

# Preschool Lower School

*Parent Handbook*  
*2022-2023*

**SAYRE**  
SCHOOL  

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**MAKE·YOUR·MARK**

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## WELCOME

Welcome to Sayre Preschool and Lower School! We are thrilled to have many familiar faces and excited to meet the new children and families who will be part of this robust community. The year ahead will be engaging, supportive, and will provide learning opportunities for all students, at all ages.

In the Lower School we encompass a wide range of learners. From the youngest of 2-year old's who are mastering the project work and engaging with new friends to the 4<sup>th</sup> graders discussing novels and engineering high level plans, we offer challenge and rigor to every developmental age. We are dedicated to ensuring that every child builds the conceptual understandings and academic skills necessary to allow them to thrive academically in both the foundational years and beyond.

Teachers at Sayre are dedicated to their students and masters in their craft. They embrace the importance of a comprehensive education that develops the whole child (educational, emotional, social, physical). As stated in our mission, we strive to empower children, be inclusive, and prepare students to live purposeful lives. We do this through innovative curriculum, exploration, meaningful assessment, and reflection on growth. We are a community of learners, confident risk-takers, empathetic friends, and encouraging teammates. The Sayre family is extensive and we are pleased to have your family with us. Please reach out with any questions, concerns, or just to share.

The following pages present the Sayre mission and an overview of the Lower School's programs, policies and procedures.

On behalf of the Lower School team,

Jacki Neistat  
Sayre Interim Lower School Head

## MISSION

Sayre School provides an innovative and inclusive learning environment that empowers students to achieve academic excellence, embrace challenge, and cultivate integrity in order to lead purposeful lives in an ever-changing world.

## SAYRE PARENT AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Sayre's mission, philosophy, and policies are built upon the idea that the education of children is a collaborative venture shared between parents and school employees. School presents young people with a host of challenges extending well beyond test grades and other common measures of performance. A mutual commitment to act for the benefit of students ensures proper and personalized support as they mature and develop productive habits of mind and character. This commitment delineates the expectations of school personnel and families we believe essential to provide positive and constructive support for the children we serve.

Sayre personnel and families commit to:

- Know and support the school's mission, philosophy, policies, and procedures
- Model wisdom, integrity, respect, and compassion
- Support an appreciation for diversity of race, religion, culture, gender, viewpoint, family status, and learning styles
- Develop partnerships and sustain communication to support each student's wellbeing and increasing autonomy
- Obtain information and resolve problems respectfully through appropriate channels at appropriate times
- Respect the school's responsibility to do what is best for the student body as a whole, while recognizing the needs of each individual student
- Act positively to support the school on behalf of its community members

## SAYRE CORE VALUES IN ACTION

Sayre School values students as individuals and works to foster their understanding of themselves and their roles in the larger community. Our core values of wisdom, integrity, respect, and compassion are woven throughout the school. Our efforts to promote these core values include classes, clubs, and activities designed to reach all students. Topics and skills are taught and practiced on a developmentally appropriate continuum centered on these themes: student mentoring, giving back to community, understanding personal and cultural differences, possessing awareness of self, and developing strong social skills.

Sayre defines its **core values** as:

**Wisdom** – knowledge of what is right combined with sound judgment

**Integrity** – understanding and practice of what is honest, decent, and good

**Respect** – holding self and others in high regard

**Compassion** – empathy for others combined with helpful action

### **Programs in the Lower School which support and promote our core values:**

**Kids-to-Kids Classes** – Through this program, Upper School students are trained to lead and mentor younger students. Classes focus on developing an understanding of stereotypes, discrimination and prejudice and ways that Sayre students can work to reduce these problems in their world.

**Community Service** – Projects are designed to allow active involvement of students. Projects may include raising money or making other donations for the benefit of others.

**Community Matters Classes** – Life skills and experiential education classes are taught in K-4th grade. The focus is on leadership, team building, problem-solving and allowing the students to work cooperatively through a variety of activities.

**School Counselor**- The school counselor visits K-4th grades to discuss topics such as friendship, conflict resolution, mindfulness/stress reduction, bullying prevention, and compassion for others.

**Responsive Classroom Philosophy** – Lower School teachers utilize this educational model which values social and emotional intelligence as a critical component of academic learning. Daily morning meetings in every classroom allow respectful, caring communication among students and build listening and communication skills.

**Everyday Life in the Lower School-** Our four, central core values are forefront in all we do throughout the day in the Lower School. Teachers are prepared to use teachable moments, as well as planned curriculum, to help students understand that wisdom, integrity, respect and compassion are built from the small, every day decisions a person makes regarding how to treat others, how to be truthful, and how to develop a strong work ethic and sense of purpose. For our youngest students, everyday life is where these foundational values are taught.

## PHILOSOPHY

Sayre School promotes intellectual, emotional, physical, social and aesthetic growth in each of its students. Founded in 1854, we honor our rich heritage and embrace change as we continually strive to achieve academic excellence. As a community, we are bound by the shared responsibility to foster a spirit of mutual respect and kindness. We value equity, justice, and the diverse perspectives of our world.

We believe in the elegance of creative and disciplined thought. The school strives to help each student acquire self-discipline, develop critical thinking, and engage in civil discourse in order to be informed, impactful members of society. Students participate in a wide range of innovative and differentiated courses and co-curricular activities to further cultivate their physical, intellectual and moral growth.

Our goal is to send students into the world understanding the meaning of honorable behavior, embracing the importance of personal accountability, and possessing the confidence and knowledge to contribute meaningfully to their future communities.

(Ratified by the Board of Trustees, September 7, 2017)



## DIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT

Located in downtown Lexington, Kentucky, Sayre School recognizes and respects the diversity of backgrounds, outlooks, and talents individuals bring to its community. Sayre defines diversity as differences embodied in (but not limited to) age, ethnicity and race, family status, gender, geographic origin, learning styles, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status. This list is adapted from the Independent Schools Association of the Central States' publication "Diversity and Multiculturalism: Broadening Our Perspective."

Sayre strives to enrich its community through diversity within all of its constituencies: students, faculty, administrators, and trustees.

Sayre seeks to create an educational atmosphere of understanding and open dialogue that fosters respect for individual differences. As part of the school's overall mission - to provide "an education of the widest range and highest order" - Sayre's curriculum presents topics from multiple perspectives, acknowledging and including many different cultures, ideas, and experiences found in our global society. Such an education involves the development of independent, critical thinking within an open-minded and tolerant learning environment.

Adopted by the Sayre School Board of Trustees September 10, 2003

## NON-DISCRIMINATION COMPLIANCE NOTICE

Sayre School (the "School") actively seeks qualified individuals with diverse backgrounds and talents who will make a positive contribution to school life. The School is committed to providing equal employment opportunity for all employees and applicants without regard to age, race, color, national origin, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions), sexual orientation, citizenship status, uniform service member status, genetic information, religion, handicap or disability, or any other protected status in accordance with all federal, state, or local law.

## ACADEMIC POLICIES AND SERVICES

### **ACADEMIC SERVICES**

Sayre offers an Academic Services Program (AS) for students who may be experiencing learning difficulty. AS staff are trained and experienced in helping children with learning differences.

AS offers an array of services, including direct, individualized instruction in reading and math. This instruction is provided by one of the AS staff and is coordinated with the student's regular classroom teacher. AS staff provide appropriate intervention for students with identified learning issues, reinforce content taught in the classroom, and teach compensatory learning strategies. Specific questions about this program's policies and procedures should be referred to the AS director or the administration.

### **AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

There are a variety of activities offered to Lower School students throughout the year such as Encore, Chorus, music lessons, art programs and other enrichment programs. Please read our weekly Lower School Notes to learn about each year's offerings.

### **AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM**

Sayre offers an Extended Day Program to its families that allows students to remain on campus until 5:45 p.m. This program operates in the Multi-purpose Room and is open to all Preschool and Lower School students. Any child attending Extended Day must be enrolled in advance with the Extended Day Director. Parents may opt to send their child from one day to five days per week. There is an additional fee for this service. If you want Extended Day to be an option for your child on a "drop-in" basis, you **MUST** complete the enrollment paperwork in advance.

### **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

**For safety reasons, cell phones should not be used during drop off or pick up time. Please help us keep our children safe by staying off of phones while in car line!**

## ARRIVAL

### Preschool and Kindergarten Drop Off

- Children in our two year old program should be walked directly to their classroom in the Lower School building by a parent. It is not developmentally appropriate, nor feasible, for us to take children this young out of their parents' vehicles.
- Families whose youngest child is in Pk-3 through Kindergarten should use the car line that operates in the parking lot off of Pleasant Stone to drop-off their students. Please pull up to the marked "Drop Off Zone" and we will have car line helpers to escort children Kindergarten and younger to their own classrooms. There will be a staff member directing traffic. Older siblings in these families are welcome to get out of the car at this location and walk to their own classrooms. Please note that there will be no car line helpers to walk children in from the Front Circle, although there will be an adult supervising drop off in this area. We are asking all parents who have children in Kindergarten or younger to use the Pleasant Stone Parking Lot car line in the morning for safety reasons. If you are the first car in line, please pull all the way up to the yellow striped "Drop Off Zone" before stopping to release your child. If you are not in the Drop Off Zone, please keep your child in the car with you.

