



ESTABLISHED 1995

PARENT HANDBOOK

NOVATO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Updated: August 19, 2009

NOVATO CHARTER SCHOOL

Parent Handbook

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NOVATO CHARTER SCHOOL STAFF

Director	Rachael Bishop
Sunflower Kindergarten	Gina Espinosa, Teacher Ruth Rotman, Assistant
Dandelion Kindergarten	Michael Rohner, Teacher Annette Faville, Assistant
First Grade	Meenu Pal
Second Grade	Helen Lambert
Third Grade	Tara Waterman
Fourth Grade	Mary Holt
Fifth Grade	Ilie Watterson
Sixth Grade	Ilona Rosson
Seventh Grade	Rick Betz
Eighth Grade	Steve Kinney
Handwork	Betsy Priest
Movement	Alex Boshell
Music	Kenneth Blacklock
Spanish	Marta Cervera
Drama	Paige Rogers
Resource	Rick Hansen
Office Manager	Karen Scheppke
Business Manager	Jeffrey Erkelens
Staff Assistant	Katie Bordenave

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INTRODUCTION

*"This is our school
Let peace dwell here,
Let the rooms be full of contentment.
Let love abide here:
Love of one another.
Love of humankind,
Love of life itself.
Let us remember
That as many hands build a house,
So many hearts make a school."*

The Development of the Novato Charter School

The impetus for Novato Charter School began when a small group of parents who were actively involved in the Novato public school system felt that the pacing of educational reform was too slow to affect their children. In researching alternative programs, the group learned of Senator Gary Hart's charter school legislation (SB1448). This bill, passed in 1992, was intended to encourage parents, educators, and members of the community to try innovative approaches to education in order to find ways of improving student learning. This legislation allowed for the development of 100 charter schools in California.

In February of 1994, an expanded group of parents began to explore the possibilities of a common vision for educational reform. Once they developed a solid common ground, they gathered the required signatures from District teachers indicating their support and submitted the petition to the Novato Unified School District (NUSD) Board of Trustees. The Trustees amended the petition with a set of conditions. These conditions were addressed, and on May 23, 1995 the petition for Novato Charter School received unanimous support from the NUSD Board of Trustees. The petition and conditions were then submitted to the State Board of Education. On July 19, 1995, final approval was received and Novato Charter School became California's 89th charter school.

In August of 1996 Novato Charter School officially opened with Kindergarten through fifth grade enrollment. An additional grade was added each year through 1999. NCS currently operates at full enrollment as a public, K-8 NUSD school.

OUR SCHOOL

History

The Novato Charter School ("NCS") began operations August 5, 1996, with 152 children in grades K-5. During our first five years, our school expanded to offer a K-8 program. In our second year of operation we hired our School Director, Rachael Bishop. Under her leadership, we developed clearly defined processes and procedures and a strong instructional program. NCS became a model for developing Waldorf-inspired charter schools throughout the state. With close support and strong collaboration with our District, we obtained critical financing which enabled us to relocate our school. We secured \$750,000 financing and raised an additional \$300,000 to construct our new facility, which included the installation of 12 portables, a play structure, basketball court, and garden.

We stabilized enrollment at 232 and established school-wide wait lists (currently at 203), created a viable foundation for fundraising purposes, and negotiated one of the first successful Proposition 39 Facilities Agreements with our sponsoring district. Facility development and site improvements were the focus over the next 5 years including: classroom enhancements; installation of an irrigation system, fencing, shade structures, green house, kindergarten play yard, 1-5 playgrounds, and $\frac{3}{4}$ acre playing field, planting over 40 trees, landscaping, and other site beautification.

Despite the many financial challenges facing public education, the Novato Charter School has continued to thrive. Working closely with the District staff, we succeeded in overcoming many fiscal uncertainties consistently demonstrating sound fiscal practices with balanced budgets and healthy ending balances. In the past 5 years NCS in conjunction with the Novato Charter School Foundation has raised \$675,000 in parent donations and affinity programs, \$299,000 in corporate and foundation grants, and 150,000 in annual fundraising events: over one million dollars.

Led by our school Director, NCS staff has worked collaboratively to improve measurable school-wide student performance. In the last two years, NCS has demonstrated Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) in both the proficiency and participation components of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). While consistently scoring in the top 20% of schools statewide as measured by the Academic Performance Index (API) School Reports we saw the need to align Waldorf-inspired methods more closely with state standards. To that end, our staff completed the process of aligning the NCS

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curriculum in all core areas; Language Arts, Mathematics, History/Social Science, and Science and monitored student progress in meeting proficient standards.

NCS is currently a thriving educational community at full capacity with an enrollment of 233 students. Our program supports each child's academic success and helps them develop the necessary capacities to meet a changing and diverse world. Under the continuous direction of Rachael Bishop, the collaborative efforts of staff, board members, and parents continue to ensure the viability and success of our program.

Philosophy

"We shouldn't ask: what does a person need to know or be able to do in order to fit into the existing social order? Instead we should ask: what lives in each human being and what can be developed in him or her? Only then, will it be possible to direct the new qualities of each emerging generation... The society will become what young people, as whole human beings, make out of the existing social conditions. The new generation should not just be made to be what the present society wants it to become."

- Rudolf Steiner

The Novato Charter School (hereinafter "NCS" or the "Charter School") is a community of parents and teachers using educational methods that nurture and inspire creativity, critical thinking, and motivated learning. As an institution committed to educating the whole child, the school endeavors to foster the unfolding of each child's full potential. Using Waldorf-inspired methods, our teachers nurture the imagination in the early years in order to build a foundation for abstract thinking. The child's intellect is appropriately challenged in the middle years and beyond. The education places equal emphasis on a solid academic foundation, artistic expression, social development, and attention to the inner life of the child. An integrated, project-based approach to learning emphasizes a child's relationship to the natural world while promoting respect for the environment and humankind. Children experience wonder, reverence, and enthusiasm for learning, and as a result, they emerge with a commitment to social responsibility and the potential to impart direction and purpose to their lives.

The Novato Charter School offers instruction for Kindergarten through grade 8. In order to foster a close and profound relationship with each child, a teacher will ideally lead the same group of children for up to but not limited to four years. Other skilled professionals may teach specialty subjects. Based on a pedagogical model of the developing child, the lessons emphasize developmental rhythms. Within this framework, the teachers select and present the subject matter integrating Waldorf-

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inspired methods with other best educational practices tailored to the learning needs of each child.

The goal of the Novato Charter School is to nurture the whole child with the objective of enabling students to become self-motivated, competent and life-long learners.

Mission

Educating our children so that they may grow to be capable and contributing human beings.

Distinctive Features of The School's Educational Program

"The need for imagination, a sense of truth and a feeling of responsibility - these are the three forces which are the very nerve of education."

