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# TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN FACULTY HANDBOOK 2025-26



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# WELCOME LETTER TO THE FACULTY

Dear Teachers,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the administration, I would like to welcome you to the 2025-26 academic year at The Harker School. The Harker School remains committed to its tradition of academic excellence, well-rounded programs, character education and global citizenship. These values, expressed in the mission and philosophy statements, have guided the school over the past century and will continue to guide us throughout the next century.

Harker encourages students to learn deeply across all domains and apply that learning towards making a difference in the world. We also believe in being the best educational institution we can be. At the heart of this commitment to excellence is the recognition that the teacher is the most important element in establishing the quality of the school. It is our sincere desire to support you in every way possible. The best way for the administration to assist you is through clear communication, and I urge you to contact us at any time.

Each of you is an important team member, and together we can make this year an experience on which we will look back with pride. Our efforts will have a significant, long-range impact on the lives of our students, and on the world we share. I wish you the very best this year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brian Yager". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brian Yager  
Head of School

# THE HARKER SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to educate students for success at college and beyond,  
and to foster kindness, respect, and integrity within  
a safe and nurturing environment.

We achieve academic excellence through the development of  
intellectual curiosity, personal accountability, and love of learning.

Our comprehensive program and exceptional faculty and staff help  
students discover, develop, and enjoy their unique talents.

We honor individuality, embrace diversity, and promote leadership  
and service, preparing students to take their place as global  
citizens.

The school tries to maintain consistency when referring to our various schoolwide goals.  
The mission statement explains our values as they relate to the tenets in the crest.

Please note the way these words are used:

## Tenet

This word describes the four words on the crest:  
Praestantia (excellence), Scientia (knowledge), Constantia (character), Beneficium (service)

## Pillars

This word is reserved exclusively for upper school honor code/code of conduct.

## Values

Our values are the words in the mission that are considered the most important  
for our community to live by, shown in italics:

"Our mission is to educate students for success at college and beyond, and to foster ***kindness***,  
***respect***, and ***integrity*** within a safe and nurturing environment. We achieve academic  
excellence through the development of intellectual curiosity, ***personal accountability***, and  
love of learning."

# I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to inform all faculty of the school's policies and procedures as well as to give a sense of our culture and in general, what we are working to accomplish during the K-12 journey on which our students embark. It is important that experienced personnel review this handbook thoroughly at the start of each school year as there are always some policy or other changes each year.

The first section is somewhat general and includes varied information pertinent to everyone. Subsequent sections are more specifically directed to individual departments. The scope and impact of this policy statement will be greatly enhanced by frequent review.

Teachers need to be familiar with the contents of this handbook, the personnel policies handbook for faculty and staff, and the Parent/Student Handbook. This will ensure maximum consistency in our dealings with students, parents and each other. If there are questions about any content in this handbook, it is the responsibility of faculty to ask their directors.

## A. THE HARKER PHILOSOPHY

The Harker School is a coeducational, independent, college-preparatory day school serving students in K-12. Our goal is to develop lifelong learners and well-rounded global citizens. Through comprehensive academic and extracurricular programs, Harker provides a challenging and balanced education. The Harker experience comprises the following cornerstones: students and families, teachers, curriculum, and a learning environment which includes inspiring facilities.

### STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

Harker students and families value learning and are kind, well-rounded global citizens. The students have passions within and beyond the classroom as they prepare to shape the world of tomorrow. Harker students are intrinsically motivated to pursue deep learning and extracurricular activities, and they take pride in contributing to a supportive peer culture where it is "cool to be smart and kind."

### TEACHERS

Harker seeks to attract teachers who are experts in their fields, love working with children, and who, through their teaching, inspire students to reach their highest potential. The Harker teacher creates a rich learning environment within and beyond the classroom so that students can find their place in the world today. Harker teachers, like the students, also care about the community, fostering the values that contribute to a successful and happy life.

### CURRICULUM

The Harker School believes in a deep understanding of subject matter, broad thinking skills and a love of learning as the key ingredients for success in the future. Our program provides a robust academic experience at a pace that meets individual student needs. Beyond the classroom, we have rich extracurricular offerings for a well-rounded, complete experience, with opportunities for students to pursue their passions wherever they lead.

### LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

There is no substitute for the special place that is the Harker campus. Motivated students, talented teachers, inspiring facilities and engaging programs, both within and outside the classroom, all combine to create the unique environment of The Harker School. The Harker experience extends beyond the campus walls as students reach out and serve the broader community. The school and its families are partners in helping the students achieve their highest potential.

## B. HARKER'S EXPECTED SCHOOLWIDE LEARNING RESULTS

Harker's Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs), outlined below, reflect the goals of the entire Harker community, and align with the accreditation expectations established by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS).

The Harker School focuses on four areas in the life of its students and the school: strong academics, broad programs, personal growth and community. We expect students to demonstrate the following ideals throughout college and life:

### ACADEMICS

- love learning for its own sake
- possess a strong foundation in core subjects
- learn and work independently and collaboratively

### BROAD PROGRAMS

- pursue a well-rounded education
- explore different activities and subjects
- develop lifelong passions

### PERSONAL GROWTH

- demonstrate and encourage moral and ethical behavior
- show kindness, honesty and respect
- pursue wellness in all its forms

### COMMUNITY

- appreciate individual similarities and differences
- develop local and global understanding
- participate in school, local and global affairs.

## C. ADMINISTRATION, DIRECTORS, DEPARTMENT CHAIRS AND LEAD TEACHERS

### ADMINISTRATION

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<b>Assistant Head of School, Academic Affairs</b>	<i>Jennifer Gargano</i>
<b>Assistant Head of School, Student Affairs</b>	<i>Ken Allen</i>
<b>Chief Financial Officer</b>	<i>Martin Bradford</i>
<b>Director of Admission</b>	<i>Danielle Holquin</i>
<b>Director of Advancement</b>	<i>Kimberly Lobe</i>
<b>Elementary Division Head</b>	<i>Kristin Giammona</i>
<b>Executive Director of Strategic Initiatives</b>	<i>Joe Rosenthal</i>
<b>Facilities Director</b>	<i>Shayne Hayle</i>
<b>Head of School</b>	<i>Brian Yager</i>
<b>Middle School Division Head</b>	<i>Evan Barth</i>
<b>Office of Communication Director</b>	<i>Pam Dickinson</i>
<b>Primary Division Head</b>	<i>Debra Cope</i>
<b>Upper School Division Head</b>	<i>Paul Barsky</i>

### DIRECTORS & MANAGERS - K-12

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<b>Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion</b>	<i>Patricia Lai Burrows</i>
<b>Director of Global Education</b>	<i>Jennifer D. Walrod</i>
<b>Director of Health Services</b>	<i>Debra Nott</i>
<b>Director of Information Technology</b>	<i>Jesse Lara</i>
<b>Executive Chef &amp; Food Service Manager</b>	<i>Steve Martin</i>
<b>Human Resources Manager</b>	<i>Marissa Locketti</i>
<b>Learning, Innovation &amp; Design Director</b>	<i>Lisa Diffenderfer</i>
<b>Library Director</b>	<i>Connie Hollin</i>
<b>Director of Security</b>	<i>Tor Warmdahl</i>
<b>Summer School Director</b>	<i>Cindi Gonsalves</i>
<b>Transportation Manager</b>	<i>Heather Armada</i>



## II. TEACHER PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS

### A. CRITERIA FOR TEACHER EVALUATION

The outstanding faculty at The Harker School is one of the cornerstones that make an education here exceptional and unique. Harker teachers actively strive to reach the highest standards of teaching and professionalism in their work. While we recognize the unique talents and personal styles of individual teachers, we share a common vision of the exemplary Harker teacher. In articulating this vision, we drew inspiration and expertise from multiple sources: current and past Harker teachers, The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, the National Association of Independent Schools, and even our own fond recollections of teachers who have inspired us in the past. The following criteria represent our aspirations and commitments to the Harker community and to ourselves as professionals.

