Violators of the dress code will be given alternative clothing to wear for that day. If that is not possible, parents may be contacted to bring in appropriate clothing. A second violation will result in a citation. Repeated violations may result in suspension and/or daily clothing check by the administration*

Emergency Cards

Should there be a medical emergency, school emergency or natural disaster that required school personnel to contact a parent, the District "Emergency Card" provides the most expedient way for us to get in touch with you. It is very important that parents fill out the emergency card completely, including up-to-date names and phone numbers of other local adults who can be contacted in your absence. Parents must remember to sign the emergency card. If you have more than one child attending school in the District, an emergency card must be on file for each child. As parents change jobs, phone numbers, and/or addresses, they should contact the school so these changes can be made on the emergency cards.

Disaster/Emergency Identification Cards

In the event of a natural disaster occurring during school hours, we will be relying on procedures outlined in the Lagunitas School District Disaster Plan. One of the provisions of that plan is to insure that each child has some form of identification to wear. Please complete this small card and return it to school with the regular emergency card. The I.D. cards will be kept with the disaster kits in each classroom.

Medication

Students who need to take medication during the school day (including asthma inhalants and aspirin) must have a signed "Authorization to Dispense Medicine" form filled out and on file. These forms are available in each school office.

Transportation

The District provides transportation to and from school by school bus. Please see information regarding costs, schedules, and an application for free or reduced bus fees. The bus driver strictly enforces all school rules in addition to bus conduct and safety rules.

Lunch

The District operates a lunch program. Lunch is provided daily. Information, menus, and application for free or reduced cost lunches are sent out at the beginning of the school year and are also available at the school offices.

Insurance

Low-cost student accident insurance is available to all students. The insurance covers students at school during school hours, traveling directly to and from school, and on school sponsored activities. The school's limited liability insurance does not cover school ground accidents.

Parental Rights

Governing boards of school districts are required to notify parents or guardians of their rights as specified in California Education Code. A brochure (also available in Spanish) is available.

Child Abuse and Neglect

With the concern for the total well-being of each student, District employees must report known or suspected instances of child abuse in accordance with state law and District regulations. Employees will cooperate with child protective agencies responsible for reporting, investigating, and prosecuting cases of child abuse.

How to File a Complaint Against an Employee

Please refer to the District contract with the LTA union for the procedure.

Sexual Harassment

The following procedures may be used by students in situations perceived as sexual harassment:

1. The members of the Lagunitas community are united in the belief that sexual harassment (or any other kind of harassment) should not be tolerated in or out of school. In an effort to address the problem of sexual harassment, the Lagunitas School District has adopted a policy and procedures to deal with harassment when it occurs.
2. Sexual harassment can interfere with a student's ability to develop and maintain self-esteem, form relationships, and perform well in school. It is important that students feel safe and supported at school; sexual harassment can undermine this essential feeling of security.

3. If a student believes that sexual harassment has taken place, they should tell the teacher or principal immediately. Parents should contact the child's teacher or principal if they become aware of any form of sexual harassment.

Early School Arrival

The Lagunitas School District does not provide supervision for students who arrive early to school. Students should plan to arrive no more than 10 minutes before school begins unless specific arrangements have been made.

Staff Development Days/Shortened Wednesdays

The District is committed to providing the best educational program possible for all students. An important part of this is an on-going Staff Development Plan of curriculum coordination, health and safety, and professional growth for teachers. Every Wednesday, students will be dismissed approximately 50 minutes early to provide time to help implement this plan. In addition to the shortened Wednesdays (time lost on these days is added on to Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday - for a longer day), some full day workshops have been scheduled. Students will not be present on these days, which are noted on the school calendar.

School Site Council

The Lagunitas School District participates in several "categorical" programs funded by the State Department of Education. The School Site Council comprised of parents, staff, and a District administrator, and meets at least four times annually to make decisions concerning policy and procedures for these programs and to determine how the funds in these programs are to be expended. Each program has one parent and one staff position allocated. Please contact your parent group representative if you are interested in serving on this committee.

Testing

During the school year, various types of "standardized tests" are administered. Some of this testing is mandated by the state, while some is used diagnostically by the District's programs to assess a child's strengths and weaknesses. District policy requires the school to notify parents when standardized tests are to be given.

Special Services

The District has an outstanding team of specialists who provide services to students with special needs. This team approach allows for greater potential for success in meeting the individual needs of our children in greatest need. Parents, teachers, and students are often included in these meetings. Further information regarding specific services offered by these programs is available by contacting the school office.

School Phones

The telephones located in all school offices and classrooms are for school business. After school plans are not proper use of school phones.

Pets, Toys, etc.

Please leave your family pets at home when you come to school. In addition, remember that items brought to school can get broken; keep them home if they are expensive, have many small parts or are electronic. Students may not trade or sell items at school. We also ask that students not come to school with large amounts of money.

Electronic Devices: Keep them home!

Students are not allowed to have MP3 players (ipods) CD players, electronic games, or cell phones at school. If cell phones are brought to school for after school use they may not be used or seen on campus grounds during school hours.