- Rudolf Steiner

- ☞ The academic curriculum integrates the arts; drama, painting, music, drawing, beeswax, and clay modeling. Education through the arts awakens imagination and creativity, bringing vitality and wholeness to learning.
- ☞ The class teacher has the opportunity to take the same children through the grades for a number of years. This affords children a feeling of community and commitment and encourages a partnership among teacher, parents, and child. This model offers accelerated learning, stability, and consistent and continuing guidance to all children.
- ☞ Textbooks are not typically used in the elementary grades. The teacher creates a presentation, and the children make their individual books (main lesson books) for each subject recording and illustrating the substance of lessons. These student-generated main lesson books are an important record of learning and a way in which art is integrated into every subject.
- ☞ A foreign language is taught beginning in first grade giving the children an experience of another culture. At the discretion of the teacher, a foreign language may be introduced into the kindergarten.
- ☞ Science is taught in the lower grades through observation and experience of our natural environment. Through nature studies, gardening, and environmentally

- conscious practices, the children develop reverence and a sense of guardianship for the Earth and all of its inhabitants. In the upper grades, the teacher sets up experiments, calls upon the students to observe carefully, ponder, discuss, and write up their observations. The students are then drawn to their own conclusions. Through this process, rigorous independent thinking and sound judgment are trained.
- ☞ Multicultural content is woven into the curriculum by means of biography, story telling, history, crafts, art, music, the practice of seasonal celebrations, and through foreign language as discussed above.
 - ☞ Reading and writing are learned in the same way as they originated in the course of human history. First graders hear stories, draw pictures, and discover letters in the gesture of pictures. Exposure to phonics is accompanied by the use of songs, poetry, and games that help to establish a joyful experience of language. Through the grades, reading texts are taken from the classical humanities curriculum.
 - ☞ The humanities curriculum acknowledges that the cultures of the past have influenced humanity throughout time and continue to influence the values and morals of today's world. Children will learn about several religions and cultures from an historical perspective; in grade two fables are taught, in grade three history and legends, in grade four, Norse mythology, and in grade five the ancient cultures of India, Egypt, Persia, Mesopotamia and Greece. By exposure to these cultures through their legends and literature, the children develop an appreciation for the diversity of humankind. By the close of eighth grade, the students have journeyed from Greece and Rome to medieval history, from the Renaissance to the Reformation, and from the Age of Exploration to the present day.
 - ☞ Each school day begins with the "Main Lesson", a two-hour period in which the core curriculum is presented. The main lesson subject (such as algebra, Greek history, botany or acoustics) is taught in three to four week blocks. Many blocks are continued later in the term. This approach allows for freshness and enthusiasm, concentrated in-depth experience, and integrated learning.
 - ☞ For the remainder of the day, the children are engaged in special subject classes, practice periods, and games classes. All children learn handwork; knitting, crocheting, sewing, and woodworking. Beginning in first grade, children are taught to play the recorder. Other instruments are gradually introduced, leading to choir and strings orchestra in the higher grades. The children learn

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songs, games, poems and a foreign language beginning in the first grade. Through the grades, the foreign language program expands to include reading, writing, and grammar. Other arts, such as beeswax and clay modeling, performing arts, puppetry, and painting are also included in the curriculum.

- ↻ Practical work such as crafts and handwork are integral parts of the required curriculum from kindergarten through the eighth grade. Research confirms that brain function is founded on body function. Learning to knit and crochet in the early grades develops the motor skills that enhance intellectual development. Coordination, patience, perseverance, and imagination are also instilled through hands-on activities such as woodworking, building, gardening, cooking and textiles.

Nature-Based Education

*"Youth should dwell in a land of health, amid fair sights and sounds
and receive good in everything, and beauty
the effluence of fair works shall flow into the eye and ear
like a health giving breeze to draw the soul to the beauty of reason."*

- Plato

NCS recognizes that nature serves as a common ground for all cultures. Observation and acknowledgement of our natural environment allows us to more fully celebrate our similarities and appreciate our differences. The natural world is acknowledged and celebrated in a variety of ways so that children may develop reverence and a sense of stewardship for the Earth and all of her inhabitants.

School festivals are opportunities to participate in multicultural based celebrations of the changing seasons. Along with the observance of the rhythm of the seasons, rhythm in daily life promotes understanding of our relationship with the Earth, sun, and moon. Through song, verse, language, and classroom activities, children's senses awaken to the excitement of the natural world around them.

Meals and snacks prepared in the classroom provide additional opportunities to acknowledge our appreciation for the natural world. These meals and snacks offer wholesome organic ingredients and encourage appreciation for healthy bodies. Families are encouraged to place importance on good nutrition. Parents are also encouraged to provide lunch containers that are reusable or recyclable and are void of media/commercial images.

Toys for the younger classes consist primarily of wood and natural fibers. Items such as rocks, sticks, pinecones, silks, and beeswax are utilized to further encourage imaginative play and connection with the Earth.

The children learn about life cycles and the seasons through planting and gardening. They are able to eat what is grown in the garden and compost scraps from the garden and from school meals. Our recycling program teaches children about the preciousness of the resources that are utilized each and every day. The school uses environmentally sound products whenever and wherever possible.

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Students, parents/guardians, and staff are encouraged to live their commitment to environmental sustainability by integrating into both school and everyday life such concepts as:

- ❖ Source reduction, or pre-cycling - reducing material consumption
- ❖ Reuse - purchase and reuse rather than disposing of one-time use products
- ❖ Recycling - purchase of recycled content materials and actively recycle/compost
- ❖ Repair - repair rather than dispose of broken materials
- ❖ Sustainability - consideration of how our choices impact the future of the
- ❖ Earth and future generations
- ❖ Environmental justice - by actively supporting global ecological and economic fairness

Whenever possible, we encourage our children to participate in community activities that reflect conscientious coexistence with the Earth. Our philosophy teaches respect at school, at home and in the community, promoting a desire for exploration, wholesome living, and the development of life-long learning skills.

Media and Your Child

"Obviously, long hours of passive viewing are vacuous substitutes for imaginative play, creativity, and social interaction. A negative impact on physical fitness and cognitive development seems unavoidable.

It's not called the "boob-tube" for nothing."

Jeffrey Pascoe, PhD, Director of Research and Development at Laureate Learning Systems, Inc., a Vermont company that develops computer software for children with special needs.

Novato Charter School has a unique media philosophy that encourages families to eliminate or significantly reduce exposure to electronic media. Recent research has shown that young children's exposure to media entertainment may have a detrimental effect upon their self-image, ability to concentrate and develop attention span, development of interpersonal relationships, their values, reading skills, physical skills, energy levels, psychological health, creativity, and social behavior.