1. Exemplary Harker teachers demonstrate their commitment to students by
  - modeling proper behavior and promoting the Harker community;
  - establishing a cooperative, respectful and positive rapport with students;
  - maintaining professional boundaries with students;
  - being effective, energetic and supportive as advisors or homeroom teachers;
  - communicating their role as supportive advocates to students;
  - supporting students by coaching, sponsoring clubs, and attending events, performances and contests.
2. Exemplary Harker teachers demonstrate knowledge of their subject areas and of instructional methodologies by
  - creating well-structured, thought-provoking classes and challenging assignments;
  - having a thoughtful approach to teaching that includes a variety of techniques and appropriate use of technology;
  - establishing an appropriate pace for students and keeping them positively engaged;
  - designing long- and short-term plans that incorporate curricular content and reflect grade-level expectations;
  - teaching concepts and skills in meaningful ways, such as encouraging students to apply them to real-life contexts;
  - exhibiting mastery of the content they teach.
3. Exemplary Harker teachers assume responsibility for managing and monitoring student learning by
  - maintaining a classroom environment of respect and rapport;
  - developing a culture of learning, in which high expectations are the norm and students take pride in their work;
  - devoting ongoing attention to students who are having academic difficulties;
  - assisting all students to become self-directed learners who can demonstrate, articulate and evaluate what they learn;
  - answering questions in a variety of ways when a student does not understand a concept;
  - incorporating a variety of teaching techniques that demonstrate a knowledge of students' varied approaches to learning;
  - communicating information effectively to students;

- providing students with appropriate, explicit and timely feedback on their work so that they understand their strengths and can learn from their mistakes;
  - communicating with parents, counselors, administrators and appropriate personnel in a timely and effective manner;
  - involving all students in the assessment of their own learning.
4. Exemplary Harker teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience by
- initiating growth and change in their own intellectual and professional development; creating annual goals and concrete steps to achieve them;
  - eliciting feedback from students, parents, administrators and peers;
  - modeling the actions of an educated person: reading, questioning and innovating;
  - critically examining their teaching practice on a regular basis.
5. Exemplary Harker teachers participate in learning communities by
- sharing best practices with the wider community;
  - pursuing opportunities to develop professional knowledge and skills and by participating in the extended professional community;
  - engaging with local and/or extended communities to improve professional practice.
6. Exemplary Harker teachers are active and supportive members of the school community by
- acting as ambassadors for the Harker community and its mission;
  - demonstrating enthusiasm for the Harker community;
  - meeting deadlines consistently, including – but not limited to – the prompt submission of grades, progress reports and comments;
  - carrying out supervisory tasks;
  - modeling consistent attendance and punctuality;
  - participating in the establishment and maintenance of an atmosphere of collegial support;
  - assisting in identifying and solving student, curricular and school problems;
  - collaborating with colleagues and the school's leadership in the design and implementation of programs and curriculum within the context of the school's mission.

The above criteria were created by a committee of teachers; some ideas were adapted from the following sources:

- teacher criteria already published in the Harker faculty handbook
- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards,
- California Standards for the Teaching Profession
- NAIS Principles of Good Practice

## B. FURTHER QUALITIES OF A SUCCESSFUL HARKER TEACHER

The successful Harker teacher gives **HEC** every day. They have **H**igh expectations, are **E**ngaging and are in the students' **C**orners.

It is also imperative that Harker teachers be **positive role models** for the students, constantly bearing in mind the considerable impact they have on the personal growth, academic achievement and emotional stability of students. Teachers exhibit and foster a love of learning in their subject areas and are expected to display the same level of integrity that we expect of the students.

Each teacher is expected to establish a warm, cordial relationship with students while maintaining

good classroom control. Verbal abuse, humiliation, name-calling, yelling or screaming at students and physically handling students are both unprofessional and unacceptable. Students should feel confident that the teacher respects them and wants them to be successful. It is imperative that everyday teachers make sure that students feel that they are part of a **safe and nurturing environment**, per our mission statement. To ensure a safe and nurturing environment, teachers must also be mindful to follow through and be consistent in all areas, at all times. The importance of doing so cannot be underestimated or overemphasized.

Furthermore, teachers are expected to develop strong faculty relations – a cooperative and collaborative relationship with their colleagues. We expect that all faculty interactions, including emails, reflect a tone of professionalism and respect. In the event a problem or concern with another faculty or staff member arises, employees may decide to resolve the issue between them. However, certain situations may be uncomfortable or unsuitable for the parties to resolve informally. In those cases, employees should consult with human resources or the appropriate manager/ division head for guidance on how best to proceed.

## C. TEACHER EVALUATIONS

The purpose of teacher evaluations is developmental; they exist to help teachers continually improve the quality of teaching and, thus, of our students' learning. We therefore ask that teachers receive the feedback in the spirit in which it is given. Since we can all improve in our crafts, teachers should expect to receive regular informal feedback from their director or other administrators.

All teachers will be formally evaluated during their time at Harker, as well. The head of school, assistant head of school for academic affairs and directors will formally evaluate teachers according to the following minimum observation schedule. All classroom visits for the purpose of formal evaluations will be unannounced.

- First- and second-year teachers will be observed by the head of school or assistant head of school for academic affairs, and directors.
- Third-year teachers and above – administrator will observe them at a minimum of every year.

Additional observations may be scheduled as deemed necessary by the administration. Teachers may also request observations or feedback from the assistant head of school for academic affairs should they desire additional feedback.

## D. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As part of a teacher's professional growth, teachers create a goal for the year that they will identify as helping them grow as educators.

Teachers are also encouraged to seek out the various, unique internal opportunities provided at The Harker School for professional growth. These opportunities include, but are not limited to: working with the directors of learning innovation and design to learn how to meaningfully enhance the curriculum; working with the global education director to learn how global education can be used to meaningfully extend a lesson or unit; or working with the librarians to better understand information literacy and how it may be meaningfully integrated into a lesson, unit or curriculum.

Teachers are also encouraged to observe other teachers' classrooms within or across campuses, to better understand and appreciate the school as a whole and/or articulation of curriculum in a given discipline. Harker faculty are encouraged to attend diversity, equity and inclusiveness professional development conferences and activities to be better prepared to handle discriminatory incidents and to better understand how to help build a safe and inclusive community.

Harker teachers are also highly encouraged to share their expertise with educators outside of the

Harker environment at conferences and workshops. We feel it is our responsibility to share our professional expertise in an effort to benefit the education of all students.

If teachers need ideas for how they can best further their professional growth, they should consult with their department chair, their division head or the assistant head of school for academic affairs. Teachers interested in pursuing a professional development opportunity should obtain approval from the assistant head of school for academic affairs, and then make the appropriate substitute teacher requests as needed.

## **E. PERSONAL QUALITIES OF A HARKER STUDENT & MODELING**

We expect Harker students to exhibit the following four aspects of our mission: kindness, personal accountability, respect and integrity. These aspects reveal themselves in a variety of ways. Harker students greet adults and peers respectfully, help those in need, use “please” and “thank you,” and think about how others will receive a comment before they speak. Students are still developing these qualities and learning appropriate and positive ways to behave and interact with others. As educators, it is our responsibility to help students develop these qualities and to reinforce positive behaviors. One of the strongest tools we have to help students develop these lifelong and critical qualities is to model them. It is important to remember that you are role models in the lives of the students you encounter, by the way you acknowledge others or show care and concern for others. Exhibiting the school’s values in action (VIA) strengthens our community in many ways, including the modeling it provides for the students in our care. We smile, we speak positively in front of students, and we exhibit joy in our daily experience.

## **III. ACADEMIC POLICIES & INFORMATION**

TK faculty should be aware of the following statements and expectations of the transitional kindergarten and should emulate them in their classrooms:

### **A. HOMEWORK STATEMENT**

The Harker School does not issue homework in TK or kindergarten. We believe that parent and child should read together daily for a minimum of 15 minutes. Occasionally, parents and child will be asked to prepare or bring something to school such as an “all about me” poster, or an item or drawing that will be used for “sharing” during all-class meetings.

### **B. DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE AND SCHOOL READINESS**

We agree with the National Association for the Education of Young Children’s position statements on developmentally appropriate practice and school readiness. The following excerpts from these statements highlight the core of these shared beliefs:

- On developmentally appropriate practice: “Developmentally appropriate practice requires both meeting children where they are – which means that teachers must get to know them well – and enabling them to reach goals that are both challenging and achievable.”
- On whole child development: “All the domains of children’s development and learning interrelate. For example, because social factors strongly influence cognitive development and academic competence – and the cognitive domain influences the social domain – teachers must foster learning and development in both, as well as in the emotional and physical domains.”
- On kindergarten readiness: “Readiness is more than basic knowledge of language and math,

important as these are. Readiness expectations should include all areas: physical, cognitive, social, and emotional competence as well as positive attitudes toward learning.”

- Hands-on experiences: “In early childhood and beyond, skills are most effectively learned and practiced when embedded in meaningful experiences. Even for children who enter school without having mastered specific skills, the curriculum should include child-guided as well as teacher-supported activities and should emphasize hands-on, integrated learning.”
- On the importance of high quality teacher interactions: “A teacher’s moment-by-moment actions and interactions with children are the most powerful determinant of learning outcomes and development. Curriculum is very important, but what the teacher does is paramount.”
- All interactions therefore, including play, are learning opportunities. As such, all teachers are expected to be active participants in student play, creating opportunities for learning even amid the simplest of tasks or play.

