



Student and Family Handbook

2025-2026

Dear Sun Mountain Families,

Welcome to Sun Mountain!

We are honored to welcome you to Sun Mountain Community School. This is history in the making! Sun Mountain holds a high standard for excellence, by providing an academically rigorous, disciplined, and joyful school for our students. We are thrilled that you have made Sun Mountain your school of choice, and we welcome you to our school community. We are deeply committed to building strong family partnerships and we look forward to working together to ensure the success of every student that enters our doors. We expect a lot of the members of the Sun Mountain community, and in turn, you can expect a lot from us.

As a family, please take the time to read through our entire handbook. Please note that we revise and improve the handbook annually. The following pages clarify many of the essential details for families to participate fully in our community, and will help you become familiar with the school procedures, policies, and practices.

When you have finished reading the handbook, both parents and the student(s) should complete and detach the mandatory signature page, located at the end of this handbook. Please sign and date the signature page and return it to the main office. Note, that when the word “parents” is used in this Handbook, it also means “legal guardians.”

While this handbook is very detailed, we know that it will not address all of the questions that you may have about Sun Mountain. If you do have any additional questions, please contact the school for any clarification.

We look forward to working closely with you during the 2025-2026 school year!

Sincerely,
The Sun Mountain Team
505.913.7477

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Section 1: Introduction

Overview

Sun Mountain Community School (“Sun Mountain” or “School” or “school”) was authorized by the New Mexico Public Education Commission on August 24, 2024. Sun Mountain will open its doors for the first time to K–4th and 6th grade students in August 2025. We will add grades each year for two years, until we reach capacity as a Kindergarten–8th grade elementary and middle school.

Sun Mountain is committed to being one of the best public elementary schools in the state.

Mission and Vision

Mission

The Sun Mountain Community School (SMCS) is a community of families and educators dedicated to cultivating the intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and consciousness capacities of the developing human being. Our students engage in rigorous academics, develop connections to the natural world and moral discernment, and achieve an appreciation of themselves and others.

Vision

Sun Mountain Community School seeks to provide an education that emphasizes intellectual achievement and the imaginative, artistic, and moral growth of its students.

- Whole Child Education: By addressing their heads, hands, and hearts, Sun Mountain encourages students to be lifelong learners and independent thinkers who are self-motivated, self-disciplined, creative, adaptable, and responsible.
- Developmental Method: Our curriculum and teaching align with our understanding of human development.
- Thematic approach: Through a thematic approach, using main lessons and subject blocks, students are immersed deeply in the various subjects.
- Use of Rhythm: We value rhythm as a teaching tool—within each class, throughout the day by varying times of deep focus and playful expression, across the month with regular reviews, and throughout the year by celebrating festivals that involve the whole community.
- The curriculum provides opportunities for all students to participate in academics, music, theater, physical education, handwork, and woodwork.

Governance and Community Values

- School Leadership and Governance: Governing Board (“Board”) members and staff of Sun Mountain emulate our beliefs in their actions, with teachers providing explicit teaching and modeling of them.

Through clear rules and constant positive reinforcement, all Sun Mountain students learn to take responsibility for themselves, their school, and their community.

- **Shared Values and Accountability:** Sun Mountain expects a great deal from our staff, our families, and our students. An excellent education requires the commitment and dedication of everyone involved. It is only by expecting more that we can achieve more.

We fulfill our mission to educate the whole child, using an age-appropriate approach to content and skills based on principles of Waldorf Education and the work of Rudolf Steiner. We remain diligent and focused on the needs of our students, the work that must be done, and the community that supports our efforts.

- **Partnership Between School, Family, and Students:** The positive impact we have on the lives of our students is only possible when the school and home community work together to reflect the same values. We believe in maintaining high academic and behavioral expectations and in supporting students and families to meet them.

Teacher Qualifications

The state of New Mexico requires that all schools inform parents/guardians of the availability to view the educational and teaching background of each teacher providing instruction to their students. Teachers' qualifications and credentials are available for public inspection in a binder at the front office.

Section 2: School Policies and Procedures

School Hours and Daily Schedule

Hours of Operation

Monday - Friday : 8:30 am - 3:30 pm

The school building opens to students at 8:00 a.m. Breakfast is available from 8:00–8:20 a.m. All students should aim to arrive before 8:15 a.m. to be ready for class, which begins promptly at 8:30 a.m.

Students are dismissed at 3:30 p.m. If parents or guardians need to speak to a teacher, please do so after dismissal. The school office is open 8:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m. Appointments with teachers before or after school may be arranged through the school office.

Students may leave school only with persons listed on their Parent-Approved Dismissal Form.

Attendance and Punctuality

Importance of Attendance

Consistent attendance is essential for academic success. Parents/guardians are expected to call the school as early as possible—but no later than 9:00 a.m.—if their child will be absent for any reason.

Reporting Absences

Calls or emails should include the child's name, relationship of caller, reason for absence, and date(s). If a student is absent without notification, the school will contact the parent/guardian.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Attendance is taken several times daily. Absences are excused only if they meet one of the following:

- Doctor's note or specific parent explanation of illness
- Death in the immediate family
- Religious holiday
- Court-mandated appearance with documentation

Vacations or family engagements are not excused. Written documentation or email must be received within one week of the absence for it to be excused.

State Reporting

The school will report unexcused absences and habitual truancy rates to the New Mexico Public Education Department, including documentation of intervention efforts.

Student Withdrawal Due to Absence

A student may be withdrawn after ten consecutive days of absence following repeated, documented communication attempts.

Punctuality and Tardiness

Sun Mountain values punctuality as a life skill and a sign of respect. Doors open at 8:00 a.m. Students arriving at 8:31 a.m. or later are considered tardy.

Consequences for Tardiness

Four Tardies per Semester: Phone call to parents

Seven Tardies per Semester: Parent meeting with the Head of School required before the student may return

Early Dismissal and Student Release

Early Dismissal Procedures

Students leaving early must be signed out in the office by a parent/guardian listed on the approved release form. Updates to authorized contacts should be submitted promptly.

Doctor and Dentist Appointments

Appointments should be scheduled outside school hours whenever possible. Early checkouts before 12:00 p.m. are considered absences; dismissals between 12:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. count as a half-day present.

End-of-Day Attendance Importance

Important community activities occur at the end of the school day; please avoid early pickups whenever possible.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

Student Drop-Off

Families driving students should use the designated area to drop off at the school entrance.

Student Pick-Up

Parents/guardians or authorized contacts may pick up students at dismissal. Parents should not enter classrooms before dismissal. For car pick-up, remain in the vehicle line—staff will escort students to cars. All students must be picked up by 3:30 p.m.

Late Pick-Up Policy

Repeated late pick-ups may result in a fine or temporary non-academic suspension until new arrangements are made.

Transportation and Personal Safety

Bicycles

Students may ride bicycles to school but must wear helmets. Bicycles must be locked and may not be ridden on campus. The school is not responsible for lost or damaged bikes.

Skateboards and Roller Equipment

Skateboards, roller skates, roller blades, and shoes with wheels are not permitted on campus at any time.

Behavioral Expectations in Shared Spaces

Hallway Conduct

Hallways are shared spaces. Students and adults should move quietly to avoid disrupting classes.

Bathroom Conduct

Students should use restrooms before or after school and during recess when possible. Bathrooms must be kept clean, with no writing on walls or misuse of materials. Students feeling ill should report to the office rather than stay in the restroom.

Dress Code

At Sun Mountain Community School, we approach dress as an opportunity to support a calm, focused, and inclusive learning environment. We aim to foster simplicity, comfort, and freedom of movement while minimizing distractions and promoting a shared sense of community. This means wearing clothes students can get dirty, stay comfortable outside in all kinds of weather, and do cartwheels and somersaults confidently any day.

A small clothing exchange closet will be available at the school for families who need or wish to borrow gently worn items throughout the year. Donations of outdoor clothes and hats are welcomed.

Students Must Wear:

- A shirt (with fabric in the front, back and on the sides under the arms).
- Pants, shorts, skirt, dress or equivalent.
- Footwear that is safe and appropriate for the weather, course assignments, athletic and other conditions.