### 1st through 4<sup>th</sup> grade

Families whose youngest child is in 1st through 4<sup>th</sup> grade should use the Front Circle for drop off. Children will report directly to their own classrooms, using the stairwell directly to the right outside of the Multi-purpose room to limit foot traffic through our preschool floor. There will be assigned staff members present on the Front Circle to supervise children entering the Lower School. It is critically important for safety reasons that all children exit their cars curbside when being dropped off in the Front Circle. We ask that all parents traveling through the circle stay off of their phones and be attentive to pedestrians. We also ask that you follow the directions of staff members in the Front Circle who will do their best to ensure that the process is smooth and safe. You may be asked to pull forward, past the door to the Lower School and on around the circle. We ask parents to do this in order to minimize the impact that our car line has on traffic flow on surrounding Lexington Streets.

**Late Arrival:** If you arrive to school after 8:05 am, please bring your Lower Schooler to the Main Entrance of the Lower School on the parking lot side of the building. We do not have any faculty on the Front Circle after 8:05 am. It may appear that there are faculty present after 8:05 am, but those are Middle School faculty. To keep all children safe and to ensure that every child is under direct supervision, please bring all students to our Main Entrance if you are arriving after 8:05 am. We do not want any children alone on the Front Circle.

### MORNING PARKING

For parents who wish to walk in with their students, there will be parking available in the following locations:

- There are 14 Public Parking spaces along Limestone in front of Sayre. These spaces are available at no charge until 8 am at which time they become metered.
- There are visitor spaces in the Sayre School parking lot off of Pleasant Stone adjacent to the Lower School. These spaces are in the row closest to the building and are marked, "Visitor". Please do not park in the numbered spaces elsewhere in the parking lot (with the exception of #65-69 as explained below) as these are purchased by Upper School students or are assigned to faculty.
- **Please do NOT park in spaces marked 24/7 as they are reserved.**
- Parents may park in the fenced area of the parking lot
- Parents may park in spaces # 65-69 which are located alongside the fenced in area.
- Please do not park in the Front Circle until after 8:05 am. All cars in the Front Circle must be moved by 2:50 pm in order to ensure a smooth dismissal.

Classes begin promptly at **8:00 am.** each day. Please be sure that your child is at school and prepared to be in class at this time. All children arriving after 8:05 am will be considered tardy and must report to the office to check in before going to their classrooms. Parents arriving to Sayre after 8:05 am are asked to always bring their Lower School children of all ages to the Pleasant Stone Parking Lot entrance (our Main Entrance) to enter the building. Lower School staff are NOT on duty on the Front Circle past 8:05 am. **Please do not ever drop your child off outside of our building unattended. If there is not a staff member outside, you MUST park and walk your child into the building and sign him/her into school at the Main Office before he/she proceeds to the classroom. This is critical in order for us to be aware that your child is in attendance that day.**

**Please note that after 8:05 am, all Lower School students should be brought to our main entrance on the parking lot side of the building. Because Middle**

**School starts after Lower School, it may appear that there is supervision on the Front Circle side of the building, but there will not be Lower School teachers present as we will be starting our day promptly at 8:05 am. **If you are arriving after 8:05 am, please always use the Main Entrance on the parking lot side of the building to drop off your child.****

## **DISMISSAL**

- Kindergarten through fourth grade students dismiss at 3:00 pm. daily, **except for on Tuesdays when they are dismissed at 2:10 pm.**
- Children in our preschool classes dismiss at either 12:00 noon or 3:00 pm. Children can be picked up through the car line in the Pleasant Stone Parking Lot at both noon and 3 pm., or on foot. Preschool parents must be sure to sign their child out with a staff member before leaving. For the noon dismissal, please do not line up in the parking lot prior to 11:50 a.m., or prior to 2:50 pm for 3 pm pick up as we need to be able to get cars in and out of this parking lot throughout the day.
- **Families whose youngest, enrolled child is in kindergarten or older** will pick their children up in the Front Circle at dismissal. **Families for whom the youngest enrolled child is in preschool** will use the parking lot pick-up location. Siblings will be grouped together with the youngest sibling for your convenience.
- Please do NOT line up in car line at either location until 2:50 pm or later (11:50 am for noon pick up) as we do not want to interfere with the traffic flow in our area. Our neighbors live and work along Limestone and Pleasant Stone and need to be able to reach their homes and businesses. In addition, we must be able to get cars in and out of our parking lot for as long as possible. On Tuesdays, please do not line up until 2:00 pm. \*\*
- **You will be provided with name cards for car windows to be used at end of the day pick up. This will facilitate the dismissal process and help faculty to properly identify family cars. Please put these name cards in the front window of your car, preferably behind the sun visor facing outward, and continue to do this all year. Using the name cards will speed up the process for everyone.**
- When parents need for their child's normal dismissal pattern to be changed, a note to the office is appreciated. We cannot allow children to go home with another child or to be picked up by anyone other than a parent without

parental consent. If plans change close to dismissal time, please call the office as teachers could miss emailed messages.

- Please be on time to pick up your child. Late pick ups delay teachers' ability to return to their classroom to prepare for the next day. Students who have not been picked up 10 minutes after dismissal will be taken to the Extended Day Program. **Parents will be charged an appropriate fee for this service.** Please also note that Middle School follows us in afternoon dismissal and it can become very hard for Lower School parents arriving late to get into the Front Circle due to the line. We suggest that anyone arriving after 3:15 pm park in the Pleasant Stone lot and walk to pick up their child.
- Sometimes families who are needing to wait for an older sibling in another division to be dismissed allow their Lower School children to get out of the car and play while they wait. This is fine, but ALL students who are playing MUST be supervised by a responsible adult who is out of their vehicle and physically present with the children. If children go to play on the plaza in front of the gym, or the playground, at least one parent must go with them and be present for supervision purposes. Lower School students may NOT play unattended on the campus for safety reasons.

### **EARLY DISMISSAL**

All divisions of Sayre School will dismiss early on Tuesdays. The Lower School will go outside at 2:10 for dismissal. The Middle and Upper Schools will follow at 2:30 pm. This early dismissal is designed to provide faculty with time for professional development.

### **ALLERGY POLICY AND GUIDELINES**

Sayre School has many students who have severe allergies. For some children, even trace amounts of an allergen can cause a life-threatening anaphylactic reaction. Working with parents, the administration strives to provide the safest possible environment for all students. The following guidelines are designed to manage life-threatening allergies to most common foods and insect bites. It is anticipated that as students move from the necessarily more restrictive environment of the Lower School to the greater independence of the Middle and Upper Schools, their needs will change. Thus, they should be better able to assume responsibility for managing their allergies with the support of the school.

- All parents have a responsibility to help create a safe environment for all students.

- Parents must notify the school of their child's life-threatening allergies by filling out the school's annual medical and allergy documentation forms.
- In Grades PK2-8<sup>th</sup>, no one should send peanuts, nuts or derivatives (nut butters, oils) for lunch, snacks or treats. In addition, please do NOT send any item that is manufactured on the same equipment as peanuts/tree nuts.
- The school provides training for faculty and staff about life threatening allergies, prevention, and response.
- Parents should coordinate with the appropriate division to be sure that their child's medications are provided and that an emergency kit is available that contains a licensed prescriber's standing order.
- Students in Middle and Upper School should be allowed to carry their own epinephrine, if age-appropriate, after approval from the student's physician and parent. At the Lower School level, epipens will be managed by school faculty/staff unless specific arrangements are made through the Lower School Head.
- Sayre School is a Nut Aware School. As a general rule, the Buttery kitchen does not use any nuts or items made in a facility where nuts may be present. Gluten free bread is also available and is produced in a nut-free facility.
- Daily Buttery menus indicate items containing dairy, gluten, shellfish, and eggs. Families can consult the online menu when helping their child plan for their food needs.
- The Buttery serves WowButter, a nut-free, gluten-free, dairy-free, soy product containing 7 grams of protein (the same as peanut butter).

## **BIRTH CERTIFICATES**

All students enrolled in Sayre Lower School must have a birth certificate on file at Sayre.

## **BULLYING/HARASSMENT PHILOSOPHY AND PROCEDURES**

It is the mission of Sayre School to foster and provide an environment that encourages, supports, and values the individual, her/his person, and property. Therefore, we do not endorse or condone, accept or abide any form of bullying/harassment, be it emotional, physical, psychological, or sexual, and we encourage bystanders to bullying/harassment to speak up against the behavior and to report the aggressor.

