



SONOMA CHARTER SCHOOL

A Public Charter School in the Sonoma Valley Unified School District

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2011/2012 Edition

(707) 935-4232
Fax: (707) 935-4207
17202 Sonoma Highway
Sonoma, CA 95476
scsoffice@scs.k12.ca.us
August 2011

Dear Sonoma Charter School Families,

I want to extend a warm welcome to the children and families that will make up the SCS community for the 2011 – 2012 school year. Whether you are a new kindergartener or entering our school at one of the upper grades, by enrolling in our school you have become a member of the SCS and the larger charter school community. We pride ourselves on getting to know all of the children and families on our campus; we are a close knit community that works and plays together, all with the common goal of educating children in all aspects of their lives: academic as well as social emotional learning.

In 1994, when a group of parents, educators and community members founded our school, there was a common goal to provide an educational program that addressed all the needs of a developing child. We continue to strive to offer that same education, working to provide the best education possible to match the needs of your child. Whether she or he is an auditory or visual learner, our curriculum approach is multi-sensory and offers an avenue that best fits the needs of your child's learning style.

Projects are an ongoing process here at Sonoma Charter School. The variety is endless and can be seen in all our classrooms from silk worm studies in our K/1 class, science studies in grades 2/3, Mission projects in the 4/5 classes, and all the variety through out the grades culminating in the 8th grade Exiting Project that is required to graduate from our school – we believe and practice the concept of 'hands on learning.' Productions happen all year long in the Playbox and every grade participates in a play or show at least once during the year. Our talented teaching staff writes most of these Playbox productions.

Being a part of the SCS community also means volunteering and taking on projects that enhance the education of our children. Family participation at our school is a vital part of our core mission; we cannot do what we do here without the full commitment of all who choose to be at Sonoma Charter School.

As the year unfolds, we will work together to provide the best possible education for your children. Jump in and take a part in our school. Work with our staff and PTO to find ways you can become fully engaged in your child's education. I look forward to working with you as we roll up our sleeves and pursue an excellent academic program that engages all of our students.

With best regards,

Paula Hunter, Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Subject	Page Number
Contact Sheet	5
Charter School Definition	6
Our Mission and Vision	6
History and Background	6
Educational Approach	7
Multi-age Groupings	7
Configurations—Clusters	7
Configurations—Classrooms	7
Students	
Goals	8
Student Records	8
Testing	8
Curriculum	8
Clusters	8
Cluster One	9
Cluster Two	10
Cluster Three	10
Homework	11
Field Trips	13
Dress Code	13
Discipline	13
Attendance	15
Schedule	15
Medication at School	15
Parking, Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures	16
Extended Day Program (EDP)	17
Lunch Program	17
Admissions Procedure	18
School Operations	
Governing Board	19
Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)	19
Expectations of Families	
Parent Participate at SCS	20
Volunteer Hours	20
Tracking Volunteer Hours	20
Volunteering on a Committee	20
Charter Your Course	20
Classroom Volunteering	21
Passive Fundraising	21
Communication	
School Calendar	22
Wednesday Folder	22
The UpDate	22
Email Blasts	22
Progress Reports and Parent Conferences	22
One Call Now	23

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONTINUED)

Subject	Page Number
Staff	23
Administrative Staff	24
Teaching Staff	24
Teaching Support Staff	27
Athletics	
Physical Education in the Curriculum	27
Extra Curricular Activities	27
School Celebrations and Traditions	
Morning Ceremony	28
Welcome Back Breakfast	28
Back to School Night (Curriculum Night)	28
Potlucks	28
Halloween Carnival	29
Harvest Feast	29
Spaghetti Feed & Talent Show	29
Jagathon	29
Student Government	29
Spirit Days	29
School Mascot & Colors	29
Families	30
School Dances	30
Graduation	30
Step-Up Day	30

CONTACT SHEET

Office	Main Line	935-4232	scsoffice@scs.k12.ca.us
Paula Hunter	Director		phunter@scs.k12.ca.us
Molly Kohler	Office Manager		mkohler@scs.k12.ca.us
Laurie Kaiser	Account Tech		lkaiser@scs.k12.ca.us
Rachel Cisneros	Grades K-1		rcisneros@scs.k12.ca.us
Darice Dekker	Grades K-1	Extension 4#	ddekker@scs.k12.ca.us
Julie MacDonald	Grades 1-2	Extension 7#	jmacdonald@scs.k12.ca.us
Cynthia Podesta	Grades 2-3	Extension 3#	cpodesta@scs.k12.ca.us
Judy Moses	Grades 2-3		jmoses@scs.k12.ca.us
Bob Edmondson	Grades 4-5	Extension 9#	redmondson@scs.k12.ca.us
Helén Johansson	Grades 4-5		hjohansson@scs.k12.ca.us
Michael Luque	Grade 6 (& more)	Extension 10#	mluque@scs.k12.ca.us
Jim Caruso	Grade 7 (& more)		jcaruso@scs.k12.ca.us
Jason Page	Grade 8 (& more)		jpage@scs.k12.ca.us
Lynda S. Allen	Physical Education & Health Tech		lallen@scs.k12.ca.us
Elizabeth Dekker	Visual Arts		etashman@scs.k12.ca.us
Dan Saski	Drama		dansaski@gmail.com
Nadine Harmon	Math, Cluster 3		nharmon@scs.k12.ca.us
David Sporang	EDP	694-7844	moonbeamittc@comcast.net
Susan Deguilio	Psychologist	935-4232	Note: only on campus 1 day/week
PTO	Kathy Pine	812-7463	pto@sonomacharterschool.org
Volunteer Committee	Sharon Johnston & Courtney Morgan	939-8957	volunteer@sonomacharterschool.org
Beautification Committee	Melanie Luque & Julie Calhoun		beautification@sonomacharterschool.org

Notes:

- To reach staff via Extension, please call 707-765-5539 to access the voicemail system
- If a phone number is not listed, please email or if you would like to speak in person either stop by the classroom or leave a message via the main office at 707-935-4232
- Additionally, a Family Directory is provided once school is in session, typically in September of each school year

CHARTER SCHOOL DEFINITION

A charter school is organized by a group of teachers, community members, and parents and is sponsored by an authorizer. An authorizer can be a local public school district, the county office of education or the state department of education in Sacramento. The specific goals and operating procedures of the charter school are spelled out in the ‘charter agreement’ between the organizers (school) and the authorizers (sponsors). Charter schools are free from many California State Education regulations, allowing for increased flexibility in exchange for increased accountability. The key purpose of these schools is to improve student learning by providing an alternative approach to learning that may not be provided in other local public schools. Charters are granted for five-year periods and are renewable by the sponsoring authorizer. Charter schools may not discriminate. Charter schools receive funding from the same sources as other public schools, yet the funding is not equal. Presently Sonoma Charter School receives approximately 68 cents for every dollar the Sonoma Valley District receives in educational revenue.

MISSION AND VISION OF SONOMA CHARTER SCHOOL (SCS)

The mission of Sonoma Charter School is Academic Excellence through Engaged Learning. We believe that students can realize the potential of their unique aptitudes and talents when they perceive that parents and teachers have high expectations of them.