Certain body parts must be covered for all students at all times. Clothes must be worn in a way such that genitals, buttocks, and chest/breasts are fully covered with fabric that is not able to be seen through.

Headwear:

- Hoods and/or hats are allowed to be worn on students' heads on campus, but in school classrooms, may only be worn at the discretion of the classroom teacher.
- Head coverings worn for cultural and/or religious reasons are permitted.

Sunglasses may be worn outdoors, but may not be worn indoors.

Students cannot wear the following clothing or accessories:

1. With offensive images or language, including profanity, hate speech, pornography, misogyny or misandry that denote, suggest, display, glorify or reference alcohol, drugs or related paraphernalia, weapons, violence or other illegal conduct or activities
2. That will interfere with the operation of the school, disrupt the educational process, invade the rights of others or create a reasonably foreseeable risk of such interference or invasion of rights
3. That reasonably can be construed as being or including content that is racist, sexist, lewd, vulgar or obscene

4. That reasonably can be construed as containing fighting words, speech that incites others to imminent lawless action, defamatory speech or threats to others
5. That could be considered dangerous or could be used as a weapon
6. Conceal the face (except as a religious observance)

Dress Code Enforcement

1. The primary responsibility for students' attire resides with the student and their parent/guardian(s).
2. School staff shall enforce the dress code consistently and in a manner that does not reinforce or increase marginalization or oppression of any group based on race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income, or body type/size.
3. Administrators may make special exceptions for students with a documented health condition or disability. Students shall not miss instructional time for failing to abide by the dress code.

Administrative Response to Students Out of Dress Code

1. Students will be asked to put on their own alternative clothing, if already available at school, to be dressed to code for the remainder of the day.
2. Students will be provided with temporary school clothing, when available, to be dressed to code for the remainder of the day.
3. Additionally, students' parents/guardian(s) may be called during the school day to bring alternative clothing for the student to wear for the remainder of the day.

Backpacks

All students must bring backpacks to school.

Breakfast and Lunch Procedures

The school participates in the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program, which provides free or reduced price meals and free milk to eligible students. At the beginning of the school year, each student will be given an application for families to complete. The student's application will allow all eligible families to be notified by mail of their eligibility for free or reduced fee meals.

Families are allowed to bring their own meals, however, sodas and candies are not allowed.

Breakfast

Breakfast is served from 8:00 AM until 8:20 AM. Students who arrive after 8:15 will not be served breakfast. Students must arrive by approximately 8:15 am to eat breakfast.

Lunch

Students may either have lunch and milk from the school or bring their own lunches from home. Since school lunches are prepared off-site, the school must have an accurate number of meals that students wish to order and must place that order with the caterer one week in advance of the meal. Every month students will be given a menu so families can decide if they would like to order lunch for a particular day. Students are welcome to bring lunch from home. They will not have access to a microwave to heat any lunches. Soda and candy are never permitted at school, even in lunches brought from home. Students must remain seated during lunch. Students may talk using “restaurant level” voices. Students are required to clean and wipe up their tables after lunch.

Food Allergies

The school will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate students with food allergies. Parents are required to inform the school of all food allergies and their severity. Once parents have informed the school, school officials will meet with the family in order to develop an Individual Health Care Plan. A parent of a child with food allergies is responsible for providing classroom snacks and lunch for his or her own child. These snacks can be kept in the classroom in a separate snack closet. Sharing or trading of food is prohibited for all students.

Internet Acceptable Use Policy

Acceptable Use

The Internet is a global network linking computers around the world. Internet use provides valuable opportunities for research, curriculum support, and career development. Sun Mountain offers internet access to students and staff. The primary purpose of providing access to the internet is to support the educational mission of the school. The school expects that students and staff will use this access in a manner consistent with this purpose.

While the Internet is a tremendous resource for electronic information, it has the potential for abuse. The school makes no guarantees, implied or otherwise, regarding the factual reliability of data available over the Internet. Users of the school’s Internet service assume full responsibility for any costs, liabilities, or damages arising from the way they choose to use their access to the Internet. Technology resources covered by this policy include commercial, governmental, and private telecommunications-accessible networks (such as the Internet), local networks, databases, and any computer-accessible source of communication or information, whether from or to file servers, hard drives, tapes, compact disks, floppy disks, or other electronic storage or retrieval means.

Unacceptable Use

The following is a list of prohibited behaviors. The list is not exhaustive but illustrates unacceptable uses of the school’s Internet service:

1. disclosing, using or disseminating personal identification information about self or others;
2. accessing, sending or forwarding materials or communications that are defamatory, pornographic, obscene, sexually explicit, threatening, harassing, or illegal;

3. using the internet service for any illegal activities such as gaining unauthorized access to other systems, arranging for the sale or purchase of drugs or alcohol, participating in criminal gang activity, threatening others, transferring obscene material, or attempting to do any of the above;
4. using the internet service to receive or send information relating to dangerous instruments such as bombs or other explosive devices, automatic weapons or other firearms, or other weaponry;
5. vandalizing school computers by causing physical damage, reconfiguring the computer system, attempting to disrupt the computer system, or destroying data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means;
6. copying or downloading of copyrighted material without authorization from the copyright holder, unless the copies are used for teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research. Users shall not copy and forward or copy and upload any copyrighted material without prior approval of the Head of School;
7. plagiarizing material obtained from the Internet. Any material obtained from the Internet and included in one's own work must be cited and credited by name or by electronic address or path on the Internet. Information obtained through E-mail or news sources must also be credited as to sources;
8. using the Internet service for commercial purposes;
9. downloading or installing any commercial software, shareware, freeware or similar types of material onto network drives or disks without prior permission of the Computer Teacher; and
10. overriding the Internet filtering software.

Safety Issues

Use of the Internet has potential dangers. The following are basic safety rules pertaining to all types of Internet applications.

1. Never reveal any identifying information such as last names, ages, addresses, phone numbers, parents' names, parents' employers or work addresses, or photographs.
2. Use the "back" key whenever you encounter a site that you believe is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.
3. Immediately tell a teacher if you receive a message that you believe is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.
4. Never share your password or use another person's password. Internet passwords are provided for each user's personal use only. If you suspect that someone has discovered your password, you should change it immediately and notify a teacher.

Privacy

Users should not have an expectation of privacy or confidentiality in the content of electronic communications or other computer files sent and received on the school computer network or stored in the user's directory or on a disk drive. The school reserves the right to examine all data stored on any medium involved in the user's use of the school's Internet service. Internet messages are public communication and are not private. All communications including text and images may be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or the receiver. Network administrators may review communications to maintain integrity system-wide and ensure that users are using the system responsibly.

Violations

Access to the school's Internet service is a privilege not a right. The school reserves the right to deny, revoke, or suspend specific user privileges and/or to take other disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, expulsion (students), or dismissal (staff) for violations of this policy. The school will advise appropriate law enforcement agencies of illegal activities conducted through the school's Internet service. The school also will cooperate fully with local, state, and/or federal officials in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through the service.

Health and Safety

Drug and Tobacco-Free Campus

Sun Mountain is a Drug and Tobacco Free zone. New Mexico law specifically prohibits any type of tobacco on public school campuses. This includes outside on the grounds or in the parking lot. This also includes all forms of tobacco. No parent, student, staff member, or other person may smoke or vape tobacco products or marijuana anywhere on the campus or on a school sponsored activity away from school at any time. For detailed information, see our Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drug Free Policy.

Personal Belongings

Backpacks

Students should bring a simple, sturdy backpack large enough to carry their lunch, water bottle, and any items requested by their teacher. Rolling backpacks are discouraged due to limited storage space and tripping hazards.

Electronics and Restricted Items

All electronic devices—including smart watches, electronic dictionaries, CD players, cassette players, handheld games, iPods, and MP3 players—are not permitted during school hours.

Students must turn in cell phones to the office or their class teacher at the start of the day. Sun Mountain Community School is not responsible for the loss, damage, or theft of any electronic device.

Toys, electronic devices, magazines, hats worn indoors, or any other items that violate school policy, disrupt class, or create a safety hazard will be confiscated. Only a parent or guardian may retrieve confiscated items in person from the school office.