### **Bullying/harassment includes, but is not limited to:**

- Punching, shoving, and other acts that hurt people physically
- Behaviors or actions that cause emotional pain
- Spreading rumors about people
- Keeping certain people out of a “group,” or other means of exclusion
- Teasing people in a mean way
- Getting certain people to “gang up” on others
- Sending mean texts, email, instant messages, pictures or videos
- Posting inappropriate pictures or messages about others in blogs or on websites
- Impersonating someone online to spread rumors or lies about someone

Simply put, bullying/harassing is the act of hurting one person or a group of people repeatedly as a way for the bully to feel superior, and we realize that recognizing acts of bullying/harassment is a complex and personal social issue. As an independent school, we know that a one-size-fits-all, zero tolerance disciplinary policy is ineffectual and often counterproductive to our mission. Therefore, our approach is both programmatic and disciplinary. We work with the victim, as well as his/her parents, to provide both emotional support and strategies; we encourage anyone who witnesses bullying/harassment to report the aggressor, and we discipline the aggressor with appropriate consequences, from punitive to therapeutic. Reported incidents will be handled as sensitively as possible. However, as part of the school’s response, victims, bullies, and by-standers may each be addressed about specific issues.

### **Standards of Practice:**

- Clearly defined expectations
- Clarification of terms
- School-wide and age- appropriate programs including: LS class meetings using the Responsive Classroom model; Cross grade level buddies in the LS; Community Matters (life skills classes) and grade level meetings in Lower



and Middle Schools; advisory groups in Middle and Upper Schools; student clubs such as the Gay Straight Alliance, Anti-Harassment Committee, Community Matters Club in US; and our Kids to Kids program

- Escalating consequences for incidents of bullying/harassment
- Parent contact for repeated or egregious behaviors
- Documentation of bullying/harassment incidents kept in individual student division files
- Structured opportunities for students who have exhibited aggressive behavior to think about their actions and make amends
- Work with bullied students and their parents to facilitate strategies for positive interactions

### **Tips for Parents:**

- Talk to your child about the definitions of bullying/harassment shared by the school
- Encourage your child to talk to you about his/her social life, but avoid questioning too directly and too often to draw attention to everyday interactions
- Share developmentally appropriate strategies to stop bullying/harassment
- Watch for parent education sessions offered by the school on the topic
- Contact teachers, administrators, and/or the counselor if you have questions or concerns

**If an incident occurs outside of school**, we encourage parents to speak to each other directly.

At times, incidents that take place outside of school impact the social climate at school. The school will intervene appropriately as needed in an effort to resolve the problem, but responsibility for student behavior outside of school lies with the parent.

### **BUTTERY**

All children in grades K through 4<sup>th</sup> grade generally eat lunch in the Buttery on Sayre's campus. Depending upon Covid conditions, the decision may be made to move lunch outdoors or into the classrooms. Preschool students eat in their own classrooms regardless of Covid. Lunch is included as a part of tuition. Students may also bring nut-free, packed lunches from home. Outside food from restaurants is not allowed. **We are a “nut-aware” environment and individuals are prohibited from bringing any food into our Buttery or Lower School that contains peanuts and/or tree nuts or that was manufactured on equipment**

**that also processes nut products. Please help us keep all of our students safe by being diligent about what comes into our school environment.**

## **COMMUNICATING AND CONNECTING AT SAYRE**

Parent communication with faculty and administrators is a vital element of the parent-school partnership essential to our success. A positive, collaborative and constructive parent-school relationship enhances the school’s ability to serve the students and accomplish Sayre’s mission.

We rely on hearing from you in the moment when things are going well or when you have concerns about your child or need clarification on a classroom or divisional matter.

Please use the chart below to determine who at Sayre is the appropriate person with whom to communicate. In each category, you should initially reach out to the first person listed. If you do not have a response or an issue resolved within 48 hours, please contact your child’s Division Head. The Head of School also welcomes the opportunity to assist family members and to address any issues or concerns.

We also ask families to be thoughtful in how they share their concerns so as to avoid gossip and rumors, whether in person or online. We ask our students, faculty and families to be respectful and responsible with their words and to avoid speaking unkindly about members of our community.

Strong communication between our Sayre families and school is critical for building and maintaining a happy, vigorous, and emotionally healthy community.

### **Communicating and Connecting in the Lower School**

See the chart below to determine who will be the appropriate person with whom to communicate. Please begin with the first person listed and follow the list in order.

<b>Type of Issue / Problem / Question</b>	<b>Person to Contact</b>
Sharing successes, ideas, thoughts, gratitude and celebrations	Anyone!
Homework, academic concerns, classroom issue, course curriculum	1. Classroom Teacher 2. Academic Services as appropriate
Problem with a teacher or ongoing concerns related to homework, curriculum or behavior	1. Classroom Teacher If ongoing: 2. Lower School Head

Suggestions, concerns or questions about general school facilities and services, unfair application of rules, school policy, questions about how things are run	Lower School Head
Emotional issues, non-urgent mental health questions, relationship issues (family, friends)	1. Classroom Teacher 2. School Counselor or Lower School Head
Behavioral Concerns (i.e. teasing, picking on, bossiness, exclusion/cliques, calling names, occasional rough housing, classroom conflicts)	1. Classroom Teacher first 2. Lower School Head as needed if unresolved
Bullying (repeated behaviors that are targeted and rise to the level of bullying)	Lower School Head and Classroom Teacher (In most cases of bullying, previous conversation with the classroom teacher should have already taken place regarding early instances of teasing, calling names or excluding)
Illness / absence	Division Office Administrative Assistant
Significant Medical issues	Teacher, School Nurse, AND Lower School Head
Issues with concern to diversity, equity and inclusion	1. The Division's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion representative 2. Lower School Head
Serious issues (abuse, immediate concerns about child safety and emotional well being, changes in family structure and/or custody, etc)	Lower School Head
Technology Questions	1. Teacher 2. Lower School Technology Specialist
Library Questions	Lower School Librarian
Lunch Questions	Director of Food Service

## STUDENT EXPRESSION POLICY

Sayre encourages free and open speech among students while promoting the robust and respectful exploration of ideas. The school is committed to creating an

environment governed by its core values of wisdom, integrity, respect and compassion. Every student should develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to participate effectively in a vibrant community of ideas, both in and out of the classroom, and ultimately become individuals of purpose. To this end, students should strive to express themselves openly, thoughtfully and respectfully through verbal and non-verbal communication while also actively listening for understanding. Civil discourse is reliant upon participants being able to both speak and listen.

The freedom to discuss and debate the merits of competing ideas does not, of course, mean that students may say whatever they wish, wherever they wish, however they wish. In addition to being consistent with Sayre's core values, student speech and actions must not disrupt the ordinary educational and extracurricular activities of the School or violate any policy set forth in the student handbooks. In short, students may express themselves to the extent that their speech, body language, tone, and actions do not impinge upon the personal, expressive, or educational rights and interests of other students, faculty, staff, or any member of Sayre's community.

## **PRINCIPLES FOR CIVIL DISCOURSE**

The School believes that civil discourse is a conversation based upon respect and civility; its purpose is to enhance understanding, trust, and learning.

- Sayre values each individual's ideas, experiences, and worldview.
- The Sayre community welcomes individuals without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, marital status, disability, uniformed service status, veteran status, citizenship status, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law. The School is committed to providing equal opportunity in all actions and in the administration of all policies and programs.
- Sayre's intellectual and social environment is diverse, with many opportunities for its students to learn from each other and to enhance their own understanding of the world around them.
- Sayre is committed to remaining a place for the healthy expression of diverse ideas, the exploration of various viewpoints, and the use of civil discourse.

### *Civil Discourse: Core Values*

As in all aspects of school life, community members should adhere to our core values when engaging in discussions on social, religious, and political topics:

- **Wisdom:** Wisdom calls for individuals to share their perspective and knowledge while exhibiting sound judgment by considering differing viewpoints.

- Integrity: Integrity requires Sayre community members to be accountable for our words and actions, and to behave in a manner that is honest, decent and good.
- Respect: Respect in conversations requires individuals to be mindful of the language they choose to use, their body language, and their tone.
- Compassion: Compassion and kindness are the foundations of respectful dialogue among individuals with diverse ideas and are expected at all times. Sayre encourages its community to follow the guidelines for civil discourse at all times.

The School encourages its community to follow the guidelines for civil discourse at all times.

### *Guidelines for Civil Discourse*

As members of the School community, we should:

- Respect everyone’s right to hold individual ideas
- Approach social, religious, and political conversations with a willingness to listen to ideas that differ from our own
- Ground discussions in fact and reason

As members of the School community, we should avoid:

- Antagonism (insults, demeaning or discriminatory language, mockery)
- Hostility (personal attacks, uncontrolled emotion, threats)
- Excessive persuasion (misrepresentation of facts, emotional manipulation, logical fallacies)

If any student has a concern about the way civil discourse is being handled in a classroom or at school, the student should talk to a teacher, parent, or trusted adult in a timely manner in order to allow the school to follow up and address the issue. Please refer to the chart “Communicating and Connecting at Sayre” in student-parent handbooks.

## WORDS MATTER: COMMUNICATION & CONNECTION AT SAYRE

Sayre School invites and values the ideas and perspectives of all members of our community. As part of our Core Values, we are dedicated to protecting each individual's right to be actively engaged while upholding the School's Mission *to provide an inclusive learning environment that empowers students*. In all conversation, we strive to use effective and respectful communication skills within our Sayre community and beyond.