Academic Excellence is providing clear and challenging standards enabling each student to:

- Succeed at higher education levels
- Become an effective, functioning, responsible person
- Realize personal goals and potential
- Meet or exceed SCS, state and national standards

Engaged Learning is an educational process that embodies the following attributes:

- Risk taking and discovery
- Collaborative learning environment
- Integrated curriculum
- Developmental readiness
- Differentiated instruction
- Active parent involvement

HISTORY & BACKGROUND

Sonoma Charter School was granted state charter number #009 in February 1993. The school was founded by a group of Sonoma Valley parents, teachers and community members who were seeking an alternative educational opportunity that could serve the families within the Valley and the surrounding areas. SCS began operations in September 1994. Originally Sonoma Charter School was designed as a year-round school and prided itself on the arts being a major component within the curriculum of the school. Multi-age classes provided the opportunity to teach to the philosophies aligned with project based, thematic and integrated curriculum. Over the past seventeen years, changes in state mandates, school personnel, family population and educational climate have affected the original model of the school, yet the basic philosophy and vision of the school has remained strong.

EDUCATIONAL APPROACH

Sonoma Charter School has a Montessori based curriculum, with a strong focus in the early grades, gradually decreasing as the children progress in grades. Materials based on the Montessori Method are evident our three primary grades.

“The Montessori Method of education, developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, is a child-centered educational approach based on scientific observation of children from birth to adulthood. Dr. Montessori’s Method has been time tested, with over 100 years of success in diverse cultures throughout the world. It is a view of the child as one who is naturally eager for knowledge and capable of initiating learning in a supportive, thoughtfully prepared learning environment. It is an approach that values the human spirit and development of the whole child – physical, social, emotional, cognitive.” American Montessori Society

In the upper grades, the Montessori philosophy that speaks to the eagerness and curiosity of the child is the basis for our project-based approach to teaching. Students attending Sonoma Charter School are taught to work successfully in groups and are expected to present to their classmates and teachers on a regular basis.

MULTI-AGE GROUPINGS

Classrooms in Grades K-5 are multi-age at Sonoma Charter School. Research shows that when children are in classrooms with more than one grade level, their self-esteem is raised. With mixed age groupings, children have the flexibility to move at their own pace. They are not pigeonholed into performing specific tasks or understanding concepts because they have reached a certain age. They’re able to learn as much as they possibly can.

CONFIGURATIONS—CLUSTERS

Our school is divided by grade levels into three clusters: Cluster One is comprised of grades K – 3, Cluster Two is grades 4 - 5 and Cluster Three is grades 6 – 8. Each cluster has a lead teacher who meets at least bi-weekly with the Director to review curriculum, review student progress and to problem solve any issues arising throughout the school.

Our 6th through 8th grade program is a hybrid middle school model. Sixth grade is taught by one core teacher who delivers the curriculum in science, social studies and language arts and a second teacher delivers the math curriculum. The 7th and 8th grade students are taught primarily by two teachers; one focuses on math/science and the other focuses on social studies/language arts. Students in this cluster change classes like larger middle schools, yet have fewer core subject teachers. In addition students in Cluster Three have art, drama and PE, as well as electives, which are held twice weekly.

CONFIGURATIONS—CLASSROOMS

Two K/1 classrooms: each classroom with 20 students, 1 teacher, 1 instructional assistant

One 1/2 classroom: 20 students, 1 teacher, 1 instructional assistant

Two 2/3 classrooms: each classroom with 20 students, 1 teacher, 1 instructional assistant

Two 4/5 classrooms: each classroom with 27 students, 1 teacher, 1 instructional assistant

One 6th, one 7th, one 8th grade class: each grade with up to 28 students

Note: one instructional assistant is shared in Cluster Three (grades 6, 7, 8)

STUDENTS

Goals

Sonoma Charter School students will study independently, retaining and applying information they learned in each grade level. They have the opportunity to express, represent, interpret, and communicate through the arts and music. They are acknowledged as individuals responsible for themselves, their ethical behavior, and their productivity in life. They will learn to exhibit social skills, respecting diversity and demonstrating service to the school and the community. They will acquire a sense of Sonoma Valley's heritage and its relationship to the world at large.

Student Records

Federal and State laws concerning student records grant certain rights of privacy and right of access to students and their parents. Full access to all personally identifiable written records maintained by the school must be granted to parents and guardians according to these laws. Records are kept in the school office and access to those records can be arranged by contacting the office manager. Copies of parent's rights to such records are available upon request in the school office.

Testing

All students in Grades 2-8 are required to participate in the annual California Achievement Test/Standardized Achievement Test (CAT6/SAT), also known as STAR. Teachers provide students with test preparation as part of the regular curriculum throughout the year. SCS does not over-emphasize testing but recognizes its importance as one evaluative tool of student/teacher performance. Students in 4th and 7th grade are also required to participate in an annual STAR writing test. All teachers assess children constantly throughout the year to help support individualized attention to the child's progress.

Curriculum

Students leave each multi-age learning level with demonstrated age-appropriate competency in the following disciplines: citizenship, creative arts, health/fitness, history/social science, language (reading and writing), mathematics, performing arts/music and science.

Clusters

Clusters of several grades allow students to develop at their own pace, yet still provide benchmarks to measure their development against standards.

- Cluster One: Kindergarten through grade three
- Cluster Two: Grades four and five
- Cluster Three: Grades six through eight

Within clusters students are grouped based on readiness for particular skills and provided instruction individually, in small groups or within the whole class accordingly. Most classrooms consist of multi-aged heterogeneous student groups with teachers working together to ensure smooth and successful transition from cluster to cluster. Each cluster has a lead teacher.

Cluster One (Grades K-3)

The Cluster One program of the Sonoma Charter School provides settings for children ages 5 to 8 to accommodate a wide range of experiences, interests and ways of learning. An integrated curriculum involves active investigation, play, experiential and interactive exploration, respect for all of humankind, and reliance upon parents as partners. Documenting children's progress through assessment and evaluation is integral to the facilitation of the child's learning.

Fundamentally, our objective is to facilitate the development of the complete and whole child resulting in a literate, thinking, active, and compassionate participant of the global society. We consciously work to teach our students higher-order thinking skills: analysis, synthesis, and evaluation instead of mere memorization of factual material. We strive to encourage students to become engaged in and excited about their schoolwork, and to pursue additional paths of study in their areas of special interest.

Parents, friends and older students are encouraged to come to the classroom and listen to the children read, share special talents and interests (such as storytelling, puppetry, drama, environmental studies, cooking, sewing, computer literacy, weaving, etc.), help coordinate and drive on field trips, assist on the playground, substitute during teacher meetings, organize and coordinate classroom celebrations and special events, assist in the art program, and keep an ongoing communication with us in the assessment of their child. We are always open to hear about additional ways parents can contribute to the education of their children.

The following are guidelines in the organization of the curriculum:

- Arts are central to children's learning
- Opportunities to read and write are ongoing and varied
- Mathematics is a way of thinking
- Scientific method is used throughout the curriculum
- History, geography and science are integrated
- Physical wellbeing is part of total wellbeing

This program encourages a developmentally appropriate curriculum for children in kindergarten through grade three. The curriculum is based on the belief that young children create knowledge from their experiences; therefore, both teacher-directed activities and child-originated activities constitute the curriculum, emphasizing exploration, clarification and reflection. The continuous building of community, respect and trust becomes the foundation for meaningful studies.