Toys and Personal Items

Students are asked not to bring toys, trading cards, or other personal play items from home unless specifically requested by a teacher for a class activity. Such items can distract from learning and may become damaged or lost.

Animals on Campus (Dogs Policy)

For the safety and comfort of all students, dogs are not allowed on school property. Service animals that meet ADA requirements are permitted with prior administrative approval.

Section 3: Academics

Sun Mountain Community School is committed to supporting academic achievement and personal growth through a strong, rigorous academic program rooted in the principles of Waldorf education. Our school operates with an extended day schedule: **8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.**

A Challenging Curriculum

Sun Mountain's curriculum is aligned with Common Core Standards, internal benchmarks, internal assessments, and state-mandated evaluations. Our integrated approach combines rigorous academics with experiential and artistic learning, ensuring that students engage deeply with each subject through meaningful connections.

Exceptional Teachers

Sun Mountain's focus on small group instruction and exceptional teachers ensures that we can have quality lessons and give one-on-one help to all students. Teachers design exciting, innovative, and challenging lessons in the classroom, while working longer hours than their peers in traditional public schools. Sun Mountain teachers know that students learn material much better when they see how it might apply to their lives and therefore their lessons are relevant to the students' lives. They also foster a climate of success through a positive disposition, well maintained and organized classrooms, honest feedback, positive reinforcement, recognition of success, and strong classroom management skills. Sun Mountain teachers are trained to move at a fast pace so that every minute of class time is utilized for instruction. Teachers ask many critical thinking questions throughout the course of the day, as well as pack each class with a number of activities designed to keep students motivated and on task.

Character and Leadership Development

Students at Sun Mountain are encouraged to develop leadership, responsibility, and empathy through an integrated, multicultural curriculum. Learning is experiential and student-centered—children's voices and perspectives are an essential part of the classroom community.

Themed studies often extend beyond the classroom through field trips, guest instructors, and community engagement. Examples include:

- Third-grade students visiting a local farm to experience the daily rhythm of agricultural life during a farming unit.

- Sixth-grade students develop service-oriented projects while studying ancient Roman civilization, exploring civic responsibility and social connection.

These experiences nurture both intellectual growth and character development, aligning with Sun Mountain's mission to educate the whole child.

Homework

At Sun Mountain, we believe that learning flourishes through curiosity, exploration, and direct experience—both in school and in the world. Homework is not a standard component of most grade-level curricula.

When students are inspired to continue working on something they learned at school, teachers will provide guidance for how families can support and extend that learning at home.

As students reach middle school, project-based learning becomes more intensive and may include at-home preparation and practice. Consistent with the Waldorf philosophy, we aim to nurture an intrinsic love of learning so that students engage in deeper study when developmentally ready and personally motivated.

Promotion and Retention Policy

Students are promoted to the next grade level based on their academic progress and social-emotional well-being. In most cases, promotion is automatic unless a parent/guardian or teacher raises a concern.

Retention is rarely recommended and only considered after thoughtful discussion among teachers, parents, and administrators. If retention is being considered, ample time will be provided for reflection and collaboration. These conversations will take place during the fall and spring Parent-Teacher Conferences, with a formal retention meeting scheduled no later than **the end of April**.

Progress Reports, Report Cards and Parent Meetings

Teachers and staff communicate academic and behavioral progress through progress reports, report cards, and parent conferences. Reports are available through the SIS portal and may also be sent home with students.

In certain circumstances, a student's report card or progress report may be held at the office and must be picked up by a parent or guardian.

Parents are expected to attend **two Family-Teacher Conferences** each year—one in the fall and one in the spring—to discuss student growth and set shared goals for continued development.

Student Supplies

Teachers will provide an annual list of required school supplies. Families are responsible for purchasing these items; however, if this presents a financial hardship, please reach out to the school office. Support is available to ensure all students have what they need to learn successfully..

Section 4: Code of Conduct

High Standards for Academics, High Standards for Behavior

Sun Mountain Community School is committed to high standards for both academics and behavior. Our school culture is orderly, supportive, and focused on meaningful learning. Mutual care and respect guide our community; discipline exists where students are known, cared for, and engaged. Consistent, fair enforcement of rules supports a safe environment that enables learning.

Purpose and Expectations

High Standards for Academics and Behavior

Sun Mountain cultivates a community in which discipline and order support academic achievement and personal growth. Because students are actively engaged and connected to community life, there is less opportunity for disruption. Administrators and teachers strive to ensure rules are applied fairly and consistently.

Safe and Orderly Environment

Sun Mountain is unequivocally committed to providing a safe, orderly environment where students can maximize academic progress. Students whose behavior interferes with the education of others will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. For every infraction, there will be a consequence; this principle forms the basis of our Student Code of Conduct.

Student Discipline Policy and Procedure

Goals

Disciplinary measures at Sun Mountain aim to help every student develop self-control, social responsibility, and an understanding of appropriate consequences.

Parental Involvement

The school encourages parent or legal guardian involvement in disciplinary matters. Parents will be informed of disciplinary actions, and the school will maintain records of disciplinary measures.

Applicability to Students with Disabilities

This policy does not replace the special procedures that govern long-term suspension or expulsion of students eligible under IDEA or Section 504. Federal and state rules regarding discipline of students with disabilities take precedence where applicable, including limits on removals that constitute a change of placement and requirements for manifestation determinations.

Discretion of School Leadership

The Governing Board delegates discretion to the Head of School and designees to make case-by-case disciplinary judgments.

1. Immediate Removal

- a. Students whose presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of interfering with the educational process may be immediately removed from school, subject to the following rules:
 - i. A rudimentary hearing, as required for temporary suspensions, shall follow as soon as possible.
 - ii. Students shall be reinstated after no more than one school day unless within that time a temporary suspension is also imposed after the required rudimentary hearing. In such circumstances, a single hearing will support both the immediate removal and a temporary suspension imposed in connection with the same incident(s).
 - iii. The school shall exert reasonable efforts to inform the student's parent of the charges against the student and the action taken as soon as practicable. If the school has not communicated with the parent by telephone or in person by the end of the school day following the immediate removal, the school shall on that day mail a written notice with the required information to the parent's address of record.

2. Detention

Detention is a disciplinary option distinct from in-school suspension and does not remove a student from their regular classes. The school may require reasonable periods of detention during or outside school hours. No detained student shall be denied lunch or reasonable restroom breaks. Detention may be imposed consistent with temporary suspension procedures where applicable.

3. Suspension and In-School Alternatives

- a. A suspension is the removal of a student from a class or classes and all school-related activities for any period of time and may include in-school suspension alternatives.
- b. The school administration must provide notification of any form of suspension to the parent/guardian and teachers of any student being suspended. The notification must be documented in writing and should occur on the same day, or as soon as possible if the parents cannot be contacted. Written notification should follow upon parent request if the notification is made by phone or in person.

- c. SCCS shall keep on file a copy of the notification.
- d. The Head of School or her designee is responsible for notification, compliance and documentation.
- e. While a student is suspended he or she may not attend any school sponsored activities (dances, athletics, after school programs, etc.) until the end of the suspension.
- f. Suspension and expulsion shall not be used as punishment of unexcused absences and/or habitual truancy.

4. In-School Suspension

- a. If suspension is in-school administration will contact each of the student's teachers in order to obtain the student's assignments for the suspension time. Teachers should provide enough work to occupy the student's time during that duration.
- b. In-school suspension.
- c. In-school suspension may be imposed with or without further restriction of student privileges. Any student who is placed in an in-school suspension which exceeds 10 school days must be provided with an instructional program that meets both state and local educational requirements. Student privileges, however, may be restricted for longer than 10 school days.
- d. In-school suspensions of any length shall be accomplished according to the procedures for a temporary suspension as set forth above. The school may limit the length of in-school suspensions which may be accomplished under temporary suspension procedures. No in-school suspension student shall be denied an opportunity to eat lunch or reasonable opportunities to go to the restroom.