### WISDOM

**Be open-minded and curious.** We call upon individuals to share their perspectives and knowledge while also listening carefully, considering differing viewpoints and disagreeing with respect.

**Practice critical thinking.** Use disciplined thought to analyze, apply, and evaluate information. Individuals should support their perspectives with evidence from reliable sources. Personal experiences and observations also provide valuable insight and have a place in the conversation.

**Build your knowledge base.** Strive to learn more and expand your understanding of complex issues. Read widely and listen carefully to others.

**Know thyself.** Be aware of your physical and emotional response to others. It is natural to react during important conversations; become accustomed to talking about emotions as a part of crucial conversations.

### INTEGRITY

**Share your story.** Your perspective matters, and your personal experiences are valuable in discussions. Speak from the I perspective when sharing your experiences.

**Hold each other accountable.** We belong to a community where honesty, decency and a willingness to learn are the expectation. We demonstrate this in our conversations. Intervene to stop the use of language that does not support positive communication. Hate speech, including terms that hurt and divide, has no place in constructive conversation.

### RESPECT

**First, seek to understand.** Active listening is key to important conversations. Demonstrate a keen desire to understand others. Ask questions to clarify your understanding.

**Be mindful.** Watch the choices you make: words, body language, and tone matter.

**Honor the inherent worth of others.** Be aware of the power dynamics that can exist in a conversation; use active listening, silence, and pauses to allow room for others to speak. Honor others and their stories. Offer dignity to everyone in the space.

## COMPASSION

**Demonstrate empathy.** Authentic care and concern is at the foundation of respectful dialogue among individuals with diverse ideas.

**Nurture relationships.** Cultivate a community of connections. Follow up with others who may still have feelings about a conversation. Check in later to clarify misunderstandings and repair hurt feelings.

Many developing problems can be solved before they become larger with the help of clear communication. Parents will be notified if a student is not progressing or if behavior does not meet school expectations. We will make a strong effort to communicate your child's successes as well. It is helpful to us in providing the most effective responses to your child's behavior if you communicate any unusual situations that might affect your child's performance/behavior at school to either your child's classroom teacher or the Head of the Lower School. It is very helpful for us to understand any events or situations which could be affecting your child's emotions, sleep schedule, or routines.

## COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

If you are not sure who to contact in the Lower School when you have a question or concern, and the Communicating and Connecting Chart did not help you, the following scenarios can provide you with some direction

For basic questions about the day-to-day operations of the school, contact Luanne Stiles, the Assistant to the Head of Lower School ([lstyles@sayreschool.org](mailto:lstyles@sayreschool.org)), or consult the Parent Handbook and Wednesday Notes available on the school website.

For academic concerns about your child, you have two options depending on the nature of the concern. If it is about a specific subject, contact the teacher directly through email, or by calling the school and asking to be connected with the teacher's voice mail. If the concern is more global (study skills or organizational concerns etc.), you should contact your child's homeroom teacher who, in consultation with the Head of Lower School, can help decide the best course of action.

If you have a concern about a teacher, the way the class is being taught and/or managed, or the subject matter of the course, you should contact your child's teacher first to communicate your concern and allow him/her time to understand your concern, rectify the problem, explain and/or work on a solution. If you feel you need further support, or you feel the situation warrants immediate conversation with an administrator, please contact Jacki Neistat, Interim Head of Lower School.

If you have a concern about your child's relationship with his/her peers, social skills, coping skills or other social-emotional concerns, you should contact your child's homeroom teacher, Jacki Neistat, or our school counselor, Nicole Garrett. We are all available to talk to you if you have any concerns about your child's well being.

Finally, for any questions or concerns you have about behavioral guidance, custody situations, serious family issues which may impact your child at school, child development, attendance, or any other pressing concern, you should contact Annie Papero. I am always available to schedule a meeting or video conference.

Emails should receive a response within 48 hours, although occasionally circumstances may delay a response. You will often hear back much more rapidly, particularly during the work week. If you do not hear back from a teacher, or if you are not satisfied with their response or the actions taken, please contact Jacki Neistat, Interim Head of Lower School, for help resolving the issue.

Please note that for urgent information, such as car line pick up or questions of an immediate nature, a phone call to the Lower School office (859-254-1364) will ensure that the message is received and reaches the correct person in a timely manner.

## **SCHOOL COUNSELING SERVICES**

The Sayre School Counselor is located on the second floor of the Edward F. Simms Library. The counselor works with students, parents, and faculty in all three divisions. Sayre School counseling services include student education and counseling, parent and teacher education and training, parent and teacher consultation regarding students (which may involve observations), and referral to resources in the community as needed. Students who require intensive, long-term support for mental health issues are referred to necessary services outside of school. The counselor serves as an advocate for students in their academic, social, personal, and emotional development. The counselor is also involved in developing school-wide programming that addresses student health and wellbeing.

Confidentiality is integral to a successful counseling program. The Sayre School policy is based on the American School Counselor Association ethical guidelines regarding confidentiality. Counseling sessions with students are confidential. Counseling records are also confidential and are not part of the student's educational record. The following are situations in which confidentiality may be broken:



- The student presents a threat of danger to self or to others
- The student requests or gives permission for the sharing of information with specified others
- Court order
- Suspected neglect or abuse (physical, sexual, or emotional) will be reported to the appropriate authorities

In a group situation, confidentiality is stressed, but difficult to guarantee.

Students may request to see the counselor or be referred by teachers and/or parents. Open communication among students and parents is encouraged and may be facilitated as part of the counseling process. Parents with any questions or concerns about counseling should contact the School Counselor. Sayre School is committed to providing a safe, supportive environment for students and their families.

### **Risk for Harm**

Sayre School personnel will respond in a timely manner to known possibilities of harm to a student or member of the school community. These possibilities include, but are not limited to, threats that are communicated to the school, observed, or posted on student social media. Sayre Upper School has a Risk for Harm Response team composed of the Head of Upper School, Dean of Students, the School Counselor and the Head of School, as necessary. The Risk for Harm Response Team will assess the situation using established protocols depending on the immediacy of action required. In all cases, the team will assess warning signs, risk factors, precipitating events and stabilizing factors. Sayre School will act as needed for the safety of all concerned and will inform the parents of the assessment. Privacy will be protected as much as possible according to the situation. The Head of School, with the input of the team, will make the final decision about the perceived risk and the appropriate course of action.

### **CLASS PLACEMENT**

The Lower School's student placement process is a team effort orchestrated with great care. The Lower School teachers and Head work together to consider many factors which will ensure an appropriate class placement for each student. Factors considered include friendships, teacher/child personality fit, academic strengths and needs, gender balance, appropriate learning partners, learning styles, special needs, behavioral needs, and balance between the two classrooms. We do not take teacher requests, but if parents would like to share in this process, they may write a letter to the Head of the Lower School. This letter may not contain requests for individual teachers, but rather should give the school additional information that

will help us in selecting the right classroom for their child. Parents should be assured that with or without a letter, the Lower School Head and staff will review each child's needs individually and select the classroom in which we believe he/she will meet with academic and social success.

## **CONFERENCES**

Parents, teachers, and administrators are united in their mission: to educate our children and to help them develop their full potential. As such, Sayre encourages our families to have frequent communication with both your child's teachers and with the Division Head. Therefore, we encourage families to call with a concern, to set up conferences when needed, and to keep abreast of the academic and social events of the school.

The school calendar includes two scheduled Parent/Teacher Conference Days. Parents are able to schedule a conference with their child's teacher through the parent portal. Conferences are arranged in 25 minute intervals. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend these regularly scheduled conferences which take place at the end of the first and third quarters. Specials teachers are also available during these times. If you would like to see a specialist on conference days, please sign up for an appointment through the parent portal on Blackbaud. We offer both in-person and virtual conferences- be sure to let the teacher know which way you prefer to meet. To ensure that our teachers can give full attention to talking with parents, Preschool and Lower School students do not attend on conference days and childcare is not provided, although Extended Day is open and parents are able to enroll their child.

It is never necessary to wait for scheduled conference days to meet with teachers. Parents are encouraged to call or meet with teachers whenever they have questions or concerns. It is particularly helpful for parents to keep teachers and administration informed of significant events in the family that might have an impact on the child's performance at school. Family illnesses, death, divorce or separation are all examples of events that can affect children dramatically.