Because we believe that the impact of electronic media can have detrimental effects on a child's healthy growth and development, we encourage families to incorporate our media free philosophy into their daily lives. To that end, we request that our families put forth a conscious effort to significantly reduce or eliminate the use of media (television, videos/DVDs, video games, computer games, and feature movies) for children. We realize that limiting or eliminating media from your child's life might be challenging in today's world. However with support and community effort, families often find that more free time means more creative and outdoor play and more quality time together.

Some suggestions for helping your children transition away from an abundance of media influence:

- ❖ Resist buying food and other items with media driven packaging
- ❖ Resist buying shoes and other clothing with media driven images
- ❖ Purchase toys that leave a lot to the imagination and are void of media images:
 - board games
 - blocks and non-media legos
 - dress-up clothes (easily found at thrift stores!)
 - outdoor games and equipment
 - kits
 - art supplies

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- ❖ Ask your child's teacher and other NCS parents for other age appropriate suggestions

Media and the Quality of a Child's Experience

Concerns about the effects of television have centered almost exclusively on the content of the programs children watch. Many might argue that watching a nature program is educational and good for the child. However, as Marie Winn states in her book, The Plug - In Drug, "It is easy to overlook a deceptively simple fact: one is always *watching television* when one is watching television rather than having any other experience."

Winn goes on to say that certain specific physiological mechanisms of the eyes, ears, and brain respond to the stimuli emanating from the screen regardless of the cognitive content of the programs. Television viewing requires the taking in of particular sensory material in a particular way no matter what the material might be. The sedentary mode of watching television does not match the active internal experience that occurs in response to what is being viewed. For example, one would not jump out of the way of an oncoming car that is on the screen, yet one may feel the anxiety, fear, and panic of the situation being viewed. There is, indeed, no other experience in a child's life that permits quite so much intake while demanding so little output as watching television.

Media and the Developing Brain

In order to function in a society which relies upon mastery of the spoken and written word, a child must acquire fundamental skills in oral and written communication. Frequent use of electronic media can be counterproductive to the development of brain functions needed to master skills such as reading, writing, arithmetic, and language development. It can also work against the natural development of analytical thinking.

Joseph Chilton Pearce, Ph.D., an internationally renowned educator, author and lecturer, states that the child's first seven years are devoted to development of the symbolic, metaphoric language structure in the mid-brain and that all future cognitive development rests on the integrated functioning of the right and left sides of the brain. Television viewing disrupts this development and can cause a child to be easily distracted and bored.

Reading, writing, speaking, and reasoning are functions of the left side of the brain. This is the part of the brain that orders data and analyzes what it perceives. The

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right side of the brain perceives the world as a whole and does not code and decode, as does the left side. Television viewing engages the right side of the brain, and as a child is inundated with the short sequences and the accelerated pace found in any television program, the ability to use the symbolic analytical-thinking brain functions may be diminished.

Media, Your Child and School

Real multi-sensory experiences are the seeds of imagination and creativity. It is important that your child be able to absorb the curriculum of the day - without electronic interference - in order to integrate and process it during sleeping hours. This is how learning becomes an integral part of life. Allowing your child to awake and attend to the tasks of the morning without the stimulation of electronic media will enhance their ability to focus and become immersed in the day's curriculum.

We encourage you to speak with staff or other parents in the school for suggestions, support and resources that you might find helpful on this subject.

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Aesthetics and the School Environment

"Joy and happiness in living, a love of all existence, a power and energy for work - such are among the lifelong results of a right cultivation of the feeling for beauty and art."

Rudolf Steiner

Children live in rhythm and beauty and so thrive in aesthetically pleasing environments, both in the classroom and out of doors. Classroom motifs change throughout the school year to reflect seasonal and curricular themes.

The upper grade classrooms richly reflect the ongoing cultural, historical and academic themes of the curriculum. The lower grade classrooms have a nurturing and magical ambience that supports the younger children's transition from home to school. Pastel colors, softened lighting and play spaces that integrate folklore and natural items of the season are used to accomplish this. In Kindergarten the smell of fresh baked goods for snack time and singing voices for gentle guidance allow the children to experience their environment with all of their senses.

NCS is committed to using natural and high-quality products in every area of the school. This supports and enhances the children's inner connection with the world around them and encourages their responsibility as caretakers of the Earth.

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School Calendar

Careful consideration has gone into creating the NCS calendar. We have chosen a modified traditional school calendar that offers a natural and rhythmic seasonal balance with logical pacing of instruction and regular breaks. This helps to maintain students' joy and interest in learning. This also helps to develop lifelong skills as they approach learning and work with enthusiasm, purpose, determination, and balance.

Students attend school for a total of 180 days per year, the same number of days as other public school students. Instruction begins the third week of August. Students have a one-week fall break in October and a two-week winter break, beginning in late December and ending in early January. Mid-February brings another one-week break that allows our teachers time to attend staff development seminars in order to strengthen the curriculum and renew their energies. Additionally, Students have a one-week break in the spring.

This calendar provides multiple vacation opportunities and encourages families to fully experience seasonal transitions. As Novato Charter School is primarily supported by ADA (average daily attendance) State funding, we strongly encourage families to take vacations during the calendared vacation times. The funding model allows the school to receive monies only for children who are in the classroom. When developing the annual budget, NCS allows for a 5% absence rate per day. Any absence beyond that number directly affects our school's funding. In addition to monetary loss for the school, children away from school lose out on valuable classroom learning and experience.

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Independent Study

If your family plans to travel for more than 5 days while school is in session, signing up for Independent Study (IS) will ensure that NCS receives your child's ADA money and that your child is keeping up with current classroom studies.

The maximum duration of each independent study contract for all pupils in grades K-8 may be up to four (4) weeks. Independent study may be extended beyond the end date of the original contract for up to 2 additional independent study periods, (a total of up to 12 consecutive weeks), by completing and submitting a new written independent study contract prior to the expiration of the contract in force.

A minimum of one (1), preferably two (2) weeks advanced notice by parents is required to complete the initial steps of the IP process: completing the paperwork and receiving the assigned work from the teacher.

On the first day back at school, students under an IS agreement must deliver to their teacher, the completed assignments.

Assessment

NCS meets all statewide standards of pupil assessment as required by Education Code Section 60605.

The teachers at the Novato Charter School pay close attention to curricular content as it relates directly to the students' emotional experiences of life, their imaginations, creativity, and artistic expression. At the same time, the students will be assessed in each of the core academic performance and content areas (reading, writing, mathematics, history/social science and science) using multiple measures. These measures include teacher observations/narratives, portfolios of written work, main lesson work, various pieces of art, and practice paper, classroom-based tests, quizzes, and homework, and presentations of research papers, projects, or lab results.