5. Temporary Suspension

- a. Temporary suspension shall be at the discretion of the Head of School and must limit temporary suspensions to periods shorter than 10 school days.
- b. A student facing temporary suspension shall first be informed of the charges against him or her and, if (s)he denies them, shall be told what evidence supports the charge(s) and be given an opportunity to present his or her version of the facts. The following rules apply.
- c. The hearing may be an informal discussion and may follow immediately after the notice of the charges is given.
- d. Unless the administrative authority decides a delay is essential to permit a fuller exploration of the facts, this discussion may take place and a temporary suspension may be imposed within minutes after the alleged misconduct has occurred.
- e. A student who denies a charge of misconduct shall be told what act(s) (s)he is accused of committing, shall be given an explanation of the evidence supporting the accusation(s) and shall then be given the opportunity to explain his or her version of the facts. The administrative authority is not required to divulge the identity of informants, although (s)he should not withhold such information without good cause. (S)he is required to disclose the substance of all evidence on which (s)he proposes to base a decision in the matter.
- f. The administrative authority is not required to allow the student to secure counsel, to confront or cross-examine witnesses supporting the charge(s), or to call witnesses to verify the student's version of the incident, but none of these is prohibited.
- g. The school shall exert reasonable efforts to inform the student's parent of the charges against the student and their possible or actual consequence as soon as practicable. If the school has not

communicated with the parent by telephone or in person by the end of the first full day of suspension, the school shall on that day mail a written notice with the required information to the parent's address of record.

6. Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion:

Where prompt action to suspend a student long-term is deemed appropriate, a temporary suspension may be imposed while the procedures for long-term suspension or expulsion are activated. However, where a decision following the required formal hearing is delayed beyond the end of the temporary suspension, the student must be returned to school pending the final outcome unless an exception under the law applies.

A student who has been validly expelled or suspended is not entitled to receive any educational services from the local district during the period of the exclusion from school. A local school board may provide alternative arrangements, including correspondence courses at the student's or parent's expense pursuant to public education department requirements, if the board deems such arrangements appropriate.

The following rules shall govern the imposition of long-term suspensions or expulsions:

- a. The same person or group may, but need not, perform the functions of both hearing authority and disciplinarian. Where the functions are divided, the hearing authority's determination of the facts is conclusive on the disciplinarian, but the disciplinarian may reject any punishment recommended by the hearing authority.
- b. A review authority shall have discretion to modify or overrule the disciplinarian's decision, but may not impose a harsher punishment. A review authority shall be bound by a hearing authority's factual determinations unless an exception under the law applies.
- c. No person shall act as hearing authority, disciplinarian or review authority in a case where (s)he was directly involved in or witnessed the incident(s) in question, or if (s)he has prejudged disputed facts or is biased for or against any person who will actively participate in the proceedings.
- d. The Governing Council may act as hearing authority, disciplinarian or review authority for any cases involving proposed long-term suspensions or expulsions. Whenever a quorum of the Council acts in any such capacity, however, the Open Meetings Act, Section 10-15-1 et seq., NMSA 1978 requires a public meeting.
- e. An authorized administrative authority shall initiate procedures for long-term suspension or expulsion of a student by designating a hearing authority and disciplinarian in accordance with Governing Council policies, scheduling a formal hearing in consultation with the hearing authority and preparing and serving a written notice meeting the requirements of this Policy.
- f. The written notice shall be addressed to the student, through his or her parent(s), and shall be served upon the parent(s) personally or by mail.
- g. The hearing shall be scheduled no sooner than five nor later than 10 school days from the date of receipt of the notice by the parent(s). The hearing authority may grant or deny a request to delay the hearing in accordance with this Policy.

- h. The written notice must contain all of the following information, parts of which may be covered by appropriate reference to copies of any policies or regulations furnished with the notice:
 - i. the school rule(s) alleged to have been violated, a concise statement of the alleged act(s) of the student on which the charge(s) are based and a statement of the possible penalty;
 - ii. the date, time and place of the hearing, and a statement that both the student and parent are entitled and urged to be present;
 - iii. a clear statement that the hearing will take place as scheduled unless the hearing authority grants a delay or the student and parent agree to waive the hearing and comply voluntarily with the proposed disciplinary action or with a negotiated penalty, and a clear and conspicuous warning that a failure to appear will not delay the hearing and may lead to the imposition of the proposed penalty by default;
 - iv. a statement that the student has the right to be represented at the hearing by legal counsel, a parent or some other representative designated in a written notice filed at least seventy-two (72) hours before the hearing with the contact person named pursuant to this Policy;
 - v. a description of the procedures governing the hearing;
 - vi. the name, business address and telephone number of a contact person through whom the student, parent or designated representative may request a delay or seek further information, including access to any documentary evidence or exhibits which the school proposes to introduce at the hearing; and
 - vii. any other information, materials or instructions deemed appropriate by the administrative authority who prepares the notice.
- i. The hearing authority shall have discretion to grant or deny a request by the student or the appropriate administrative authority to postpone the hearing. Such discretion may be limited or guided by the Governing Council policies not otherwise inconsistent with this rule.
- j. Where a student has been suspended temporarily and a formal hearing on long-term suspension or expulsion will not occur until after the temporary suspension has expired, the student shall be returned to school at the end of the temporary suspension unless:
 - i. The right to a hearing has been waived as outline below in this Policy, or
 - ii. the student and parent(s) have knowingly and voluntarily waived the students right to return to school pending the outcome of the formal proceedings, or
 - iii. the appropriate administrative authority has conducted an interim hearing pursuant to a written school policy made available to the student which affords further due process protection sufficient to support the student's continued exclusion pending the outcome of the formal procedures.
- k. A student and his or her parent(s) may elect to waive the formal hearing and review procedures and comply voluntarily with the proposed penalty, or may waive the hearing and review and negotiate a mutually acceptable penalty with the designated disciplinarian. Such a waiver and compliance agreement shall be made voluntarily, with knowledge of the rights being relinquished, and shall be evidenced by a written document signed by the student, the parent(s), and the appropriate school official.
- l. The formal hearing is not a trial. It is an administrative hearing designed to ensure a calm, orderly determination by an impartial hearing authority of the facts of a case of alleged serious misconduct. Technical rules of evidence and procedure do not apply. The following-rules govern the conduct of the hearing and the ultimate decision:

- i. The school shall have the burden of proof of misconduct.
- ii. The student and his or her parent shall have the following rights: The right to be represented by legal counsel or other designated representative, however, the school is not required to provide representation; the right to present evidence, subject to reasonable requirements of substantiation at the discretion of the hearing authority and subject to exclusion of evidence deemed irrelevant or redundant; the right to confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, subject to reasonable limitation by the hearing authority; the right to have a decision based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing and the applicable legal rules, including the governing rules of student conduct.
- iii. The hearing authority shall determine whether the alleged act(s) of misconduct have been proved by a preponderance of the evidence presented at a hearing at which the student or a designated representative have appeared.
- iv. If no one has appeared on the students behalf within a reasonable time after the announced time for the hearing, the hearing authority shall determine whether the student, through the parent, received notice of the hearing. If so, the hearing authority shall review the schools' evidence to determine whether it is sufficient to support the charges(s) of misconduct.
- v. A hearing authority who is also a disciplinarian shall impose an appropriate sanction if (s)he finds that the allegations of misconduct have been proved under the standards of the law. A hearing authority who is not a disciplinarian shall report its findings, together with any recommended sanction, to the disciplinarian promptly after the hearing.
- vi. Arrangements to make a tape recording or keep minutes of the proceedings shall be made by the administrative authority who scheduled the hearing and prepared the written notice. A verbatim written transcript is not required, but any minutes or other written record shall fairly reflect the substance of the evidence presented.
- vii. The hearing authority may announce a decision on the question of whether the allegation(s) of misconduct have been proved at the close of the hearing. A hearing authority who is also a disciplinarian may also impose a penalty at the close of the hearing.
- viii. In any event, the hearing authority shall prepare and mail or deliver to the student, through the parent, a written decision within five working days after the hearing. The decision shall include a concise summary of the evidence upon which the hearing authority based its factual determinations. A hearing authority who is also a disciplinarian shall include in the report a statement of the penalty, if any, to be imposed, and shall state reasons for the chosen penalty. A hearing authority who is not a disciplinarian shall forward a copy of his or her written decision to the disciplinarian forthwith. The disciplinarian shall prepare a written decision, including reasons for choosing any penalty imposed, and mail or deliver it to the student, through the parent, within five working days of receipt of the hearing authority's report.