## **ELECTRONICS**

Because of possible disruption and the expense of personal electronic devices, cell phones, Game Boys and other electronic entertainment equipment are not allowed at school. On special days when electronic equipment will be allowed, the teacher will notify parents in advance.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is designed and assigned in a manner that is consistent with our homework philosophy that any homework assigned in these younger years should involve short, meaningful practice and application. Research does not support assigning large amounts of homework to this age group, but rather supports lots of free play including gross motor movement, any kind of reading, a manageable number of extracurricular activities, limited homework (short), if any, and family time in the afternoons and evenings. Homework shouldn't be busy work, but a reasonable undertaking that engages the student in a meaningful fashion. Taking into account the needs of families and their personal time, assigning homework in the Lower School is based upon the learning value and rationale behind the assignment. We respect that research does not support extensive homework and therefore only assign an amount that is developmentally appropriate. A good rule of thumb would be to not exceed ten minutes X grade level per night:

Kindergarten and First: Ten minutes maximum per night plus pleasure reading

Second Grade: Twenty minutes maximum per night plus pleasure reading

Third Grade: Thirty minutes maximum per night plus pleasure reading

Fourth Grade: Forty minutes maximum per night plus pleasure reading

Although many parents and teachers believe that large amounts of homework support achievement, research evidence does not support this practice. Homework does not appear to impact achievement or student responsibility until upper elementary grades. Instead, research suggests that outside gross motor play, time for creativity, pleasure reading, and family time are the most supportive gifts we can give to our children in the afternoons/evenings.

Please inform your child's teacher if homework is taking a prolonged period of time for your child or if you believe that your child needs further, appropriate challenge.

The Lower School faculty consider the following criteria when assigning homework:

- **Practice** that reinforces newly acquired skills.
- **Individualized** skills building that capitalizes on the strengths and learning styles of each student.
- **Foundation building** that prepares students for upcoming work in a class.
- **Extension** that transfers skills or concepts to new situations.
- **Creativity** that promotes higher level thinking, demonstrates a new level of understanding, or integrates information to produce original responses.

## **REPORT CARDS**

Report cards are posted on-line for students in kindergarten through fourth grade at the end of each 9-week quarter. Preschool parents will receive a written comment posted in the Parent Portal at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> marking period as well as being provided with additional developmental information at each conference (1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> marking periods). At the midpoint of the nine-week grading period, midterm progress reports will be sent home to children in 1<sup>st</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> grade who are working below average in any subject. Midterm progress reports may also be used to make note of improvements. All K-4<sup>th</sup> grade students new to Sayre will receive midterm progress reports at the midpoint of the first nine-week quarter. Faculty in grades kindergarten through fourth grade write course overviews and narrative comments each quarter on report cards in addition to monthly classroom newsletters.

## **SPECIALIST TEACHERS**

Students in the Preschool receive art, music and library instruction as a part of their curriculum. Spanish begins in our second preschool year. Beginning in Kindergarten, students receive instruction from specialists in technology, art, music, Spanish, library, and physical education. Students in Kindergarten through Fourth also receive instruction with our dedicated Science Teacher.

## **SPEECH PATHOLOGY**

Lower School students are screened by a licensed Speech and Language Pathologist who contracts with the Lower School. This initial screening is provided by the School. For students who need speech pathology services, parents may contract with a local speech pathologist. We appreciate being included in any information about this therapy so that we can fully support the child.

## **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

Standardized testing is given during the spring of grades three and four. The Stanford Achievement Test and Otis Lennon School Ability Test are used. Results are mailed to parents when they are received in the summer. The School encourages parents to remember that test scores are only a small part of a student's total profile as they measure only a certain kind of skill but are unable to measure traits such as persistence, decision making, collaboration, creativity, independent thought and social skills. Teacher input, progress reports and the student's in-class work should also be considered. Questions about test scores should be directed to the Head of Lower School.

## **WEATHER**

All determinations as to whether school will be canceled or delayed will be made on the morning of a given day. Only in extreme situations will decisions be made earlier. Student safety will be the prime concern in any decision, yet since our school community comes from several counties, parents should determine for themselves the advisability of attending classes. Sayre has instituted a telephone broadcast system that will enable school personnel to notify all households by phone within minutes of an emergency or unplanned event that causes early dismissal, school cancellation, or a late start. Sayre will continue to report school closings on local television and radio stations. Additionally, information about closings and delays will be available on the Sayre School website home page ([www.sayreschool.org](http://www.sayreschool.org)).

One-hour delay - Sayre may choose to delay morning classes one hour rather than cancel school entirely. This delay will be announced via the same channels as stated above. When school is on a one-hour delay, dismissal takes place at the regular time.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**It is critically important to the success of your child that he/she attend regularly and on time. Regular attendance is positively correlated with academic success and helps children to form and maintain strong social relationships.**

## **ABSENCES**

Parents are asked to call the Lower School office by 10:00 a.m. when their child will be absent. Upon request, assignments for absent children will be collected on a daily basis and sent to the office. If a student misses school due to a family vacation, daily assignments are collected during the absence and given to the student when he/she returns. When possible **please arrange for personal vacations only during scheduled school vacation times**. It can be difficult for a child who has missed a significant amount of instructional time.

Pre-arranged absences - Absences due to medical appointments or religious holidays should be arranged with the classroom teacher in advance. The student should bring a note to his/her teacher indicating:

1. The time the student will leave school
2. The estimated time he/she will return
3. The nature of the absence

## **DAILY ATTENDANCE**

Daily attendance is taken each morning after announcements and sent to the office. Children are considered tardy if they arrive after 8:05 am. The Lower School office, as well as the classroom teacher, keeps a record of attendance. In the case of religious holidays, children will be noted as “not present” for emergency accountability reasons, but this will definitely be counted as an excused absence. “absence” Parents with students who are chronically tardy may receive a letter from the Head of Lower School offering to meet and discuss ways to support a timely arrival. The start of the day is very important because it sets the tone and expectations for all of the learning to come.

## **UNEXCUSED ABSENCE**

Regular attendance is vital to academic and social success, as well as the development of sound school attitudes and work habits. For these reasons, only an emergency, illness, documented medical appointment, or a religious holiday will be considered an excused absence. A parent meeting – either in person or virtually - may be requested if a student accumulates ten absences during the semester. At that time, a plan of action will be developed that may include engaging a tutor, or other methods for helping the student learn the curriculum, make up work, or to address other needs. A homebound plan may be enacted if needed. All efforts should be made for students to attend when possible for the benefit of the student’s progress.

An absence from school will be considered “unexcused” unless the school receives a written note or a phone call from a parent or guardian. 10 parent notes for absences or tardies will be allowed annually. Once ten days have accumulated, a doctor note must be present in order for the absence to be excused. Doctor notes must include specific dates for absence and/or return to school date. Even though only the school can excuse an absence, parents or guardians can assist the school by being most specific about the cause of the absence. Work missed due to an unexcused absence jeopardizes the student’s academic standing. All assignments (including tests, quizzes, papers and other age-appropriate tasks) must be made up or turned in as per arrangements made with the classroom teacher.

A student absent for twenty school days or more during the year - excused or unexcused – jeopardizes their chance of finishing the school year, or enrolling for the next year.

## **EXCESSIVE ABSENCES RELATED TO CHRONIC ILLNESS**

A parent meeting may be requested if a student accumulates 10 or more absences. If a student has a physical or mental health condition that has resulted in this many

absences (10 yearly or 7 consecutive), parents and administration may meet in conjunction with the treating physician to develop a Health Management Plan.

As a part of this plan, the following may take place:

- The school may ask for permission to establish ongoing communication between the school and the physician in relation to the chronic illness.
- An HMP will include documentation from the treating physician related to the illness or condition that is resulting in excessive absences. An anticipated time frame for returning to school should also be included as well as plans for ongoing treatment/therapy.
- The family may be asked to obtain an outside tutor to ensure that the child acquires concepts missed during absences from school. The school administration will work with the family and teachers to coordinate what skills and academics need to be addressed by the outside tutor.

## CONDUCT & BEHAVIOR

An important factor in a student's academic success is a safe and nurturing environment. One of the main components of our curriculum is the social and emotional domain as it pertains to one's behavior. Students are encouraged to reflect upon the choices they make and the consequences a specific choice carries, realizing that one's behavior not only affects the person responsible but those around him/her. Expectations are as follows:

1. Whether inside or outside the classroom, students must fully respect, in action and word, their classmates, teachers and other adults.
2. Students must recognize the right of every individual to learn.
3. Students must take responsibility for their own behavior.
4. Students must be honest in all dealings with their peers, teachers and other adults.

The purpose of our guidance strategies is to help children learn ways of behaving that are acceptable to themselves and others. If a student makes a poor choice, we take the time to help him/her reflect and understand the effects of his/her behavior. We also support children in finding alternative ways in which they could handle the situation in the future and in accepting the natural and logical consequences of their behavior. The development of self-control in children is fostered through the use of positive guidance techniques such as modeling and encouraging expected

behavior, redirecting children to a more acceptable activity, and setting clear limits for the benefits and safety of all children.

Behavior issues are generally handled by teachers so that the situation may be resolved as quickly as possible. In situations where a behavior becomes habitual or is not able to be resolved in a successful manner, the child will then be referred to the Head of the Lower School.