## C. CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

1. Raise your hand to speak.
2. Listen carefully to the teacher.
3. Respect each other and use kind words.
4. Remember your personal space.

## D. CURRICULUM

Curriculum books and other major materials should be approved of by the assistant head of school for academic affairs prior to being ordered or used. Teachers should use our Goals and Objectives in an intentional manner when designing curricular plans to assure progression through and review of all points moving through TK.

In all lessons and across all topics within your curriculum, teachers should take care to utilize a variety of modalities (visual, auditory, tactile and kinesthetic) to engage all different kinds of learners. For example, stories can be read and re-read by a teacher, children can take part by adding a motion or a chant at just the right times, a story can be told without a book, retold by a child and read to all, played out with puppets, played out with felt pieces, played out with materials from around the classroom, painted, drawn, sung, acted out by children at a group time, played out with materials or dress up clothes in a dramatic play area, in a sand kitchen, in a block area, and more. By sharing a story in more ways than reading with two-dimensional visuals, more children will engage and come to deeply understand the sequence, character perspectives and details of a story.

## E. MODELING: DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND OTHER UNWELCOME BEHAVIOR

Harker does not tolerate any act of harassment or discrimination based on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, religion, ability, sexual orientation, and physical and neural ability.

Harker also expects all faculty and staff, including coaching and extracurricular staff, to report any incident of actual or suspected discrimination or harassment to an authoritative figure, including the division head or dean of students, to ensure that Harker has a safe and inclusive community.

## F. THE IMPORTANCE OF NAMES

As a school, we too want to recognize our students by their preferred names. If a teacher finds that a student prefers to go by a name that is different than what is currently in Infinite Campus, please

Speak to your division head or campus counselor to determine how best to make sure the student's name is reflected properly in our systems.

## G. RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

Teachers must be mindful of scheduling assessments and project due dates around spiritual, religious and cultural celebrations that are widely practiced by the student body, including but not limited to Diwali, Holi, Yom Kippur, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, Easter and Lunar New Year. At Harker, there is a wide diversity of religious and cultural practices that are most important to and celebrated among your students and their families; some of those holidays may not be the more widely practiced ones as listed above. As such, it is important that teachers encourage their students to let them know if there is a cultural or religious holiday that they celebrate, such that they will require special consideration in terms of deadlines and assessments. To support these students, teachers need to demonstrate understanding and communicate with students as it relates to deadlines and assessments.

## H. STUDENT ASSEMBLIES AND PRESENTATIONS

Those who arrange for an outside speaker for our students are responsible for vetting the speaker. The OofC can help, if need be. One of the goals here is to ensure that the speaker represents the school well and is not affiliated with groups and/or have other allegations, records, etc., that might reflect poorly on the school.

## I. EXPECTATIONS OF TEACHERS IN RELATING TO CHILDREN

Teachers should view each child through a lens of competency. Positive language should be used. Methods of guidance should build on a child's confidence and self-respect. Moving close to a child, getting down to their level, making eye-contact, and listening in turn all promote effective communication and should be followed as often as possible. Teachers should consider themselves researchers, interested in asking questions of and learning more about each child and groups of children in order to better guide them in their learning. Please see "Guides to Speech and Action" for more guidelines to expectations around high-quality interactions with young children. This guide will be distributed at the beginning of the year.

## J. SUPERVISION / MENTORSHIP OF ASSISTANT TEACHERS

Lead teachers, teachers and specialists are mentors to and managers of the assistant teachers they work with directly. Please share the above expectations for interacting with young children and their families by modeling, through discussion, and in writing as necessary. Time will be scheduled to ensure teachers and assistants can share thoughts about children and discuss curriculum and assistant duties and responsibilities.

## K. RE-ENROLLMENT

Being an engaged and successful student at The Harker School is more than a set of grades or assessments. The experience of being in the classroom interacting with one's teacher, given activities and peers is imperative to accessing the Harker experience in order to fulfill the school's mission and prepare students for matriculation to the next grade level. The Harker School understands and appreciates that certain unusual circumstances may affect a student's attendance. The school will consider how any such circumstances may impact a student's success or performance on a case-by-case basis.

## L. TUTORING

Tutoring is generally not required or requested for TK students. When additional support is needed, parents, guided by the teacher, can typically provide the necessary assistance. If concerns arise regarding a TK student's academic progress, consult the primary division head to determine the best course of action.

While tutoring in TK is rare, all Harker teachers (TK-12) should be familiar with Harker's tutoring process and philosophy. The following paragraphs provide detailed information on this topic.

When a teacher is concerned about the performance of a student, the teacher needs to communicate those concerns to the parent. In such communications, teachers should give recommendations for what a child can do to remedy the issues the teacher is seeing. Prior to any suggestion that additional help outside of Harker may be needed, teachers need to ensure that students are attending and fully utilizing extra help. If assistance beyond extra help becomes necessary, counselors should be notified, as they can determine whether additional strategies may be of help in each situation. Not every family may be able to obtain a tutor, so counselors can determine the best plan of assistance for a given family.

Should it be determined that tutoring is the best step for a student, please note that all referrals for tutoring go through the lower school counseling office. Once a referral is received, the counseling office gives the family the names and contact information for three appropriate and available tutors. Those tutors may and will be encouraged to reach out to the students' teachers so that they can work with the Harker teacher to best determine how to optimize a given student's learning and growth in the area in which they are being tutored.

If a Harker teacher tutors, it is important that the teacher keeps the counseling department updated with the names of the students being tutored so that counselors, teachers and tutors can work together as a team to best support the efforts of the students. That Harker teacher tutor is also responsible for reading and knowing all of the information on the document "Tutoring Information Policies," which is found on the faculty and staff portal under Resources.

## M. LEARNING DISABILITY TESTING

Teachers should not discuss learning disabilities with a student or a student's parent. If you have any such concerns, please notify the assistant head of school for academic affairs. The assistant head of school for academic affairs must approve all recommendations to test students for learning disabilities as well as any accommodations given to students with learning disabilities. Accommodations for a given child will be documented and kept on file in the TK office.

## N. PROTOCOLS FOR IDENTIFYING CONCERNING BEHAVIORS / RECEIVING REPORTS OF ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR

Any time a teacher notices a student behavior that is concerning (the student makes a distressing comment, draws a picture containing violence, exhibits a drastic change in appearance, social interactions or moods, etc.) we ask that the teacher notify the appropriate administrator right away. They will investigate the matter and, with the assistant head of school for academic affairs as well as necessary outside resources, determine whether the student is a threat to him/herself or others, and what, if any, further steps need to be taken to ensure the safety of our students. In general, teachers should always be watchful for signs that might be indicative of concerning behaviors. Submitting work that is of poor quality or incomplete, conducting oneself in a manner that is disruptive, inappropriate or unusual, and exhibiting academic patterns that may indicate a special need are just a few of the behaviors that teachers must analyze, review and then handle appropriately. Teachers should notify the appropriate director or administrator should there be any such concerns.

Teachers are mandated reporters. If a child reports that they are being abused or if you have reasonable suspicion that a Harker student is being abused, as a mandated reporter, you must report your concerns or suspicions to Child Protective Services (CPS). If you have heard an allegation of abuse or neglect from a student, it is your responsibility to make the CPS report. If you would like a counselor's assistance when making a report, please contact the counselor and the counselor can provide the needed support. All CPS reports are required to be made within 36 hours of hearing the concerning information. If a counselor or administrator is not available for consultation (summer, late evening, weekend, etc.), you must call Child Protective Services for Santa Clara at 408.299.2071 or at the phone number of the CPS agency where the incident occurred, to file the report. Please know that it is not the faculty member's responsible to investigate the matter; rather, it is the responsibility of the faculty member to report reasonable suspicions of child abuse to CPS. The responsibility of the mandated reporter is to report, in their professional capacity, or within the scope of their employment, when they have reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Their responsibility is not to prove that the child abuse or neglect occurred. It is the responsibility of CPS or another governing agency to investigate the matter and decide whether the child abuse or neglect occurred. All faculty at The Harker School must annually complete the online mandated reporter training that outlines legal expectations as it relates to reporting abuse. If you have further questions, we also encourage you to review the information on the Child Abuse Mandated Reporter Training website given to you at the beginning of the year: <https://www.mandatedreporterca.com/training/general-training>

## IV. PARENT COMMUNICATION

### A. PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are an essential tool to build relationships with parents and to help keep lines of communication open. In an effort to ensure that all parents have access to their child's teachers during the parent-teacher conferences, all faculty members who have scheduled appointments must be available during all available appointment times. It is important that all faculty members not make personal appointments during these days as their attendance is vital to the success of parent-teacher conferences. Faculty members who need to make appointments to meet with their child's teachers need to do so outside of the scheduled parent-teacher conference times. As such, all faculty members will need to make themselves available to faculty parents during mutually agreed upon alternate meeting times. Please note that the spouse/other parent is welcome to make an appointment on these days.