Disciplinary Policies Continued

Students who are found to have violated the School's Discipline Policy may be subject to the following penalties, either alone or in combination with one another:

- 1) Oral warning

- 2) Written warning
- 3) Written notification to parent(s)/guardian(s)
- 4) Conference with parent(s)/guardian(s)
- 5) Confiscation
- 6) Detention
- 7) Exclusion and/or removal from a particular class or event
- 8) Suspension from transportation
- 9) Suspension from cafeteria, commons, library, social, athletic, after-school, field trip, extracurricular, or other activities or privileges
- 10) In-school suspension
- 11) Short-term suspension (ten days or less) from school
- 12) Long-term suspension (more than ten days) from school
- 13) Expulsion from school

In determining the appropriate disciplinary action, the Head of School or designee authorized to impose disciplinary penalties may consider, among other things, the student's prior disciplinary record, age, grade level and appropriateness of the consequence.

Use of Physical Intervention by Supervisory Personnel

It is the policy of Sun Mountain to provide for the appropriate use of restraints and to protect students from

Policy and Purpose

Sun Mountain provides for limited, appropriate use of restraints only when necessary to protect students or others from imminent harm, and to preserve student dignity and safety.

Definitions and Limits

1. A restraint is any physical method that involuntarily restricts movement.
2. Physical restraint should be used only in emergency situations, after less intrusive strategies have failed or are inappropriate. If a student's Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) specifies restraint, the emergency requirement is waived and the BIP guides restraint use.
3. Restraint aims to protect persons from imminent harm and to minimize harm to the restrained student.

Training and Reporting

1. Only properly trained staff may use restraints. Whenever possible, another adult should witness the restraint.
2. Staff working with students who have known medical or psychological limitations on restraint will exercise extra caution and use restraint only when imminent danger exists.
3. Each restraint incident must be reported to the Head of School and documented with names of staff involved, student name, a description of events leading to the restraint, methods used, and any follow-up actions required.

4. Follow-up includes reviewing the incident with the student and staff, evaluating procedures, and determining additional steps for safety and learning.

Discipline of Students with Special Needs

Sun Mountain will comply with Section 504, IDEA, and applicable state laws regarding discipline of students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are entitled to due process protections and specific procedural rights in disciplinary situations

Short-term suspensions

School personnel may suspend or remove a student for up to ten cumulative school days without providing additional services; for subsequent removals that do not constitute a change of placement, school personnel must provide services to the extent necessary for progress on the general curriculum and IEP goals as determined by school staff.

If appropriate, a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) must be conducted or revised.

Change of placement and Manifestation Determination

A change of placement occurs when removals exceed ten consecutive school days or when cumulative removals create a pattern constituting a change. Within ten school days of a decision resulting in a change of placement, the team must conduct a manifestation determination meeting to decide whether the conduct was caused by, had a direct relationship to, or was a result of the school's failure to implement the IEP. If the conduct is a manifestation, the student must be returned to their placement and the team must review or develop a BIP. If not a manifestation, school discipline may proceed, but the student continues to be entitled to educational services necessary to progress in the curriculum and IEP goals.

Appeal Rights

Parents/guardians who disagree with a manifestation determination or alternative placement decision may request an expedited hearing from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals. Placement during the appeal will be the alternative setting determined by the team.

Exceptions for Specified Conduct

Under certain special circumstances as defined by federal law, school personnel may place the student in an interim alternative setting for 45 school days, without regard to the manifestation determination. These special circumstances include incidents where the student possesses, uses, sells or solicits illegal drugs, carries or possesses a weapon, or inflicts serious bodily injury while on school premises or at a school function. The federal definition for serious bodily injury means bodily injury that involves:

- A substantial risk of death;
- Extreme physical pain
- Protracted and obvious disfigurement; or
- Protracted loss or impairment of a bodily member, organ or mental facility.

Otherwise, if the student's continuation in the current placement is substantially likely to cause injury to himself/herself or others the district may request an expedited hearing for an order to place a student in an alternative setting for a period not to exceed 45 school days. The district also has the right to seek a court injunction.

Students with Disabilities under Section 504 Students who are not eligible for services under the IDEA, but who have disabilities within the meaning of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act are entitled to certain procedural protections associated with Section 504.

Complaint Process

Initial Resolution

Parents are encouraged to address concerns directly with staff. If dissatisfied with a staff resolution, the complaint should be submitted in writing to the Head of School. The Head of School will review staff and parent statements, investigate as needed, and issue a decision. The Board will not hear complaints that bypass this process.

Escalation to the Governing Board

If unresolved, the parent may contact the Governing Board Chair to request placing the issue on the Board agenda. Notifying a board member does not guarantee agenda placement; parents should be aware that board members who receive substantive information outside a public meeting may need to recuse themselves.

Field Trips

Field trips extend the classroom into the community and require responsible behavior. Participation requires a signed Field Trip Permission Slip from a parent or guardian. Teachers will notify parents in advance. Students without signed permission or those who have lost privileges will remain at school. Volunteers should be treated with the same respect as teachers. No non-enrolled siblings may attend field trips. Inappropriate behavior may lead to community violations, suspension, or loss of trip privileges. If a student poses a safety concern, a parent may be required to attend for the student to participate.

Forgery

Accurate communication among school, teachers, students, and parents is vital. Progress reports and other communications may require parent signatures. Students who forge a parent/guardian signature or falsify school communications, including approvals of community violations, may face out-of-school suspension.

Section 5: Building Safety and Security

Sun Mountain Community School is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all students, staff, and visitors. The following procedures ensure that teaching and learning can proceed without interruption. Cooperation from the entire school community is essential.

Closed Campus

Students may **not leave the school campus** during school hours without prior permission.

Students granted permission to leave may do so **only under the escort and supervision of an authorized adult**.

Students should always be **respectful and courteous to neighbors** surrounding the school.

Once students arrive on campus in the morning, they may **not leave unless accompanied by a staff member or authorized adult**.

Visitors

All visitors, including parents and guardians, must **report to the main office** and sign in upon arrival.

Visitors should **wear a visitor badge** at all times.

Classroom visits during instructional time require permission from the Head of School.

Conversations or conferences with staff must **not interfere with teaching duties**.

Failure to comply with visitor policies or causing a disruption may result in being **barred or removed from campus** at the Head of School's discretion and may result in **criminal trespass charges**.

Student Visitors

Student visitors may be allowed on campus at the discretion of the Head of School.

Students **suspended from another school** or who have caused disruption at another school **may not visit**.

Volunteers

Volunteers may have access to **sensitive information**, including student grades, disciplinary records, or personal information about staff (e.g., address, salary, Social Security number, phone numbers).

This information is **confidential**. Concerns should be addressed with a faculty member or the Head of School.

Violation of this policy may result in revocation of volunteer privileges.

Student Searches

To ensure the safety of the school population, school personnel may conduct searches of students. The School acknowledges both state and federal constitutional rights which are applicable to personal searches of students, searches of their possessions (e.g., pocket contents, backpacks, handbags, etc.).

School administrators need only have individualized reasonable suspicion that a particular search will reveal evidence that a crime or breach of the disciplinary code is being committed by the student or that a safety or security issue may exist. Individualized reasonable suspicion is established when the observation of specific and describable behavior or information from a credible informant leads one to reasonably believe that a particular student is engaging in or has engaged in prohibited conduct. The reasonableness of the search shall depend upon:

- The value and reliability of information used as justification for the search;
- The prevalence and seriousness of the problem to which the search is directed;
- The urgency requires an immediate search.

Even if individualized reasonable suspicion exists, the scope of the search shall be such that the measures used are reasonably related to the purpose of the search and not excessively intrusive.

Law enforcement officers shall be required to have probable cause to perform a search of a student.