The following behaviors, if deemed significant by the classroom teacher, result in immediate referral to the Head of the Lower School who may determine that it is necessary for a child to spend some time removed from the classroom or for parents to attend a conference at the school:

1. Physical altercations with any student or adult.
2. Damage to another's property.
3. Any behavior that is a threat to an individual's safety
4. Overt disrespect or abusive language to another person.
5. Conduct detrimental to the standards of the school.
6. Physical or emotional harassment. (See Bullying/Harassment Philosophy and Procedures)

Parents will be contacted by the teacher or the Head of Lower School about any unusual or extreme behavioral issue that occurs.

Sayre reserves the right to suspend a student for a set period of time or demand withdrawal when conduct is detrimental to the school and its members.

Sayre School reserves the right to search a student or his/her belongings if the student is suspected of breaking the law or violating the Sayre standards of honesty and integrity. The school may seize any illegally obtained possession at the time of the search.

## DRESS CODE

We believe that standards of neatness and appropriateness in clothing encourage an atmosphere conducive to learning. Appearance reflects respect for School and Self. The purpose for the student dress code is to contribute in a positive way to the daily school learning environment. Modifications will be made as the activity warrants.



The faculty and student dress code contributes in a positive way to the daily school environment. The dress code reflects the school climate: one of focused learning in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. Modifications will be made as the activity warrants.

**The following applies to all students 1<sup>st</sup> through 4th grade unless otherwise noted. Please see the “Preschool/Kindergarten” section below for developmentally appropriate clothing guidelines for these students.** In addition to the following, the school reserves the right to address any clothing issue that is deemed distracting to the learning environment.

**Note: No denim clothing of any type is permitted in 1<sup>st</sup> through fourth grade.**

**Clothing permitted:**

- dress shorts of appropriate length- we suggest “beyond fingertip length”, although growing children may find that their dress shorts are a bit shorter than that depending upon arm and leg growth. This is okay- do your best, we understand. (during the months of August, September, October, April and May only),
- skirts and dresses (all skirts and dresses must cover the entire bottom when sitting and bending),
- slacks, pants and capris
- button-down shirts and blouses
- turtlenecks,
- collared knit shirts,
- shirts with a jewel neck or a banded collar designed as part of short/pant matching set,
- sweaters or fleeces,
- Sayre logo t-shirts (Sayre T-shirts are the only ones that can be worn except on dress down day)
- Sayre logo sweatshirts with or without a hood (they are the only sweatshirts that may be worn),

•leggings or legging type pants (**can only be worn with a skirt, dress, or shirt that covers the full bottom**),

•tennis shoes, dress shoes (no high heel), sandal with a back strap or any well-kept casual shoes.

**Clothing NOT permitted:**

- any clothing with words or lettering (other than Sayre School),
- Backless or low cut apparel
- See through clothing
- Shirts that do not cover the midriff
- Tank tops, Spaghetti straps
- Short shorts
- Short skirts or mini-skirts
- Denim/jeans
- Sweatshirts or T-shirts that do not have the Sayre logo
- Camouflage Attire
- Athletic apparel, exercise pants and sweatpants
- Flip flops, shoes with wheels or open backed shoes of any kind
- Hats, hoods or sunglasses in the building

**Special Program Dress:**

We have a few Special Dress days in the Lower School each year. Special Program Dress Code begins in First Grade and includes: dresses, skirts and blouses or dressy pants outfits of any color or pattern, or dress shirt and pants. Dress jackets are optional. (Please note: If this is a PE day for your child he/she must also bring PE clothes and sneakers and/or appropriate shoes for recess.) Everyday shoes are acceptable.

### **Dress Down/Spirit Days:**

Every Friday will be a Dress Down/Spirit Day. On these days, and the others that warrant a more casual dress, the dress code is relaxed and students may wear jeans and a T-shirt. We encourage students to support the school by wearing a Sayre T-shirt or sweatshirt. Per Sayre School Dress Code Policy, although not particularly relevant at the Lower School level, no shirts with alcohol, drugs or gun logos are allowed at Sayre even on dress down days. Sayre logo t-shirts, sweatshirts, and Sayre team athletic shirts are always appropriate to show Sayre spirit. Denim is permitted on these days.

### **Dress Code Infractions:**

On a regular school day, if a student is not in compliance with the dress code, a conversation will be had with the child and the parent will be notified by the classroom teacher. If repetitive infractions occur, parents will be asked to bring a change of clothes for their child to the school. If clothing is significantly distracting to the classroom, a child may remain in the office until properly dressed. If an ongoing problem develops related to a child's clothing, a parent conference may be scheduled with the Head of the Lower School to develop a plan for resolving the issue.

### **Kindergarten and Preschool**

Our days in preschool and kindergarten are very busy and involve a lot of movement and hands-on activities. Your child should come dressed in clothing that is comfortable, easily washable, and allows him/her to engage fully in both indoor and outdoor activities. Your child's clothing may be exposed to paint, glue, markers, dirt and other fun, tactile materials, so please do not send your child in clothes that are "special" or need to be kept clean. Be sure that clothes can be easily washed and managed by your child in the bathroom without assistance. For safety reasons, children must wear comfortable shoes that stay securely on their feet. **All shoes must have "backs"; No flip flops, clogs or open backed shoes of any kind are allowed.**

**Please be sure to dress your children appropriately for the weather. Outdoor play is an important component of our program and we will be going outside daily, weather permitting.**

**At all ages, please label all clothing with your child's name!**

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

### **ASTHMA OR ANAPHYLAXIS MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION**

An amendment regarding the self-administration of asthma or anaphylaxis medication became effective in the Commonwealth of Kentucky as of April 21, 2004. KRS 158.834, as amended, states:

(1) "The board of each local public school district and the governing body of each private and parochial school or school district shall permit the self-administration of medications by a student with asthma or by a student who is at risk of having anaphylaxis if the student's parent or guardian:

- (a) Provides written authorization for self-administration to the school; and
- (b) Provides a written statement from the student's health care practitioner that the student has asthma or is at risk of having anaphylaxis and has been instructed in self-administration of the student's prescribed medications to treat asthma or anaphylaxis.

The statement shall also contain the following information:

- 1. The name and purpose of the medications;
  - 2. The prescribed dosage;
  - 3. The time or times the medications are to be regularly administered and under what additional special circumstances the medications are to be administered; and
  - 4. The length of time for which the medications are prescribed.
- (2) The statements required in subsection (1) of this section shall be kept on file in the office of the school nurse or school administrator. (3) The school district or the governing body of each private and parochial school or school district shall inform the parent or guardian of the student that the school and its employees and agents shall incur no liability as a result of any injury sustained by the student from the self-administration of his or her medications to treat asthma or anaphylaxis. The parent or guardian of the student shall sign a statement acknowledging that the school shall incur no liability and the parent or guardian shall indemnify and hold harmless the school and its employees against any claims relating to the self-administration of medications used to treat asthma or anaphylaxis. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to relieve liability of the school or its employees for negligence. (4) The permission for self-administration of medications shall be effective for the school year in which it is granted and shall be renewed each following school year upon fulfilling the requirements of subsections (1) to (3) of this section."

## **ILLNESS**

It is imperative for the welfare of our entire school community that children with communicable illness stay home. Health Department guidelines dictate the following:

1. **Fever:** Any child with a fever (any temperature 100 degrees or above) must be kept at home. Your child may return to school once he/she has remained fever free, without fever reducing medication, for a full 24 hours.
2. **COVID:** Please see our regularly updated COVID policy to determine how to proceed should you be concerned that your child has contracted or been exposed to COVID.
3. **Vomiting/Diarrhea:** If your child has vomited or had diarrhea during the previous day or night, please keep your child at home. Children must be kept home for a full 24 hours after the last bout of vomiting and diarrhea and should not return to school until their energy level is back to normal. Be sure to consult your child's doctor if symptoms continue more than 48 hours or worsen instead of improving.
4. **Strep Throat:** If your child is diagnosed with strep, he or she must stay home for a full 24 hours after beginning to take prescribed antibiotics.
5. **Pink Eye/Conjunctivitis:** There are two forms of conjunctivitis commonly seen in children. One is bacterial and requires antibiotic treatment for a full 24 hours before returning to school. The other form is viral and highly contagious. Parents should consult a physician before allowing children to return to school if you suspect that he/she has pink eye.

Our school nurse is available to answer any health related questions that you may have.

## **IMMUNIZATION & EYE EXAM REQUIREMENTS**

Sayre School is required by the state of Kentucky to have on file a copy of each enrolled student's immunization records. This information must be on a Commonwealth of Kentucky Immunization Certificate. These records must be valid through the current school year. These medical records must be sent to the registrar (attn: Luanne Stiles) before your child enters school in August or within 30 days from entering.

## **MEDICATION**

Families should let the office know if their child begins or changes a medication. This is necessary in order for the school to provide appropriate support and follow-

up. All medical information is confidential and only shared on a need to know basis with faculty who work directly with the child.

Prescription drugs may not be sent to school with a student for self administration. The Lower School office will dispense prescription medication to students upon written instructions from parents. Non-prescription medication (Tylenol, etc.) will be administered after phone approval from parents.