### B. COMMENTS

The quality of comment writing is one of the hallmarks of a teacher's professional contribution to The Harker School. The teacher's expertise as an evaluator of student ability and growth and development is measured in these reports; moreover, the entire school is judged by both what and how teachers write about their students. Thus, comments must be supportive and helpful. Parents need to be assured that teachers:

- know their child individually;
- care about their child as a person;
- know their child's strengths and weaknesses; and
- have concrete strategies to help with continued development.

All comments should convey a specific evaluation using concrete examples from the teachers' observations of the student or the students' behavior or performance. Address them to the parents, not to the students.



The quality of a teacher's comments is a reflection of that teacher's professionalism. Comments must be balanced and constructive and should aim to foster growth and development. There must not be anger or sarcasm in the report. Comments should focus on the accomplishments of the student; do not write merely a stock paragraph that outlines or explains methodology or curriculum. In fact, such paragraphs are discouraged as they change the focus of the comment from the student to the course. Your comments should focus on the big picture: the student's achievement, attitude and ability; they should not focus on grades, and teachers shall not list the scores a student has earned for graded work.

Comments should convey to the family that the teacher knows the student as an individual, and should not be generic. They must contain specific information that conclusively demonstrates the existence of a relationship between teacher and student.

Comments should begin and end with a positive, encouraging or hopeful statement. Constructive feedback should be written as specific observable behavior, not as a value judgment: e.g., "Sam turned in six assignments late," rather than "Sam doesn't work" or "Sam is lazy."

It is the teacher's responsibility to make sure that someone other than the author proofreads the comments thoroughly before comments are submitted for parent distribution. Making a spelling error or including the wrong student's name as a result of overzealous copying and pasting may create a loss of confidence in the teacher on the part of the parent. Therefore, please make sure that such errors do not occur.

## C. GUIDELINES FOR INFORMAL COMMUNICATIONS WITH PARENTS

It is important to view the parent as a partner to optimize the student's learning experience. The importance of effective and supportive parent communications is therefore vital and cannot be underestimated. Issues that teachers should be communicating to parents are:

- milestone events
- concerning patterns
- disruptive behaviors
- strategies for growth in the classroom
- injuries or upsetting events

All of the above mentioned issues and poor or declining performance in general should never come as a surprise to parents at the end of a reporting period.

In-person meetings should be the primary mode of communication for all sensitive or serious communications. This includes any serious matter that is best discussed, so a plan can be made that is customized to a student's needs. For example, sensitive information of news where a supportive tone could be easily lost should be communicated by phone or in person.

Concerns about possible learning disabilities or other sensitive counseling issues should never be discussed with parents. If teachers have concerns about issues such as learning disabilities or depression, teachers should notify the assistant head of school for academic affairs, who will follow up with students and parents. Teachers should ensure important communications are sent or communication to both parents if a student has two households.

## D. EXPECTED MODES OF COMMUNICATION FOR TK TEACHERS

**Drop-off and Pickup Communication:** During drop-off times, one member of the classroom teaching team is expected to warmly greet the child and parent. Both drop-off and

pickup times are good times to initiate a short conversation with a parent regarding how things are going at home or at school provided that the conversation stays short, neutral and/or positive. Longer conversations or conversations that may be too sensitive for a child to overhear should take place away from the child, other children and other parents. Please stop conversations that move this direction and schedule a time to discuss over the phone or in private later. Overall conversations at drop-off and pickup times must be kept succinct, as teachers are responsible for supervising and greeting other children and families.

**Weekly Newsletter:** Each classroom and each specialty class will send a weekly newsletter. The point of these newsletters is to share general classroom information and learning goals, to help parents better understand general happenings between drop-off and pickup. Photos, ongoing projects, calendars and events to come, outlines of upcoming curriculum and child-initiated interest should be included.

**Documentation Boards (pinable):** In the classrooms and specialty classes, the walls should include special glimpses into current group experiences and interests. This should build through the year and feel appropriately current.

## E. DOCUMENTATION OF PARENT COMMUNICATION

Teachers should document any communication with a parent that is of a serious nature. An email exchange copy-and-pasted with a summary of context is fine. For a conversation, please write up a summary. Note the date, who was present, a summary of the discussion, and anything of note said or unsaid (emotions, background info, etc.). Please send this to the primary division head and keep a record for yourself. For ongoing serious communications with a parent, we recommend keeping a running log of communication (dates, times, a few words on the content).

## F. COMMUNICATION MODEL

All communications, whether by phone or email, must contain the following:

- a greeting and positive introduction
- a description of the situation
- the teacher's expectations of student and family
- positive encouragement, which includes what the teacher can offer to support the student
- a follow-up plan
- a warm ending/salutation

Parents want to know that their child's teachers know and respect their child, and are in their child's corner. Following this model will ensure that is communicated. Communications that are curt or suggest frustration or anger will not hasten the student's improvement and may hurt the relationship between the parent and teacher. Proactive and supportive communications often curtail the potential for negative parent interactions. However, if parents prove to be demanding or difficult in their communications, teachers should discuss the situation with their assistant head of school for academic affairs to determine the best next course of action. We do not tolerate parents who are excessively demanding or abusive, so an administrator should be notified immediately if such a parent situation becomes uncomfortable.

## G. SOLICITING HARKER FAMILIES FOR FUNDRAISERS

We have a generous and active community that is involved in hundreds of fundraising efforts each year for various causes, and we applaud those efforts. Due to the variety and volume of these efforts schoolwide, the school has the following policies.

All fundraising efforts must be pre-approved (see specifics below). Emails to families or employees from students, parents, faculty or staff soliciting funds or donations are not permitted unless they

are doing so on behalf of Harker's advancement office. Approved fundraising would include the school's annual giving, capital giving, annual picnic, Harker Day, etc.

### **Parent Fundraisers**

All parent-organized fundraisers at Harker must go through the advancement office for prior approval. Parent-run fundraisers should not go through official school channels, such as school email lists, grade-level coordinators, or room parents; parents may use their personal contacts and social media to publicize fundraisers.

### **Faculty/Staff Fundraisers**

Faculty- or staff-run fundraisers at Harker must be approved by the pertinent division head. Faculty and staff who organize a personal fundraiser on their own outside of Harker should not go through official school channels, such as school email lists, grade level coordinators, or room parents. Faculty or staff may use their own personal contacts and social media to publicize fundraisers.

## **V. STUDENT SIGN IN/OUT AND ATTENDANCE**

### **ATTENDANCE**

Teachers hold the responsibility of receiving children upon arrival and releasing children to authorized care-givers.

Warren Volk must take attendance in Infinite Campus each day before 10 a.m. Students arriving after 8:30 a.m. will be logged in by the front office and the office will also record the tardy.

Teachers are to discuss patterns of repeated tardiness or absences with the appropriate parents and report any continuing issues to the assistant head of school for academic affairs. Additionally, teachers should reach out to a family if a child is absent for more than two days. Messages left with the front desk about absences or tardies will be relayed to teachers.

### **EXTENDED STUDENT ABSENCES**

The school discourages extended trips during the time school is in session. While we recognize the value of extended travel, lengthy absences have an impact on a child's progress and performance and disrupt the class as a whole.

Therefore, teachers should be aware that parents should notify the school of any extended absence (non-medical) in advance of the trip. The school does not expect teachers to create or provide special assignments for students who miss school for unexcused reasons.

## **VI. FACULTY ATTENDANCE**

### **A. SUBSTITUTE TEACHER PROCEDURES**

The following procedures should be followed as early as possible if a teacher will be absent:

Contact the primary division head to ask permission for a planned or known absence on a given day or periods during the day. Examples of this include doctor appointments (for yourself, your spouse or your child), conference or work-related events, jury duty and personal time off. Please note that all sick and PTO absences must be requested via Paycom prior to the close of the given pay period. Once your time has been approved, arrange for the absence with Alea Selburn, who will serve as the substitute for the academic teachers.

In the rare occurrence that two teachers are absent on the same day and coverage beyond Alea is needed, contact our substitute coordinator at 408.345.0102 or at [subline@harker.org](mailto:subline@harker.org) in order to arrange for a substitute to cover your classes. Substitutes are often difficult to get, so we ask that

teachers give us advance notice and contact the substitute coordinator as soon as possible.

When you do, please provide the following information to the coordinator:

- Your name (please say it slowly in case the voice message is garbled).
- Your campus.
- The subject you teach.
- The date and time (if needing coverage for specific periods) you need sub coverage. Please be specific and identify the day of the week, month and date. If identifying period coverage, please indicate the times of your classes as the sub coordinator will not know your specific schedule details. All of this is especially helpful if the coverage is needed more than one week out.
- The reason for needing the sub. You only need to state the following exceptions: sick, personal day, jury duty, conference or work-related absence.
- The substitute you may be requesting for your absence (if applicable).