Emergency Drills

During the first month of school and frequently throughout the school year, students and staff will participate in emergency drills to ensure that the entire school community is familiar with the appropriate response in the event of an emergency. It is important for students to follow instructions quickly and quietly during an emergency drill.

Section 6: Family Involvement

At Sun Mountain Community School, we believe that education thrives when families, teachers, and students work together in partnership. Every member of our community—teachers, staff, families, and board—shares the goal of nurturing each child’s growth in both heart and mind. While school policies are set by the Governing Board and Head of School, family involvement and communication are essential to supporting our mission and the well-being of every student.

Family Communication

Clear and open communication between school and home is vital. The school must be able to reach families at all times in case of emergency, illness, or urgent matters. Please notify the office promptly of any changes to your address, phone number, or place of employment.

In the event of an emergency, parents or guardians should contact the Main Office directly by phone or in person. Families may not go directly to classrooms or remove students from campus without checking in at the office and receiving staff authorization.

Whenever possible, the school will communicate with families in their preferred language, as indicated in the enrollment packet.

Parent and Family Involvement

Family participation enriches the life of the school and deepens each child's educational experience. We invite families to engage in ways that are meaningful and sustainable for them. Below are some of the many opportunities to get involved.

Visiting Classes

Prospective students and families may schedule a classroom visit through the front office. The visit allows interested families to experience a "day in the life" of a Sun Mountain student. While not required for enrollment, these visits can be valuable in understanding our school culture and approach to learning.

New Parent Orientation

Before the school year begins, Sun Mountain hosts a New Parent Orientation. This gathering welcomes new and returning families and provides important information about class rhythms, expectations, and the daily flow of school life. Teachers will share classroom-specific details, and families will have an opportunity to connect with one another and with staff.

Parent Education Evenings

Throughout the year, the school hosts several Parent Education Evenings designed to deepen understanding of our curriculum and the principles of Waldorf education. These evenings provide a window into classroom learning, child development, and seasonal themes. Families will receive an annual calendar noting all scheduled events.

Cafecitos With the Head of School

The Head of School will periodically host small gatherings—known as *Cafecitos*—to foster connection and dialogue among families. These informal meetings are opportunities to explore topics related to Waldorf education, parenting, and child development, as well as to share questions, insights, and celebrations from our community.

Volunteer at Sun Mountain

Families are an integral part of our community life. We welcome volunteers in a wide variety of roles—from helping in the gardens, preparing for festivals, and assisting with community events to supporting classroom projects or Parent Association initiatives.

Those interested in volunteering should contact the school office for information on required procedures and background check

Class Emails & Community Newsletter

Teachers send weekly class emails to keep families informed about classroom activities, events, and important updates. A monthly community newsletter shares broader school news, upcoming events, and highlights from across the grades. Families are encouraged to read both communications carefully to stay connected and informed.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Family conferences are an essential part of our educational process. These meetings provide a dedicated time for reflection and collaboration between parents and teachers regarding each child's academic and personal growth. Conferences are held on the dates indicated in the school calendar, or as requested by the teacher or Head of School. Families should plan to attend a 30-minute meeting during the scheduled conference week.

Section 7: General School Information

Contact

Sun Mountain Community School
26 Puesta del Sol
Santa Fe, NM 87507
505.913.7477
www.SunMountainCommunitySchool.org

Phone Use

The school aims to maintain strong communication with families. However, office phones are for business and emergency use only.

1. **Messages for Teachers:** Leave messages with the Office Administrator; teachers will return calls as their schedules permit.
2. **Student Phone Use:** Students may use the office phone only for emergencies. Calls to arrange delivery of forgotten items or to manage routine matters such as homework or forms are not permitted.
3. **Incoming Calls:** Students will not be called out of class except in case of emergency.

Lost and Stolen Property

Students are strongly encouraged **not** to bring valuable items to school. Items that cause disruption may be confiscated. While the school will make every reasonable effort to return lost items, **Sun Mountain is not responsible** for lost or stolen property.

Enrollment Policies

Sun Mountain Community School operates as a **tuition-free, open-enrollment public charter school** and follows New Mexico's legal requirements for community schools.

Enrollment is determined through a **fair and equitable process**, which includes:

1. An Open Enrollment Period
2. A Lottery (if applications exceed available spaces)
3. A Waitlist process

Sun Mountain does not discriminate in admission or participation based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Homeless Education Policy

Sun Mountain will comply with the provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 (the "McKinney-Vento Act") as well as any applicable regulations, as well as New Mexico state laws and regulations concerning the education of homeless students.

The Head of School will designate a staff person as liaison for homeless students who will carry out duties as assigned. Among those duties will be the responsibility to coordinate activities and programs in the best interest of homeless students as set forth in the McKinney-Vento Act.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Procedure for the Identification of Homeless Children & Youth. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison will identify students experiencing homelessness during enrollment by ensuring the following:

- Family to complete McKinney-Vento Enrollment Questionnaire.
- Liaison will follow-up with family to obtain additional information, if needed.
- Liaison will post the Educational Rights of Homeless Students Posters at enrollment counters.
- Liaison will include the Educational Rights of Homeless Students in the enrollment packet.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison will identify students experiencing homelessness during the academic year by ensuring the following:

- Liaison will train all staff who have interaction with students including the following:
 - Bus Drivers
 - Teachers
 - Resource Officers
 - Enrollment Counselors
 - Front Office Staff
- Liaison will provide the Educational Rights of Homeless Students two additional times during the academic year in one or more of the following means:
 - Newsletters
 - Pamphlets
 - Student Handbook
 - Website
 - Posted on the front bulletin.

Registration and Records

Registration: Enrollment forms need to be filled out for each child to be registered at Sun Mountain. The forms should be submitted to the school office along with the following documents:

- A copy of the pupil's birth certificate or other acceptable proof of age;
- An up-to-date record of immunizations;
- Custody papers (if applicable);
- IEP, psychological reports, and/or other documentation of special education (if applicable);
- Proof parent's New Mexico address.

If a child is transferring from another school, and in order to complete the registration process, Sun Mountain will need the records from the child's previous school. This documentation should include a withdrawal form, the child's immunization history and a copy of his/her birth certificate, as well as his/her complete academic and disciplinary records, including any special needs or information. A request form may be obtained at the school office. Official transcripts should be sent to Sun Mountain directly by the previously attended school or, if hand delivered, the transcripts should arrive sealed with a signature across the back of the envelope. If your child was home-schooled, a signed description of the curriculum and course content mastered must also be provided.

Parents have the right of access to the records of their children. The school reserves the right to have a 24-hour waiting period in order to maintain the smooth flow of school business, and to charge a reasonable fee for the cost of copying records. Non-custodial parents also have the right of access to records, unless the school has received a court document to the contrary.

Health Information

Health screenings are provided annually in order to identify students with health problems such as vision or hearing deficits that may now, or in the future, affect their education. Parents/guardians are requested to notify the office if a student has a health problem. School personnel make every effort to comply with physicians' recommendations.

Parents and guardians are requested to keep students home if the following symptoms are present: nausea and/or vomiting, elevated temperature, yellow or green nasal discharge, red or inflamed eyes, cold symptoms, any skin rash unless it has been diagnosed by a physician as non-infectious, severe headache, or other pain.

Emergency contact

Parents/guardians must make arrangements to have either a parent, neighbor, or other responsible person available at all times to pick up a child who is ill. Because it is occasionally necessary to contact parents/guardians, it is very important that parents/guardians inform the school immediately of any phone number or address changes.

Emergency Form

Parents are required to complete an emergency medical referral form for each of their children every year. Tell us how to contact you or another responsible adult if your child becomes ill or is injured at school. Parents are expected to notify school officials regarding students' health problems including allergies to foods, medicine, insect stings, etc. It is important to notify the office of your address, home phone number, business phone or emergency phone number changes during the school year.