Focus upon a particular curriculum theme within the integrated format is determined by various means, including:

- The observation that children are all interested in something
- The belief that one child's interest reflects many children's interests
- The knowledge that work upon any particular theme captures children's interest and meets their needs in a variety of ways
- Multiculturalism in the classroom stresses that understanding other cultures and other languages in the world is crucial to the inter-connectedness of humans; thus, encouraging self-esteem, respect for all life, and the experience of success in life
- The classroom environment must be a 'prepared' one, in order to make the program a success
- Active participation is essential; learning materials are concrete and relevant to children's lives. Objects children can manipulate and experiment with such as blocks, cards, games, tapes, books, tools, computers, arts and crafts materials, and scientific equipment are enticing and readily accessible

- Multicultural images and materials are integrated throughout the environment
- Attention is given to an organization that allows for flexibility of whole class instruction, small group instruction, or individual study

Teachers continuously gauge the progress of each Cluster One student in a variety of ways, including formal and informal assessments, teacher observations and individual student portfolios. Students receive trimester progress reports (1 parent-teacher conference and 2 written) with report cards based on academic progress as well as social and emotional skill acquisition.

Cluster Two (Grades 4-5)

The Cluster Two program incorporates the Sonoma Charter School standards into an integrated curriculum providing each student with the continuum of academic learning and effective life-long social skills. The integration of language, social studies, mathematics, science, visual and performing arts, physical education, technology and life skills thematically center around one of two themes in alternating years: U.S. history or California history.

Through this program each student in Cluster Two:

- Completes an in-depth study of core literature
- Writes, edits, and publishes original stories
- Presents and publishes reports
- Acquires knowledge of California and U. S. history and geography
- Demonstrates mathematical abilities in problem solving, computation and memorization
- Learns the scientific method via hands-on experiments
- Participates in drama or musical productions
- Completes various art projects
- Demonstrates basic competency of word processing and computers
- Effectively communicates and collaborates with others
- Takes personal responsibility for one's actions and their consequences
- Presents a portfolio during the student-teacher-parent conference

Cluster Two teachers deliver the curriculum in a variety of approaches, including multi-age groups, grade level groups, mixed groups and via individual instruction. The multitude of groupings serves to meet the needs of all students. Additionally, the program combines teacher directed activities with student directed activities that include active learning, exploration, discussion, and research throughout all subject areas. Teachers encourage students to become independent in their learning and their thinking.

Teachers continuously gauge the progress of each Cluster Two student in a variety of ways, including formal and informal assessments, teacher observations and individual student portfolios. Students receive trimester progress reports (1 in-person conference and 2 written) with report cards based on an academic performance scale of 1-6 (1-emerging, 2-limited, 3-developing, 4-competent, 5-strong, 6-exceptional). Student effort in each academic area is also noted on the report card.

Cluster Three (Grades 6-8)

In Cluster Three, the sixth grade is taught mainly as a self-contained program for all core subjects, with the exception of math. Math is taught by a designated math teacher (or teachers) who individualize instruction based on student needs and to meet California standards. Seventh and eighth graders are combined in homogenous groups for the core subjects. Once core subjects are complete, the remainder of the day is spent with students changing classes for art, physical education, drama and electives. All

classes are taught in their respective grade levels with the exception of electives, which incorporates students in all three grades.

The rigorous academic program in Cluster Three culminates with the 8th grade Exiting Project. This is thoroughly explained to students and parents throughout their Cluster Three experience. Without the successful completion of this project, students do not graduate from eighth grade.

Field trips and extended off-campus experiences are an integral part of the curriculum. Sixth grade attends Marin Headlands, the seventh Yosemite Institute and the eighth attends the Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, Oregon.

Each student is prepared for the next academic step, as demonstrated by:

- The successful completion of all academic units in the humanities, science, the fine and applied arts, drama, and physical education
- A review and selection of the best past work as a demonstration of skills gained
- Grades, conferences, and testing

The staff is committed to offering a program that includes:

- Students working in multi-aged groups
- Inter-dependent learning across the curriculum
- Students using learning as a tool
- Community and parental involvement in the classroom
- Students will leave Cluster Three with competency in language arts, science, history, social science, health/fitness, mathematics, technology, citizenship, and the creative arts
- They will be able to study independently, apply knowledge, and retain, recall, and locate information for application at higher levels

Homework

Homework should reflect and reinforce the daily work in the classroom and be appropriate for the developmental level of the student. It should enrich, strengthen, and enhance the learning of each student. At Sonoma Charter School, the staff believes in a “No Tears” homework policy. In other words, if your child is in tears or there is a lot of conflict around homework, send it back to school and contact your child’s teacher. Let us help solve this issue.

We assign 3 types of homework to achieve 3 different objectives, as follows:

1. Practice—reinforces newly acquired skills
2. Preparation—getting ready for activities that will occur in the classroom
3. Extension—completing long-term projects that parallel class work

Homework Time Commitment

The amount of homework varies from day to day and teacher to teacher. Work habits and speed of work vary from student to student. Except for ongoing projects, teachers do not assign homework for weekends and holidays. As a very general rule, you might expect the following:

- Grades 1 – 3, about ten minutes x grade level (i.e., Grade 3 = 30 minutes)
- Grades 4 – 5, from 30 to 50 minutes
- Grades 6 – 8, about 1 ½ to 2 hours

Parent Notification

If a student repeatedly fails to turn in assignments, the teacher notifies the parent/guardian.

Questions

Refer any questions about homework should be directed to your child's teacher.

Homework—Student Perspective

- Responsible to complete and submit assignments on time
- Responsible to ask the teacher for clarification on any assignment or portion of assignment that they do not fully understand
- Responsible to find out about pending assignments that were missed due to an absence
- All students are expected to take pride in their work and turn in assignments of high quality

Homework—Parent/Guardian Perspective

SCS looks at our homework approach as being “no tears.” In other words, if your child is crying about homework, put it aside and contact his/her teacher. Below are some other guidelines for supporting homework in your family:

- Remember who is responsible for the work—your child
- Provide a suitable study area at home
- Plan a homework schedule with your child that is consistently followed
- Coordinate and limit after-school activities to provide time for homework and family activities
- If your child asks for help, ask him/her questions or work through an example, rather than simply providing an answer
- If an assignment sounds unreasonable or the amount of work required is well beyond what seems normal, check with the teacher; often students put off work to the last minute when they should have been working on it each day
- Set up a communications system with your child, where home work is written down each day during class; check this each day; if no homework seems to be assigned for most evenings, check with the teacher. If requested, a “routing slip” type form can be taken to each teacher at the end of classes
- Look at completed homework—Is the quality acceptable? Is it really complete?
- Allow students to take responsibility for their work or lack of it
- While not the highlight of each student's day, homework can be very important. It should not be unnecessarily burdensome, but should require effort and discipline

Homework—Teacher Perspective: (this is geared towards Clusters 2 and 3)

- It is expected that all homework will be evaluated and returned to the student in a timely manner
- Students receive feedback from the teacher (oral or written comments on strong points, suggestions for improving weak areas)
- Homework assigned is to be of value and never assigned just for the sake of assigning homework
- Homework assignments take individual differences and needs into consideration
- Clear expectations are given for each assignment
- Cluster Three teachers coordinate assignments to ensure that reasonable amounts of work are assigned overall
- When assigning long-term projects, time lines and due dates are given for each segment of the project and are monitored by the teacher; clear assessment rubrics (criteria) are given to the students
- Cluster Three teachers coordinate long-term projects to ensure that final due dates are not concurrent
- The impact on students' time due to school sponsored visual and performing arts projects (plays, concerts, etc.) are taken into consideration when assigning work

- Organizational skills will be taught to ensure that students are able to plan their time and keep track of assignments (“binder reminders”)
- Penalties and procedures for late homework will be clearly articulated by each Cluster and teacher
- Reasonable time is given for work missed due to an excused absence (one day for each day missed)
- Whenever possible, a list of homework assignments is given in advance for the week (this may not always be possible in Cluster 3) and be given by hard copy and email, particularly in Clusters 2 and 3

Field Trips

Each teacher coordinates several class field trips during the year, with the approval of the school director. Parents receive field trip forms in the Wednesday folders and are requested to fill out, sign and return them to the teachers in a timely manner. Parent volunteers are encouraged to drive their own vehicles on these field trips, and are required to fill out an Automobile Use Certification form each school year, available in the school office.