Should this second sub/additional need be needed at the last minute such as an illness or personal emergency, email the sub coordinator at [subline@harker.org](mailto:subline@harker.org) as soon as possible to arrange for substitute coverage. Should you realize that you need a substitute teacher for that day, and it is after 6:45 a.m., call the transitional kindergarten office admins to ensure your message is received. If possible, you should speak with one of them directly.

Additionally, note that if a teacher is absent the entire day, Paycom must reflect the 8-hour absence, not just the class and advisory hours missed. This is to accurately reflect a teacher's missed time and also to honor the community impact all teachers have, whether in the classroom or not.

Teacher presence and teacher quality are by all measures and studies among the most important aspects that contribute to a successful academic experience. As such, it is important that teachers be present in their class whenever possible. That said, we realize that there may be emergencies that may take a teacher away from class. In the case of such an emergency when a teacher is absent for four hours or more, the teacher must record the absence in the Paycom attendance program. If faculty need to miss an obligation during a school day such as a class, office hours, school meetings, faculty meetings, etc., notify your department chair and division head in advance by email. While we understand such shorter absences may be necessary from time to time, the expectation is that you will meet all obligations of a given school day. We will reach out and discuss the recording of PTO if the frequency of such absences is greater than ideal for consistency of program or of our students' learning. Please use the appropriate code as noted in the fifth bullet point above. If you have questions about the absence and corresponding pay code to utilize, please contact human resources. When teachers plan to be absent, they are expected to make detailed lesson plans that allow the substitute to continue the student learning in a productive manner. Upon arriving at school, outside substitutes will check in with the receptionist at the front office, substitutes will pick up a substitute folder and classroom key at that time. We ask that you make the assistant head of school for academic affairs be aware of any concerns you have regarding a particular substitute. Positive feedback is also welcome. You should not be repeatedly leaving early or leaving campus, as PTO would then be required. Your presence, especially in TK, is important as every interaction with a teacher is a learning opportunity and therefore the absence of a teacher's presence results in the loss of potential learning opportunities.

## B. FACULTY LEAVING CAMPUS DURING FREE PERIODS

All faculty and staff must sign out at the front desk and notify the transitional kindergarten receptionist/assistant if leaving campus during the school day. You may not take students off campus with you during a free period unless you have official permission slips for those students. Please refer to the personnel handbook for additional procedures around leaving campus during

the school day.

## C. AFTER-SCHOOL TIME FOR TEACHERS

Teachers are not required to remain on campus after school hours unless they wish to or there is a mandatory function. However, if parents ask to meet with teachers, they should be available to help after school or at another time that the teacher establishes with the student and/or parent.

# VII. FACULTY POLICIES/EXPECTATIONS

## A. FACULTY MEETINGS

Teachers are expected to attend all after-school meetings. They must request permission from the assistant head to miss a meeting if they have a personal conflict. Such instances should be rare. All teachers are required to attend all faculty meetings. Games or practices for athletic teams involving teacher-coaches will not be scheduled during all faculty meeting times; similarly after-school club meetings or activity practices should not be scheduled during any all faculty meeting times.

### ALL FACULTY MEETING EXPECTATIONS

- Teachers needing to miss an all faculty meeting must ask permission from their director prior to the meeting.
- Teachers identify themselves to their director at the beginning of each all faculty meeting. This will help the director ensure all of the teachers in the department are present.
- Teachers give each speaker the attention and respect they would expect to receive if they were speaking to adults or to their students. Teachers should therefore refrain from distracting behaviors including, but not limited to, grading papers, working on a computer or phone, and chatting with fellow faculty members.
- Teachers should remain attentive to the speakers and information presented during the full time of the meeting. If sitting for such extended periods of time is physically uncomfortable, please notify your director so that alternate accommodations can be found.

## B. FACULTY APPEARANCE/PROFESSIONALISM

Please refer to the personnel handbook for faculty appearance and professionalism guidelines.

## C. TEACHER AS TUTOR

Teachers who provide tutoring to our students are vital and valued team members of our learning community. In an effort to avoid conflicts of interest, teachers are never allowed to tutor students they are currently teaching. In addition, teachers may not tutor during the school day. You must notify the counseling department and the assistant head of school for academic affairs with the names of the students you are tutoring so that counselors, teachers and tutors can work together as a team to best support the efforts of our students.

All tutoring relationships are professional relationships between teachers and students. When tutoring students on any Harker campus over the weekends, teachers must notify their division head of which students they are tutoring, the day and time they are tutoring, and where they are tutoring the students. They must also reserve the use of their own rooms through RAR (Reserve A Room). Teachers should encourage parents to remain on campus while their child is being tutored on the weekends. Teachers may never tutor students after 7 p.m. on campus. In addition, we discourage teachers from tutoring students at the teacher's home; if you do so, a third person,

preferably an adult, should always be present. For reasons of liability, teachers are also never allowed to tutor non-Harker students on any Harker facilities. All tutoring referrals go through the counseling department. Teachers are not to refer students to a particular tutor.

All teacher-tutors must familiarize themselves with the tutor protocols and policies. A document titled "Tutoring Information & Policies" can be found on the faculty portal as well as in Schoology, located under Teacher Resources-Academic Affairs, Resources, Beginning of the Year information. All teachers need to read this document in its entirety before tutoring any Harker student.

## D. TEACHER AS COACH

The after-school coaching hours are from 3:30 to 5 p.m., with occasional extensions on game days. The school draws its coaches from off campus, but is also fortunate to have several Harker teacher-coaches on staff. Details regarding the general expectations for coaches are included in the athletic handbook, published annually. Though teachers' hours may preclude them from coaching, there are always exceptions. Interested teachers should contact the assistant head of school for academic affairs first and then the athletic director will be notified of your interest.

During their season of sport, coaches are required to conduct daily practice and attend all games for their team, whether they are head coaches or assistants. Faculty meetings are scheduled after school and may come in conflict with the after-school coaching schedule. The administration recognizes that coaches are teachers and have to be with their classes during their season of sport. As such, student practice needs to continue even if there are departmental, dean or divisional meetings. Solo teacher-coaches are relieved of the responsibility of attending all after-school meetings, with the exception of K-12 meetings, during their season of sport. Teams and programs with multiple coaches should coordinate with each other and the athletic director prior to a scheduled meeting to have practice led by one of the coaches so the other(s) may attend meetings. If this is a divisional meeting the attending coach should take notes and report back to the other coaches. Coaches missing divisional or department meetings are responsible for gathering information about the meeting from their director.

**Coaches are expected, however, to attend every all-faculty meeting.** Games or practices for teams involving teacher-coaches will not be scheduled during K-12 meeting times, and games will not be scheduled for those teams on the day following to allow for the practice preparation to be made up by the coach and team, if needed.

## E. SUPERVISORY ASSIGNMENTS

All TK staff and faculty teachers will be responsible for supervisory duties such as lunch, rest time or supervising students outside play time.

During your supervisory duties, know that the safety of students is of paramount importance. Therefore:

- Be actively involved – do not sit and chat with other teachers, or talk or text on the phone; make sure the environment is set up appropriately for the children.
- Be aware of safety rules and policies at all times.
- Interact with the children on an individual basis to guide behaviors and facilitate play.
- Facilitate return of shared equipment.
- Be aware of how many, where and the details of the social interactions between children during these less structured times and guide children as appropriate.
- Communicate with other teachers if you must step away.

## F. RECYCLING PROGRAM AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Harker School maintains a wet/dry recycling program to reduce the percentage of our waste stream that goes to the landfill, following guidelines set forth by the city of San Jose and Republic Services (the waste management company for commercial users in San Jose). In fact, the city of San Jose presented an official commendation to the school for its outstanding efforts. All campus trash bins are labeled either "Compost" (food that will break down, dirty paper/cardboard – or, as our youngest students say, "things that worms will eat") or "Other" (clean paper/ cardboard, plastics, metals, glass). Harker also discourages the use of single-use plastics in the school setting. Please be aware of this, especially if organizing field trips or events where students' refillable water bottles can offset the need for disposable ones. This may be expanded when sandwiches are ordered through the catering system, to replace small condiment packages with larger, refillable and recyclable units that can be shared. These are just two examples of best practices we hope to exemplify whenever possible. Please set a great example for the students by following the guidelines and demonstrating your commitment to this waste-reducing measure to our community.

## G. OPENING THE CLASSROOM

TK teachers should be prepared to meet children and parents by 8:15 each morning. The classroom should be prepped and ready for the morning activities by 8:15. Teachers should be available for parent interaction and provide a welcoming transition for students from home to school.