Immunizations

School officials maintain health records on each student. An immunization record for school attendance must be completed, current, and on-file before a student can be enrolled. The immunization requirements for a child entering Sun Mountain are:

- Measles (rubeola)
- Rubella (German measles)
- Poliomyelitis (polio)
- Tetanus
- Pertussis
- Mumps
- Diphtheria
- Hepatitis B (3 doses for all students)
- Varicella or history of chicken pox
- Meningococcal (age 11 years or older)

Parents/guardians are asked to inform school officials at Sun Mountain of any immunizations received during the year so that the school records can be kept up-to-date.

New Mexico law provides certain exemptions from immunization requirements. Any minor child through his parent or guardian may file a request for exemption from required immunization with the director of the public health division by providing the following:

1. Certificate or affidavit from a duly licensed physician attesting that any of the required immunizations would seriously endanger the life or health of the child; or

2. An affidavit or written affirmation from an officer of a recognized religious denomination stating that the parents or guardians are bona fide members of the recognized denomination, whose religious teaching requires reliance upon prayer or spiritual means alone for healing; or
3. An affidavit or written affirmation by a parent or guardian whose religious beliefs, held either individually or jointly with others, do not permit the administration of vaccine or other immunizing agents.

The original request for approval of any exemptions from immunization must be mailed to the department of health, public health division, immunization program. Within 60 days of receipt of a request for exemption from immunization, the department of health immunization program manager shall review the request to determine whether the certificate has been duly completed. Incomplete requests shall be returned to the requester with information regarding what elements are missing. If approved exemption requests shall be for a nine-month period indicated by the public health division director or designee;

Restricted Physical Education Activities: If for any reason you feel your child should have restricted physical education activities, please provide school officials with a doctor's statement giving the reason and the length of the restriction. This information will be forwarded to the classroom teacher.

First Aid Provision and Medical Emergencies

Minor accidents, cuts, scrapes, and bruises will generally be treated at the school by selected teachers and administrators. The school is not equipped to handle medical services beyond basic first aid. In the event that a child requires emergency medical care, a parent or guardian will be notified as soon as possible. If a parent, guardian, or other emergency contact cannot be reached, the school may need to initiate medical treatment. Thus, it is essential that we have on file each student's Office/Health Emergency Card, which provides up-to-date contact information for parents and guardians, and which gives the school permission to initiate emergency medical treatment if a parent or guardian cannot be reached.

In the event of an emergency, the school will attempt to contact the parent or emergency contacts provided by the parent on the annual enrollment form. If the condition is life threatening, beyond the scope of the health office staff, or the parents/emergency contacts cannot be contacted, the school will contact Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to assess and treat the student. If medical transport is required, as determined by EMS, the parents are responsible for any costs incurred.

FERPA - Annual Notification to Parents and Eligible Students Regarding Student Records

This Notification is required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and provides you with important information regarding your rights as they relate to student educational records. It is directed to parents (including a natural parent, a guardian or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian) and eligible students (students aged 18 or older) or attending an institution of postsecondary education).

Parent Rights

- The Right to Inspect and Review the Student's Educational Records. If you wish to inspect/review the student's educational records, please contact the Head of School to make an appointment to do so. You will be provided access to records within a reasonable period of time, but in no case more than 45 days after your request is received. 34 Code of Federal Regulations § 300.613. School personnel will respond to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of the records. Sun Mountain will provide you with a copy of the records or make other arrangements for inspection and review of the requested records if its failure to do so would effectively prevent you from exercising your rights to inspect and review the records.
- The Right to Consent to Disclosures of Personally Identifiable Information Contained in the Student's Educational Records, Except to the Extent the Law Authorizes Disclosure Without Your Consent. Albuquerque will limit the disclosure of information contained in a student's education records except: (1) By your prior, written consent; (2) As directory information; or (3) Under certain limited circumstances permitted by FERPA, the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001 (USA PATRIOT Act), and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Some instances in which disclosure is permitted without your consent are set forth below.

Directory Information

Your consent is not required for Sun Mountain to release the following student information designated as "directory information:" If you wish to refuse to permit Sun Mountain to release directory information, you must submit your written refusal to the Head of School's Office within two weeks of the date of this notice.

Disclosure To School Officials

Sun Mountain may disclose personally identifiable information from a student's education record without your consent to school officials who have a legitimate educational interest in the information. School officials include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Administrators, supervisors, and teachers
- Counselors, therapists, and other non-teaching personnel
- Authorized volunteers or interns
- Temporary substitutes for administrative, supervisory, or teaching personnel
- Members of Governing Board, when acting in their official capacity
- Contracted consultants or other professionals (i.e., attorneys, auditors, evaluators)

A "legitimate educational interest" is the person's need to know in order to fulfill the school official's professional responsibility and/or to provide a service or benefit to the student or the student's family.

- The Right to Seek Amendment of the Student's Education Records that the Parent or Eligible Student Believes to Be Inaccurate, Misleading, or Otherwise in Violation of the Student's Privacy Rights. If you believe the student's records contain information that is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's privacy or other rights, you may ask Sun Mountain to amend the record. You are also entitled to a hearing to present evidence that the record should be changed if Sun Mountain decides not to alter it according to your request. A form for this purpose and additional information is available in the Head of School's office.

- The Right to File a Complaint with the U.S. Department of Education Concerning Alleged Failures by Sun Mountain to Comply with the Requirements of FERPA. You are entitled to file a Complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if you believe Sun Mountain has violated FERPA. Complaints may be sent to the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202-5901.

Sun Mountain complies with FERPA (20 U.S.C. § 1232g and § 1232h; 34 C.F.R. Part 99); the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.; 34 C.F.R. Part 300); and A.R.S. §§ 15-141, 15-142.

Parents and eligible students have a right to file a complaint concerning alleged failures by a school district to comply with the requirements of the student records laws and regulations with the New Mexico Public Education Department. Complaints relative to federal statutes and regulations governing student records may be filed with the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

IDEA is a federal law that protects the rights of students with disabilities. In addition to standard school records, for children with disabilities education records could include evaluation and testing materials, medical and health information, Individualized Education Programs and related notices and consents, progress reports, materials related to disciplinary actions, and mediation agreements. Such information is gathered from a number of sources, including the student's parents and staff of the school of attendance. Also, with parental permission, information may be gathered from additional pertinent sources, such as doctors and other health care providers. This information is collected to assure the child is identified, evaluated, and provided a Free Appropriate Public Education in accordance with state and federal special education laws. Each agency participating under Part B of IDEA must assure that at all stages of gathering, storing, retaining and disclosing education records to third parties that it complies with the federal confidentiality laws. In addition, the destruction of any education records of a child with a disability must be in accordance with IDEA regulatory requirements.

Custody

In most cases, natural parents shall be given reasonable access to their children at school and to their children's official school records. Exceptions to this will be made in cases where there are court orders restricting the rights of a parent to access a child and/or the child's official school records.

It shall be the responsibility of the natural parent who has a court order restricting the rights of the other (non-custodial) parent to a child or the child's official school records to notify school officials of the conditions of the court order and to provide school officials with a current copy of the court order. In cases in which a person other than the natural parent has been granted guardianship, the rights and privileges of the natural parent shall be considered divested, in the absence of court action granting the natural parents specific rights. In cases of guardianship, the legal guardian shall be responsible for notifying school officials of the conditions of the guardianship and for providing school officials with all pertinent written documentation or changes.

Reporting Child Abuse

Child abuse is something that will not be ignored at Sun Mountain. All school employees are required by New Mexico state law and school policy to complete required training on the detection and reporting of child abuse or neglect. All employees are also required report any suspected child abuse. Sun Mountain is required by law to report to Child Protective Services or the police department with jurisdiction any suspected non-accidental injury, sexual molestation, abuse, or neglect.

Non-Discrimination

Sun Mountain does not discriminate in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment its services, programs and activities, on the basis of race, color or national origin, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI); on the basis of sex, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; on the basis of disability, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); on the basis of age, in accordance with the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1974 (ADEA), or on the basis of pregnancy status in accordance with the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978. In addition, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to the school on the basis of race, sex, color, creed, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, or ancestry . Finally, no person shall be discriminated against in obtaining the advantages, privileges, or access to the courses of study offered by the school on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation.