Student progress and development are carefully monitored and formally reported annually to the parents at parent-teacher conferences. Additionally, a parent or teacher may request a conference at any time. Mid-term and year-end reports on each child are prepared and given to parents. While mid-year reporting highlights the child's progress to date, the year-end report includes an overview of the year stating what was taught during each learning block. The second part of the report will be a written narrative of the child describing academic performance, social and emotional development, and artistic expression. The child's strengths and achievements will be highlighted, and areas for further progress identified. The third part of the report will include a skill area rubric, aligned with the NCS academic standards as developed by the Academic Standards, Curriculum and Assessment Committee (includes the Novato Charter School faculty and Director).

Student assessment is uniquely facilitated at the Novato Charter School by the fact that teachers remain with the same group of students throughout most grades. In this way, teachers develop a comprehensive understanding of each student's academic strengths and weaknesses and learning styles. Targeted teaching strategies and instructional adaptations are then easily designed to meet individual needs.

Curriculum

"One of the strengths of the Waldorf-inspired curriculum is its balance and depth: the emphasis on the arts... the rich use of the spoken word through poetry and storytelling... Above all, the way the lessons integrate traditional subject matter is, to my knowledge, unparalleled."

- Ernest Boyer, President, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

NCS believes it is vital that the education the child receives at school continues in the home. For this reason, the parents' understanding of the unique nature of the NCS curriculum must support a child's enrollment in the school.

The following is an example of what is taught in each grade. The faculty and Director decide the detailed pedagogy.

Kindergarten

Our two-year kindergarten program is a developmentally-based child-centered environment. This setting allows each child the opportunity to reconstruct the world around them through play, social interaction, and group activities. The daily activities lead the children into song, music, rhythmical gestures, movement, puppet shows and plays. The daily routine includes gardening, baking, artistic activities, and nature studies. Kindergarten, "a child's garden", is not yet a time to expose the child to academic pressures. It is a time to preserve childhood. Their work is their play and their play encourages healthy social/emotional development. Kindergarten serves as the foundation for learning in an environment of community, cooperation, and respect.

First Grade

Math- Qualities of numbers, introduction to the four operations of arithmetic.

Literature & Grammar- Pictorial and phonetic introduction to letters; fairy tales from around the world; poetry recitation.

Science- Nature stories, nature walks, observations, gardening.

Music- Singing, pentatonic flute (develops finger coordination, concentration, and breath control), songs based on seasonal themes.

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Art- Form drawing, painting (emphasizing an experience of working with color rather than creating formed pictures), beeswax modeling, crayon illustrations.

Foreign Language- Spanish is taught through plays, songs, rhythms and games.

Handwork- Knitting (promotes hand-eye coordination, fine motor skills, and pre-reading skills-sequencing)

History and Social Studies- Multicultural stories.

Second Grade

Math- Continue with four operations of arithmetic, story problems, counting by 2, 3, 4, and 5, beginning multiplication tables.

Literature & Grammar- Elements of grammar (naming, describing words), beginning cursive, animal fables and legends from around the world.

Science- Garden and nature studies.

Music- Singing, pentatonic flute.

Art- Continue form drawing, painting, beeswax modeling.

Foreign Language- Spanish continued (Songs, plays, poetry, games, and simple conversations).

Handwork- Knitting patterns of knit and purl (pattern recognition and perpetuation, concentration, fine motor skill development).

History and Social Studies- Multicultural stories.

Third Grade

Math- Higher multiplication tables, weight, measure, length, volume, money, time.

Literature & Grammar- Elements of grammar (nouns, verbs, adjectives), continuing cursive, punctuation, compositions, stories from ancient history.

Science- Continuation of garden and nature studies (ecosystems).

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Music- Singing, recorder.

Art- Continue form drawing, painting, beeswax modeling.

Foreign Language- Spanish continued (songs, poetry, conversations, and plays).

Handwork- Crocheting (pattern and placement recognition, finger dexterity).

History and Social Studies- Study of practical life (farming, building, clothing, cooking, textiles, and gardening).

Fourth Grade

Math- Higher multiplication tables, four digit multiplication, long division, fractions.

Literature & Grammar- Elements of grammar, continuing cursive, punctuation, book reports and creative writing, Norse mythology.

Science- Zoology, continuation of garden and nature studies.

Music- Singing, recorder, violin.

Art- Advanced form drawing, painting, beeswax modeling.

Foreign Language- Spanish immersion (introduction of basic grammar, masculine/feminine verb conjugation).

Handwork- Cross-stitch, embroidery, braiding

History and Social Studies- California and local history.

Geography- California, local geography, and map-making.

Fifth Grade

Math- Decimals, fractions, metric system.

Literature & Grammar- Elements of grammar, continuing cursive, punctuation, compositions, Greek myths.

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Science- Botany, inductive method, introduction to reproductive systems via botany, continuation of garden and nature studies.

Music- Singing, recorder, violin.

Art- Calligraphy, painting, clay modeling, woodworking.

Foreign Language- Spanish continued (grammar, past and future tenses, reading simple stories).

Handwork- Knitting in rounds, knitting socks, hats or mittens (develop and follow written instructions).

History and Social Studies- Ancient civilizations through Greek times.

Geography- American geography as related to vegetation, agriculture, culture and economics.

Technology- Introduction to computers.

Sixth Grade

Math- Algebra, ratios, proportions, geometric drawing with instruments.

Literature & Grammar- Composition, grammar, spelling, biographies.

Science- Mineralogy, physics (acoustics, electricity, magnetism, optics and heat), beginning astronomy, continue reproductive systems, continuation of garden and nature studies.

Music- Singing, recorder, strings (violin, viola, cello or bass).

Art- Calligraphy, painting, clay modeling, woodworking.

Foreign Language- Spanish continued (grammar, reading and writing continued).

Handwork- Hand sewing stuffed animals (visualizing from two-dimensional to three-dimensional finished product).

History and Social Studies- Roman and medieval history.

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Geography- North America, South America.

Technology- Computers continued.

Seventh Grade

Math- Algebra, mathematical thinking/theory, geometry.

Literature & Grammar- Creative writing, grammar, spelling and punctuation, classical literature.

Science- Physics (mechanics), physiology (blood and muscles), astronomy, inorganic chemistry, nutrition, continuation of garden and nature studies.

Music- Singing, recorder, strings (violin, viola, cello or bass).

Art- Calligraphy, carving (wood and stone), clay modeling, woodworking.

Foreign Language- Spanish continued (short essays in Spanish, read descriptive material, travel articles, etc.).

Handwork- Sewing

History and Social Studies- End of Middle Ages, Age of Exploration, Renaissance.

Geography- European and world geography.

Technology- Computers continued.

Eighth Grade

Math- Practical applications of arithmetic, algebra, geometry.