## H. SPECIAL CLASSROOM EVENTS

Any on-campus event must be approved by the campus administrator and the assistant head of school for academic affairs. Use of campus facilities other than one's classroom must be reserved online using RAR, once approved by the assistant head.

## I. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Good classroom control is essential for learning. Teachers are responsible for safeguarding the learning environment in the classroom. Additionally, a well-managed class allows for a safe and nurturing environment to be realized. It is expected that classrooms be reasonably quiet, orderly and free from tension. Teachers are expected to develop thought-provoking discussions and activities while maintaining control of the classroom.

## J. CLASSROOM DÉCOR/CLEANLINESS

Teachers are expected to decorate their classrooms in an interesting and appropriate manner. Material used should be related to the current activities and interests of the classroom. Attractive bulletin boards are important and necessary in each classroom. Children's work and documentation should be displayed whenever appropriate. It is also important that classroom décor not create unnecessary distractions. A classroom is a reflection of the teacher as well as the learning environment. As such, teachers are expected to maintain clean, neat classrooms and desks. Classrooms should not appear cluttered. Writing or markings on desks, tables or other classroom furniture is to be reported to the office. Teachers should watch closely for markings or damage to furniture and equipment in classrooms.

Teachers should keep the classroom looking neat and tidy on a daily basis. Spray bottles for cleaning furniture surfaces and nap mats should be used and stored as required by licensing. Teachers should help develop a class- room system to teach the children to use the proper waste receptacles (wet/dry). Teachers are responsible for washing classroom lunch and snack dishes each day. Brooms, mops and other cleaning supplies are available in each classroom for daily spills

and messes. The maintenance staff is responsible for evening sweeping, vacuuming, and emptying of trash cans. Floors will be mopped and windows washed on a rotating basis each week. Any unsafe or unsanitary conditions should be reported immediately. Common hand towels may not be used. Adults must wash their hands before serving food and helping in the bathroom.

## K. CLASSROOM BOOKS

TK teachers are expected to care and account for all books issued to their classroom by the school. All books are marked and coded for easy identification. Books are to be cared for properly at all times, and teachers should periodically check books to be sure students are not defacing them.

## L. VOICEMAIL/EMAIL/MAILBOXES

To ensure timely responses to parent, faculty or administrator needs, voicemail, email and mailboxes should be checked at least twice per day, and teachers must respond in a timely and appropriate manner. A 24-hour response window (one working day) is reasonable for parent/colleague responses even just to say "I received your message and I will respond to you shortly." Faculty should also assume that such communications have an appropriate tone to maintain and promote a positive community.

## M. STUDENT FILES

A cumulative file is maintained for each student. Files contain student information, licensing documentation, parent interaction reports, new child intake forms, and teacher comments. Teachers are responsible for keeping all important information in the files.

## N. PHOTO/VIDEO POLICY

TK parents and caregivers are welcome to take photos at school. We do ask that parents understand that not every moment is a good moment to photograph, and teachers may occasionally direct you to hold any picture taking. Please follow their directions in such instances. We recommend seeking permission beforehand whenever possible (either in the moment just before, or further ahead of time).

## O. FACULTY CHECKOUT

At the conclusion of each regular school year, all teachers must follow prescribed checkout procedures. Teachers receive a form for this purpose and must collect signatures from the appropriate supervisors. The completed forms are turned in to the assistant head for final approval. TK teachers will be asked to check out at the end of the school year or the end of their required summer session.

## P. INVENTORIES

All teachers are responsible for keeping accurate, updated inventories at all times. Teachers need to check inventories early in the school year to be sure items are present. Inventories must be updated at the end of each school year.

## Q. PROCESS FOR HOSTING PARENT PRESENTATIONS

There is an approval process in place for any employees interested in hosting a parent presentation at The Harker School. The first step in this process is to contact the assistant heads of school for both academic affairs and student affairs, who will then direct the host through a



process that includes but is not limited to submitting a form that highlights information relevant to the presentation and receiving a document that highlights the responsibilities of a presentation host. Following this process allows us as a school to present our best selves to our community. This process also helps to provide the school sufficient time to promote the speakers to our parent community and identify the best audience for the presentation (K-12, 6-12, etc.). For presenters who are not members of The Harker School community, this process also helps to ensure all speakers are vetted thoroughly since it is important that those who present at Harker publicly model the values we represent.

## **VIII. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Please refer to the TK parent handbook for all health and safety information.

### **ALLERGIES**

Teachers should discuss student allergies with the campus nurse. Each student situation tends to be different; the campus nurse will direct the teachers as to how best to work with any student allergy.

Teachers should always consult with the campus nurse, should any questions arise.

## **IX. FIELD TRIPS**

### **A. GENERAL**

The easiest way to determine if an activity is considered a field trip is to answer the following questions:

1. Is Harker providing transportation?
2. Is a Harker faculty member providing direct supervision of the students?
3. Is it mandatory for a class, club or team?

If the answer to any of those is "yes" then it is a field trip and the following guidelines apply. Faculty and staff may not take any student off campus without prior notification to and signed permission from parents and without the approval of the division head.

Teachers are responsible for scheduling their own field trips via the VersaTrans Trip Tracker system, found online in the faculty portal. Tutorials for use of the system are also available online. If possible, all field trips for the year should be planned and submitted to the division head the first week of October. All first-time trips must be approved by the division head prior to any conversation with parents or students.

As a general rule, day-long field trips may not depart prior to 8:30 a.m. or return after 3 p.m. due to transportation needs in other divisions. Trips extending beyond this time period must be specifically approved within the Versa- Trans system.

### **B. PERMISSION FORMS FOR DAY TRIPS**

Teachers must generate a permission slip for the parents of each student attending any day field trip.

Permission form templates for simple day field trips in editable PDF format are available online in the faculty portal. Paste-in links to the forms are located within the VersaTrans email confirmation system.

Reminders should be sent home in weekly packets for younger students to get materials returned on time

- at least five days before the scheduled departure so that the attendance office can enter the information into Infinite Campus.

No student may leave campus without submitting a signed permission slip. In the event that students fail to submit their permission slips on the due date, attempt to have the parents fax or email a signed slip. Emails from parents are not a substitute for the permission slip.

Permission slips are not required for intercampus travel.

## C. FIELD TRIP TRANSPORTATION

Chaperones ride with students on field trips. All Harker students who are transported by bus, train or plane on a Harker field trip must be chaperoned from start to finish. Particularly in the case of bus travel, faculty and staff chaperones must ride to provide support and supervision while drivers concentrate on the road ahead. Bus drivers, whether Harker or chartered, cannot be responsible for supervision or check-in/out of students on field trips. In general, this rule can be followed: A bus that is half full requires at least one adult chaperone and a bus that is full requires a minimum of two; and in the case of our youngest students, more are required. Consult the dean of students or division head for guidance.

Bus drivers are instructed not to leave the departure point unless the requisite numbers of faculty or staff members are on board. The transportation director will ensure that adequate space exists for both the students and chaperones riding on the bus.

All chaperones on the transport should have accurate attendance lists, and carefully check students onto the bus or other mode of transport prior to the start of the trip and after every stop during which students are allowed to leave the vehicle or other mode of transport. A copy of the original, verified attendance list must be left at the front desk of the campus from which the field trip departs; this should be done just prior to departure to ensure accuracy. For day field trips lasting longer than 3.5 hours, or occurring during the driver's normally required lunch break, the teacher who is organizing the field trip will be responsible for providing lunch for the driver or budgeting for the driver's reimbursement for lunch.

## D. FACULTY AND STAFF DRIVERS FOR FIELD TRIPS

A teacher or staff member can only provide field trip transport for students if the teacher or staff member has completed the process of being added to the Harker Approved Driver List. The policy summarizing this procedure is online in the faculty/staff portal. In these cases, information regarding who is driving must be included on the permission slip to the parents. The approval, permission form and insurance combine to provide protection for the staff/faculty member and the school in the unfortunate case of an accident. Any faculty or staff member driving a Harker vehicle on Harker business who receives a moving violation/ticket, parking violation/ticket or toll road/gate violation/ticket will be held responsible for the fine levied for the violation. Approved drivers must have provided information regarding appropriate levels of personal vehicle insurance in order to drive students in their own cars on a field trip. No one is allowed to transport a student alone with them by car on a field trip.