Dress Code

Sonoma Charter School encourages students in their development of a positive sense of self, but requests moderation in clothing and personal grooming for the sake of creating an atmosphere conducive to learning. Students are expected to wear clothing that is clean, simple and in good repair. Both clothing and shoes should be suitable for indoor and outdoor activities. Proper PE shoes must be worn on days when children have PE or they may not be able to participate due to safety. Simplicity and appropriateness should be major considerations. The teachers and the school staff enforce the dress code.

The following are enforceable standards:

- Pajamas and slippers are not appropriate dress. (Exception is ‘pajama day’)
- Shirts/blouses must be of a “tuckable” length—no bare midriff
- Shoes must be worn at all times
- Any clothing that permits any undergarments to be visible is not allowed. (i.e., clothing not allowed includes but is not limited to: spaghetti straps, see-through blouses, low-arm tanks, halter tops, short shorts, clothing with major holes or tears. Undergarments include but are not limited to boxers, bra straps and briefs.)
- Clothing that promotes tobacco, alcohol, obscenities, sex, insults, vulgar language or illegal drugs is inappropriate and are not permitted
- Clothing accessories of any kind that are deemed to have gang affiliation are not allowed

Consequences:

Students will be sent to the office where one of two things will happen:

- Additional clothing will be given to wear
- Parents will be called to take the student home for a clothing change

Discipline

All SCS students have the right to benefit from all the Sonoma Charter School offers academically and socially. No student may violate another student’s right to learn and to participate in school activities. Students who are not able to observe the SCS rules are subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Rules pertaining to student discipline are part of the Board Policies, a copy of which can be obtained in the office.

Each student is expected to show respect for others and our community and the environment, and to treat all property with care.

This includes:

- No littering or leaving trash around the school
- No writing on walls, breaking equipment, carving on or damaging school property
- Showing respect to peers and adults. Rudeness, swearing, disobedience, arguing, harassment, physical confrontation, or assault is unacceptable
- Following the directions of school staff members
- **NO DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO ARE PERMITTED AT SCHOOL AT ANY TIME.** Any student who violates this policy will be referred to the Sheriff and is subject to suspension or expulsion
- Gum is not permitted on campus at any time
- For safety reasons there are to be no rough games, wrestling, tackle games, play with rocks or hardballs
- Fighting will not be tolerated
- Students must remain within campus boundaries the entire school day unless they
- have specific parental or teacher permission to do otherwise
- Students may not arrive in class before 8:30 am, and should leave campus promptly when dismissed, unless they participate in school-sponsored activities, or are enrolled in the Extended Day Program
- Cell phones are to be off during school hours and kept in a safe spot, such as backpack or pocket. Violation of this rule will result in phone being checked in at the office each day
- No bike riding, roller-skating or skateboarding on campus. Bikes, scooters and boards are to be kept locked in the provided racks
- All student belongings should be clearly marked with the owner's name. Do not bring cash or valuables to school
- Students are expected to use common sense and good judgment regarding their own safety and the safety of other students
- Each class or cluster may have additional sets of rules and standards that are developed each year with the help of the students. All students and adults are expected to treat those rules with the same respect as all-school rules
- Further school policies follow State and Federal laws regarding other basic student behaviors and legally acceptable consequences. These are in the school policy book, and are available upon request in the school office

Suspension

Few students are involved in suspensions, but under certain circumstances a student may be suspended from normal school activity. In each case the parent/guardian is contacted, involved in discussion of the suspension, and be asked to confer with the Director and the teacher about the student and the suspension. In some instances students may be given in-school suspensions, or may be asked to bring their parent to school to accompany them throughout the school day.

Expulsion

Repeated suspensions may result in expulsion. The Governing Board shall be the final arbiter for suspension and expulsion.

Attendance

SCS receives money from the State of California based on student attendance or Average Daily Attendance (ADA). SCS does not receive any ADA funds for absences (excused or not). Parents must contact the office, and/or students must bring in a written excuse signed by a parent or guardian. Illness, bereavement, or family emergencies are among the few excused absences. If your child will be absent for 2 days or more, you must enter into an Independent Study contract with your child's teacher. Forms can be obtained from the office for this process. By contracting with the school during your child's absence, the school does not lose ADA funding for your child, and it enables your child to keep up with his or her schoolwork.

School begins at 8:40 am. Students who are late must go to the school office for a note to admit them to class and to allow the correction of attendance records. Lateness causes a student to miss crucial information and opening activities, so please make every effort to avoid being late. Each trimester the director reviews attendance records. Students who experience frequent tardiness and absences may be contacted by the director as state education law regarding such absences may be considered truancy.

Schedule

8:30 am	Classroom doors open
8:40 am	SCS morning ceremony
8:45 am	Classroom instruction begins
10:00 am	Recess and snack—Cluster One
10:35 am	Recess and snack—Clusters Two and Three
11:45 am	Lunch and recess—Cluster One
12:30 pm	First, second and third grade instruction continues
12:30-12:40 pm	Kindergarten pick up (varies, bell rings at 12:30 pm)
12:35 pm	Lunch and recess—Clusters Two and Three
1:15 pm	Instruction continues—Clusters Two and Three
3:00 pm	Dismissal

Medication at School

If your child is required to take medication during the school day, the school can only assist in administering it if:

- The medication is properly labeled with the child's name, type of medication and exact dosage
- A note of consent by the parents as well as a doctor's note is on file

PARKING, DROP OFF AND PICK UP PROCEDURES

Sonoma Charter School is impacted by the fact that our small school is right in the middle of a neighborhood, thus parking is very limited. We have a staff parking lot that is reserved for staff – please don't park there during the school day. When parking in the neighborhood, please be respectful of our neighbors' homes; do not obstruct driveways and entrances to their properties. We appreciate your help on this!

We have 231 children in our school, so be aware how this translates into the number of vehicles that come on and off our campus at the beginning and ending of the school day. If possible, arrange carpools with other families. If you want help arranging this, speak to us in the office.

Please remember that between 8:30 a.m. and 8:45 a.m. in the morning and 2:45 p.m. and 3:15 p.m. in the afternoon there is no parking in the drop off/pick up zone. If you need to park during these times, please park off campus.

Drop Off/Loading and Pick-up Zone

Our driveway accommodates one-way traffic, please follow the flow of traffic and keep your speed to 5 mph or less. Vehicles need to enter through the driveway at the far end of the school. Vehicles should exit from the driveway near Vailetti and STOP before exiting campus.

Vehicles should pull up adjacent to the drop off zone to pick up or drop off students. This is single lane traffic only, on the right side of driveway. Do not create another lane on left side and drop your children off in the middle of the driveway! Load and unload students as quickly as possible to keep the backup of cars to a minimum. If you need to have a conversation with one of our staff, please park off campus and come back to resume the conversation.

Sidewalks

Students and parents must use the crosswalks at all times. Do not walk through the parking lot.

Speed Limit

Please keep your speed in the drop off/pick up zone below 5 mph. All neighborhood streets have a speed limit of 25 mph.

Driving on Field Trips

Please park on Cedar Avenue or Casabella if you are driving on a field trip. Students and adults must use the crosswalk to access cars.

Parking

The large parking area is reserved for STAFF ONLY. During any time other than drop off/pick up, parking is allowed in the drop off/pick up zone.

EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM (EDP)

The Extended Day Program offers a nurturing environment to students before school in the mornings between 7:30 and 8:30 am, and after school from 12:45 to 6:00 pm every weekday. The program combines children of varying ages, providing an opportunity to learn from each other and to encourage new friendships. Children are able to play outdoors for a part of the afternoon and are encouraged to use EDP games and toys, or to work on their homework or projects.

At the conclusion of the a.m. program—8:30—children are either accompanied or sent to their classrooms depending on age. At 12:45pm, Kindergartners are picked up from their classrooms and escorted to the EDP room. Teachers supervise drop off at EDP at 3:00 pm. Each child is signed in and parents or other responsible parties are required to sign students out at the time of pick up. Parents must leave emergency contact information.

Students are registered with EDP at the beginning of the school year for a pre-determined number of hours. Contracts and payment agreements state hours and rates. EDP is available on teacher workdays, and some winter and spring conference and break days, but is closed for all school holidays.

Please contact the EDP director David Sporrang at (707) 935-4232 or voicemail at (707) 765-5539 ext. 13# to register your child for after school care. For billing questions contact Laurie Kaiser, Account Tech, in the office or via email at lkaiser@scs.k12.ca.us.

LUNCH PROGRAM

We are fortunate to have a contract with Revolution Foods, an Oakland-based organic school lunch supplier. We offer both hot and cold lunches. Every lunch includes fresh fruit and vegetables, a healthy carbohydrate, a lean protein, and a choice of milk or water. Lunches cost \$3.95 and are pre-ordered, either by a lunch menu provided in the Wednesday folder or via www.cafeprepay.com. In the event that your child forgets his or her bag lunch we have an option for \$3.95 that includes a peanut butter sandwich, milk and fruit. Lunch room service usually commences in the second week of the school year until one week before school ends and is dependent on parent participation as lunchroom personnel. Students are always welcome to bring their own lunches.

Free and reduced lunches are available to those who qualify. Information about this is sent home the first week of school in the Wednesday folder. Further information about this program is available in the school office.

Children eat outside at the picnic tables that are scattered throughout campus. If the weather is inclement, we eat in the multi-purpose room. We are a hardy bunch and believe in eating and playing outside as much as possible, so at times, a few sprinkles won't scare us away from the outdoors. Yard duty supervisors determine where we eat and play during lunch and recess.

ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE

Admission to Sonoma Charter School is open to any resident of California without regard of ethnicity, national origin, gender, or disability. The school's goal is to recruit a diverse student population, reflective of the Sonoma Valley and surrounding areas, from families that are committed to the school's instructional and operational philosophy.

The following steps are taken in admitting a child as a student to the Sonoma Charter School.

1. Applications are available in the school office.
2. Interested families must attend a mandatory orientation night and take a scheduled tour of the campus during school hours, during which an application is given.
3. Families submit a single application form including the ages and number of eligible children in the family.
4. Each spring the director, office manager and a district representative conduct a lottery. All applications are assigned a lottery number and all slots are filled according to lottery results. If the number of applications exceeds the number of available slots the lottery results establish a waiting list determining the order of subsequent admissions during the school year as new slots open up. The school's capacity is 231 students.
5. Open slots are filled according to the following guidelines:
Admissions are not to exceed a maximum of eighty students in each cluster
Admissions are not to exceed a maximum of thirty students per age level
6. Once a family has been selected, eligible siblings are given preference in admission
7. Families are informed about their child's admission status and the philosophy, policy, and goals of the school. They are asked to accept or reject the slot(s) within a given time period.
8. Families are asked to sign a contract upon acceptance of their child's admission indicating that they are willing to actively participate in their child's education and the functioning of the school.
9. Current immunization records, health screening documents and proof of birth data are required for registration. Kindergarten students must be five years of age by December 1st to enroll in August. An optional kindergarten screening test may be scheduled to help you and the school estimate your child's developmental age and appropriate placement.

SCHOOL OPERATIONS

Sonoma Charter School cannot function fully with our staff and also relies on volunteer groups to support the mission, vision and goals of our school. It takes many kinds of boards and committees to keep the charter school going. Below is a list of them and how they operate:

Governing Board

The SCS Governing Board is responsible for oversight of the school. It functions similar to that of the city school board in Sonoma, has fiduciary responsibility, oversees and hires the Director and works with the staff to ensure the smooth running of the school. This board is made up of 7 members. The parent body elects three parent representatives, the entire school community elects two community representatives, and the SCS staff elects two teacher representatives. The function of the Board is to set school policy and manage the School Director (including terminating or replacing that person.) Copies of Board Policies are available in the school office. Board meetings are held the second Monday of each month, with published exceptions due to conflicts with school calendars. All parents and interested parties are welcome and encouraged to attend! Board agendas are posted on the office door; agendas, minutes of meetings and Board packets are available in the school office.

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

Mission Statement: The SCS PTO is dedicated to serving the needs of the students, school and parent community by providing a centralized group that fosters parent involvement and allows for resources, talents & communication to be shared across all volunteer efforts, parent-driven activities and fundraising.

Sonoma Charter School's newly established PTO commences in the 2011/12 school year. Each parent is automatically a member of the SCS PTO and we welcome your involvement in this newly organized group!

Prior to the PTO, parent efforts were focused on the fundraising group called SCSF (pronounced "skuf") or Sonoma Charter School Fundraising. You may hear this referred to and it does still exist as our Nonprofit 501 C3 corporation. All funds raised in conjunction with PTO sponsored events (or other) are handled through SCSF. The PTO and SCSF will be run by one elected board and will follow the bylaws and conditions of the 501 C3 status.

Funds earned through fundraising efforts provide for such programs as Art, Music, Drama, and after school reading. Past Sonoma Charter School fundraising has put full-time aides into the classrooms, established scholarships for field trips, upgraded the playfield, purchased textbooks, built the library/media center, helped purchase new classroom/staff computers and operates the lunch program. As state cuts to public education increase, the role fundraising plays in maintaining the viability of SCS also increases.

Through our fundraising, the PTO/SCSF commits a specific dollar amount each year to SCS's budget, and is increasingly called upon as additional needs arise. Getting involved in the PTO helps us to meet those needs! Come to the monthly meetings, ask in the office, read the Update, ask your student's teacher, or ask a friend. There are many ways that you or anyone else (friends or extended family) can help.

Contact the PTO at pto@sonomacharterschool.org or call Kathy Pine, PTO President, at 812-7463. Note, written comments or requests can also be put into our PTO inbox, located inside the office.

EXPECTATIONS OF FAMILIES

Successful learning begins with active family involvement. Charter school families are actively involved in the operations and fundraising of the school, and choose representatives to the governing board of the school.

Parent Participation at Sonoma Charter School

By joining our school, you have made a commitment to play an active part in your child's education and to support the development of the school community as a whole. Sonoma Charter School constantly looks for the time and talent that parents, families, or community members can bring to our school. Your help is needed!

Because of the serious California State budget crisis, we cannot continue to offer our programs unless each and every parent helps in some way.

Volunteer Hours

SCS student families are asked to volunteer 12 hours per trimester, for a total of 36 hours per family per school year. This is very little time, far less than similar schools require! The school cannot function without volunteer manpower. Please help us by volunteering. There are opportunities for all hours of the day, and all days of the week, and all skill levels. Email volunteer@sonomacharterschool.org or call Sharon Johnston at 939-8957.