Literature & Grammar- Composition, grammar, spelling; literature (short stories, letters, Shakespearean drama).

Science- Physics, organic chemistry, physiology, continuation of garden and nature studies through ecology.

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Music- Singing, recorder, strings (violin, viola, cello or bass).

Art- Calligraphy, soapstone carving, clay modeling, woodworking, painting.

Foreign Language- Spanish continued (reading from Spanish literature Cervantes, de Vega, etc.).

Handwork- Machine sewing - clothing.

History and Social Studies- World economics, American history.

Geography- World geography.

Technology- Computers continued.

Middle School Electives

The middle school students, grades 6-8 choose two electives per school year with one elective beginning in the fall and one beginning in the spring. Elective subjects cover a wide range of interests and include such classes as Japanese fencing, cooking, music composition, murals, guitar, journalism, clay modeling, aikido, and bonsai.

Field Trips

Outdoor education fieldtrips are an integral part of the NCS curriculum beginning in third grade and continuing through eighth grade. These outdoor classroom opportunities offer the students observation and hands-on learning and curriculum integration.

Parent Involvement

"The healthy social life is found when in the mirror of each human being the whole community finds its reflection, and when in the community, there lives the strength and virtue of each one."

- Rudolf Steiner

Parent involvement at NCS is essential. To sustain the high quality educational experience, it is necessary for each family to contribute to our school community. There are a number of ways to be involved in the life of the school.

Class Teacher Support

Classroom support both in and out of school is necessary: Assisting in specialty classes, making crafts, special classroom cleaning, doing laundry, bringing flowers, sewing and making costumes, organizing and chaperoning outdoor education trips, participation in class projects, phone tree communication, and more. Participation in parent education events also offers opportunities to learn about the school's philosophy and from what perspective your child's teacher views him/her. This bridging of school and home life works directly to support your child's teacher and therefore your child's education.

Financial Support

Parents are encouraged to participate yearly in the school's annual pledge and classroom fund drives by making financial donations. Additionally, the cost per student for outdoor education trips is between \$100 - \$300 per year (costs can increase for 8th grade trips and activities.) Each family is asked to contribute to fund these expenses. Of course the school has made provisions to cover such costs when families are financially unable to do so; scholarships are available upon request and upon completion of a scholarship application. No child will be denied participation in an outdoor education trip or any other school sponsored activity for inability to pay. Financial contributions are voluntary and not required in any way for a child to enroll or continue or to remain in good standing in the NCS program. Together, our financial contributions sustain our educational vision and make it possible to provide a high quality educational experience for the students of our school.

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Site Beautification and Maintenance

Playground, garden, and site development and beautification are important elements of building our school and maintaining quality classrooms and school environments. Help is always needed in these areas, as the school campus is a long-term evolving project.

Board of Directors and Committees

Parent participation is also needed on the NCS Board of Directors and on various committees including but not limited to festivals, fundraising, health and safety, and facilities planning. These committees are important for carrying out day-to-day operations of the school outside the classroom and for conducting the long-range planning and work that will secure the continued success of our school.

Commitment to Parent Education

Parents who embrace and support the educational philosophy at home enhance the student's experience. Parent Education seminars are held throughout the school year and parents are expected to attend a minimum of two each year.

Philosophy and Home Life

Our philosophy includes a commitment to understanding and nurturing each child's unique inner development. For reasons thoroughly defined in the Media section, we believe that significantly reducing or eliminating children's television viewing will further enhance their ability to fully develop their potential. We ask that all parents regard this matter seriously and make every effort to consciously diminish their children's use of television, videos/DVD, and video/computer games.

Ecological Living

The school strives to teach children to develop love and respect for the earth. Children come to learn that we are part of a much larger world community that needs to be kept in balance. Charter families can further this respect by living healthy, ecologically conscious lifestyles. Families are encouraged to live ecologically through recycling, teaching conservation of resources, and maintaining a healthful diet.

Rhythms

Another way that families can enhance the educational experience is to understand the importance of rhythm in children's daily lives. Children flourish in environments that

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are not only loving but also orderly and predictable. With an external sense of order and routine, children feel comfortable living in the moment. Just knowing what is expected at different intervals in the day can help children to feel secure in the world.

Festivals

"Traveling through the year's festivals with children is like experiencing the rainbow - no sooner has one color faded than the next one appears. Ceremonies which have their roots deep in mankind's past, flower in the day-to-day life of caring, which is the home and can be a source of healing in many troubled times."

—Caz Iveson

Celebrating seasonal festivals at NCS is a way of observing and showing appreciation for the recurring rhythms and cycles in nature. As the Earth makes its journey around the Sun, the solstices, and equinoxes become the four cornerstones of the year's rhythm. They inspire our seasonal festivals in themes that are universal and culturally diverse. During the fall equinox, we celebrate the Harvest Festival. We also have a nighttime brotherhood lantern walk for the early grades. Both of these events fill the children with excitement and anticipation. As the days continue to grow shorter in winter, we celebrate festivals that evoke the image of the sleeping Earth and the light to come in the approaching spring: the Winter Garden Spiral (grades K-2) and the Sunrise Hike (grades 3-5). With the New Year comes a gradual transition of winter to spring. We mark the spring equinox, this transitional renewal with our Spring Festival. This is celebrated with maypole dances, music, and games in a delightful country faire atmosphere.

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Enrollment Policy and Procedures

All students who reside in the state of California are eligible for admission to Novato Charter School.

This enrollment policy is guided by the goal of Novato Charter School to provide quality alternative educational service to its students.

Application Procedure

Parents of prospective students shall:

- Attend one or more school tours prior to the lottery date
- Complete and submit a written application by the appropriate deadline
- Sign an acknowledgement of parent expectations
- Attend an orientation meeting (applicable to parents of prospective Kindergarten students only)

Applications will be accepted during the open enrollment period from the first Monday in August to the first Friday in March.

Applications received after the open enrollment period and lottery date will be placed at the bottom of the wait list, in the order in which they were received. New students will not be accepted into the program after March 1st.

Lottery Procedure

If there are more applications than spaces available in any grade level, NCS will hold a lottery at the completion of the open enrollment period.

NCS will contact every applicant on the prior year wait list to determine their interest in keeping their enrollment application active. Those who confirm their interest by completing a new application will be exempt from participating in the new lottery and placed on the wait list in the order they had before. Applicants who do not confirm their interest within the established deadline will be permanently removed from the wait list.

Placement Procedure

Following the open enrollment period each year, students are placed in grades K-8 according to space availability as determined by order of the lottery draw.