We do follow all state licensing requirements for administration of medication to preschool aged children. With the exception of rescue medications (inhalers and epipens for example) which only need one form signed for the full school year, written permission must be given EACH day with a parent signature in order for any medication to be given to a child. Please see Mrs. Stiles in the office to arrange for this and to complete the necessary paperwork.

### **MESSAGES & PHONE**

Except for rare cases, arrangements for after-school activities should be made before students come to school in the morning. Students will not be called from class to take or make phone calls. Should a parent have the need to leave a message for their child, we will ensure that the information is delivered to your child at a point in the day when learning will not be interrupted.

### **NEWSLETTER**

Each Wednesday, our weekly newsletter called “Lower School Notes” will be posted on the Sayre website. You will receive a weekly email with a link to the Wednesday Notes. This email can be sent to both parents in a household and to non-custodial parents as well. Please let us know if you would like for us to add an appropriate email to our database.

### **PARTIES**

Parties are very important social times in the lives of our children. Every attempt should be made to be inclusive and respectful of children’s feelings when hosting a party outside of the school day. Invitations to parties may be distributed at school only when all students in a class are invited or when all members of the same sex in a class are included. Under any other conditions, all party arrangements and invitations must take place outside of school.

### **AFTER HOURS PLAYGROUND USE BY SAYRE FAMILIES**

Any Sayre child who is playing on the playground while not actively enrolled in a program that is supervised by a Sayre employee **MUST** be directly supervised by a parent who is physically present on the playground **inside the fence**. All rules of the playground **MUST** be observed even while under parent supervision. Any

child who is present on the playground without a parent will be asked to rejoin their parent elsewhere.

## **RECESS**

All Preschool and Lower School students have at least one daily outdoor recess. Children should be careful to dress for the weather, as outdoor playtime will occur daily unless it is raining or there is lightning.

## **RESPONSE TEAM**

If a student or family approaches the school with a concern related to mental health, gender identity, family issues, or other special needs, the school may convene a response team that can include the Division Head, the school counselor, and the student's classroom teacher or advisor (or another trusted faculty member), to work closely with the student and parents. At the discretion of the school and with the family's input, the response team may include other adults.

The response team will work cooperatively with the family to encourage a safe, welcoming, and inclusive school environment.

## **PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

Each Preschool and Lower School teacher will ask for parent volunteers to assist with a variety of tasks. The responsibilities vary according to the needs of the individual teacher; however, parents will be needed to assist with class parties, Fall Festival and organizing volunteers for field trips, etc.

## **SECURITY SYSTEM**

During the school day, parents/visitors may access the Lower School by coming to the main entrance vestibule and ringing the bell. This entrance is monitored by a video camera which alerts the Lower School's office to visitors. **All parents/visitors must then come into the Lower School office to sign-in and receive a visitor's pass. All external doors remained locked.** Students who leave early for appointments or due to illness must be signed out in the office by their parents or guardian.

## **SNACKS**

**We cannot over stress the importance of parents working with us to help keep our students safe and healthy.** Children function best throughout a school day when snacks are healthy and not full of sugar. We encourage you to consider nutritional value as you choose what to send with your child for snack each day as you are fueling both his/her body and brain! In addition, we recognize that proper hydration is important to health and learning. We welcome children to bring non-spill, unbreakable water bottles to school with them for use during the day (but never near technology). These should only be filled with plain water- please do

not send sugary or staining beverages to school both for health reasons and in order to help us keep our building clean. Water is all that children should need during the school day other than at lunch when the Buttery also serves milk and juice.

In addition, in response to the growing numbers of children who have anaphylactic reactions to nuts, Sayre Lower School and Buttery are nut-conscious environments. This means that **any food you send in with your child for snack or lunch must be 100% nut free.** Please read the ingredients of all items and keep them at home if you see any nuts (peanuts and/or tree nuts) in the ingredients, OR if it says that it was processed on equipment that also processes peanuts or tree nuts. Even if the snack is only an individual snack for your child, it must be screened by you prior to being sent to school. If a child were to have a snack containing nuts in our classrooms or in the Buttery, it could contaminate the desk surfaces or other surfaces touched by a child's hands. Please help us keep all of our children safe by respecting our rule that no foods containing nuts or processed on the same equipment as nuts enter our building.

**IMPORTANT: Due to continual changes in manufacturer packaging, please read the ingredient label of all snacks each time you purchase them to ensure that they do NOT contain any of the following: peanuts /tree nuts, peanut/tree nut butter, peanut oil, peanut/nut flour, peanut/nut meal, or any variety of the statements, "Contains peanuts," "May contain traces of peanuts and/or tree nuts," or "Manufactured in a facility or on equipment that also processes peanuts (and/or other nuts)."**

#### **KINDERGARTEN TO 4<sup>th</sup> GRADE TOY POLICY**

Because of possible disruption, loss or breakage, toy items such as dolls, trucks, cards, or games are not allowed to be brought to our K-4 classrooms. On special days when items like these would be allowed, the teacher will notify parents in advance.

#### **PRESCHOOL TOY POLICY**

We understand that many preschool-aged children would like to bring special toys from home into the classroom. We are willing to allow children to bring special items in from home to share on occasion or to assist with transitioning into the classroom in the morning, but are also aware that this can create some challenges for both the teachers and children throughout the day. These items are very easily misplaced and under high demand for exploration by other children in the class. This can create sadness and anxiety for the child who brought the item in to share, or for others who would like to be able to play with the item as well. We are always willing to allow children to have transitional "lovies" with them to be used



as needed throughout the day (blankets, stuffed animal, etc). We are asking that all other toys brought to school be used only for a brief period of time in order to help a child transition into the classroom. After sharing, or a short period of exploration, these toys will be placed back in backpacks for safekeeping for the rest of the day. We encourage parents to keep toys at home unless you see something as particularly important to your child on a given day. Thank you in advance for your understanding of this preschool policy.

## **TRANSPORTATION FOR SCHOOL FUNCTIONS**

During the school year students are sometimes transported to school functions, including field trips, class trips, athletic contests/practices and other events. At the start of the school year, parents complete a permission form for each student to ensure clear communication as to what authorizations are given for transportation to these functions. Parents may also be asked to sign additional field trip permission forms during the school year.

In this regard parents should be aware of a factor called to the school's attention by its insurance advisor regarding transportation of students in vehicles—the issue of *primary* versus *secondary* insurance coverage (which assumes that there *are* insurance coverages in place, of course).

The insurance advisor has informed the school that insurance coverage “follows the vehicle.” This means that the insurance carrier scheduling a specific vehicle has primary coverage applicable to an injury to an occupant of that vehicle. For example, Sayre's coverage on its bus would apply to an injury to a bus passenger. In contrast, a parent's coverage on his or her personal vehicle (driven by the parent or the parent's child) would apply to an injury to a passenger in that parent's vehicle. Parents should consult their own professional advisors on this matter prior to transporting students in a personally-owned vehicle for school functions.

## **VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERING**

Sayre is a family-oriented school that warmly welcomes parents and guardians to participate in school life. Parents are invited to hear speakers, attend special programs, and visit classes. Parents are also encouraged to become active volunteers and to share their time and talents with the school community in a variety of ways, including supporting project-based learning in our classrooms. Parental involvement gives vitality and strength to the school and gives the volunteer a clearer understanding and appreciation of Sayre. **For security purposes all visitors, including parents, must report to the Lower School office to sign-in and receive a visitor's pass before going into classrooms.**

The Head of School, Division Heads, and faculty welcome conferences, by appointment. If parents wish to visit classes, kindly make an appointment in advance. Please do not call on teachers unannounced before the start of the school day. This is a very busy time for faculty members as they are preparing for the day's activities. If you have an issue you would like to discuss with a teacher, please let them know that you wish to set up a time to meet when he/she can dedicate their full attention to your concerns regarding your child.

## SPECIAL TRADITIONS/PROGRAMS

### **BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT**

Shortly after the opening of school, parents are invited to an evening informational program about the Preschool and Lower School and their child's class in particular. More information regarding this event will be distributed after the start of the school year.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

Birthdays are very meaningful to young children and they are eager to share their special day with their friends. Because of the range of allergies in classrooms, we are now requesting that parents who wish for their children to celebrate their birthdays at school provide nut-free, dairy-free popsicles to be shared with their friends. This is a fun, inexpensive, tasty treat loved by children which eliminates the challenges faced by both families and the school in screening birthday treats.

**Popsicles will be the ONLY treat allowed to be brought to school for birthday celebrations.** We will still continue to allow other nut-free foods be brought for Halloween and Valentine's Day Parties, **but only popsicles will be allowed at birthday celebrations.** Freezer space will be available to keep items frozen until served.

**Birthday invitations:** Invitations may be distributed at school **ONLY** when all students in a class are invited or when all members of one sex are included.

### **CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS**

Twice a year, at Halloween and Valentine's Day, our classrooms host celebrations. There are also other special events that come up as a part of culminations or other curricular events. All food brought in for these events must meet our Nut-free policy listed below.