Tracking Volunteer Hours

SCS asks that all parents track their time and enter it into our online tracking system. In addition, to ensure each family is contributing the required 36 hours, keeping a complete log of family volunteer hours helps the school be aware of how and when volunteer time is being used and allows us to be eligible for specific grants that may require proof of parent participation in the school.

Tracking your volunteer hours is required at SCS. If you cannot log your hours online, please keep a paper copy and a member of the Volunteer Committee will log them for you. If you need assistance logging your hours, please call Sharon Johnston at 939-8957 and she will be happy to assist you.

Link to log in hours: <http://www.app.sonomacharterschool.org/>

Volunteering on a committee: By joining a committee, or helping on special projects, you not only help accomplish our most important goal of providing an excellent learning environment for our children, but you also have fun and meet other SCS parents.

Time commitments vary greatly for each committee. Ask a parent mentor or contact the Volunteer Committee to inquire about where your talents can best be utilized. Officially joining a committee is not required, but commitment and willingness to help is necessary. Any extra hours are always welcome—this allows us to not only meet, but to exceed our goals!

Charter Your Course:

This is a fundraising endeavor new to our school. You can volunteer to help by being a classroom representative for this initiative. You will get more information about this exciting new program as the year unfolds.

Classroom Volunteering:

Teachers ask for classroom volunteers at the beginning of each school year on an as needed basis. Teachers provide supervision of volunteers and determine the ongoing need for volunteers as the year progresses. Support your classroom teacher! We need classroom representatives for each room, field trip reps, lunchroom help, and the list goes on. Come to a PTO meeting to find more opportunities to get involved, talk to your classroom teacher, the Director or to someone in the office.

Daily short-term help is announced on the rolling white board that sits at the entrance to the courtyard. Check this board for opportunities to help and new announcements.

Help us continue to create a magnificent learning environment for our children

Examples of areas you can help:

Below are some examples of places that need your volunteer hours, expertise and ‘roll up your sleeves’ sweat equity. If you don’t see something that suits your interests, let us know!

- Crossing guard in the mornings before school
- Art, Drama, Music
- Campus Beautification—Painting, Landscaping, Student Garden
- Grant writing and research
- Tech Committee (help bring us into the 21st century); teach a class in the lab
- Reading groups
- Spanish
- Administrative tasks—making copies, Wednesday Folder assembly, web updates, communications
- Photographer
- Classroom Parent
- Event planning
- Snack Coordination
- Field Trip Coordination
- Events (non-fundraising) Dances, Graduation. Concerts/Plays
- Facility Coordinator
- Multipurpose Room
- Library: read to children, check out books, organize library, and oversee for classroom visits
- Lunchroom Coordinator and hot lunch servers (2 per day needed)
- Gala Fundraiser (none during the 2011/12 school year)
- School Promotion/Fundraising
- Spaghetti Feed/Talent Show

For more information on the committees, contact a PTO rep or speak to the office staff.

Contact either pto@sonomacharterschool.org or volunteer@sonomacharterschool.org

Passive Fundraising

Passive fundraising does not cost you anything, but helps to raise funds for Sonoma Charter School. Examples of passive fundraising include eScrip, Lucky S.H.A.R.E.S card, Amazon.com SchoolRewards, Box Tops for Education, Dine and Donate nights at local restaurants/businesses, Safeway-eScrip partnership program, Whole Foods Scrip program, ink cartridge (toner) recycling and cell phone recycling. Additional details will be provided during the first month of the school year.

COMMUNICATION

Communication between school and home is a key aspect to the educational success of each child. At Sonoma Charter School we have a variety of methods by which we keep you informed about the progress of your child, events at school, opportunities to participate and changes occurring within our community. It is very important that you keep the office and your child's teacher updated on any changes in your contact information so we can be sure that you receive all of our email, one call, and snail mail messages.

Below are the various forms by which we communicate school to home:

School Calendar

The basic school calendar is created by the staff and approved by the Governing Board in the Spring, prior to the next school year. Our calendar also takes into consideration the general Sonoma Valley Unified District calendar. Because of the way we develop curriculum at our school, we have chosen not to have weekly early release days on Wednesdays, choosing instead to have a full professional development day (teacher work day) almost monthly with several additional minimum days scattered throughout the school year. Events are added to the school calendar continually throughout the year; these additions are communicated to families through Wednesday folders, the Update, class newsletters, weekly school email blasts, class email and on our website.

Wednesday Folder

Every Wednesday your child comes home with "The Wednesday Folder". It contains the UpDate, notices from teachers about field trips or homework, notices from volunteers about upcoming activities, corrected schoolwork and other information. Please take the time to look through the information in your child's folder. Please return the empty folder by Friday of each week.

The UpDate

The UpDate, our school newsletter, is sent home every other Wednesday in the *Wednesday Folder*. It includes useful information about SCS including school news, class news, student work and upcoming events. Deadline for submissions to the newsletter are due in the office the Friday before the next issue. Please contact the Office Manager for more information about submissions. Teachers, staff and volunteers all include important school notices in the UpDate. Please make a special effort to read The Update!

Email Blasts

SCS sends out weekly email to the entire community the first day of each week during the school year. This email informs about events, volunteer opportunities and other current information, keeping our school community in the loop. Please be sure the office and the PTO has your current email information, as well as that of other adult members of your family. This is a great way to have grandparents involved in your child's school, so send us their email addresses as well! You may also add your email address to the school list by going to www.sonomacharterschool.org and filling in the box labeled "Join the SCS Mailing List."

If you would like to publish information in the weekly email, submissions should be sent to pto@sonomacharterschool.org no later than 10 a.m. on the Friday prior.

Progress Reports and Parent Conferences

Report cards and written progress reports are issued every trimester. The annual Parent-Teacher Conference days are scheduled on the school calendar and take place Thanksgiving week in November. Your child's teacher coordinates the scheduling of this meeting.

If you wish to schedule additional parent-teacher conference(s) regarding your child, please contact your child's teacher directly either by telephone or email and they will make specific arrangements with you.

One Call Now

SCS relies on One Call Now's parent notification service to deliver staff and parent emergency notification messages via telephone. The system is a recorded service used to notify families in event of lockdown, emergency or weather related scheduling changes, as well as communicating less urgent, but still critical information regarding parent-teacher conferences, testing, fundraisers and other activities or school safety issues. We only record less urgent messages after 4:00 p.m., so please listen to the voicemail before responding with a redial to school.

STAFF

SCS staff creates an educational environment that respects each student’s learning potential and cultural heritage. The staff has an active voice in the operations of the school, and is represented on the Governing Board. Each staff member is also expected to take on extra responsibilities beyond their classroom assignments.

Administrative Staff

The administrative staff conducts daily school operations in support of the school director, teachers and students. They manage the school office and interactions with parents and the community. If you need to contact our administrative staff, please call the main phone number at 935-4232 or via email directly.

Main office	General Info, requests	scsoffice@scs.k12.ca.us
Paula Hunter	Director	phunter@scs.k12.ca.us
Molly Koler	Office Manager	mkoler@scs.k12.ca.us
Laurie Kaiser	Account Tech	lkaiser@scs.k12.ca.us

Teaching Staff

All core academic teachers must possess or be working towards a California teaching credential. Using current methods of instruction, the teaching faculty identifies student capacities and individual learning styles to enable each student to reach high performance goals.

Paula Hunter, Director, phunter@scs.k12.ca.us

Paula joined SCS in July 2008, having spent the prior five years as the Director of the San Carlos Charter Learning Center, the first charter school in California. Prior to that, she was at The Nueva School, an independent K-8 school for gifted children located in Hillsborough, where she spent five years as a humanities teacher and administrator of mid level elementary grades. With a background in education, theater and business, Paula has had a wealth of experience in a variety of job experiences. She hails from Boston, (and yes – is a Red Sox fan) has a Masters Degree from the University of Mass and spent twenty years living in Maine, raising her children, chickens, goats and turkeys. She is happy to not have to shovel snow any longer!