Enrollment Priority

Priority categories are assigned to prospective students as follows:

1. Existing students at NCS
2. Children of full-time NCS employees
3. Siblings of currently enrolled NCS students.
4. Prior year applicants.
5. New applicants residing in the NUSD.
6. New applicants residing outside of the NUSD

Kindergarten is divided by age criteria into K-A (younger) and K-B (older). The Kindergarten class has a maximum capacity of 44 students. Each year, at the sole discretion of the Director, KA spots could be limited to ensure space availability for siblings of currently enrolled students or new enrollees entering the second year Kindergarten class (K-B).

Due to the unique nature of the school's curriculum, eighth grade enrollment is not available.

Admission Procedure

When an opening occurs, applicants are notified to schedule completion of the application procedure that includes an orientation (kindergarten only) and a family conference.

NCS has the right to refuse admission to any child whose birth date falls outside of the minimum age requirements in each grade level.

Any information that is misrepresented on the Application for Admission could invalidate your child's enrollment in Novato Charter School.

Grade Level Placement

NCS follows a developmental approach and therefore has different requirements for minimum age in each grade level. Concerns about grade level placement, must be indicated in written form and attached to a student's application. Grades are determined by the ages and dates listed below.

Kindergarten A	5 years old by December 2nd of the school year for which the applicant is seeking enrollment
Kindergarten B	5 years or older by June 1st, prior to the school year for which the applicant is seeking enrollment
First Grade	6 years or older by June 1 prior
Second Grade	7 years or older by June 1 prior
Third Grade	8 years or older by June 1 prior
Fourth Grade	9 years or older by June 1 prior
Fifth Grade	10 years or older by June 1 prior
Sixth Grade	11 years or older by June 1 prior
Seventh Grade	12 years or older by June 1 prior
Eighth Grade	13 years or older by June 1 prior

Special Education Students and Students with Disabilities

NCS complies with all applicable state and federal laws in serving students with disabilities including but not limited to Section 504 of the Americans with disabilities Act and the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act. The Charter School intends to function as a "public school of the local education agency (LEA) that granted the charter" for purposes of providing special education and related services pursuant to Education Code Section 47641 (b).

English Language Learners

NCS complies with all applicable federal law in regard to services and the education of English Language Learner (ELL) students. NCS develops implements, and maintains policies and procedures for the provision of services to ELL students in accordance with state and federal mandates.

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ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

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Organizational Structure

Overview

The Novato Charter School is a nonprofit public benefit corporation. It is organized under the Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation Law for public and charitable purposes. The specific purposes for which this Corporation is organized are to manage, operate, guide, direct and promote the school.

NCS is chartered by the Novato Unified School District as the local educational agency (LEA). The charter's term is five years and was renewed for a second time in June 2006.

Novato Charter School Board of Directors

The school's activities and affairs are managed, and all corporate powers are exercised, by or under the direction of the Board of Directors ("Board"). The number of directors shall be no less than five (5) and no more than seven (7), unless changed by amendments to the school's bylaws. Two (2) of the directors may belong to the community-at-large appointed by the Board of Directors. The other members of the Board are elected. Elections for Board seats whose terms have expired are held in May of each year. Each parent and/or legal guardian with children enrolled in the Charter School at the time of an election is entitled to submit one ballot. Each director holds office for three (3) years and until a successor director has been elected.

All meetings of the Board of Directors and its committees are called, noticed, and held in compliance with the provisions of the Ralph M. Brown Act ("Brown Act"). (Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 54950) of Division 2 of Title 5 of the Government Code).

Regular meetings of the Board of Directors, including annual meetings, are held at such times and places as may from time to time be fixed by the Board of Directors. At least 72 hours before a regular meeting, the Board of Directors, or its designee posts an agenda containing a brief general description of each item of business to be transacted or discussed at the meeting. Regular meetings are usually held on the 3rd Wednesday of each calendar month at 6:30 p.m. in the NCS room #9 located next to the school office. Time is allotted at each open meeting to allow members of the community to address the board on any issue that is not on the agenda. The board cannot comment or take action on such an issue but may, if deemed appropriate, place the item on the agenda for a subsequent meeting. Time is also allotted during meetings for public comment for items on the agenda.

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Parents are invited to attend Novato Charter School Board open meetings and take an active role in the educational affairs of the school.

Placing An Item On The Board Agenda

Requests for an item to be placed on the board agenda must be submitted in writing and delivered to the School office no later than noon the sixth day prior to a regular meeting. Items must be directly related to school business. The Director determines whether the request is or is not within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board and will determine whether the agenda item is appropriate for discussion in open session or closed session of the board.

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SCHOOL RULES AND POLICIES

School Rules and Policies

*"Loving authority needs to precede freedom of thought
and independent judgment."*

- Rudolph Steiner

Positive Learning Environment

Novato Charter School is committed to creating a safe and nurturing environment for every child. We are equally committed to helping our children grow into healthy, happy, responsible adults. In order to respect, care for, and work with others, children must learn to truly love and respect themselves.

It is also important that every student possess a clear understanding of how their actions affect others. Using a positive discipline approach, our goal is to discourage misbehavior and encourage students to learn from mistakes and make appropriate choices in the future. Conflict resolution and esteem building are integral parts of our curriculum.

The Guidelines of Novato Charter School are based upon a philosophy of Respect:

- Respect for all human beings
- Respect for the earth and all living things
- Respect for all school and personal property
- Respect for the guidance provided by teachers, staff, and parents
- Respect for our school community
- Respect for our neighbors

Consequences of Misbehavior

In the event that class management systems are not sufficient to correct disruptive or disrespectful behavior, the following procedures will be followed:

1. Student behavior report and action plan

If a child's behavior endangers self, others or property, or in any other way undermines a healthy learning environment, notice will be sent home with the child. The child must give this notice to their parents, who will be responsible for discussing the problem with the child, assisting in corrective behavior, and signing the notice and returning it to the office. The parents may also request a telephone or personal conference with the teacher and or the Director.

2. Parent-teacher conference

If three notices are sent home, a mandatory parent conference will be scheduled with the teacher. If both parent and teacher agree, the child may be included in the meeting. The teacher may request the Director to be present, or the Director may be the one to call the conference. Parents may invite other individuals to the conference.

3. Faculty intervention

If the disciplinary problem does not improve, the Director or classroom teacher will call the parents to schedule another conference to determine the most appropriate course of action. It may be recommended that a Student Study Team, consisting of the Director, classroom teacher, and other teachers and support staff be convened to study the child and his/her special needs. The members of this team will work with the child's family and teacher to cultivate healthy classroom and playground behavior.