## E. SPECIFIC PROCEDURES

All VersaTrans requests for recurring trips must be submitted by October 1 via the online reservation system in the faculty portal. These are the essential requirements for entry of field trip requests into the VersaTrans system:

- Day trips traded after the first week of October require 14 days for approval and scheduling.
- Any field trip that may be unable to meet these criteria should be brought to the attention of the division head and assistant head of school for student affairs before promotion to parent or students to determine if cost-effective transportation is effective or available.
- If you have not submitted a request before, you may need to contact the office of the assistant head of school for student affairs to establish an account in VersaTrans. Once that is done and you have submitted your request, the email response system will keep you informed of the approval chain. And, once officially scheduled for transport, you will receive a notice as well. Throughout the process, the trip request can be viewed online in the VersaTrans system. Instructions and training can be obtained from the office of the assistant head of school for student affairs.
- If the transportation request is for a charter bus rather than a Harker bus, a request for a quote should be forwarded to the transportation manager before entering the VersaTrans request. This is to maintain budget integrity and transport availability.
- Once initial approval is confirmed, you may contact the appropriate organization and solidify your off-campus reservation. There is a field trip fiscal information sheet, also available via the faculty portal, to collect all necessary information for the day field trip to be fully supported.
- You will receive a transportation confirmation email from the transportation manager via VersaTrans the week before your trip is scheduled. Any amendments to the schedule or location can be done online in VersaTrans prior to that time. However, significant changes should be communicated directly to those who have previously approved the trip to see if the changes may affect other school activities.
- At least one week prior to the trip, if a meal request has been previously submitted, forward the lunch/meal count (separately indicating the number of students and adults) to food service. It is the trip leader's responsibility to inform food service regarding the number of students who will not be present for lunch. Confirm from the prior request the number of vegetarian lunches needed and any special dietary requests.
- Five days prior to the trip, teachers should bring permission slips to the attendance office. This allows for permission forms to be reviewed for completeness and then maintained on file during the trip.
- The day before the trip leaves, trip leaders need to pick up first aid packs. They should be returned to the office upon return to campus.
- On the day of the trip, teachers will leave an accurate list of students taking part in the trip with the attendance office. In case of emergency during a day trip the teacher will contact the office to fax any necessary information to a treatment center as needed. Teachers should not dispense medications to students on day field trips without calling and checking with the campus nurse first. Instructions for dispensing prescription medications on overnight trips should be reviewed with the nurse prior to departure.
- Check to see that your students are appropriately dressed for the trip.
- Brief any parents who may accompany the day field trip as chaperones on their responsibilities, and be sure they have received prior approval as chaperones. Parents may not act as chaperones on overnight trips.
- If using a bus for transport, please be aware that the driver is in charge. State law prohibits teachers and other adults from standing or moving about on the bus while the vehicle is in motion. Chaperones should disperse throughout the bus to maintain supervision over the students.
- Throughout the trip, maintain an accurate count of the students. A recount should be performed each time you move to a different location and each time you board the bus or change to another mode of transport.

All faculty should be familiar with and abide by all of Harker's travel policies. The travel policy document can be found on the faculty and staff portal under the HR and Business Office tab.

## F. GENERAL CHAPERONE EXPECTATIONS

These general guidelines can help create a successful experience when you are chaperoning a dance or other event:

- Be positive and flexible. Your attitude sets the tone for the students.
- Be proactive and pitch in where needed. Act as a team. Events always run smoother when everyone works together.
- Be on time. If you cannot make a chaperoning duty because of illness or dire emergency, contact the trip leader and division head as soon as possible.
- Field trips, performances, games and events are a time for students to enjoy those specific activities. They are not a time for teachers to mention grades, assignments or other classroom-related issues.

When chaperoning a student trip, faculty and staff should understand and address job responsibilities with the same professionalism demonstrated on campus. The expectations related to student supervision are heightened due to the fact that the standard support services available at school (i.e., nurse, counselor, parents, etc.) are not available to chaperones. Whenever chaperones are on duty they need to be present, attentive and in a condition to act appropriately and effectively. Chaperones are always responsible for maintaining themselves in such a manner where they can exercise good judgment. Therefore, no alcohol should be consumed 24 hours before any chaperone duty, since chaperones in these cases are the primary caretakers of the students. Additionally, chaperones are strictly prohibited from consuming alcohol or being under the influence of any substance at any time during the trip. Please remember that responsibility for the safety of the collective student group is shared by everyone on the trip and each chaperone needs to be able to depend on the others for help and support in the event of an emergency.

A detailed list of chaperone responsibilities and expectations for overnight field trips is maintained on the faculty portal under field trips.

### **Volunteer & Chaperone Livescan Fingerprint Requirement**

All volunteers and chaperones who will be working with or having contact with students on the lower school campus - including during field trips, class parties, or any other school events - must complete Livescan Fingerprinting through the Verify Group. This is a one-time requirement, and once completed, it will cover you for your entire tenure at Harker. This clearance process ensures the safety and well-being of our students by verifying that all volunteers and chaperones have been fully vetted by a third-party screening service.

## **G. SPOUSES, PARTNERS AND FRIENDS AS GUESTS WHILE CHAPERONING**

The guidelines above should act as the basic guide when considering the attendance of a spouse, partner or guest when you are acting as a chaperone. All such requests for the presence of spouse, partner or guest while you are on chaperone duty must have the advance approval of the division head. Before considering such an invitation, consider the event and whether or not you will be able to fulfill your responsibilities to the students and the other chaperones while your spouse, partner or friend is present. Your division head can assist with that decision. If approved, any interaction between the spouse, partner or friend and the students can only occur in the presence of a faculty member, and cannot be directive in any way.

All faculty should be familiar with and abide by all of Harker's travel policies. The travel policy document can be found on the faculty and staff portal under the HR and Business Office tab.

## **X. GENERAL INFORMATION FOR FACULTY**

### **A. RECEPTION DESK**

The reception desk facilitates communications between parents and the school. All messages for staff will be left in their mailboxes. All visitors will be registered at the front reception.

## B. RAINY DAYS

In extreme weather, students should eat lunch inside their classrooms, and should play outside only if they have proper rain gear.

## C. SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Classroom supplies needed by teachers for personal use can be obtained by submitting a supply request. Requests will be processed two times during the school year, in August and January. It is essential that you plan ahead when ordering supplies. The school maintains a small inventory of basic supplies for emergency purposes. A serious effort should be made to conserve as these items are costly.

## D. LOST AND FOUND

We believe that students should develop the responsibility to manage their belongings. Taking care of possessions is an important skill. Within the classroom, teachers should encourage children to put away their own things and help identify and return loose items found around the classroom.

## E. VISITORS

Please note that all visitors on campus are required to check in at the front desk, and wear visible Harker-issued lanyards while on campus. Faculty and staff expecting visitors should alert the front desk in advance. If you would like a visitor to observe or spend time with your class, you need to request approval from the middle school division head and the assistant head of school for academic affairs in advance.

## F. FACULTY & STAFF GIFTING

In a school, tradition is such that occasionally students, parents or vendors give gifts to employees, generally in recognition of appreciated efforts. While Harker does not prohibit employees' acceptance of gifts, all employees should make sure that doing so does not influence or give the appearance of influencing business or academic decisions, transactions or service.

As a guideline and to protect employees from the appearance of influence, if any gift appears to have a value above \$200, staff members should discuss options with their supervisor. To ensure no misunderstanding about equal treatment of all students, teachers should be judicious when accepting gifts.

## G. HOURS OF CAMPUS OPERATIONS

Each campus is staffed with security at prescribed times. Teachers should plan their on-campus presence according to those times. It is preferred that teachers limit their working schedule to daylight hours, which can fluctuate during the school year. If working on campus after dark, teachers should make contact directly with security to advise of their presence. That phone number is 408.639.1002. It is recommended that if teachers are on campus after dark or in the morning prior to 7:30 a.m. that they work with their doors closed and locked unless students are present. If teachers want an escort to their cars after hours they may call security for that service. There is no weekend access, unless there is an event for which you have secured permission from the administration.

If coming to campus alone on the weekend, an email should be sent in advance to the assistant head of school for academic affairs so someone is aware of your presence on campus. In these instances, teachers should work in their classrooms with the doors locked. If teachers know in advance they will be working on a weekend, they should use the RAR system to “reserve” their classrooms. This is another means of letting security and facilities know in advance of your planned presence on campus. If you need help with the RAR system, please contact the facilities coordinator. Utilization of the campus for student tutoring on weekends is discouraged.

## **H. LENGTH OF SCHOOL YEAR**

Should there be an extenuating circumstance such that the school has to close and classes are unable to be delivered to students, the school reserves the right to add additional school days to the school year calendar. Teachers, of course, would then be required to carry out their usual duties and responsibilities during these days.

## **XI. MANAGING BEHAVIOR**

At The Harker School, the character and behavior of the students are of paramount importance. We believe that the kind of people who graduate from Harker is just as important as the skills and knowledge that they acquire. In keeping with this belief, students are expected to live by the four tenets of character and behavior highlighted in our mission, which our faculty and administration must reinforce in developmentally appropriate ways. Those tenets are:

- Kindness
- Respect
- Integrity
- Personal Accountability

We are committed to providing a learning environment that supports the development of young children’s social and behavioral competence. It is the teacher’s responsibility to work with families to manage each child’s behavior and development in a way that promotes the values below.