Rachel Cisneros, Grades K-1, rcisneros@scs.k12.ca.us

Kristy Grindle, Instructional Aide

Rachel joined the SCS community in November 2005. She holds a BA degree in Psychology from San Francisco State University. She has earned a California Multiple Subject credential, a Montessori Primary certificate, and is completing her AM Elementary certificate. Her teaching experience began more than 20 years ago in Montessori schools in San Francisco. Locally, she has taught at the Montessori School of Sonoma and Crescent Montessori.

Darice Dekker, Grades K-1, Extension 4#, ddekker@scs.k12.ca.us

Jantze Trotta, Instructional Aide

Darice has been with the school since it was founded in 1994. She has worked as a classroom teacher, instructional assistant and English Language Learner instructor. Darice is a graduate of Westmont College, in Santa Barbara, with a BA degree in English Literature. She has a bilingual teaching certification in Spanish from the University of Arizona. Darice was the 2011 recipient of the Teacher of the Year Award in Sonoma Valley.

Julie MacDonald, Grades 1-2, Extension 7#, jmacdonald@scs.k12.ca.us

Cassie Oaks, Instructional Aide

Julie joined Sonoma Charter School in 2008. She came to us with a wealth of knowledge in the area of Montessori education and a passion for working with children. She earned her Montessori Lower Elementary credential while assistant teaching in a Montessori school in Napa. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Studies from Sacramento State.

Cynthia Podesta, Grades 2-3, Extension 3#, cpodesta@scs.k12.ca.us

Mary Oakes, Instructional Aide

Cynthia graduated from Sonoma State University and received her teaching credential with an emphasis in Early Childhood Education. She began teaching in Mill Valley in 1992. Cynthia lives with her family in Petaluma and is pleased to have her son, Collin, coming to school with her each day.

Judy Moses, Grades 2-3, jmoses@scs.k12.ca.us

Karin Gare and Dana Keeton, Instructional Aides (job share)

Judy has been a teacher at the Charter School since the school was founded. Judy did her credential program at the University of Nebraska and holds a degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Law School. She has since attained her California teaching credential.

Bob Edmondson, Grades 4-5, Extension 9#, redmondson@scs.k12.ca.us

Burch Owens, Instructional Aide

Bob holds a BA in English and Education from Capital University in Columbus, OH and a MS degree in Counseling Education from California State University in Los Angeles, as well as a California Multiple Subject Credential and a Counseling Credential. Bob taught at the 4/5/6 grade level for over fifteen years at schools in Southern California. He has served as the track coach, outdoor and science camps facilitator and music producer for school productions. He is the proud recipient of the "Teacher of the Year Award" given to him from the Sonoma Valley Education Foundation.

Helén Johansson, Grades 4-5, hjohansson@scs.k12.ca.us

Julien Bell, Instructional Aide

Helén started her first year of teaching at Sonoma Charter School in 2001. She taught 1st/2nd grade for two full years until youngest daughter Emily was born. Helén stayed home for two years with Emily and came back to teach 4th/5th grade at Sonoma Charter School! Helén studied Human Resources at the University of Umeå in Sweden. Throughout her academic years she volunteered as a Scout Leader for the Sea Scouts. After moving to California, she found the passion for teaching, earning her teaching credential from Dominican University in 1999.

Michael Luque, Grade 6 Homeroom, Science, social studies, language arts, Extension 10#, mлуque@scs.k12.ca.us

Christine Velarde, Instructional Aide

Michael Luque studied history at U.C. Davis, graduating in 1991. He earned his teaching credential there the following year. He spent his first nine years teaching in Catholic elementary schools in San Francisco, Santa Rosa and Sonoma, and now teaches Science, Social Studies and Language Arts. His children, who have all attended Sonoma Charter, validate Michael's confidence in the SCS program.

Jim Caruso, Grade 7 Homeroom, 7/8 math and science, jcaruso@scs.k12.ca.us

Christine Velarde, Instructional Aide

Jim holds a B.A. from San Francisco State University, and earned his teaching credential from the College of Notre Dame, Belmont, in 1995. Since then he has taught middle school and high school, spending four years at Cardinal Newman High School in Santa Rosa. He has been at Sonoma Charter since 2005. His two children, Selena and Vince, attended Sonoma Charter School since kindergarten and are now in high school. Jim coaches girls and boys basketball as well as track at SCS.

Jason Page, Grade 8 Homeroom, 7/8 social studies and language arts, jpage@scs.k12.ca.us

Christine Velarde, Instructional Aide

Jason is the 7th and 8th grade teacher for Humanities. He attended SRJC and College of Marin before receiving his BA in Liberal Studies from the Hutchins School at Sonoma State University. He also received his teaching credential from Sonoma State in spring of 2008. Jason has coached Boys Basketball at Sonoma Valley High School and currently coaches both boys and girls basketball at SCS.

Nadine Harmon, Cluster 3 Math, nharmon@scs.k12.ca.us

Nadine graduated from University of California Santa Barbara in 1995 with a Bachelor's Degree in Linguistics. After earning her teaching credential, she was employed by Phillips Edison Charter School in Napa, where she taught 3rd, 4th and 5th grades. She continued on to teach in American Canyon and also afterschool intervention at Adele Harrison Middle School in Sonoma. Nadine was raised in Sonoma and has two children attending Sonoma Charter School.

Lynda S. Allen, Physical Education and Health Tech, lallen@scs.k12.ca.us

Lynda holds a BA degree in Physical Education with credentials in P.E. and Adapted P.E. from Sonoma State University. Lynda has taught in both regular and adapted P.E. programs in preschool through adult education. Lynda serves as the Student Government Advisor and as our School Health Technician. She has taught at SCS since 1996 when she created the entire SCS P.E. program. Lynda has been a Teacher of the Year in Sonoma Valley.

Elizabeth Dekker, Visual Arts, etashman@scs.k12.ca.us

Elizabeth was born in Chicago, IL. raised in Tucson, Arizona, and educated in Santa Barbara. She graduated from Westmont College in Santa Barbara, with a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Art. Immediately following graduation she was hired at Raoul Textiles in Santa Barbara and worked as a designer and colorist for textiles for 10 years. She moved to Sonoma in 1999 and was hired at the Sonoma Charter School as a classroom aide. In the fall of 2002 Elizabeth took the position as Art teacher and has never looked back! As Elizabeth always says, "This is truly my dream job!"

Dan Saski, Drama Teacher, dansaski@gmail.com

This is Dan's 3rd year at Sonoma Charter School, and he is thrilled to be back! The 7th Grade had a very successful run of The Bard! last spring, and we look forward to more shows! Directorial credits include: Suessical the Musical, The Phantom Tollbooth, The Birds, Guys and Dolls, Footloose, Back To The 80's, Willy Wonka Jr., Macbeth, Comedy of Errors, Romeo and Juliet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, A Christmas Carol, and Alice in Wonderland. Dan also teaches at Ursuline/Cardinal Newman High School, Rincon Valley Charter School, and Sonoma County Repertory Theater, where he is an Artistic Associate as well. He has been seen in over 30 productions in and around the North Bay. Favorite shows include: Tuesdays With Morris, Bullshot Crummond, Leading Ladies, Fully Committed, Room Service, Taming of the Shrew, The Three Musketeers, Fat Pig, and Disney's Aladdin. He will portray 40 different roles in the one-man show, Fully Committed at Sonoma County Repertory Theater, Summer 2011.