- Because we must have documentation that shared, classroom treats are nut free and not processed on equipment that also processes nuts/tree nuts, any

snack sent in for a celebration **MUST** contain the original list of ingredients in order to be served:

- If you use a cake mix or canned frosting, or bring any other store bought treat, please bring the items in their original box with ingredients, or, cut out the ingredients labels and put them in a baggie to be brought to school with the treat.
- If you bake something from scratch, you must handwrite or type an ingredient list and certify that your counters had been wiped down prior to baking and were nut free.
- If you bring something from a bakery, it must contain a list of ingredients in order for us to serve it here at school.
- If you bring a pre-packaged item, the ingredient list must be nut free and not be made on equipment that also processes any form of nut.

**\*\*Please note that we will unfortunately NOT BE ABLE TO SERVE any treat that does not contain a clear list of ingredients that shows your food is nut free. We are asking every parent to comply with this request and include all ingredient labels with food brought into our building. If we are not able to determine if a food is nut free, we will return it to you at the end of the day without serving it.\*\***

**Parents of children with allergies should ensure that you have filled out the *Allergy Information Form* so that we know your preferences in terms of which shared treats, if any, your child should be allowed to eat. We are always happy to have parents of children with allergies provide a box of alternative treats that can be given to your child during shared snacks if you do not want your child to partake.**

## **COMMUNITY MATTERS**

The Community Matters Coordinator meets with children in grades Kindergarten through four on a regular basis. The program uses a variety of modalities to deal with topics such as self-awareness, self-esteem, communication skills, good decision making skills, creating and maintaining healthy relationships and community building. Community Matters philosophy dovetails nicely with Responsive Classroom.

## **FALL FESTIVAL**

Each fall, the Sayre Parents' Association hosts the Sayre Fall Festival either out at the Sayre Athletic Complex or on campus in the case of weather concerns. This is a wonderful event with many booths, activities, games and snacks appropriate for a

wide range of ages. The Fall Festival is usually held on a Friday afternoon in October.

### **FIELD DAYS**

During the last month of school, all Preschoolers and Lower Schoolers enjoy a day of planned outdoor events. Specific information will be sent home well in advance of these special days.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Teachers plan field trips to various places during the course of the year to enhance the academic program. With the exception of our youngest classrooms, Preschool and Lower School students take field trips throughout the year. Please be sure to read all notes/letters sent home which will alert families to the specific details of these special events. In our preschool programs, we are required by licensing regulations to have separate written permission from parents for each specific field trip in order to take your child with us. Please be sure to read, sign, and return all permission slips that come home promptly.

### **FOURTH GRADE RECOGNITION PROGRAM**

On the last day of school, fourth grade students are recognized with a special program in their honor.

### **GRANDPARENTS'/SPECIAL PERSONS' DAY**

Each year, grandparents of Preschool and Lower School students are invited to campus for a morning of special events. Please check this year's calendar for the exact date.

### **SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE**

On the day before opening day, Lower School students are invited to "drop-in" and briefly meet their new teachers. The goal of this short visit is to make the first day of school a more comfortable experience for children (and parents! ☺).

### **PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (PAC)**

An advisory group of parents, selected by the director of the Lower School, meets on a monthly basis to discuss and give input regarding programming and activities.

### **SAYRE SPECTACULAR**

The Sayre Spectacular, usually held in the early spring, is Sayre's major fundraising event and is organized by a special parent committee. The Spectacular raises money for special school projects.

## POLICIES SPECIFIC TO PRESCHOOL

### **BITING POLICY**

Biting is a very common behavior among children birth to three years of age. Even in the very best preschool settings, incidences of biting occur among infants and toddlers, and sometimes even among preschoolers. This is an unavoidable occurrence in groups of young children. When it happens, it can be very scary, frustrating and stressful for children, parents, and teachers. Understand that this is not an unusual phenomenon among children who are going through the oral stage of their development. Biting is a form of communication and is generally an indication of their developmental age, rather than something to blame on children, parents or teachers. There are no quick or easy solutions to biting.

At Sayre School, we believe that by understanding the developmental stages of the children in our care and their individual needs, we can proactively prevent many biting behaviors through the environment we create for the children. Children bite for a variety of reasons. They bite to gain a reaction and/or because they lack language and social skills required for a particular situation. A child might bite to:

- Relieve pain from teething
- Explore cause and effect (“What happens when I bite?”)
- Experience the sensation of biting
- Satisfy a need for oral-motor stimulation
- Imitate other children and adults
- Feel strong and in control
- Get attention
- Act in self-defense
- Communicate needs and desires, such as hunger or fatigue
- Communicate or express difficult feelings, such as frustration, anger, confusion or fear (“There are too many people here and I feel cramped”)

Knowing that their biting will hurt another person is not yet part of a child’s mindset, so the “cause-effect” relationship is not internalized. Our teachers plan activities and supervise carefully in order for biting not to happen. Bites happen quickly, however, and there are times when a teacher cannot be within immediate reach to prevent a bite.

In order to alleviate some of the triggers for biting, Sayre Preschool has many practices in place that are known to help prevent incidences of biting in young children:

- Relationship based care: Our staff develop nurturing relationships with the children and get to know each child as an individual. Staff are given many professional development opportunities to help them learn ways to cultivate quality connections with the children in our care and to recognize when children need assistance in communicating their needs and wants.
- Careful crafting of our classroom environment: We maintain low child to staff ratios in our classrooms in order to cultivate a calm and responsive environment. Stimulating activities are provided which keep children purposefully engaged and actively learning. Teachers are trained to proactively teach children social skills which will help them work through frustration and communicate their needs and wants, as well as being trained to intervene quickly as problems arise.
- Targeted social-emotional supports: Children have a daily routine which they follow which helps to make transitions and activities predictable. This helps children to learn how to navigate classroom transitions in a way that helps them build confidence and lowers stress. Staff proactively talk about emotions/feelings through books and other approaches and teach children language to communicate their needs and wants. Our goal is to help children develop self-regulatory skills that will lessen the chance of goal oriented physical aggression.

Our policy for handling a biting incident is as follows:

- 1) The biter is immediately removed from the group with as little emotion as possible. A firm, “NO” or simple language such as “biting is not okay- it hurts” will be used with the biter. We will avoid any immediate response that reinforces the biting or calls attention to the biter.

Caring attention will be focused, instead, on the child who was bitten. The bitten child is consoled and the area washed with soap and water. If necessary, ice is applied to reduce any swelling or bruising. The wound will be assessed to determine if any further first aid is needed.

The biter is not allowed to return to play and is talked to on a level that he/she can understand such as “I can see that you want that truck, but I can’t let you hurt him. We don’t put our teeth on people.”

- 2) Parents of the bitten child will be notified by phone as soon as possible during the school day.
- 3) A written incident report will be given to the parents of all children involved when they are picked up that day. **To maintain confidentiality per NAEYC guidelines, Sayre School will maintain complete confidentiality of all children involved when notifying parents that their child has been bitten or has bitten another child.**
- 4) For children enrolled in our Extended Day program, staff in each program will notify the Director of the other program of any biting incidents that occur involving dually enrolled children. This will allow teachers to be vigilant in terms of subsequent biting activity, as well as to be sensitive to each child's needs.

After an incidence of biting, our staff will use several strategies to help prevent further biting incidents from happening. These strategies include:

- Giving children teethingers or biting rings which help reduce the sensitivity to their teeth and gums, satisfies their biting needs and reduces the likelihood that they will bite other children.
- Encouraging children to use simple words to communicate their wants and needs. Each time there is a conflict, we will model appropriate language and remind children to use their words.
- Shadowing a child who has recently bitten in order to be able to intervene quickly should another situation arise, to teach non-biting responses to frustrating situations, and to reinforce appropriate behavior
- Providing a generous variety of toys and materials (including duplicates of favorites) in order to alleviate conflicts related to sharing toys
- Observing carefully in order to be aware of times throughout the day that a particular child may be tired, hungry or overstimulated
- Proactively using a lot of positive reinforcement and redirection, recognizing children when they are playing cooperatively, sharing and being kind to each other.

Should a child have consistent, repetitive biting behaviors, the Head of the Lower School will work with parents to determine a course of action. We try to make every effort to extinguish the behavior quickly and to balance our commitment to

the family of the biting child with that of other families. Although we will make every effort to work with families, Sayre School may choose to terminate a child's enrollment if it is deemed in the best interest of the child, center, or the other children in our care. Re-enrollment of the child may be considered after the biting phase has passed.

### **TOILET TRAINING**

At Sayre School we respect that each child develops at an individual pace. During the early childhood years we are equipped and willing to meet the toileting needs of your child. As your child grows we will support and adapt to help him/her reach the goal of becoming self-sufficient with toileting needs. To further develop independent toileting, it is important that we work as a team to encourage self-help skills at home and at school. These skills include but are not limited to: hand washing, independently maneuvering clothing, wiping and changing clothes if necessary.

### **NAPPING**

Sayre's Preschool program schedules a nap/rest period every day. Per the State of Kentucky, it is required for students to have up to 2 hours of rest. If the student does not take a nap, quiet and supervised activities are provided while students remain on their cot (922 KAR 2:120).