Sending a child home, suspension and dismissal

In the interest of maintaining a safe and courteous environment for all members of the Novato Charter School learning community, there are certain behaviors that will not be tolerated and will result in immediate removal of the child from the school setting. These behaviors are:

- Violent acts that endanger the life of the child or could seriously harm that student, other students, or an adult
- Bringing weapons, cigarettes, alcohol and/or drugs to school
- Blatant defiance and disrespect, including profanity, racial, ethnic, sexual slurs, any sort of harassment, or verbal attacks
- Intimidation or threat of assault
- Deliberately ignoring or violating safety rules

Novato Charter School Dress Code Policy

The Novato Charter School makes every effort to support students in developing a positive sense of self, and discourages the development of a false sense of self-based on media, commercial, sexist or racist influences.

The Novato Charter School discourages the use of clothing with media advertisement, cartoon images or slogans, and commercial logos of any kind. The use of makeup, fingernail polish, hair dye, tattoos, and heavy jewelry is discouraged. Support and cooperation of all parents is requested to encourage moderation in clothing and personal grooming for the sake of creating an atmosphere conducive to learning.

In an effort to create a working and learning environment at school, students are expected to wear clothing that is clean, simple and in good repair. Clothing and shoes should be suitable for both indoor and outdoor activities. Simplicity and appropriateness should be major considerations.

The school administrator may prohibit clearly specified types of clothing or accessories if they lead to disruption of the school's educational environment. (*Jeglin v. San Jacinto Unified Sch. Dist.* (C.D. Cal.1993) 827 F.Supp. 1459, 1460-1461).

Public school students have free speech rights under the First Amendment of the Federal Constitution and also under the California Constitution. The Fourteenth Amendment of the Federal Constitution also provides the rights to liberty. These rights do not disappear once the student enters upon school grounds.

Definitions

Media means any of the following:

References to television shows and characters

References to movie & video characters

Policy

The following are enforceable standards:

- Clothing and accessories (e.g., backpacks, lunch boxes) marked with references to drugs, alcohol, racism, sexism or violence are prohibited.

- Acceptable skirt and shorts length is mid-thigh or longer.

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- Strapless dresses, tube tops, low-cut tops that do or could expose cleavage, see-through tops without a modest camisole and midriff tops are considered to be improper school dress and are therefore prohibited.
- Attire that exposes undergarments is prohibited. Attire that exposes midriff and/or buttocks is prohibited.
- Excessive or extreme jewelry or accessories, e.g., dangling chains, spiked bracelets, large earrings are prohibited.

Procedure

The Director and the class teachers shall monitor the dress standards at the Novato Charter School in accordance with the Dress Code Policy. The Director and class teachers may counsel students with reference to the Dress Code Policy.

If a student is found to be in violation of the enforceable standards of this policy, the Director or teacher may take action in the following successive steps:

Speak to a student privately
Call a student's parents
Issue a Behavior Report
Meet with a student and his or her parents
Suspend a student

Should any questions of attire and personal grooming arise that are not addressed in this Policy, determination as to management procedure will be made by the Director or his or her designee.

**Field Trip Policy Excerpts
Chaperone Definition/Duties**

Chaperone

A parent, guardian, or other Director approved adult who accompanies the Excursion or Field Trip in order to provide supervisory support to the students under the direction of the class teacher.

- ❖ Chaperones not a parent or guardian shall be 25 years of age or older.
- ❖ Chaperones are accountable to the class teacher and Director for their behavior. Behavior that is acceptable on the actual school campus is what is expected of Chaperones on all Excursions and Field Trips.
- ❖ Before all Excursions and Field Trips, teachers shall provide all Chaperones that will accompany the students with clear information regarding their responsibilities, including standard and trip specific safety precautions, how to keep groups together, and what to do if an emergency occurs.
- ❖ The Director shall approve all Chaperones for Excursions and Field Trips and has discretion to deny participation to any person at any time.
- ❖ Chaperones are entitled to occasional breaks from supervision at the direction of the teacher when student safety is not materially compromised.
- ❖ Each student shall be assigned to a teacher or Chaperone at all times. The Chaperone shall be responsible for the continuous supervision of these students' activities and at all hours for the duration of the assignment. Students shall not be left unsupervised for any reason.
- ❖ Charter school staff and Chaperones shall not consume alcoholic beverages, use controlled substances or tobacco while accompanying or supervising students on an Excursion or Field Trip.
- ❖ Chaperones will be asked prior to departure to inform the Director of any medication being used that could impair their ability to perform their driving or Chaperone duties in a prudent and safe manner.

FUNDING MODEL

Novato Charter School Funding Model

The Novato Charter School Foundation (NCSF) is a nonprofit organization that organizes and manages all of the major fundraising programs for Novato Charter School. All contributions to the NCSF are tax-deductible. The NCSF may be reached at novatcharterschool.org. The main annual fundraising programs conducted by the Foundation include:

Annual Parent Pledge

All parents of NCS are invited to make an annual pledge to the school for general operating support. The pledge can be paid all at once, quarterly or monthly, and may be paid by check or with a credit card. Pledge forms are available in the office and are included in your child's take home materials early in the year.¹

Affinity Programs

While doing your normal everyday shopping, the school can be making money. NCSF has agreements with many retailers to give a percentage of your purchases back to NCSF. Stores such as Safeway, United Markets, Albertson's, and many others participate. Forms are easy to fill out, and we encourage you to get your friends and family to fill them out as well. Complete information about these programs and how to sign up is in the office.

Corporate and Foundation Support

Many employers offer a matching grant for educational donations given by employees. Sometimes parents have corporate and/or foundation contacts that could be a useful grant resource for NCSF. Any and all support is greatly appreciated and the NCSF is always looking to expand its base of support.

¹ Financial and/or service contributions are voluntary and not required in any way for a child to enroll or continue to remain in good standing in the NCS program.

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Enchanted Garden

NCSF hosts this annual Dinner and Auction. This event brings together the community for a night of fun and also raises significant funds for the school.

Spending Priorities

The NCS community works together to bring in funding which is allocated according to the following priorities:

General Fund

NCS has an enriched curriculum that includes many specialty teacher programs, the purchase of high quality instructional materials, and the development of an aesthetically pleasing environment for our children in which to learn. The *General Fund* supports this curriculum for grades K through 8.

Class Trip Scholarships

Scholarships for outdoor education class trips are another high priority community need. Class trips are an important and enriching component of each class' curriculum in grades 3 through 8. Every child must be allowed to participate regardless of parent's ability to pay.

Graduation

Graduation is also a priority event. Graduation is the ceremony that not only celebrates each child's successful completion of elementary and middle school but also celebrates the completion of our school's primary goal: to ready students for the paths of higher learning. Graduation is a school-wide event which is community supported.

Festivals, Hospitality and Appreciation

Festivals are an integral component of the NCS curriculum. They provide opportunities for our community to come together for seasonal/cultural celebrations. Hospitality and Appreciation are how we as a community extend ourselves to visitors, and how we honor and appreciate the work of our faculty and staff.