Teaching Support Staff

Instructional Aides (IA) are present in the classroom with the lead teacher and act in their support in a variety of functions: daily classroom set up, student help and supervision, grading, paper work, and organization of field trips. They are vital to the work we do with providing a smaller adult to student ratio so that we can meet the needs of all students at SCS. The IA also supervise lunch and recess, the children refer to them as "yard duties" when they are in that role.

ATHLETICS

Physical Education in the Curriculum

Our Physical Education (P.E.) program is led by Lynda Allen. All K-5 students receive two 45-minute periods of P.E. per week. All 6-8 students receive two 50-minute periods of P.E. per week.

Extra Curricular Activities

Sonoma Charter School also offers athletics outside of the school day. Detailed information is sent home at the start of each season. Further information is available by contacting our Athletic Director Jim Caruso at jcaruso@k12.ca.us or leave a message in his box, located in the office.

Track

Grades 5-8, Co-ed team

Volleyball

Grades 6-8, Co-ed team

Basketball

Grades 6-8, Boys team and Girls team

SCHOOL CELEBRATIONS AND TRADITIONS

Morning Ceremony

Morning ceremony occurs in the courtyard each day (weather permitting) at the start of the school day; all students attend this ceremony with their class. It is the way each day at Sonoma Charter School begins—it is unique to our school and the founding philosophy regarding the building and maintaining of community. By starting each day together, we embody the philosophy of being one school, encompassing children and adults in all the grades.

At approximately 8:35 am, the eighth graders begin to drum and that signals to teachers and families that we are calling them to the courtyard. Once everyone arrives, our student government president leads the school in three pledges: the Pledge of Allegiance, Pledge to the World and The Gift of a New Day. Once completed, the vice president announces student and staff birthdays and the celebrant comes to the microphone to receive applause and pencils in celebration of their special day. Next the Director leads the school in celebrating achievements, making announcements, thanking folks for many contributions, leading students in appreciations and often reading poems. At morning ceremony we also celebrate and speak to academic projects that are occurring in different classrooms.

We encourage families to participate in ceremony by gathering behind the students in the courtyard and we request that there be no talking during ceremony!

Welcome Back Breakfast (also known as ‘Boo Hoo’ Breakfast)

On the first day of school, right after Morning Ceremony, the PTO sponsors a breakfast to welcome new families to our school and to greet returning families back after summer break. This event began as a supportive way to start the year for incoming Kinder families who were sad to leave their child at school and to foster friendships amongst all families at our school. This event is also a great way to find the path for your volunteer adventures at our school.

Back to School Night (Curriculum Night)

Within the first few weeks of school, we have a ‘Back to School’ event for all classes, K-8. During this evening, teachers meet with families to discuss what their curricula goals will be for the year as well as give out information that is relevant to the daily lives of the children at school. At this time families are encouraged to sign up for their volunteer responsibilities with each teacher. School wide volunteer opportunities may be mentioned at this time as well.

Note: this evening is typically for adults only and children are asked not to attend

Potlucks

Back to School Potluck: Within the first few weeks of school we get together to celebrate our close-knit school community. Families sign up in their respective classrooms to bring a dish to share—a appetizer, main course, dessert, or drinks. Classroom reps normally put this list together in each classroom.

End of Year Potluck: In the last month of school we have another get together to celebrate our accomplishments and visit classrooms to see the wonderful displays of student work.

As with all potlucks at Sonoma Charter, we ask that you bring plates and utensils for your family. We encourage use of reusable plates and utensils to cut down on waste!

Halloween Carnival

On the last Friday before Halloween, Sonoma Charter School sponsors a Halloween Carnival from 5:30 – 8:00 that is open to everyone in our school and Sonoma area community. The event is run by our Student Government, with Lynda Allen our PE teacher overseeing the arrangements. This is a fun, family event for wearing costumes and playing games that are appropriate for all children in elementary grades. Proceeds earned by this carnival go into the Student Government treasury, which distributes funds for a variety of school events. Student Government contributes annually to the scholarship fund, which supports Clusters Two and Three overnight trips to Coloma, Marin Headlands, Yosemite and Ashland Shakespeare Festival.

Harvest Feast

Harvest Feast is Sonoma Charter School's version of Thanksgiving. The week before Thanksgiving, each classroom or Cluster asks for family help in setting up a feast that aligns with the classroom teacher's goals for this special celebration. In the younger grades, feasts are held in classrooms, older grades may elect to do this by cluster and have their celebration in the courtyard. We all work together to bring our favorite dishes; some classes choose to have a theme that may be related to areas of study. Children sit down to share this special meal, with parents serving.

Spaghetti Feed and Talent Show

This event is one of Sonoma Charter School's 'Fun Raisers.' In February or March we have a talent show where many of our students (and some adults) show off their passions and abilities. Before the curtains rise, we have spaghetti feed that is run by the PTO. There is wonderful pasta and salad, plus a silent auction for families to sign their students up for such events as being the Director for a Day, or a classroom teacher of the day, PE teacher for the day, Office Manager for the day, just to name a few. Although this is a fundraising event for our school, it is also a wonderful way to showcase the talent of the students at Sonoma Charter School.

Jagathon

This is Sonoma Charter School's version of a Jogathon. Since our mascot is a Jaguar, we have elected to alter the name to fit our school. Lynda Allen, our PE teacher, works with members from the community to set up a walking/running path on our field. Students find sponsors to support their laps; the school provides colored beads to indicate the number of laps each student (and adult) completes. This is an easy and fun event for our school that raises money to support our programs.

Student Government

Elections take place in May or June amongst Cluster 3 student body. Elected officials hold the office for one year, beginning in the new school year. There are 10 positions filled (President, Vice President, two Dance Coordinators, two Snack Shack Coordinators, 1 Recorder, 1 Cluster Representative and 2 Treasurers. The student government meets weekly as part of an elective class.

Spirit Days

The student government select 6+ spirit days throughout each year. Parents are notified in advance via the UpDate and weekly emails. Spirit Days typically involve a theme dress up day with acknowledgement of the class with highest participation. The winning class may receive a prize, but most often it is simply bragging rights and temporary ownership of the "Jaguar", our school mascot.

School Mascot & Colors

The school mascot is the Jaguar and our school colors are blue & silver.

Families

Within the student body, children are grouped into families—a mixed group of children from grades K-8. 7th and 8th graders run each family with adult staff overseeing the groups. The 7th & 8th grade family leaders not only plan, but fully lead all family activities. Families typically meet once per month during the school year.

School Dances

The Student Government plans 4-5 dances per year for Grades 6-8. These dances are typically held in the Playbox with 5 to 6 adults chaperoning, as well as 2 SCS staff.

Graduation

On the last day of school, we celebrate the 8th graders who are moving on to high school with a very ‘unique to charter’ celebration of their accomplishments. Traditionally this event is held at BR Cohn Winery beginning at 6:00 pm. The graduation is fine-tuned to the current eighth grade class and is truly fitting the personality of that class as can be seen by their choice of music and guest speaker.

Step Up Day

On the last day of school, at Morning Ceremony, the Director leads the school in a step up ceremony indicating the end of a school year and anticipation of the next year. The Director begins with the 8th grade class, symbolically sending them off to high school (they actually leave campus to go to graduation practice). The Director then has each grade level/children “step up” to the respective slots where each grade stands for morning ceremony. This celebration kicks off the last day of school and is a favorite amongst the children and adults alike!

=====End=====