Harassment

Sun Mountain is committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. Harassment by administrators, certified and support personnel, students, vendors, or other individuals at school or at school-sponsored events is unlawful and is strictly prohibited. Sun Mountain requires all employees and students to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with respect to their fellow employees, students and all members of the school community.

In General

Harassment includes communications such as jokes, comments, innuendoes, notes, display of pictures or symbols, gestures, or other conduct that offends or shows disrespect to others based upon race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.

By law, what constitutes harassment is determined from the perspective of a reasonable person with the characteristic on which the harassment is based. What one person may consider acceptable behavior may reasonably be viewed as harassment by another person. Therefore, individuals should consider how their words and actions might reasonably be viewed by other individuals. It is also important for individuals to make it clear to others when a particular behavior or communication is unwelcome, intimidating, hostile or offensive.

Sexual Harassment

While all types of harassment are prohibited, sexual harassment requires particular attention. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Acceptance of or submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or education.
- The individual's response to such conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting an employee or as a basis for educational, disciplinary, or other decisions affecting a student.
- Such conduct interferes with an individual's job duties, education or participation in extracurricular activities. The conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or school environment.

Harassment and Retaliation Prohibited

Harassment in any form or for any reason is absolutely forbidden. This includes harassment by administrators, certified and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals in school or at school related events. In addition, retaliation against any individual who has brought harassment or other inappropriate behavior to the attention of the school or who has cooperated in an investigation of a complaint under this policy is unlawful and will not be tolerated by Sun Mountain .

Persons who engage in harassment or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to reprimand, suspension, termination/expulsion or other sanctions as determined by the school administration and/or Governing Board, subject to applicable procedural requirements.

Bullying and Cyberbullying

1. Bullying and cyberbullying are strictly prohibited. This Policy covers conduct that takes place in the school, on school property, at school-sponsored functions and activities, on school buses or vehicles, and at bus stops. This Policy also pertains to usage of electronic technology and electronic communication that occurs in the school, on school property, at school-sponsored functions and activities, on school buses or vehicles, at bus stops, and on school computers, networks, forums, and mailing lists. This Policy applies to the entire school community, including educators, school staff, students, parents and volunteers.

2. Definitions:

- A. "Bullying" means any written, verbal or electronic expression, physical act or gesture, or a pattern thereof, that is intended to cause distress upon one or more students in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop, or at school activities or sanctioned events. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, hazing, harassment, intimidation or menacing acts of a student which may, but need not be based on the student's race, color, sex, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, age or sexual orientation.
- B. "Harassment" means knowingly pursuing a pattern of conduct that is intended to annoy, alarm or terrorize another person. Harassment means written, verbal or physical conduct that adversely affects the ability of one or more students to participate in or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities because the conduct is so severe, persistent or pervasive. This includes conduct that is based on a

student's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion or any other distinguishing characteristics that may be defined by the state or local educational agency. This also includes association with a person or group with one or more of the abovementioned characteristics, whether actual or perceived.

- C. "Cyberbullying" means electronic communication that targets a specific student, is published with the intention that the communication be seen by or disclosed to the targeted student, is in fact seen by or disclosed to the targeted student, and creates or is certain to create a hostile environment on the school campus that is so severe or pervasive as to substantially interfere with the targeted student's educational benefits, opportunities or performance.

3. Notice: This policy will be distributed annually and will also be included in any student codes of conduct, disciplinary policies, student handbooks and school websites.

4. Reporting Bullying and Harassment:

- A. Procedures- These Procedures for reporting incidents of bullying and cyberbullying are designed to ensure confidentiality to those reporting bullying or cyberbullying incidents, as well as protection from reprisal, retaliation, or false accusation against victims, witnesses, or others with information regarding a bullying or cyberbullying incident.

All allegations of bullying or harassment shall be reported to the Head of School or a designated staff member. Prior to notification of any parent or guardian regarding any incident of bullying, harassment or cyberbullying, school authorities must consider the issue of notification as they would any other educationally-relevant decision, considering the health, well-being, and safety of any students involved in the incident including confidentiality.

B. Any school employee who has information about or a reasonable suspicion that a person is being cyberbullied shall report the matter immediately to the Head of School or their designee. Any school administrator who receives a report of cyberbullying must take immediate steps to ensure prompt investigation of the report.

Whomsoever is designated to investigate the allegation shall do so in a timely manner and determine appropriate disciplinary action. The Head of School or designated staff member will be held accountable for doing everything possible, within reason, to resolve the situation.

C. Anonymous Reports- Bullying and cyberbullying may be reported anonymously. This may be done by the student or someone delegated by the student placing an unsigned report into the Head of School's mailbox in the Administration Office. However, disciplinary action cannot be taken solely based on an anonymous report. Anonymous reports will be investigated with the same procedure, timeliness and vigor as other reports and disciplinary action can occur based on the results of the investigation.

D. False Reports- Students or employees who file false reports of bullying or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action.

E. Parental Reports- Reports alleging bullying or harassment may be filed with the Head of School or the designated staff member.

F. Responsibility of Students- Any student who observes an act of bullying or harassment should report the bullying or harassment to the Head of School or the designated staff member.

G. Responsibility of Staff- All staff members will take reasonable measures to prevent bullying and harassment and are obligated to report any such acts that come to their attention.

H. Retaliation- Retaliation or threats of retaliation meant to intimidate the victim of bullying or harassment or toward those investigating the incident will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action.

5. Investigation of Bullying and Harassment: Once reported commencement of the investigation will begin promptly by the Head of School or her designee. If the Head of School is unavailable upon the report of bullying or harassment, or is the subject of the report, the investigation will be undertaken by the Director of Operations. Proper disciplinary action will be taken immediately following the conclusion of the investigation.

6. Discipline and Remediation: Disciplinary actions for bullying and harassment may include, but are not limited to: warnings, counseling, loss of opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities, school social events or graduation exercises, loss of school bus transportation, community service, in-school suspension, short term suspension, long term suspension, or expulsion. The specific consequences should be consistent, reasonable, fair, age appropriate, match the severity of the incident, and in the case of cyberbullying, be by the least restrictive means necessary. If necessary, counseling will be provided for the target and/or the student perpetrating the bullying or harassment.

7. Training and Prevention: All licensed school employees will complete training on how to recognize signs that a person is being bullied or cyberbullied. Students and staff will be given instruction on how to prevent bullying and harassment. This will also include instruction on the process for filing complaints and the process/consequences that will result from the complaint.

In addition, Sun Mountain Community School shall comply with the requirement that anti-bullying be included as part of the health education curriculum as set forth in 6.30.2.19 NMAC (“content standards - health education”).

Grievance Procedure

Introduction: It is Sun Mountain’s policy to ensure that students or parents with a grievance relating to Sun Mountain, its administration, and/or other employees shall, except as otherwise set forth below, use a procedure which may resolve grievances as quickly and as fairly as possible.

1. Any student, parent, or legal guardian of a student may file a complaint of any nature with the Head of School. The Head of School or his/her designee will conduct an investigation into the complaint. This investigation may consist of interviews of the complainant and any witnesses who may have knowledge of the wrong doing. Additionally, other method(s) or documents may be used. Complaints must be filed within 180 days of any wrong doing.
2. An investigation will generally be completed within forty-five (45) calendar days. In some cases, the investigation may take longer. However, Sun Mountain will make every reasonable effort to complete investigations within appropriate timelines.

3. At the conclusion of the investigation, the complainant and respondent (if applicable) will receive written notification of the outcome.
4. When the investigation is concluded by Sun Mountain, the complainant and respondent (if applicable) will have ten (10) working days from the date of the written notification to submit an appeal in writing to the Governing Board. The Governing Board will have fifteen (15) working days from the date of the receipt of the appeal to inform the complainant or respondent of its decision in writing.
5. If the Head of School is the subject of or reason for the complaint the student, parent, or legal guardian may bring the complaint directly to the Governing Board via any of its members.

Adopted by the Sun Mountain Community School Governing Board on ___11-19-25___.

Acknowledgement of Student and Family Handbook

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Sun Mountain Student and Family Handbook and contents therein.

Student Name	Student Signature	Date
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Parent/Guardian Name	Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
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Parent/Guardian Name	Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
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