- We treat all children with respect and dignity.
- Realistic expectations are set for children in all areas.
- Our environment is designed to enhance positive outcomes.
- Teachers provide guidance to help children develop the skills needed to control impulsive behavior and delay gratification.
- Natural and logical consequences are used to reinforce desired behaviors.
- Problem-solving skills and strategies are taught to help resolve conflicts.
- No methods that shame a child will be employed. No corporal punishment will ever be used.

In a rare case when a child has continued or extreme difficulties interacting with others or following school routines, the teacher should contact the primary division head. Parents will be consulted and ideas for improvement will be strategized. Teachers and parents will continue to work together in these cases to support the child at school. If appropriate improvement does not occur, dismissal from the school may be necessary.

## **XII. BUSINESS OFFICE**

For any information relating to the business office or to human resources, please refer to the personnel handbook, which can be found on the faculty portal.

### XIII. SCHOOLWIDE COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA RELATIONS: OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION

Harker's Office of Communication oversees the public website, Parent Portal, internal and external publications, including the Harker Magazine, photo and video coverage, social media, media relations and the Harker News, Harker's daily digital news source. Email [communications@harker.org](mailto:communications@harker.org) with any questions or suggestions.

**Parent Portal:** Harker's Parent Portal is your dashboard for information and resources. In this password-protected space, accessed from [www.harker.org](http://www.harker.org), you can (depending on your student's division): update your family's information; view report cards, announcements, the staff directory, lunch menus and homework; find tuition and re-enrollment information; customize calendars; purchase tickets for events; access the photo database and video channels; sign up for after-school activities; and more.

**eWeekly:** The eWeekly is sent each Thursday to all Harker families with calendar and event reminders for the coming week, including links to RSVP or purchase tickets to events and access to our photo database for downloading. (Additionally, parents may receive unofficial reminders and updates regarding grade level social activities by Grade Level Coordinators or other parent volunteers from our advancement office).

**Online News, News Express, Harker Magazine:** We publish news and updates about the Harker community in Harker News on an almost-daily basis here: <http://news.harker.org/>. You can subscribe to a daily digest, which we highly recommend so you don't miss interesting and exciting news of the community. The Harker News Express is emailed in the first week of each month to all families and to alumni. It recaps the top stories from the previous month and includes event reminders for the coming month. The biannual Harker Magazine includes in-depth features, alumni news and more. It is mailed to homes and also linked in the Parent Portal. To submit story ideas and suggestions for any of these publications, email [news.harker.org](mailto:news.harker.org).

**Photos & Video:** Parents are expected to show consideration for students, teachers and coaches if video recording or photographing extracurricular events, such as performances and sporting events. No recording (audio or video) of in-class or athletic practice activity is permitted without the explicit consent of the instructor or coach.

To enable parents to devote their full attention to their child's performance, all major performing arts events are professionally recorded and photographed by the school and made available for free to parents via the Performing Arts tile on the parent portal, and photo galleries in the portal shortly after the performance. Therefore, we ask families not to video record or photograph these events so that all families can enjoy their children's performance without distraction. A quick phone photo is acceptable, but no flash photography is allowed. Specific guidelines will be announced prior to each performance. The public release or posting of any portion of any of these recordings is strictly prohibited without the explicit consent of the administration of The Harker School.

The school photographs and video records parent presentations and other events and activities at all four campuses regularly. Those photos and videos, along with the student performances, can be found in the Video On Demand tile and Performing Arts tile, and in the photo database, and all may be downloaded for free.

**Logo Use:** Harker logos are trademarked, and any use must be cleared by the Office of Communication. If logo products of any kind are needed, the request and order must go through the Eagle Store so that the O of C can vet and approve the logo use. Email [communications@harker.org](mailto:communications@harker.org) with requests.

**Media Relations:** The O of C oversees the school's media relations. The goal of the school's media relations is to maintain a professional working relationship with the press; seek opportunities to share timely news of the school, its people and its programs; ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of

any information being disseminated about the school; and protect the school's reputation.

Faculty, staff, students or parents who are contacted by the media for a Harker-related story should refer the reporter to [news@harker.org](mailto:news@harker.org) or call 408.345.9273. You can also contact the O of C with the information, and they can approve or discuss any concerns and/or suggestions with you. Members of the media wishing to visit any of our campuses must contact the O of C at [news@harker.org](mailto:news@harker.org) who will clear and supervise the visit.

Note: Harker's student journalists are members of the community, as well as developing journalists, and we encourage the Harker community to participate in their learning process and to respond to their inquiries. Given that the stories covered by our students can be obtained by external media and could be considered in any legal matter, it is important that all Harker community members exercise good judgment when discussing any matter. Any Harker community member with questions about a given topic or information requested should inquire with the head of school or Office of Communication.

While we do our best to monitor Harker media coverage, please be aware that media companies and individuals over whom we have no control may take photos of the school, students, faculty and parents, both on and off campus. Also, social media has created a proliferation of information about the school, students and faculty over which we have little control, but that we monitor regularly.

If you have any questions, contact [communications@harker.org](mailto:communications@harker.org) or Pam Dickinson, Office of Communication director, at [pam.dickinson@harker.org](mailto:pam.dickinson@harker.org).

**Social Media:** Follow Harker on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/harkerschool](http://www.facebook.com/harkerschool)), Instagram ([www.instagram.com/harkerschool/](http://www.instagram.com/harkerschool/)), and YouTube ([www.youtube.com/user/harkerschool](http://www.youtube.com/user/harkerschool)). Follow athletics on Instagram ([www.instagram.com/harkerathletics/](http://www.instagram.com/harkerathletics/))

It's important that employees exercise appropriate discretion when using social media (even for personal communications), monitor their sites to keep them safe and/or clear of spam and hijacking by inappropriate sites, and keep in mind that social media activities may be visible to current, past and prospective students, parents, colleagues and community members.

To ensure clear boundaries, faculty and staff can only "friend" or "follow" a Harker student in social media, such as Facebook, Instagram and SnapChat, after the student has become an alumna/us of the school and is 18 years of age or older (exceptions are of course made for faculty/staff parents following their own children). Using social media as part of a classroom, club or off-campus trip must be cleared by the division head and Office of Communication.

Remind is the school-approved and supported application for use on all field trips and for informal student-teacher communication in grades 6-12. Before planning a field trip, you must meet with a LID director to be trained in Remind's use at Harker. Additionally, if you find that your students are unable to use Remind (due to a lack of a mobile device, parental agreement or other such reason), you may collect cell phone numbers only for communication that is minimal, formal school business and includes a serious need to reach them immediately.

## XIV. LIBRARY

### A. LIBRARY MISSION

The mission of the Harker library program is to ensure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information. Our library staff empowers students to be critical thinkers, enthusiastic readers, skillful researchers, and ethical users of information.



## B. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AND RESOURCES

Harker's professional librarians are eager to assist faculty with collaborative curricular planning with an eye toward infusing all disciplines with information literacy objectives. Librarians plan units with classroom teachers, and purchase excellent fiction and nonfiction titles in all formats for avid independent readers of all ages.

Access the Harker library website at [library.harker.org](http://library.harker.org). The lower, middle and upper school library websites provide 24/7 access to online resources including subscription databases, the library catalog and project LibGuides. See the "For Teachers" tab on any of the campus library websites to access professional resources.

The lower, middle and upper school libraries are open from 7:30 a.m.-6 p.m. on regular school days.

## C. RECOMMENDING MATERIALS

Librarians welcome suggestions of materials for purchase, including books, eBooks, magazines and films. Contact your campus librarian or use the Recommend a Resource box on the For Teachers page on the library portal.

## D. BORROWING MATERIALS

Faculty may check out materials from any Harker library for educational or personal use for three weeks. Items can be requested from and returned to your campus via the library catalog. Items may be renewed if they are not in demand. There are no fines for overdue materials. You can access adult print titles, eBooks, and eAudio on the upper school library portal.

## E. LIBRARY PRIVACY POLICY

Among the many values important to The Harker School community is respect for the individual. Harker librarians adhere to a professional code of ethics that safeguards patron rights, including confidentiality of library records. Information on what patrons have checked out of the library will be treated confidentially by the library staff and volunteers.



**LOWER SCHOOL**

4300 Bucknall Rd.  
San Jose, CA 95130  
408.553.0501

**MIDDLE SCHOOL**

4525 Union Ave.  
San Jose, CA 95124  
408.553.0300

**UPPER SCHOOL**

500 Saratoga Ave.  
San Jose, CA 95129  
408.345.9200