- Any of these items that are observed in use or present at school will be confiscated.
- School staff will only return the items to parents/guardians that come to school and pick them up.
- If the problem of bringing these such devices to school persists, a citation will be given. Lagunitas School District is not responsible for any of these items, nor does our staff wish to spend time investigating the theft or damage to items that do not belong at school.

Bicycles, Skateboards and Rollerblades

Bicycles, skateboards and rollerblades are not allowed on the school playgrounds or corridors. Students who ride bicycles or skateboards to or from school must follow basic safety rules, and must wear safety helmets as required by California State law. All students who ride to school must cross Sir Francis Drake Boulevard with the school crossing guard. Adults riding bicycles to or from school are asked to observe the same rules that are in effect for the students.

School Board

The Board of Trustees is the governing body of the Lagunitas School District. The elected members of this board hold regular meetings. Agendas for these meetings including the location are posted in local post offices and are on the school web site. The public is encouraged to attend these meetings. School Board members are listed on the inside cover of this handbook.

Visitations/Parents Conferences

Visitors (including parents) are welcome in the Lagunitas School District. All visitors are asked to check in with the appropriate school office before going to any classroom. Parents are asked to time their visits and/or questions so as not to interrupt classroom activities. Parents wishing a special parent-teacher conference should leave a message with the school secretary rather than interrupting the teacher. The teacher will contact you as soon as possible. Regular parent-teacher conferences are scheduled at various

times for each program during the school year. Traditionally, Middle School meets at the beginning of the school year with 6th grade students and new incoming students. Conferences after the beginning of school year are upon teacher request or under special circumstances. Please see the school calendar for specific dates for each program and respective minimum days.

Computers

School computers are available on campus to students with permission from teachers for use with academic work. Students are expected to comply with the computer agreements signed by students and parents stating that they understand the appropriate use of the school computers. Violation of the agreement will lead to withdrawal of the student's privilege to use the computers and possible other consequences including citation and restitution if appropriate.

LEAP

LEAP (aka Lagunitas School Savers) is a fundraising organization dedicated to improving school programs and facilities. This group meets monthly. Meetings are open to all parents. For information about LEAP, please call 488-1246 or mail at PO Box 268, San Geronimo, 94963.

Parent Volunteers

Parents are welcome and encouraged to volunteer in classrooms throughout the school and for special projects. Parents who are working directly with children are required by state law to have a TB test within the last 4 years.

Parent Groups

Each program has a parent group which meets to discuss program interests, issues and concerns. All parents are welcome to attend. Please call the school office for information about the Middle School parent group meeting schedule and the year's activities.

Interesting But Dangerous

In the interest of safety, firearms, knives, slingshots, and any other weapons or toy weapons, including explosives, are not allowed at school. Wooden and metal baseball bats and hard balls are not allowed at school, unless under direct supervision by a professional staff member (i.e. P.E. teacher during curriculum instruction) In addition, please do not send glass drinks in lunches or snacks. (Please plan for Halloween costumes without weaponry. Play weapons will not be allowed at school. Also, students and adults will not be allowed to wear full face masks.)

School Pictures

School pictures will be taken near the beginning of the school year. Packets are available to parents on a prepaid basis. All students have their pictures taken for school records. Each student, whether ordering a packet or not, receives a group class photo. Watch for flyers in notes coming home from school.

Library Time

There are two libraries available for student use, one on each campus. It is important for students to not only check out books to read by themselves and with their families, but also to develop the habit of returning their books on time. Please have your son/daughter make note of the due date when books are brought home.

Buildings and Grounds

Our custodial staff works hard to maintain and keep our schools clean. You can assist by volunteering for work parties that are held on various occasions. It is also helpful if you model environmental care by picking up trash and expecting the same of students. Custodians appreciate the assistance.



TIPS FOR BEING SUCCESSFUL IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Guidelines developed for Middle School students by Middle School students

∪ BE ORGANIZED.

∪ PLAN AHEAD.

∪ KEEP EVERYTHING.

∪ PLAN YOUR TIME.

∪ DO YOUR HOMEWORK.

∪ STUDY FOR TESTS.

∪ DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE LAST
MINUTE TO DO A PROJECT.

∪ BE PREPARED FOR CLASS:
PENCILS, PAPER, BINDERS,
CALCULATOR FOR MATH.

∪ WRITE DOWN YOUR
ASSIGNMENTS.

∪ PAY ATTENTION.

∪ GET HELP. DON'T BE AFRAID TO
ASK QUESTIONS.

∪ BE PATIENT.

∪ COOPERATE IN GROUPS.

∪ RAISE YOUR HAND; DON'T SHOUT
OUT.

∪ STAND UP FOR YOURSELF.

∪ TALK TO YOUR TEACHER IF
GROUP MEMBERS ARE NOT
HELPING.

HAVE FUN! IT'S NOT AS BAD AS YOU THINK IT WILL BE!