**Individual class funds do not fall within the scope of these spending priorities, however student involvement in class fundraising is a curricular component of the

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middle school, grades 6, 7 and 8. These grades participate in a limited number of class fundraising activities.

Communication Model & Grievance Procedure

Communication Model

The ultimate purpose of a communication model is to encourage the growth and development of the NCS as a healthy community. Conflict is a part of any development or growth process and may arise in any community. An effective grievance and conflict resolution process is therefore an essential component of the communication model.

The Grievance and Conflict Resolution Procedure is a model for all members of the NCS community and is designed to address issues among the following: Between parents and teachers; parents and administration; and teachers and teachers.

A. FOUR MAJOR AREAS OF COMMUNICATION:

Conflicts may fall into one of four major areas or may be a combination of these areas as listed below.

1. Policies and Legal Issues

Current policies are available in the Charter School office. Reviewing policies and procedures lends information that may at times solve a conflict. The Board of Director's at the NCS has final approval for all school policies and procedures. Issues of policy and procedures should be addressed directly to the Novato Charter School Board (hereinafter "NCB")

2. Procedures/Daily Operations

The Director shall establish procedures designed to carry out the policies adopted by the NCB. Procedures pertain to anything regarding the daily operations of the NCS. Procedures can be clarified by an office staff member or the Director. The Director serves as the primary administrator of the school. Any daily operations/procedural issues should be addressed directly by the Director.

3. Pedagogy

Pedagogical issues pertaining to anything that occurs in the classroom, i.e. teaching, curriculum, classroom management, or teacher-student relationships. Pedagogical issues should be addressed directly to the class teacher.

4. Interpersonal Communication and Relationships

Concerns between people or communication breakdown should be directly communicated with the person(s) involved. In addition, communication and relationship issues can surface in conjunction with policy and procedural issues or pedagogical issues.

The overall purpose of this procedure is to perpetuate a climate of collegiality, mutual trust and respect by resolving differences in a timely, objective and equitable manner.

If concerns or conflicts regarding policies and procedures, pedagogy, and/or community members are not resolved after following the procedures described under "Four Major Areas of Communication," the following direct communication lines should be employed.

These communication lines are the vehicles that the NCS uses to resolve conflicts within our community as they arise. These pathways form a structure and process that encourage parties involved in a conflict to reach resolution. It is emphasized that the first step in the resolution of conflicts in our community is direct communication with the involved parties. The following steps should then be initiated if issues are not resolved.

If the Director is contacted directly by a community member the Director will acknowledge the concern, review the Communication Model with the complainant and refer her/him to the appropriate step in the Conflict Resolution/Grievance Procedure.

It is the Director's responsibility to evaluate each situation and determine if administrative support is necessary. The Director has the discretion in any conflict to bypass LEVEL 1 and proceed to LEVEL 2 of the Conflict Resolution/Grievance Procedure if deemed necessary.

B. LEVEL 1: Direct Resolution

In the NCS Community a set of direct communication lines exist and include:

If you have a question or concern go directly to the person(s) in the above areas or categories. For instance if you have a question regarding school policy, you would speak directly to the NCB; if you have a question or concern regarding daily operation

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of the school, you would contact an office staff person or the Director; if you have a question or concern regarding the classroom, you would speak directly with the teacher of the class; if you have a question or concern regarding any member of the community, you would address that person directly.

If the person(s) involved are unable to resolve the conflict or complaint, the complainant should forward the complaint to the Director.

C. LEVEL 2: Administrative Resolution

The administration resolution process consists of a meeting between the parties involved with the Director in attendance. An attempt at administrative resolution is to be made prior to requesting formal resolution.

The Director shall attempt to identify a resolution that is acceptable to both parties. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the resolution, the Director shall inform the complainant of the formal complaint procedure.

D. LEVEL 3: Formal Resolution

Formal resolution consists of the submission of a written complaint or grievance to the Novato Charter School conflict Resolution/Grievance Committee. The Conflict Resolution/Grievance Committee is a standing committee which reflects a diverse group of the NCS community. The grievance committee shall consist of at least 1 member each from the NCS Board, Faculty, and parent body.

The committee members will participate in conflict resolution training prior to serving on the committee. The committee will review the written submissions within ten (10) working days. In addition, it may request interviews with any or all of the parties. The decision of the grievance committee is final and further appeals within the scope of this procedure are not available. Dissatisfied parties have the right to proceed with the Uniform Complaint Procedure (UCP).

E. FILING A WRITTEN COMPLAINT:

To initiate the formal procedure the complainant must submit a written complaint using the NCS Confidential Complaint Form or a letter containing the following information:

1. Name of community member who is the subject of the complaint.

2. Date(s) of the act(s) which is the basis for the complaint. If the act(s) or omission(s) occurred more than six months before the complaint is submitted, the complaint procedure does not apply.
3. Description of the action(s) omission(s) which is the basis for the complaint.
4. Names of other individuals who might have information about the complaint.
5. Meetings held and with whom and results of the meetings.
6. Desired resolution

The complaint must be dated and signed.

The written complaint may be submitted to the Director. The Director will acknowledge and record the complaint and give copies to all persons involved, including the NCB Grievance Committee within three working days. The Director shall inform the parties involved that the complaint has been submitted to the grievance committee.

The other party has the right to submit a written response to the complaint, providing information regarding the act or omission described in the complaint, and names of individuals who might have information about the complaint within five (5) working days of receipt. A copy of the response will be provided to the complainant and to the NCS Grievance Committee within three (3) working days.

F. LEVEL 4: Uniform Complaint Policy/ Procedure (UCP)

The NCS Uniform Complaint Policy/Procedure shall be used to address all complaints which allege that the Charter School has violated federal or state laws or regulations governing educational programs. Guidelines for the UCP can be found on the school website or may be obtained in the school office.

G. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

If either party feels the Director and/or a member of the Conflict Resolution/Grievance Committee should not participate in the above procedures due to a conflict of interest or confidentiality reason, their concern may be submitted to the Board of Directors and an alternate will be appointed if the Board of Directors determines it to be necessary. If the NCS Director is involved in the conflict, then the Board will appoint one of it's members to fulfill the Director's responsibilities under the Administrative or Formal Resolution Procedure.

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H. CONFIDENTIALITY

It is fundamental to the conflict resolution process/grievance procedure that the individuals involved maintain and honor strict confidentiality regarding all aspects of the complaint and procedure.

The District shall not intervene in any such internal disputes without the consent of the governing board of the school and shall refer any complaints or reports regarding such disputes to the Board of Directors or Director of the Charter School for resolution pursuant to the Charter School's policies

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940 C STREET, NOVATO, CA 94949

www.novatocharterschool.org

Phone: (415) 883-4254

Fax: (415) 883-1859